

#7: Out of love for God.

Oh, what great feeling comes from resisting sin and serving God out of love for Him and His presence in our lives. The feeling only comes sometimes when we do this, but the love for God that works in resisting sin is still the highest motivator, even without the feelings.

Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. For, behold, those who are far from You will perish; You have destroyed all those who are unfaithful to You. But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, that I may tell of all Your works. (Psalm 73:25-28)

In all seven of these levels, we can view them from God's perspective:

1. Our just and righteous God has built consequences into His creation, but He also lovingly disciplines His children (Job 5:17; Ps. 50:17; Prov. 3:11-12; Heb. 12:4-11; Rev. 3:19).
2. The good things in life are God-approved and eternal, like deep discussions with family and friends and ministry to those who are suffering. Listen to Phil Keaggy's *Ain't Got No*.
3. The Spirit is constantly prompting us to allow His fruit to come through us. May He succeed more and more.
4. God can't imagine why those who know His Word keep sinning (James 1:12-17). But try to notice how He never stops presenting His Word to us.
5. No matter how selfish we are, God continues to put His lovely people in front of us until we begin to love them with His love, even a little bit. Follow this love, and sacrifice time and energy to it.
6. God gives us opportunities to serve Him (especially if we are in regular fellowship with His people) and as we take these we learn what our spiritual gifts are and settle into the work He has for us.
7. Our God is beautiful, perhaps not visually now, but His attributes and works are beautiful. Actually, most people know God's beauty by His visible works, but His love, grace, mercy, kindness, justice, righteousness, even more so draw us to Him as we experience them more and more.

Motivations to Resist Sin

by
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Updated March, 2025

“Resisting sin” is both positive and negative. Negatively, we resist sin by not *committing* thoughts, words, or deeds that offend God. Positively, we resist sin by not *omitting* thoughts, words, or deeds God is asking us to think, say, or do. Both aspects are good, despite the term “negative,” since it only means not “committing,” not that this is negative.



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From the lowest motivation to the highest, seven levels of resisting sin are below. When resisting sin, we probably don't use just one level, but it is the greatest joy to use the highest level and diminishing joy going down to the lowest level. At whatever level, there is joy in resisting sin, and other fruit can result as well. The first three are selfish, the middle one is fact, and the last three are for others and God.

Seven Levels of Resisting Sin

#1: Fear of consequence.

For many, this lowest motivator to resist sin is the major and perhaps sole motivator not to sin, and that's not ideal, but still very good to heed. Psalm 73 describes this first level and also will describe the highest level, #7. Only select verses of Psalm 73 are quoted due to space limitations, but please read the whole psalm for greatest effect.

I was envious of the arrogant as I saw the prosperity of the wicked. Until I came into the sanctuary of God; then I perceived their end. Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. How they are destroyed in a moment! They are utterly swept away by sudden terrors! Like a dream when one awakes, O Lord, when aroused, You will despise their form. When my heart was embittered and I was pierced within, then I was senseless and ignorant; I was like a beast before You. (Psalm 73:3, 17-22)

#2: Sin is not so pleasurable as anticipated.

Sin's pleasures always let us down.

Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, "I have no delight in them..." (Ecclesiastes 12:1)

For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. (Romans 6:20-21)

#3: We allow more fruit of the Spirit.

Resisting sin gives us love, gives us joy, gives us peace, etc.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23).

#4: God has given us the power to resist sin.

Out of ignorance of Scriptural application (or because we love our sin, we ignore or forget the power of Scripture) we may not utilize the sufficient power God has given us to resist sin. Many more passages than those below present truths we can use against sinning.

Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (Galatians 5:24)

Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace. (Romans 6:11-14)

But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. (Romans 6:22)

Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. (Romans 8:1-2)

#5: Out of love for others.

Our sin inhibits our ability to love others.

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. (Galatians 5:13)

#6: Because of wanting to serve God

Serving God is hindered when we indulge in our flesh. We want to serve God and walk in the Spirit ministry He's giving us.

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. (Galatians 5:16-17)