

**If believers are free from the power of Satan (Col. 1:13), then why do they still sin?**

In Colossians 1:13 it says that God has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of His beloved Son. In order to better understand what God has rescued us from it is helpful to go back to the original Greek. The Greek says that God has rescued us from the “ἐξουσία” of darkness. This term refers to power and authority over something. What Paul is saying here is that God has saved us from the power that sin has over us; we are no longer dominated by sin. Before the rescue described in this verse we were slaves to sins (Romans 6:20). In Romans 6:20 Paul helps clarify the meaning of this Colossians verse. He says that while we were in slavery to sin we were “free” from righteousness in the sense that we were not slaves of righteousness. In other words, we had no choice in the matter, it was our natural state to be sinful. However, because of Jesus we are freed from the domination and “power” of sin that leads to spiritual death and compels to act. Now we are slaves to righteousness. We are free from the “power” or domination of our previous sinful lifestyle. However, it is very important to note that we are not free from the “temptation” and “ability” to sin. In fact, Jesus himself was “tempted” to sin (Matt. 4:1-11), but he withstood the temptations. Jesus even instructed his followers, in the Lord’s prayer, to pray daily for forgiveness of sins just as they prayed for daily bread (Matthew 6:11-12). He would not have included that in a daily prayer if daily sin was not a possibility. It is important that we keep in mind the difference between “justification” and “sanctification”. Justification is the judicial declaration of our innocence on Christ’s behalf and is instantaneous when we put our full trust and faith in Jesus. Sanctification, however, is a life-long process in which we become more like Jesus Christ. We will never reach perfection in this life and will never be free from the temptations and capacity to sin while in this body. However, we are free to fight sin and to fight the temptation to sin and we are expected to use every weapon possible, even to the point of radical measures if necessary (Matthew 18:9), to fight the fight against sin. If, in this battle, we do sin “we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1) and “if we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John



GRACE  
OVERFLOWS

HEBREWS 4:16

1:9). The believer will still struggle with sin throughout their earthly life (see Romans 7 for Paul's battle with sin). But God has rescued us from the "power" that sin had over us and we are now free to swim against the current that once carried us mindlessly along.

For further reading:

Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology*. (Inter-Varsity Press & Zondervan), pp. 749-753