

LET'S GET RID OF SIN

CHAPTER 3

In our first study, we emphasized the truth that we are saved by the grace of God apart from any works we might do--whether they be good or bad. This truth must be impressed upon our minds for there is much false-thinking today about the matter of salvation. So many people feel that God weighs our good works over against our bad works and the one which is heaviest determines whether we go to heaven or not.

God saves us by our faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross,. Our sins were laid on Him, and we are clothed in His righteousness. Thus, God does not see the sin in our lives. He sees us clothed in the righteousness of Christ. If we had any sin held against us, we could never go to heaven. He cleanses us from all sin (past, present, and future) through the blood of Christ which he shed for us. There is a continual cleansing.

That raises the questions, "Do you and I now have a license to sin since we have accepted Christ as our Savior? Can we do just anything we might please?" Certainly not!

We have stated in our previous study that a holy God demands a holy people. We are to separate ourselves from sin and do those things which are not pleasing in His eyes. The order of the universe demands it. If we violate a physical law, there is an immediate result. If you were to hold a fifty-pound weight over your foot and then let go, that weight would strike you directly upon your foot. There would be immediate pain. The same results would follow each time. This is because of the law of gravity. It never changes. We depend upon it in everything we do.

Though most people know of the laws of the physical universe and believe that God works things after the order of His purpose, somehow many feel that they can get by spiritually even if they violate some of God's spiritual laws. As a cut on the body leaves a wound and later a scar, so a sin leaves a wound on the soul that, even when settled in confession, will leave a scar.

It should be emphasized that God forgives the sin through the blood of Christ, but the effects of the sin may last. If I were to get into a fight and a person hit me in the eye and put my eye out, God would forgive me for the

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fight if it were confessed, but He would not give me my sight back. The damage cannot be repaired.

Before we go any further, it must be understood what the Bible means by sin. On the one hand, many believe that if they haven't shot anyone, committed adultery, or stolen anything too large; they haven't sinned. When I talk of sin, I mean much more than just murder, adultery, and stealing. The Bible speaks of sin as rebellion against God and His Word. In the book of Genesis, God asked Adam and Eve not to eat of the fruit in the midst of the garden, "for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die." God cursed them because of their disobedience to His Word. They rebelled against the command of God and chose to do what they wanted. This was sin. Rebellion against God in any way is sin.

On the other hand, to be tempted is not sin,. Christ was tempted; yet, He did not sin. One man has stated that we can't keep birds from flying over our heads, but we can keep them from building a nest there. Thoughts of sin and rebellion may go through our minds which are temptations. If we do not roll them over and over in minds they are not necessarily sins. When we are faced with a temptation that is enticing and we meditate upon it, it becomes a sin.

Look up Reference Group Number 1

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| (1) Command of God | Genesis 2:16-17 |
| (2) Disobedience | Genesis 3:6; 3:23-24 |
2. To be tempted is not to sin.
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|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| a. Jesus was tempted | Matthew 4:1-11 |
| b. Jesus knows of our temptations. | Hebrews 4:14-15 |
| c. Temptation can lead to sin. | James 1:13-16 |

Self Check Number 1

1. Since we are saved by God's grace, does it matter if we sin? _____

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2. A holy God demands a _____ people.
3. Is it true that God has certain spiritual laws just like He has physical laws?

4. Sin is _____ against God.
5. Is it true that when we are tempted, we have sinned? _____

(answers in outline and study guide)

The Scripture references you looked up dealt with the sin of Adam and Eve in their rebellion against God; the temptation of Christ and the fact Jesus did not sin; and then in the book of James, the evolution of a sin.

In this study, I want us to study the consequences of sin in the life of the believer and the confession that is necessary for a meaningful fellowship with our heavenly Father.

What are the consequences of sin in the life of the believer?

First of all, it breaks fellowship with God. In the book of Romans, the apostle Paul tell us of the frustration experienced by the Christian who knows what he should do; yet he rests in the energy of the flesh to fulfill the will of God for his life. This person is totally incapable of doing that which is right through the energies of his own flesh. At last he cries out, "Oh, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Later he states that the carnal, or fleshly mind, is at enmity with God.

In the Old Testament, God wanted to fellowship with His people Israel, but they sinned by following other gods. This grieved the heart of God. He still loved them and wanted to pour out His blessings upon them, but their sins had separated them from God. In the book of Isaiah it says,

"The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated

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between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you, and he will not hear."

The Lord could hear their cry and even desired to answer their prayers, but their sins made it impossible to Him to hear.

I must ask who is at fault when there is no fellowship. Is it because God does not want to fellowship with us? Not at all! He wants to fellowship with us, but it is we who go astray. Now, it is the fellowship and joy of peace with God that is broken. It is not the loss of our salvation. When David prayed his prayer of repentance after his sin with Bathsheba, He prayed:

"Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou has broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities...Restore unto me the joy of my salvation, and uphold me with a free spirit."

He did not pray for the restoration of his salvation, but he prayed for the restoration of the joy of his salvation.

Look up Reference Group Number 2

1. Paul speaks of the frustrations of the fleshly Christian.
Romans 7:15-25
2. The carnal mind is against God. Romans 8:7
3. Israel sinned and broke fellowship with God Isaiah 59:1-2
4. David repented so that he might receive the joy of his salvation
Psalms 51:8-12

Not only is our fellowship with God broken, but also sin will cause us to feel guilty before God. After David repented of his sin, he recorded a Psalm telling the forgiveness he received; but also tells of the inward struggle he had when he tried to keep his sin silent. He states, "When I kept silent, my bones became old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer." He is here describing the terrible weight of his sin upon his

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conscience. Concealing a transgression brings only misery defeat and ultimate ruin.

Psychologists tell us that a person with a guilty conscience can become filled with mental stress. Tensions, anxiety, and depression may set in. But this is just the first step for this mental anguish will cause physical illnesses. One medical doctor lists over fifty physical diseases that he has treated which are a direct result of mental anguish caused by guilt. Of these listed are ulcers, hiccoughs, constipation, diarrhea, high blood pressure, coronary thrombosis, gangrene of the legs, rheumatic fever, headaches of several types, diabetes, obesity, hives, asthma and hay fever.

This is in keeping with what the apostle Paul told the church at Corinth about the sin which was in their church body, We are not to eat or drink of communion, also called the Lord's Supper, "unworthily." He states "For he that eats or drinks unworthily, eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body, For this cause, many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." By "sleep" he meant that many were dead!

These Christians at Corinth were a fleshly group of Christians. Some thought they were more spiritual than others; thus manifesting their carnality . Some were taking others to court because they had been wronged. Some of the marriages were filled with conflict and strife. There was even one case of adultery in the congregation that had received no discipline from the church body. With all of this sin in the church, was it any wonder that some were sick while other had even died because of the sin of the group?

Everyone of these sins was a direct result of a broken fellowship with God. Can you imagine the guilt, tensions, and anxieties there must have been within that church?

The conscience is a good thing. But when we have done wrong, it can cause all sorts of frustrations. We should have a pure conscience. Some, however, may have a weak conscience like the Corinthian believers. It is certainly hoped that through the continual practice of sin, the believer will not defile nor sear his conscience. The apostle Paul in his epistles wrote to two young pastors and admonished them about people who have their conscience either defiled or seared. In both cases, the people under

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discussion were unbelievers; suggesting that a Christian could not be guilty of such a continual practice of sin. In 1 John 3:9, the apostle John plainly states "No one who is born of God practices sin." (NASV) The word "practice" is in the present tense and suggests that no believer will continually practice sin. Though a believer may lapse into acts of sin, he cannot live habitually in sin because the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, implanted by the Holy Spirit in the soul, has brought new life to the child of God.

There are two verses which suggest our consciences may be made more sensitive to the ministry of the Holy Spirit within us. Paul when he was before the Roman governor Felix, "I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward man." And again, the writer of the book of Hebrews states, "Solid food belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." In both of these verses we have the word "exercise." Even though two different words are used in the Greek text of the New Testament, both words carry the meaning of a disciplined training. In other words, both verses suggest that by careful discipline, we might be able to train our conscience. An athlete trains by discipline and effort. So we are to exert some effort as we discipline our conscience by a careful study of the scriptures to see what God might have in any given area of our life.

Look up Reference Group Number 3

1. Sin becomes a weight upon us. Psalm 32:3-5
2. Sin can cause physical illness. 1 Corinthians 11:27-30
3. Sin can defile the conscience Titus 1:15
4. Sin can sear the conscience. 1 Timothy 4:2
 - a. A Christian will not practice sin. 1 John 3:9
 - b. We are to exercise our conscience to do good
Acts 24:16, Hebrews 5:11-14

There is a third consequence which comes when we who profess to know Christ sin. We hurt the entire body of Christ. Possibly nothing hurts so much as a sinful believer. Everyone criticizes the church for this. Paul stated to the church at Corinth, regarding the man who was committing

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fornication with his step-mother, that it was as a leaven which affected the entire church. It was as cancer which would spread throughout the body to the hurt of the entire body. As mold starts in one spot on a loaf of bread and soon engulfs the whole loaf; so sin, when it starts in a body of believers, will engulf the entire group. In the case of the Corinthian believers, they would not stop their sin. Therefore, it became necessary for the church to take action against them to put them outside the group.

How much better it would have been if the individuals involved would have confessed the error of their sin, and put it away from them. This would still have the same affect upon the body of believers as removing the members from the church. It was the sin that needed to be removed to preserve the body. If those involved in the sin did not remove the sin from their lives, then it was necessary for the rest of the church to remove the offenders from the church. The body of Christ needs to be pure.

There is yet another harm that comes because of the sin of the believer and that is the personal testimony of the believer involved. Immediately people look upon a sinful believer as a hypocrite. A hypocrite is one who professes to be a child of God but acts like a child of the Devil. Anyone who has this reputation will completely lose the respect of those around him. The church will also be hurt because of his actions and the unregenerate world will make light of the genuine character of the person.

There was no group of people that received a stronger rebuke from Christ than those who were the hypocrites of His day.

The believer should rely completely upon the Lord to empower him to remain apart from sin. Sin is the spoiler of the abundant Christian life God intended for us to have.

Look up Reference Group Number 4

1. Sin in the church at Corinth caused difficulty in the entire church.
1 Corinthians 5:1-8
2. Sin will spread like a cancer.
3. Sin harms personal testimony of the believer.
4. Christ sharply rebuked hypocrites. Matthew 23:13-33

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SELF CHECK Number 2

Check the following which are consequences of sin in the life of the believer.

- _____ The believer will be happier
- _____ The believer's personal testimony is hindered.
- _____ The believer will have strong feelings of guilt.
- _____ The believer loses his salvation.
- _____ The believer breaks his fellowship with God.
- _____ The entire body of Christ is hurt.

We have now seen some of the consequences of sin in the life of the believer, but we cannot stop here. The question we must resolve is "How can the believer get rid of the sin that enters his life? As sure as you are human, sin will crowd in upon your life. When it comes, it will rob you of the joy and fellowship you first had when you came to Christ. But God does not change. We are the ones who change. God is the same. His love is the same. He still desires to fellowship with us. the scripture states that He loves us as He loved His son, Jesus Christ. Think of it!! God loves you and me as much as He loves the Lord Jesus Christ. Because of this, the heavenly Father must yearn for us when we are away from Him. He longs to have us return to Him.

We do not need to plead nor beg to be forgiven. We do not need to perform some religious ritual. We are not restored to a place of fellowship because of our efforts. We simply must confess our sin and He has promised to forgive our sin. He will forgive our sin because He is faithful. The very fact that we must confess our sin demonstrates we are unfaithful.

What do I mean by confession? According to Webster's Dictionary, the word "confess" simply means "to acknowledge or own, as a fault or debt." The Greek word used in the New Testament and translated by our English word "confess" means literally "to speak the same thing." In other words, "I am to say what God saw." If I have sinned I am not to add to what happened, and I am not to leave out anything that did happen. I am to say exactly what God saw.

To know the meaning of the word "confess" is one matter, but to confess exactly what happened is quite another matter. All too often, we

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tend to cover for ourselves and make excuses and justify our sin. We tend to make it look better than what God saw.

Let me illustrate. Some time ago, I had mentioned to the people in our church in a sermon that we are not to justify our situation. If we have sinned, we should just admit it; that is, confess it and be done with it. After driving home my point with illustrations, I was satisfied that the people knew they should not do as Adam and Even had done when each blamed the other. Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent.

The following week when I was out calling, I got caught in the rush-hour traffic. I came to a left hand turn-off from a busy street onto a less traveled street. A lady three cars up had the same idea as myself. It was a rather wide intersection and she could have turned in front of the on-coming traffic when the light changed, but she waited. There was one continuous line of traffic. The car behind this lady pulled out into the intersection and I squeezed up as close as I could get. Finally, when the light turned amber, the first lady made her turn so did the second car, and so did I. Behold, there was a police car just one block away watching the activity.

When he pulled me to the side of the street with his flashing light, I so wanted to tell him about the stupidity of the lady driver. then I remembered my sermon of the Sunday before. "Don't justify your situation," I had said. I was so guilty, and I had no one to blame. I had run a red light, and I was guilty.

Often people don't confess their sin unless they get caught. They try to justify themselves by saying no one knows or no one saw it. Somehow, we don't feel so guilty when we are not caught,. But, my friend, God sees us just the same. He knows what happened, and we need to confess to Him if we have sinned against Him.

Furthermore, if we have sinned against another person, we should confess to them our sin as well. Now, we need to be careful here. We should only confess the error to the person we have wronged. If I have said something harsh and bitter to my wife, it will not help if I confess my bitterness to the church. I need to confess the sin to God then to my wife.

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A good principle to follow in this matter would be to confess the sin as widely as the influence of the sin. If God is the only one who knows, confess to Him only. If you have offended a loved one, confess to him or her. If you have offended the church, confess to the church. Confess your sin only as widely as the influence of your sin.

When we confess our sin, it restores our fellowship with God. Remember, it was not God who was out of fellowship. It is we who were out of fellowship because of our sin. When we confess, God has promised that the sin is already forgiven. By faith, we believe God and are restored to a right relationship with Him once again.

In 1 John, the apostle declares, "I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins." (NASV) Now this word "propitiation" means He is the One who satisfies all of God's demand for sin. In the Living Bible, this verse is paraphrased "I am telling you this so that you will stay away from sin. But if you sin, there is someone to plead for you before the Father. His name is Jesus Christ, the One who is all that is good and who pleases God completely."

God does not want us to sin, but when we do, we should confess it right away. The longer a seed is allowed to grow, the deeper the roots go. Even an oak tree can be pulled up easily within the first year if the roots do not go down very deep. But leave it for a couple of years and it soon becomes impossible to pull it out by hand. So it is with sin. The longer we feed a sin and allow it to get rooted in our life, the harder it becomes to confess it and forsake it. Unfortunately, many believers live a defeated life out of fellowship with God simply because they do not confess and forsake their sin.

Don't become one of these people. If you have some sin or sins which bother you, confess them. I would even suggest writing them out on a piece of paper as you confess them to God and then destroy the piece of paper.

I will not forget the first time someone suggested I do this. I had taken a young man who was the pastor of our mission church and one of the lay leaders of our congregation to a training session in San Bernardino,

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California. There, Doctor Bill Bright, the Founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, asked all of us who wanted to be used of God to write down any sins which might be hindering our relationship to God. Right away I thought of the young pastor seated beside me and the man from my church. What would they think of their pastor writing down his sins and failures? I determined I wouldn't write anything down. Then the Holy Spirit pointed out to me my rebellion. As I wrote the word "rebellion" on the paper provided, I began to ask myself why I was rebellious. the answer came back "pride." So I wrote "pride" down. Then there came to me a sense of cleansing power of Christ as I continued to confess to God.

At this time, if there are sins which the Holy Spirit has revealed to you, list them, confess them, and then forsake them.

Let's pray:

Heavenly Father, I thank you for your love which is extended to me even when I fail you. Thank you that you forgive me. Help me at this time to completely forsake anything which hinders my relationship to You. For I pray this in Jesus' Name. Amen."

List any sin or sins at this time, then look up Reference Group Number 5.

Illustration of excusing self.

Genesis 3:9-13

God desires to fellowship with us.

1 John 1:3-2:2