

A Light in the Valley

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Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

Lesser Discussed Sins: Part 1

by: Justin Brewer

Recently, an article was passed around social media that discussed sins that Christians readily “accept.” There were a few activities identified as sin within the article that were unsustainable from the Scriptures, but the overall article brought to mind the fact that there are some transgressions that Christians spend less time talking about than others. Does less time spent on this sin or that sin necessarily mean that Christians “accept” them? Why do we spend less time on some sins than we do on others? Perhaps the answer is that Christians tend to discuss what is most applicable to the culture and time in which they reside. Does this mean that the lesser discussed sins are not present? Or does it mean that the “mainstream” sins tend to take up more of our efforts? For instance, a brief review of social media and major news outlets will establish that homosexuality, transgenderism, and abortion demand a significant amount of a Christian’s time and effort to address. These sins need to be addressed because they are

so prevalent in our own society. When a Christian addresses any given sin, especially those considered to be “hot button” issues, the following argument is frequently used: “But you didn’t address sins x, y, and z!” Must a Christian address every single sin every time they deal with a specific sin? If the Christian does not address every sin, does that mean that they accept the sins not mentioned? What does the Bible teach us on this concept?

In Matthew 19:16-22, Jesus answered a question addressed to Him by a young man, but how long did He dwell on the sins that were not pertinent to that specific individual? For instance, Jesus condemns adultery as sin, but was that young man involved in adultery? The context indicates that he was not adulterous. What good would it have done for Jesus to dwell on that specific sin in that circumstance? Instead, Jesus made a specific application to the individual He was instructing; knowing that the young man placed great store in his

physical possessions, Jesus addressed materialism. Did Jesus accept adultery because He chose not to dwell on it in this circumstance?

Likewise, Christians today tend to deal with sins that are currently prevalent. Should we be pointed in addressing the sins that are specific to an individual's life? Jesus certainly was in our example. If there is a particular sin that currently impacts society as a whole, should we spend time addressing it? In the Old Testament, there are numerous prophets, judges, rulers, and kings of Israel that dealt with sins that impacted the whole nation. For example, idolatry frequently plagued the people of God; how many prophets avidly fought against idolatry? How many judges and rulers of Israel? Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Moses, Joshua, Elijah, and many other devout men and women of God openly opposed idolatry. Should we not do the same as Christians?

While Jesus did not dwell on the sin of adultery in our example from Matthew 19, that does not mean that He did not teach on it in more depth under more applicable circumstances. In fact, in the earlier portions of Matthew 19, Jesus was asked about marriage and divorce and He spent time answering the question. Some sins may be more prevalent within our society and considered "high profile" in some aspects, but Christians do need to be careful to spend time identifying and addressing sins that might not be so mainstream. There are many tender hearts in both the world and the church that may be involved in sin without realizing it. A story was once told about a young couple that was involved in fornication without knowing that they were. Why did they not realize it? They had been preached to and taught that "fornication" is a sin, so how could they not know it? They knew that "fornication" is a sin, but they had no idea what "fornication" meant! Part of our duty as Christians is to understand what sin is, have the appropriate reaction to sin, and to help one another understand sin so that it might be corrected.

Within the Scriptures, there are numerous passages that include a somewhat limited list of "what not to do," but a comprehensive list of sins does not exist. Examining the Scriptures shows that even the inspired writers did not address every single sin every time they wrote instructions for the first-century Christians. Often, we turn and use passages that deal with prevalent sins such as homosexuality, but do not take enough time to go into depth about the remaining sins in the list. Does this mean that we accept these other sins? Or does it mean that we need to spend more time in study? Included in such lists are the following sins: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envies, murder,

drunkenness, revelries, homosexuality, sodomy, thieves, covetousness, extortion, filthiness, whoever loves and practices a lie, and “the like” (Galatians 5:19-21, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Ephesians 5:3-6, and Revelation 22:12-16). For a conscientious Christian, there is much guidance to be found within these passages and those similar to them.

How should a Christian view sin? We tend to have a natural revulsion to some sins in the aforementioned list, but should there be a difference? Peter, in his discussion of Christians returning to the world, stated that sin is like a dog that returns to his own vomit and a washed sow returning to wallow in the mire (2 Peter 2:18-22). Does that disgust you? Is it revolting to picture a dog eating its own vomit? Is mire merely mud? Jude wrote that Christians need to save others “with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh” (Jude 23). There needs to be revulsion to all sin, not just one or two sins. In Romans 8:6-8, the Apostle Paul wrote that to “be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” Christians must have the correct perspective of sin; it is not cute, it is not acceptable, and it needs to be addressed. While we do not accept sins simply because we do not often address them by name, we do need to be careful not to allow some sins to slip through the cracks unnoticed.

The purpose of this article has been to lay the foundation for the future study of some “lesser discussed” sins and how those sins impact our lives. While we will not go through and discuss every single sin listed even in this article, we will select a few and try to do an in-depth study of those sins and possible applications we can make. Often, non-believers will state that if an activity is not specifically mentioned in the Bible that it must not be a sin; hopefully we will be able to address such argumentation and show that we are given enough information to be able to accurately determine right from wrong even if a sin is not specifically mentioned.

Study Opportunities

Sunday Bible Study: 10:00 AM
Sunday Worship Assembly: 11:00 AM

Meeting At

Homewood Suites of Bozeman
1023 E Baxter Ln,
Bozeman, MT 59715

Everyone Welcome!

A Godly View of Sin

by: Sewell Hall

“What happened to sin?” This question, occasionally asked these days, can be answered with another question: “Whatever happened to God?” When people lose sight of God, sin cannot be far behind.

The World's View Of Sin:

Worldly people usually have in mind some vague definition of sin. In their view murder is sin because it hurts other people. If you asked the average person to name a sinner, he might well name Saddam Hussein; look how many people he has hurt! On the other hand a psychology professor I knew insisted that sexual relations between two unmarried consenting adults is no more than a handshake if no one gets hurt.

Some take another step to call things sin if they hurt the one who does them. These days some people think of smoking as sinful because it harms the body. At the same time, drunkenness is winked at as long as one does not harm himself or drive under the influence.

Things may be thought sinful once they become socially unacceptable; speaking against homosexuality is just about the most heinous sin some people can imagine. Illegal things are considered sinful if one is caught and, if not, they become clever. And, of course, anything that makes you feel bad about yourself is probably a sin for you.

Notice that all of these involve horizontal relationships. Sin is defined in purely human terms. The only authority acknowledged is human authority. The guilt or innocence of any action is judged by its visible and foreseeable effect on people here and now. God is not in the picture.

The Godly View:

As godliness is defined, however, everything is judged in reference to God. The word sin, as used in the Bible, is “missing the mark.” Crime is missing the mark set by men: sin is missing the mark set by God (1 Jn. 3:4). Murder is sin, not because it is illegal or because it hurts someone but because God has forbidden it. The mark God has set may be missed by going beyond it (1 Jn. 5:17; 2 Jn. 9) or by coming

short of it (Jas. 4:17; Rom. 3:23).

The act by which “sin entered into the world” (Rom. 5:12) was an act that few people in our godless age would call sin. In fact, I am asked sometimes, “What do you think that Adam and Eve really did?” Well, what they really did was eat a piece of fruit (Gen. 3:6), and it was sin because God had forbidden it. Whether men see anything wrong in their action is beside the point.

When God told Abraham to offer his son on an altar (Gen. 22:2), he would have sinned if he had failed to obey. His faith was demonstrated in his willingness to do what God said, regardless of his own human sense of right and wrong.

Fornication, idolatry, adultery, homosexuality, covetousness, drunkenness, and extortion were socially acceptable in Corinth, but the Holy Spirit through Paul insisted that those practicing such things would not “inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 6:9,10). “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience” (Eph. 5:6).

Even worship can be sin if it is not what God desires (Matt. 7:21-23), and a failure to worship is also sin (Jas. 4:17).

God And Sin:

Once God is brought into the picture it becomes clear that sin is man’s greatest problem. “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men...” (Rom. 1:18). What man on his own can escape the wrath of God? Since sin is an offense against God, only God can forgive it. And forgiving sin is not easy even for God. It cost Him the life of His Son.

The just penalty attached to sin by a just God is death; consequently, justice demands that the penalty be paid if sins are to be forgiven. If the sinner paid it he would be forever separated from God. But “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (Jn. 3:16). He allowed His Son to be “cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of My people, to whom the stroke was due” (Isa. 53:8).

Whenever we are tempted to sin, even in ways that the world considers innocent, we should ask with Joseph, “How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” (Gen. 39:9). And when even the world pronounces us guilty, we still must confess to God along with David, “Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight...” (Psa. 51:4).

List Makers

by: Machella Goad

Ladies

Corner

Women are great at making lists, am I right?! I mean, we make lists for everything imaginable... meals, grocery shopping, party planning, holidays, packing for a trip, books to read, to-do lists (daily, weekly, and monthly). I could go on and on, but you get the point. Making lists is important. It is a process that allows us to organize the chaos in our busy lives, prioritize and stay focused on our tasks, be reminded of what still needs to be done, and see the progress we make when we accomplish those things. List making is an aid in our success of being productive women, housekeepers, wives, and mothers.

*“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”
(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)*

Let’s take a minute to engage in a different list-making exercise. Instead of writing all the things you need/want to accomplish in the future, take some time to reflect and record two lists: first, a list of what others have done for you (recently and/or long ago); then, a list of what God has done (for you personally, and/or in general for all mankind). Go on... do it now! Grab a piece of paper, a pen, and get busy making those lists before reading on.

So, how did you do? How did writing those lists make you feel? Did the process of reflection help you realize how blessed you are? Do you have a more grateful attitude? When you consider the kind deeds of others, are you inspired to do more? When you ponder God’s amazing generosity, do you desire to serve Him with a more willing and thankful heart? Let’s examine each list separately.

List One: What others have done.

When we consciously think about what others have done for us, and write those things down, we recognize the caring hearts of other people. Realizing that people care about us is crucial to our joy and hope, especially when our enemy’s goal is to make us feel the exact opposite. Satan would have us believe that no one cares, that we have no hope of finding good in others, and we should just give up. Reminding ourselves of the thoughtfulness of others is one way to fight against this

deceiving tactic.

Listing out specific acts of kindness shown to us also gives opportunity to gain ideas of what we can do to help people in the future. A dear friend recently shared this idea, and it made perfect sense. A simple plan that can lead to fruitful service.

List Two: What God has done.

During a recent Bible reading with my children, I noticed that even Mary, the mother of our Savior, was a list maker. As you read what is known as “The Song of Mary” in Luke 1:46-55, can you see her list of what God has done?

“And Mary said: ‘My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. And His mercy in on those who fear Him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty. He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.’”

Mary’s reflection upon God’s actions had a powerful result. She said her soul “magnifies the Lord” and her spirit “rejoiced in God” (verses 46 and 47). As God’s people, glorifying Him should be our goal, for we have been created for His glory (Isaiah 43:7). When Paul wrote to the brethren in Thessalonica, he instructed,

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

This becomes easier and more natural when we remind ourselves of God’s goodness.

Obviously, making lists is not only helpful in our efforts to complete the physical tasks required of us, but is also very beneficial for our spiritual life. Listing our spiritual blessings is not a new concept. We often sing, “Count your blessings, name them one by one...,” but how often do we actually write them down? As we use lists as a tool to successfully fulfill our day to day duties, we must also be mindful of what has been done for us. Who knew? The simple skill of list making is also an aid in recognizing our blessings, and teaching us to be productive, thankful servants in God’s kingdom.

Daily Bible Reading

November 2017

November 1	2 Thessalonians 1-2	November 18	Galatians 3:1-18
November 2	2 Thessalonians 3	November 19	Galatians 3:19-4:7
November 3	1 Timothy 1	November 20	Galatians 4:8-31
November 6	1 Timothy 2-3	November 21	Galatians 5:1-15
November 7	1 Timothy 4:1-5:16	November 22	Galatians 5:16-6:18
November 8	1 Timothy 5:17-6:21	November 23	Ephesians 1:1-14
November 9	2 Timothy 1:1-2:13	November 24	Ephesians 1:15-2:10
November 10	2 Timothy 2:14-3:17	November 25	Ephesians 2:11-3:7
November 13	2 Timothy 4	November 26	Ephesians 3:8-4:6
November 14	Titus 1-3	November 27	Ephesians 4:7-24
November 15	Philemon	November 28	Ephesians 4:25-5:14
November 16	Galatians 1	November 29	Ephesians 5:15-33
November 17	Galatians 2	November 30	Ephesians 6

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