

Have We Become Too Desensitized to Sin?

Isaiah 5:20: (NASB) *Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!*



Right is right and wrong is wrong! A few generations ago, morality and ethics seemed simple. There were things you knew you should and should not do. There were principles you knew needed to be present when it came down to making appropriate decisions. There were societal consequences for stepping outside of those lines. Now morality seems to have gone rogue, and the idea of ethics seems to have been redefined to fit personal preference. Now when we say, "Right is right," we really mean, "Right is what I feel is right for me,"

There is not much that is wrong, except when you try and infringe on my personal feeling of what is right. What has happened? Does the whole concept of sin need to be reevaluated? It needs to be reawakened.

The two words most often translated sin from the Old Testament:

Sin: Strongs #2403 *chatta'ah* or *chatta'th*; from #2398; an offence (sometimes habitual sinfulness), and its penalty, occasion, sacrifice or expiation; also (concretely) an offender

Sin: Strongs #2398 *chata'*; properly, to miss; hence (figuratively and generally), (causatively) lead astray, condemn



The two words most often translated sin from the New Testament:

Sin: Strongs #264 *hamartano*; to miss the mark

Sins: Strongs #265 *hamartema*; sin, evil deed

Sins: Strongs #266 *hamartia*; from #264; to sin, equivalent to missing the mark

Anything less than perfection misses the mark. We live in a society where nobody wants to be in trouble; we want to be recognized for individuality.

Let's start by looking at a humanistic perspective, which is the opposite of a godly perspective. The humanists' view is that gods are fictitious and imaginative, and humanity is the core and centerpiece of everything.

 **Right or wrong, *What Makes Something Right or Wrong*, Stephen Fry, *That's Humanism***

- *What makes things right or wrong? Some people believe that what is right and wrong never varies from situation to situation and that it can be expressed in constant and unchanging commandments. They often look to religious texts or authorities to discover what they think a god wants them to do. A humanist view of morality is different. Humanists do not look to any god for rules but think carefully for themselves about what might be the best way to live. This approach means we have always to be empathetic and think about the effects of our choices on the happiness or suffering of the people (or sometimes other animals) concerned. We have to respect the rights and wishes of those involved, trying to find the kindest course of action or the option that will do the least harm. We have to consider carefully the particular situation we find ourselves in and not just take any rule or commandment for granted.*

God's commandments do not vary. Stephen Fry says, "They have to respect and consider the rights and wishes of others." Who makes the rules?

We will use the following prophecy from Isaiah to draw out some general principles on appropriately dealing with sin and righteousness.

Though this prophecy is about Israel, we can learn from it:

Isaiah 5:18-19: (NASB) ¹⁸*Woe to those who drag iniquity with the cords of falsehood, and **sin <2403>** as if with cart ropes; ¹⁹Who say, Let Him make speed, let Him hasten His work, that we may see it; and let the purpose of the Holy One of Israel draw near and come to pass, that we may know it!*

In ancient times there were ropes attached to the cart the animal would pull. The cart represents iniquity. This verse is saying, *woe to those who drag iniquity* - darkness and sin - with falsehood and mock God along the way, saying, "Where is God? let Him show Himself and then we will believe Him."



(Source: John Gill's Exposition of the Bible) The prophet returns to the wicked again, and goes on with the account of their sin and punishment; and here describes... such who draw it to themselves, seek after it, and willingly commit it; who rush and force themselves into it; who solicit it, and seek and take all occasions and opportunities of doing it; and take a great deal of pains about it; and make use of all arguments, reasonings, and pretenses they can devise, to engage themselves and others in the practice of it; which are all cords of vanity, fallacious and deceitful.

These verses give us a clear picture of the idolatry of sin, replacing what we *think* God's presence should look like with all of the things we want for our own self-satisfaction. That is proclaiming to God how He should present Himself.

Psalms 10:2,11: (NASB) ²*In pride the wicked hotly pursue the afflicted; let them be caught in the plots which they have devised...*¹¹*He says to himself, God has forgotten; He has hidden His face; He will never see it.*

The idea God is dead or never existed is a common theme.



**WHENEVER WE MOCK GOD'S SEEMING
LACK OF ATTENTION, IT ALWAYS
OPENS THE DOOR FOR BLATANT
SIN AND DARKNESS
TO FLOURISH.**

Something as basic as mocking or respecting God is a basis for whole societies to crumble or to flourish.



Is being desensitized to sin really as simple as mocking God and opening the floodgates of darkness?

While nothing that breaks our society down is ever simple, disrespecting God is a good place to begin our understanding. Satan's first sin took place in his mind's eye as he thought of himself rising up to be like God. Eve's first sin was to entertain a contrary thought to what God had emphatically said. Both of these sins were mental sins. They both clearly defied the first commandment that would be given to Israel - *Thou shalt have no other gods before Me* - an internal commandment spoken to the heart and mind of each individual.



The first major point of being sensitized to sin is to always remember the first commandment. Satan put himself before God by making himself a god. Even though Eve wanted knowledge and God's wisdom, she took Satan's advice, which put Satan before God.

Isaiah 5:20: (NASB) *Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!*

Shouldn't these things be obvious? Evil is made to look good and more exciting and thrilling. If it is not godly, then it is sin.

 **Morality from within, *What Makes Something Right or Wrong*, Stephen Fry, *That's Humanism***

- *This way of thinking about what we should do is explicitly based on reason, experience, and empathy and respect for others, rather than on tradition or deference to authority. It might sound hard but luckily most of us do it most of the time without really thinking about it. Morality is not something that comes from outside of human beings, gifted to us by an external force like a god. When we look at our closest relatives in the animal world, we see the same basic tendencies we recognize in ourselves - affection, cooperation, all the behavior needed to live in groups and thrive. It is clear that our social instincts form the basis of morality and that they are a natural part of humanity.*

Humanism is telling us WE are the source of enlightenment! We do not need anything bigger or authoritative. The big problem with this "enlightenment" is that it is polluted.

Here are how entire societies become desensitized to sin. All are given the testimony of nature:

Romans 1:20-21: (NASB) *²⁰For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.*

The vast complexity of creation gives us cause to acknowledge a MUCH higher power than us - yet:

²¹For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.



They knew God because they saw His creation, but they did not give Him the credit.

The act of ignoring God creates an emptiness in man's thinking. This darkens man's hopes, because they are not seeking light from above:

Romans 1:22: (NASB) ²²*Professing to be wise, they became **fools** <3471>.*

Fools: Greek English Lexicon #3471; to be foolish, to make flat, tasteless

Luke 14:34: (NASB) *Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become **tasteless** <3471>, with what will it be seasoned?*

The word for *fool* is the same word used to describe salt - tasteless or flat and of no good use. If salt does not have its flavor, it is useless.

Any profession of wisdom and enlightenment within a godless environment is ultimately foolish:

Romans 1:23-25: (NASB) ²³*and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.*

This foolishness seeks to replace worshipping the mighty God with worshipping self and nature:

²⁴*Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. ²⁵For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*

Serving the creature rather than the Creator is idolatry in one of its biggest forms. *Satan exchanged the truth of God for a lie* in the Garden of Eden.

Idolatry is the epitome of darkness masquerading as light. Worldly enlightenment thrives in darkness because it avoids God - the first commandment is not followed.

Sin therefore creeps in as counterfeit light:

2 Corinthians 11:13-15: (NASB) ¹³*For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.*

Darkness works best when it is mimicking light. Satan disguised himself as an angel of light to Eve and has done so throughout the ages. Those who follow him also say they are bringing people to enlightenment and higher ways of living, yet they are really desensitizing them to sin, because they are missing the first commandment.



BECOMING DESENSITIZED TO SIN
CAN BE A PROCESS OF
subtlety, disguise and attraction.
ALWAYS BE LOOKING UP FOR
TRUE LIGHT.

It is sobering to realize that our entire world has gone down this desensitized road of destruction.

We looked at societies, now what about me? What should I be looking out for to stay away from sin?

It will be no surprise that there are strong similarities on the road to desensitization for societies and for individuals. As individual Christians, we each can govern the things we allow into our own lives to help us battle sin. We can choose to stand strong even when surrounded by a society of those who have lost their way.

Isaiah 5:21-22: (NASB) ²¹Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight! ²²Woe to those who are heroes in drinking wine and valiant men in mixing strong drink.

This is an example of going down a road where our senses and control are lost to something external.

Here we not only see runaway pride, but now we add the power of peer pressure to the mix! Becoming desensitized to sin becomes easy when we follow the crowd because the pressure is too great to stand against.

 **How we soften sin, We Soften Sin, David Platt**

- Many of us, now most of us would say, "I sin. I know I sin." So, we are probably not denying sin; like it seems like sin is being denied here. 1 John 5. Well if I'm not outright denying sin, I think we do find ways to soften sin, to justify it, to rationalize it until we redefine it in other terms. We say, "Oh, it's just an impure thought. If I'm a man, it's just normal. It's just one website, for a minute. It's not going to hurt anybody. We gossip about others - not a second thought."

He brings up some interesting perspectives. When we think, "Nobody cares, or it is not going to hurt anybody," that is being desensitized.

Three subtle peer pressure steps to avoid that would desensitize us to sin:



Psalms 1:1: (NASB) *How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked. Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!*

Proverbs 13:20: (NASB) *He who walks with wise men (godly men) will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.*

Proverbs 2:11-12: (NASB) ¹¹Discretion will guard you, understanding will watch over you, ¹²to deliver you from the way of evil, from the man who speaks perverse things;

Nor stand in the path of sinners - when we stop and stand in the path of sinners, we are now more engaged. We throw away our discretion and understanding, and God's protection as well.





...Nor sit in the seat of scoffers.

Psalms 26:4-5: (NASB) ⁴*I do not sit with deceitful men, nor will I go with pretenders. ⁵I hate the assembly of evildoers, and I will not sit with the wicked.*

When we *sit with deceitful men* - fellowship - not only have we stopped, but we are comfortable and enjoying the darkness.

When we walk in a **common direction** with the world and join in its **common interests** and **fellowship** - we deepen our bonds with the world.

By avoiding these three developmental steps we can look forward to what the second verse of this Psalm offers:

Psalms 1:2-3: (NASB) ²*But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. ³He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers.*

When we are *planted by streams of water*, we are immovable in a place that will always nourish us no matter what is going on around us. That is how we avoid peer pressure.



Job 23:10: (NASB) *But He knows the way I take; When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold.* This was a favorite Scripture of a dear Christian friend of ours, Sr. Calanthea from Florida, who recently passed away. She let her light shine and always encouraged and supported us with our work with Christian Questions. She had a glow about her. We think of her like one of those trees firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither. Calanthea (Clanky) has been a wonderful example and we sorrow with her family about her passing but rejoice about her potential reward with the Lord.

The Apostle Paul gives us similar guidance in avoiding the world, but in a reversed order:

2 Corinthians 6:14-16: (NASB) ¹⁴*Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? ¹⁵Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? ¹⁶Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols...*



Let's look at these steps in reverse order and see how they build up to trouble: We make an agreement and now have something in common. Because we have something in common, we develop harmony. From harmony comes fellowship. From fellowship comes partnership which leads to being bound together. There is a subtlety from one step to the next.



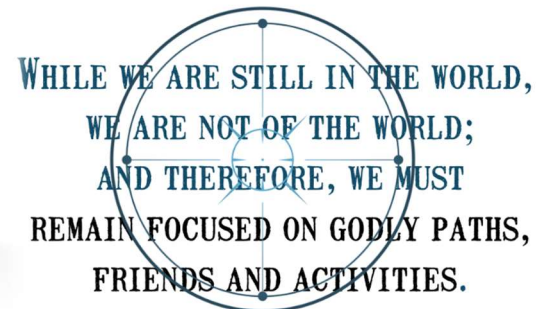
We need to be careful and remain sensitized to sin. How?
You shall have no other gods before Me.

Just as with natural Israel, they needed to be separate from the other nations and follow the commandments of God. We, as Christians, need to be set apart for holy service for God.

There really is no common ground for a Christian in this world. Why? We are set apart:

2 Corinthians 6:16-18: (NASB) *...For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their GOD, and they shall be My people. ¹⁷Therefore, Come out from their midst and be separate, says the Lord. And do not touch what is unclean; and I will welcome you. ¹⁸And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me, says the Lord Almighty.*

This does not mean we do not have friends in the world or have acquaintances with co-workers. It means our **common interests** are limited.



2 Corinthians 5:20: (NASB) *Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ...Be reconciled to God.*

We are aliens and strangers in this world looking for our heavenly home. An ambassador's role is to communicate with those around them, but we need to remain focused on godly principles.

We do have to keep our guard up - it is all too easy to give in to this or that - just this one time.

There are desensitizing dangers in society and with those around us. What about from within?

As challenging as it might be to stand up against social norms and peer pressure, it is a different matter when dealing with our own worst enemy - ourselves. Fighting an internal battle requires different tools and fortunately, the Bible supplies them and shows us how to use them. How do I fight myself to stay sensitized to sin?

We each have mental, physical and emotional weaknesses, but they cannot be an excuse. We cannot compare ourselves to others and not fight our internal battle. We need to fight the good fight of faith. We can make mistakes, but we need to know how to get back up and continue on and serve the Lord.





Isaiah 5:23: (NASB) ²³*Who justify the wicked for a bribe and take away the rights of the ones who are in the right!*

When we stand for something that is convenient, rather than standing for something higher, we have become desensitized to sin.

Here we have internal desires and greed smothering out godly righteousness.

The first commandment is - *You shall have no other gods before me.* The last commandment is - *You shall not covet...* These two commandments are both internal - in our heads and hearts. If we have no other gods other than God, then we should have no need to want anything outside of that.

 **We make morality, *What Makes Something Right or Wrong, Stephen Fry, That's Humanism***

- *But ultimately, morality comes from us, not from any god. It is to do with people, with individual goodwill and social responsibility; it is about not being completely selfish, about kindness and consideration towards others. Ideas of freedom, justice, happiness, equality, fairness and all the other values we may live by are human inventions, and we can be proud of that, as we strive to live up to them.*

Humanists have the audacity to say our morality comes from within, not from any god. We live in the most selfish time in all of human history. It is also the most godless time. We have lost the idea of putting others first. This is why so many people are unhappy. Mental illness has skyrocketed because we have taken away all the things that govern life. We need guidance, and when left to ourselves, we self-destruct.

1 John 2:15-17: (KJV) ¹⁵*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* ¹⁶*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.* ¹⁷*And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.*

Morality does not come from us! What comes from us is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

In these three actions all sin is conceived, developed and expressed...but all sin need not have all three.

FIRST example of sin: Inward (hidden) sin is expressed through the lust of the eyes:

Matthew 5:29: (NASB) *If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell (gehenna - a symbol of complete destruction).*

What happens with these sins of the mind? How do we stay sensitized? The first and last commandments!

Hebrews 4:16: (NASB) *Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*



Overcoming Principle: Prayer. The foundation of God's Law for solving sin is Jesus' ransom.



CQ Team



Comment

Trish comments: Man was made in God's image, so we did have morality built within us originally.

We did, but we did not have the experience to back up the morality. When Eve was tested, she could recite what was right, but she did not follow what was right because she had a suggestion of something that seemed more convenient, attractive and more pleasurable.



SECOND example of sin: Outward (presumptuous) sin is expressed through the lust of the flesh:

Matthew 5:30: (NASB) *If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell (gehenna).*

Jesus was using a figuratively dramatic example. He was saying if your hand is drawing you to do things that are not godly, then cut off that action.

These are more publicly discernible sins of action. How do we stay sensitized? The first and last commandments!

1 John 1:9: (NASB) *If we confess our sins (through prayer), He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Overcoming Principle: Honesty and confession before God. Admitting there are dark consequences of our sins and honestly confessing them.

THIRD example of sin: Outward (presumptuous) sin is expressed through the pride of life:

Matthew 5:22: (NASB) *But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, You good-for-nothing, shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, You fool, shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.*

Jesus is saying these are things that could take our opportunity for life away.



These are sins of emotion and reckless judgment. How do we stay sensitized? **You shall have no other gods before me and do not covet!**

James 5:16: (NASB) *Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.*

Not only should we pray for one another, but we should work together.

Overcoming Principle: Mutual trust and confession. This honesty can be a healing balm.

Having a trusted friend in Christ with whom we share our weaknesses and failures says we want someone to keep an eye out for us. We want them to help and encourage us. This keeps us accountable. We can overcome whatever wrong road we may head down.

We need to work together and build each other up.



REALIZE THAT THE DARKNESS OF THE WORLD
IS NOT ONLY AROUND YOU BUT IS WITHIN
YOUR IMPERFECT HUMAN FORM.
EMBRACE THIS SO YOU CAN OVERCOME IT!

MAKING SENSE OF A DESENSITIZED WORLD:

Embrace the fact we have darkness inside of us and we are born in sin, but we do not have to stay sinful in all of our thoughts and actions. We can never get rid of sin in this life, but we can put it in its place by putting God in His place.

This shows us the battle to overcome sin is an everywhere and all the time effort. Never stop!

**Does fighting off all of these sinful tendencies mean
we judge the world not worthy of our presence?**

This is where we can get confused. We built this whole case for staying away from things that are desensitized, and yet we are absolutely supposed to engage with those of the world. Why? That is what Jesus did, and we are to follow in his footsteps. How else can we witness God's plan? We do not judge the world not worthy of our presence. We judge the world as the place in which we develop Christlikeness and plant examples to others.



Isaiah 5:24: (NASB) *Therefore, as a tongue of fire consumes stubble and dry grass collapses into the flame, so their root will become like rot and their blossom blow away as dust; for, they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.*

The judgment of God against unrighteousness is always the same. Godlessness produces destruction and because God is merciful, we know Jesus' ransom eventually gives everyone a fair chance. Even those engaged in sin will get an opportunity because of the ransom of Jesus. But what am I doing right now? I need to stand firm in the principles of righteousness, so that I remain sensitized to sin.

Jesus loves us! Does this mean he accepts us as we are? Jesus DOES love us, but to properly answer the acceptance question, we also need to ask how much do we love Jesus?

John 14:23: (NASB) *Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him.*

Our selfless love towards Jesus is unequivocally expressed in keeping his words. What does it mean to keep his word? We are to live as Jesus instructed and as he lived.



The following story of the rich young ruler shows us an example of Jesus loving someone but not accepting them as they are:

Mark 10:17-25: (NASB) *¹⁷As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to him and knelt before him, and asked him, Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*

The young man shows humility, respect and sincerity, and he has Jesus' attention.

Jesus' words in verses 18-19: Follow the Law already given to you and live with honor, integrity and respect. For us today - live up to the highest God-driven standard available.

²⁰And he said to him, Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up. ²¹Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me. ²²But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property.

Jesus respects the man's life, and now shows him an even higher way - "Divest yourself of all that you hold so dear and follow in my sacrificial footsteps." It was too much for the man. Jesus loved him but did not accept him as a follower.

This takes away the concept that if you are just a good person you go to heaven.

²³And Jesus, looking around, said to his disciples, How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁴The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.



Key Point Jesus LOVED this man, but the kingdom of God was not for him at that moment. He was not ready to be a follower of Jesus. This man did not love Jesus and the prospect for eternal life enough to change and follow Jesus.

There is a difference between being given the opportunity for life from Jesus' ransom that every human being who ever lived will experience and the calling to be a follower of Christ.

We cannot say, "God is going to have to accept me as I am." Do not make excuses to stay desensitized to sin.



Call it something else, We Soften Sin, David Platt

- *We're good at finding ways to sin and call it something else. Or are we just becoming desensitized to sin? We don't even notice it. It doesn't jar us to hear God's name taken in vain. We can watch hours of TV and movies and hardly even notice that. Do we realize even what a dangerous position that is to be? I guess that's the part we don't realize. We're dogged to sin.*

It is so easy to be accepting of the things around us. We need to be an example of what true righteousness, godly integrity and godly effort are.



We live in a day of a dramatic crisis of conscience:

1 Timothy 4:1-2: (NASB) *¹But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, ²by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron.*

False Christian teachings and errors are being exposed even more than ever before.



Here is the real context in which Jesus says to love:

Matthew 22:36-40: (NRSV) *³⁶Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest? ³⁷He said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. ³⁸This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

To be desensitized to sin is natural, comfortable, easy, convenient and it is everywhere.

We want to be like Jesus. Let's take steps daily to find those of like faith and godly conscience to walk with us and encourage us to stand above and sensitize ourselves to sin. That is how we bring glory to God!

*So, have we become too desensitized to sin?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it!*



Join us next week for our podcast on December 16, 2019:

Ep. 1104: How Do I Know My Decisions Are Right?

Bonus Material!

I know I wouldn't be a New York Yankee if it wasn't for my mom: the guidance she gave me as a kid growing up, knowing the difference from right and wrong, how to treat people and how to go the extra mile and put in extra work, all that kind of stuff. — Aaron Judge



A few more Scriptures to encourage us as we deal with sin:

Isaiah 1:18: (NASB) *Come now, and let us reason together, says the LORD, Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool.*

1 Peter 4:1-4: (NASB) *¹Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, ²so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. ³For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. ⁴In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you;*

Isaiah 40:28-31: (NASB) *²⁸Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. ²⁹He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. ³⁰Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, ³¹yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.*

Life is SO much better when we look up for help rather than following our sinful natures.

(Source: Hating the Sin Without Judging the Sinner, Rev. Mr. Matthew Newsome, “Test Everything” Blog)

We’ve had an invasion of ants in our yard this year. In an attempt to mitigate the situation, I purchased some heavy-duty ant poison which I mixed up in a spray bottle, which I then – unfortunately – left out on our porch after using. I realized my mistake when I looked out the window to see one of my younger sons spraying his little brother with it.

I quickly dashed outside and took the bottle away from him. He thought there was just water in it and was using it as a squirt gun. As I washed them both down with the garden hose, I explained why it is dangerous to play with unknown spray bottles.

Before I sprang into action, I made a judgment. I didn’t judge my kids. I knew they were acting out of ignorance. I did chastise myself for leaving the ant spray where the kids could find it. But most importantly, I made an immediate judgment that my children’s actions were not safe. That judgment on my part enabled me to quickly step in and prevent any real harm from being done.

There is a lesson here about the proper way we are to interpret Christ’s command not to judge others, as given in Matthew 7:1-6.

Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, “Let me take the speck out of your eye,” when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite; first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.

It is clear from this passage that Christians are forbidden from judging others. The judgment Christ is talking about is a judgment upon another’s soul. Christ tells us that if we judge others harshly, we can expect to be harshly judged. All of us have sinned. It is hypocritical for us to condemn other people when we also deserve condemnation. If we expect God to have mercy on us, we need to extend that mercy to others. Indeed, this is what we pray for any time we say the Lord’s Prayer. “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us” (Matthew 6:12).

But there is another popular maxim among Christians: Hate the sin; love the sinner. Lately people have started to display a negative attitude toward this phrase.



Admittedly it has become somewhat of a cliché, but there is truth to these words. It makes an important distinction between actions and persons.

Many reject this saying today because society has associated certain sinful actions (especially when it comes to sexual morality) with personal identity, so that to “hate the sin” is tantamount to “hating the sinner.” This makes the statement appear hypocritical. This is unfortunate, because the distinction between the sin and the sinner is a real one. Understanding this distinction is the key to making right judgments.

Imagine you saw someone pick up a glass you knew was full of a poisonous liquid. They bring it up to their lips and begin to take a drink. What do you do? I hope you would shout out, “Stop, that’s poisonous!” or even rush forward to knock the glass out of their hand.

In doing so, you have made a judgment. You judged this person’s action to be harmful and intervened to stop them. This did not require you to make any sort of judgment about the person. Did they know the glass was poisonous and were trying to commit suicide? Are they suffering from delusions and think they are immune to poison? Perhaps they mistakenly thought the glass was full of water and were only trying to quench their thirst. Or maybe they have a physiological condition that makes them crave something in the poison. Who knows?

You don’t need to know anything about their knowledge or intention in order to make an objective judgment about their action. Far from condemning them for their action, your judgment allows you to display your love for them by working for their good.

Love at its root means to desire the good of the other. To love, then, requires us to make judgments about what is good and what is not.

Just as poison is harmful to our bodies, sin is harmful to our souls. We “hate the sin” precisely because we “love the sinner.” Warning someone about the danger of sin is no more of a condemnation of the person than warning them about the dangers of drinking poison.

