
Words of Truth

Sin Must Be Dealt With

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Sin, as defined by God, is transgression of His law (I John 3:4). Sin, as defined by God, is all unrighteousness (I John 5:17). For a person to sin they have to be capable of knowing right from wrong (James 4:17). We have to define these terms because many people have been led to falsely conclude that sin is an object rather than an action. Many have been led to conclude that you are born in a state of sin, which simply is not true (Deuteronomy 24:16, Ecclesiastes 7:29, Ezekiel 28:15, and Romans 2:5-6). Sin occurs when you give in to temptation (James 1:13-16).

If you understand everything we just examined, you should realize many things that are missed by a lot of people. For one, you should understand that you are to be blamed when you do something wrong. You were not given a "sinful nature". Secondly, you should understand that when you do something that is not pleasing to God, you are doing something that is wrong (Matthew 28:18-20, Colossians 3:17, James 2:10, I Peter 4:11, I John 2:3-6, and II John 9). Thus, you should understand that you are not right in doing something just because the Bible doesn't explicitly say it is wrong to do so (i.e. "God doesn't plainly say it is wrong for me to bomb an abortion clinic").

Having made those things clear, we will now turn our study to the problem of leaving sin alone. Most people are very comfortable with not dealing with sin. Such is true of many when it comes to their own sins as well as the sins of others. People just like to sweep sin under the rug (so to speak). What we are going to find in our study is that we MUST correct our own sins and we MUST also work to help others correct their sins. Let's start with ourselves as we approach this very important study.

We Must Deal With Our Own Individual Sins

God expects us to practice self-examinations (Haggai 1:5; 7 and II Corinthians 13:5). What do you think He wants you to do when you examine yourself and find that you are lacking (cf. Daniel 5:5-29)? Notice God's answer to this question: *"I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies... Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD... Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die... And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee"* (Psalms 119:59, Lamentations 3:40, Ezekiel 18:27-28, and Luke 15:17-18).

Clearly, God expects us to be honest enough to see our errors. He then expects us to be honest enough to correct those sins. We have to be able to look at ourselves, through the Scriptures (James

1:21-25). After we've corrected our own lives (Matthew 7:1-5), we then need to be able to help others change as well (Galatians 6:1-2, James 5:19-20, and Jude 22-23).

We Must Deal With The Sins Of Others

We cannot excuse the sins of others. If a person errs, and if that person is open to the truth (Proverbs 9:8 and Matthew 7:6), we're bound to try and help that individual correct his or her errors (Matthew 18:15-17 and Luke 17:3-4). We cannot allow sin to continue in the lives of those whom we may be able to influence for right (Leviticus 19:17). The Lord teaches us that love is rebuking those in error rather than remaining silent (Proverbs 27:5 and Revelation 3:19). This may even mean we have to rebuke said individual(s) in a public manner (Galatians 2:11-15 and I Timothy 5:20).

We cannot make excuses for people who sin (Exodus 32:21-28). We have to deal with problems for them to end (III John 9-11). We have to love people enough to clearly point out their errors (Acts 8:18-24). If that person refuses to change, we MUST mark and avoid that individual (Romans 16:17-18, II Thessalonians 3:6, II Thessalonians 3:14-15, and Titus 3:9-11). When you or I allow someone to continue in sin without correcting them, then you or I will fall into condemnation with that person (Ezekiel 3:18, Acts 20:26-27, and Revelation 2:14-16).

So that we are clear, in dealing with the sins of others, we cannot just make vague comments or drop hints to make ourselves feel like we've dealt with sin. The Lord instructs us to, "*rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith*" (Titus 1:10-14). We have to show people their sins, through the Scriptures (II Timothy 4:2). We then have to instruct them not to just to be sorry for their sins, but they also have to allow that sorrow to bring about repentance (II Corinthians 7:9-10).

Dealing With Sins Means Repentance Has To Occur

We are not finished dealing with sin just by establishing that there is a problem. This is true when dealing with our own individual problems or helping others with their sins. God demands that we do more than admit that we're wrong when we've sinned. Yes, we must confess our sins to have them forgiven (Psalms 32:5, Jeremiah 3:13, and I John 1:9), but more than acknowledgment of our sins is required of us. God requires us to repent of our sins. In fact, we cannot be saved without repentance (Luke 13:3; 5 and Acts 3:19).

Saying we must repent is not clear enough. There are people who think that repentance is saying, "I'm sorry". Some think that repentance is trying to do better. Both of those ideas are WRONG. Repentance is to CEASE from sin (Psalms 37:27, Ezekiel 18:30, II Corinthians 7:1, II Timothy 2:19, and I Peter 4:1-2), correct those sins (Ezekiel 14:6, Ezekiel 33:14-16, and Luke 19:1-10), and to show change in your life (II Chronicles 7:14, Matthew 3:8, Matthew 21:28-32, and Acts 26:18-20).

Conclusion

"The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul... He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 16:17 and Proverbs 28:13).