

It Is Written

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When Sin Becomes Trivial

By Bobby L. Graham

People sometimes indulge themselves in wickedness to the point that it no longer seems wicked. The danger of sin is that it can easily deceive us and eventually lull us to sleep so that our former awareness of God's will and sin's violation of that will becomes foreign to us.

Daily exhortation is the Lord's means appointed to prevent the process of hardening exerted by sin's deceitfulness (Heb. 3:13). "...lest any of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." The Lord said that the heart becomes hardened, calloused, by sin because of its deceitful quality. There is something about sin – any sin – all sin – that is deceptive. While we seem to be faring well and enjoying ourselves, basking in the adulation and esteem of others, sin is hardening our hearts. It is through this process that sin becomes trivial, a light thing to us.

In 1 Kings 16, near the end of the chapter, we have an example of sin becoming trivial in the day of King Ahab. Ahab served as king in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, in that long line of wicked kings after Jeroboam. Not one of the predecessors had deviated from the ways of evil launched into by Jeroboam. For years these kings had practiced evil instead of righteousness in leading the people of the nation. Is it any wonder that Ahab did wickedness "more than all who were before him" (v.30)? Sin had become the usual way of life for all of the leaders of the nation. Verse thirty-one says that he took as wife Jezebel, the daughter of Eth-baal, king of the Sidonians, and that he went to serve and worship Baal in a temple that he had built in Samaria. The Lord's explanation as to how such departure from God could take place is found in the same verse: "as though it had become a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat." Sin had become trivial to him.

Remember that a calloused attitude develops slowly, so that the person is hardened in his feelings, insensitive in his response to those influences designed by God to prick and goad him to do right. The warnings of God mean increasingly little to him as the hardening process proceeds. When sin becomes trivial to one, it usually spreads contagiously so that it is then trivialized by many; in fact, the trivializing of sin becomes almost institutionalized.

I hope this thought scares us to avoid sin. It is not the harmless plaything that we sometimes think it to be. It can paralyze us spiritually and damn us eternally! When our attitude toward the vulgar and irreverent speech so common in our world declines so that we begin viewing it as not so bad after all, we need to wake up. When we start thinking that one's clothing has little to do with his godliness, so that we start experimenting with styles and garments bordering on indecency, we need to wake up. When we start thinking that our children's popularity and acceptance are more important than the positive influence for God that they should exert, then we need to wake up. When we allow the ungodliness and abounding iniquity in the world to dampen our zeal to save the lost and to set examples for good, we need to wake up. When we permit the loose thinking in the world and in the church to drift into our attitude and practice, no longer striving to hold fast in the pattern of sound words set forth in the Scriptures, then we need to wake up. Sin is becoming trivial to us, and the sad thing is that we don't even realize it.

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." Romans 13:11-14

Gossip

By Johnie Edwards

Someone has said, "Gossip is like a blotter – it absorbs a lot of dirt, and gets it all backwards." Webster defines a gossip to mean: "A person who chatters or repeats idle talk and rumors about other."

Gossip wounds. "The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the inner most parts of the belly" (Proverbs 18:8). It can be often seen that the wounds of tale-bearing never heal, Sometimes the damage is so great that it can never be undone.

Gossip separates friends. "He that covers a transgression seeks love; but he that repeats a matter separates very close friends" (Proverbs 17:9). Again, Solomon said, "A whisperer separates chief friends" (Proverbs 16:28). A lot of friendships have been ruined by gossip.

Gossip sows strife and digs up evil. "An ungodly man digs up evil; and in his lips there is a burning fire" (Proverbs 16:27). One who is eager to talk, he who must whisper, will find something to talk about – even if he has to dig it up! His lips burn with a message of gossip. Strife is the result.

Gossip ensnares the soul of the gossiper. "A fool's mouth is his destruction and his lips are the snare of his soul" (Proverbs 18:7). The person who gossips is digging his own grave with his mouth.

Gossip is classed with the worst of evil. It is mentioned with such sins as fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, murder, deceit, malignity, haters of God, et. (Rom. 1:29-30).

Gossip is dangerous. "he that goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flatters with his lips" (Proverbs 20:19). Such is not of a faithful spirit (Proverbs 11:13).

The remedy. "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (Psa. 143:3). The Psalmist was having difficulty in guarding his words. David's weakness is quite common with many today.

Confidence

By Doy Moyer

Confidence in salvation is based upon faith in God's promise, which rests on grace (Rom 4:16). Having the kind of faith that Abraham had means that we fully trust God that He will do what He promised (vv. 20-21). This is the kind of faith that God counts as righteousness (v. 22).

It is not faith in our faith, or faith in our abilities, or faith in all that we have done that gives us the confidence of salvation. If we think this way, we will be overwhelmed by our failures or we will think we deserve what we do not. Instead, God's grace is the foundation. His promises rest on this grace. We trust His promises, and therefore we can know.

Trusting God also means taking Him at His word (cf. Acts 27:25). When He tells us to act, we will act. Loving Him means we will obey. Yet do not forget that true knowledge of salvation can never leave the foundation of grace and promise, and faith undergirds this hope (Heb 11:1).