It Is Written

A weekly publication of the
Junction Highway church of Christ in Kerrville, TX.
Vol. 8 November 1, 2026 No. 44

The "We-All-Sin" Approach

By Terry Wane Benton

In the "we-all-sin" approach to grace, the attitude is that since we all sin, none of us can exclude another sinner from fellowship. But even a casual glance at I Corinthians 5 shows this is not the right approach. Paul, even though he could not claim sinless perfection, said that they should have taken firm measures to deal with the man involved in sexual immorality. He knew more about grace than any of us, knew he was not perfect, and yet he knew enough about sin and the proper relationship to grace to know that God would not automatically cover a man who was not repenting of sin, yet claimed to believe in Jesus and trust in His grace.

Peter, another man who did not claim sinless perfection, still held Simon to a standard that said that Simon's heart was not right because he thought the gift of God could be purchased with money. He wanted the same power the apostles had to lay hands on and impart the Spirit's miraculous power to others. This matter was reserved for the apostles, and he had no part in it (See Acts 8:13f). But since "we all sin," why would Peter single out Simon and tell him he needed to repent? Was Peter being unfair and judgmental? Or is there something wrong with the "we-all-sin" approach?

Paul confronted Peter when Peter acted hypocritically in associating with Jews and Gentiles, showing favoritism in his behavior (See Galatians 2). This would have been a good time for Paul to demonstrate the validity of the "we-all-sin" approach. The fact that he never took that approach should tell us that the approach is not valid.

Some think the "he that is without sin, let him cast the first stone" applies to all cases, but that would immediately cancel out the instructions in I Corinthians 5. What Jesus was referring to was not that no sin should ever be disciplined by other people who also sin from time to time, but that the law of Moses did not allow the death penalty for adultery to be applied without bringing both the man and the woman and without having two or more witnesses. The witnesses were to be willing to cast the first stone; else they would be subject to the death penalty of stoning if they were false witnesses.

Jesus was not saying stoning should never occur since all sinned in some way; who would administer it? Jesus was saying the witnesses should apply the law correctly, because it would backfire on them. Were they aware of this woman's sin because they had spent time with her too and knew just where to find her when they had their minds set on trapping Jesus instead of administering justice under the law? Jesus' words in the case were not designed to make the Spirit-guided words of I Corinthians 5 and II Thessalonians 3 never be practiced.

There is something to be said for the faith that is in Christ, that has a penitent heart, that is always working on the heart to overcome the practice of any sin and will not excuse it but will work with the Spirit to overcome it, versus a brother who openly sins and is not penitent about it. Perhaps he tries to justify his sin by claiming that "all sin," and that he plans to keep his choice of sin as long as others have any sin in their lives. One man is confessing his sins and is determined to use the tools of God to work on overcoming it. He appeals to God's mercy and grace, confessing his sin, and determining to be washed in the blood to sin this way no more. He walks in the Spirit, strengthening his faith and determination to "go and sin no more". This man goes away from the throne of grace justified and renewed in his determination to work against the sin that so easily besets him.

The second man has resigned himself to sin and plans to sin, thinking grace will automatically

cover him. But Scripture warns against “continuing in sin that grace may abound” (Romans 6:1f) and against “turning the grace of God into license” (Jude 4-5). The second man has misused the grace of God not only to deceive himself, but to resign himself to continuing in sin and to extending fellowship to others who plan to continue in sin.

He takes a path that neither Paul nor Peter took. The second man would disobey the instructions to withdraw from a brother who continues in sin (I Corinthians 5), because he has resigned himself to the “we-all-sin” approach. He thinks Paul was wrong and lacked the Spirit's guidance when he gave such instructions. He is now on a path that resents anyone who would withhold or withdraw fellowship from practicing thieves, adulterers, homosexuals, and murderers.

He reasons that “sin is sin” and “we all sin.” So, fellowship should be wide open to all sinners. He would think Paul is the worst sinner of all for giving such instructions, and he will not fellowship Paul or those who hold the same position as Paul. This is an impossible position because if his fellowship were open to all sinners, he should never object to the kind of sinner Paul was in giving instructions for limited fellowship. The “we-all-sin” approach is simply not the position Paul and Peter held regarding fellowship. Instructions about limited fellowship show that the “we-all-sin” approach is not true to God’s word and actually aids and abets sin. Paul said a person must not deceive himself into thinking he can practice sin and still go to heaven.

"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (I Corinthians 6:9-11 NKJV).

The second man has simply deceived himself.

The Family Religion

By Mark White

Oh, we’re members down at First Church because that’s where my Grandparents worshipped when they moved into town many years ago. Why, my Mother and Father were married down there. Our kids all grew up at First, and when our oldest little granddaughter was born, they brought her back to First Church for her dedication. All our friends go there, and we wouldn’t even dream of going any place else to church.”

Doesn’t that sound familiar? Our experience is that if asked, most folks will give you this kind of answer as to why they go to church where they do. Even members of the church of Christ have been known to make such reasons the basis of their decision to work and worship with their present congregation.

Should a person just accept his parents’ religion as his own, without any question whatsoever? Some people sing, “Give me that Ole’ Time Religion – It was good enough for Momma, so it’s good enough for me!” But is this right?

The Bible says, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). And, “He that loves father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me” (Matt. 10:37). It is such a blessing if our family is serving God acceptably, but that is still not the proper reason for our faith. But if what our family believes and practices has no basis in the word of God, we must not follow them into error. Real love for our family will cause us to do right rather than encourage them in what is wrong. Opposing religious error in your own family may be the most difficult thing you will ever do as a Christian. But if you want to go to Heaven, you must stand for what is right, no matter whom you must oppose. Trust God to help you and supply your needs (Phil. 4:13; Mk. 10:29,30).