

~Other Speakers S-Z: Basilea Schlink:

Curiosity is different from being interested in something. Being interested is something good. Curiosity is something bad. Curious people usually look at things and listen to things that are not meant for them. Typically they read letters and notes on other people's desks, that were not meant for their eyes. Or they listen to some-thing not meant for their ears, but told confidentially to someone else. Curious people "poke their noses" into everything and make it difficult for others to live with them. They ruin community life, which is based upon trust, because they insist upon knowing everything that is going on. And they constantly seek to find out things about others. If this yearning to know things is so strong in us, there is something sinful behind it.

Curious people should ask themselves what their motives are. For instance, if they are always curious, it may be their desire for attention. Pretending to be important, they pass on their newly-gained information to others when it is not right, they talk about things in the wrong place, and they destroy the relationship of mutual confidence for the sake of being the centre of attention. If they are only curious about one person or a few people-if a mother secretly reads her daughter's diary or her children's letters about their friendships-then it probably stems from jealousy or the thirst for power. They want to pry into the secrets of others. They are hurt if they do not get to know everything and consequently they ask questions, directly or through others. They want to know everything in order to keep the other person under their control. Certainly justified concern can be one of the motives for such behaviour, but discovering things secretly is never the way to form or maintain a relationship of mutual confidence.

Sometimes mistrust is behind curiosity; or the root may be lack of discipline when confronted with sensual attractions. They are so eager to hear something new or something intimate that they overrun all ethical and moral boundaries to satisfy their curiosity. Due to this lack of discipline curious people are often driven to reading lewd literature or watching bad television programmes. If they happen to see something "by chance", they have to keep watching, just because they think they have to know what is being shown. Without their realizing it, poison can flow into their thoughts and hearts.

Because curiosity is a vice, a sin, curious people often find that God punishes them in the act. For instance, they may hear something that provokes their jealousy and then they react meanly. Or they read something that is not meant for them and do not understand the context. So they draw false conclusions, burden others unnecessarily, and spread rumours.

In all this the curious become guilty. They trespass especially against the seventh commandment. For if I have listened to or read things that do not belong to me, I have become a thief; I have stolen intellectual material, which is often much more important than material possessions. If these possessions are gained dishonestly, this can hurt others more than anything else. If someone is harmed by the curiosity of another, he sometimes finds that what he had guarded as his property is now trampled under foot by others. Curious people, therefore, are thieves, who harm others in very delicate matters, by robbing them of the possessions of their spirit and soul.

This sin is therefore against the seventh commandment. Just like every other sin against our neighbour, it will bring us Gods judgment, if we persist in it. Sin always provokes God's anger, especially when it appears in Christians who know about Jesus' sacrificial death and His redemption and still dare to live in their old sins without fighting against them. If we confront this truth soberly, we will realize that we cannot continue to live with this sin. We have to begin a real battle of faith. So when we are tempted to read shameful literature or do similar things out of curiosity, we must realize that this mania can very quickly lead us into "enemy's territory", especially in our days. Then we would be like a child who goes into a forest without protection in order to see what's there and is then attacked by wild beasts.

Furthermore we must realize that it is Satan who incites us to discover new things and to know and hear what we actually should not. If we give in to our curiosity, we have fallen into his trap and he laughs at us scornfully, because he succeeded in making us sin and become guilty towards others. We must confront curiosity as a sin and not tolerate it any more in our lives. We have to be consistent in avoiding certain places, certain books and other things that our curiosity wants to drive us to. Furthermore, if we looked at or listened to something that was not meant for us, it would be advantageous for us to confess it immediately. That will make us humble and prevent us from trying to satisfy our curiosity so quickly again, because we try to avoid humiliations.

Jesus has come to redeem us from all sin, even from the sin of curiosity. Whoever calls upon Him will be saved. So we must do that and honour Jesus by not persisting in a single sin, not even in this sin which seems so

(You Will Never Be The Same) 09 - Curiosity

small to us, because if we do, we will be disgracing Jesus, who died to free us from our sins.

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