

Scriptures and Doctrine :: How to address SIN

How to address SIN - posted by repenter, on: 2004/8/2 9:30

How can we address the common sins that are so rampant in the church today?

I don't understand how so many people who claim the name of Christ can live the way they do. Most people chalk it up to personal preference and grey areas--but I have a really difficult time seeing that in the Scriptures.

For example, we don't go to beaches all that often (about twice in the last 4 years) and if we do we try to find a fairly isolated area to protect my husband's purity. I also do not wear just a bathing suit, but I have a swimming outfit that I wear over top my bathing suit, because I believe that it is totally immodest to wear what is no more than underwear, in a public setting, if anyone other than my husband can see me. Our friends however go to the beach, the pool, and the hot tub, in mixed gender groups, and they see nothing wrong with it. These same people watch movies like "Kill Bill" and "Fast and Furious" which I understand are absolute filth, and not only do they watch them, they talk about them during fellowship times at church!

I just don't understand how someone who claims to have the Spirit of the Living God residing in their hearts can expose themselves, enjoy themselves, and corrupt themselves over and over again, and have no conviction that these things are wrong!

Is it possible for people who live this way to be saved? Are God's standards so "broad"? I have heard some of these same people share things about the Scriptures in a Bible study that are right on the ball--and yet they don't seem to see verses such as "be holy for I AM holy" and "be simple concerning evil" as applying to their lifestyle--but instead argue that "everyone is at a different stage of their growth," and "God hasn't shown me that is wrong". I don't get it!!! And here, these same people who claim Salvation through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, don't enjoy singing praises to Him, they choose soccer over prayer meeting, they cut down other brothers and sisters in a "joking" way--but constantly bring up old embarrassing stories, even sharing them with all the new young people that join the group--and I just don't understand it. I know that if I were to point out these things, backed by Scripture, I would be argued to the ground, accused of causing disunity, etc. etc. etc. I know, because I have attempted before to bring things up in a general manner, and they are shot to the ground, and I'm labeled as a legalist. So, I eventually stopped talking and stifled my "gift". I'm a prophet in the new testament sense--proclaiming the Truth in black and white--so to speak. I'm also a female which can make it more difficult, but I guess the fact that we're heading back into the environment described above in a few weeks has stirred my heart and I am dreading being back around that again.

So, what do we do, brothers and sisters? How does the common, average disciple share the black and white truth of the Word of God with a generation that has gone completely grey?

Re: How to address SIN - posted by KeithLaMothe, on: 2004/8/2 10:36

This also weighs heavy on my heart. I'm involved in a number of fellowships here on/around the University of Georgia, and I'm around a wide range of evangelical Christians. Some are dead on, in belief and practice, whereas many are quite correct in their beliefs, but their lives seem "crusted over" with varying degrees of worldliness and sin.

Smoking, rock concerts, filthy movies (not porn, just the average theater stuff), immodest dress, idle words, coarse jesting, lukewarmness, etc... I grieve because I see these among professing Christians, and indeed many with very strong senses of Biblical morality in most areas of their lives. I grieve more that confronting them about it (lovingly, with Scripture) might bring charges of legalism and at least a refusal to heed the exhortation... but actually I think they might also respond correctly, I've had some positive results. The questions are how to go about it, who to go to first, when, what to say... the Scriptures, as always, should be our guide.

There seem to be two parts to this: convincing the person that the act in question is in fact sin, and exhorting them to repent of the sin.

Assuming the first part is done, say it's something like fornication or some other sexual immorality:

Matthew 18 (NASB)

15 "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.

16 "But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed.

17 "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

I wonder, what if the church won't play its role in discipline? What if the elders won't confront the unrepentant sinner? I'm inclined to think that in such a situation we are to "come out from among them," painful as it might be. If even the church leadership won't stand up against fornication and the like, how can we call it a house of God?

The harder of the two things would seem to be convincing the people that the acts are actually sin. Here we must diligently study the Scriptures and the arguments on both sides; both that we may be prepared to give a solid case if it is sin, but also to make absolutely sure we're correct in thinking it's sin. One of the worst things that ever seems to happen in living churches is when people start taking personal convictions against things that aren't actually sin (in the general sense) and applying them to everyone else and insisting everyone else obey those convictions. That sort of practice is what has given such credibility to the argument "but that's legalism," because church history is rife with legalists. The Biblical condemnation of this sort of thing:

Matthew 23:4 (KJ21)

For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

(looking at the context, I'm actually not sure if this should be taken as a condemnation of extra-Biblical commands, but I think we can all agree that it's very dangerous to get dogmatic about something that can't be solidly proven from the Scriptures)

Perhaps it would be best to pick the most grievous and Biblically provable sin in your congregation, take it to the elder (or whatever you call your leaders) that is most concerned with obeying God, and plead the Scriptural case that such thing s must be confronted.

But far more important is to pray and to fast and to devote yourself to the Lord... it is He that convicts and changes the hearts of men.

Re: How to address SIN - posted by 5nva (), on: 2004/8/2 12:25

Repenter:

Your post has really hit home with me. I have experienced the same things you mentioned. It has been a serious struggle for me the last three years. Three years ago my family moved away and the move took us away from our house church. We ended up in a small church with a only a few that seemed like they wanted to walk in holiness.

I was accused of the same things, legalism, judging, being critical. God opened the door for me to preach several times and some would not come if I spoke. Needless to say those were the ones who were in my opinion compromising with the world. Needless to say we no longer fellowship there.

I think I have learned some things through all of that though and still am. I know the Lord is trying to teach me patience and long suffering toward other Christians (true or professing). I also think the Lord is teaching me that just because I hold to a very high standard of separation and there are many things I think a Christian should and should not do doesn't mean that all of my opinions can be put on someone else as right or wrong.

Please don't misunderstand me, sin is sin and compromise with this world is sin. I am just working through these issues and questions with the Lord and want His love to abound in my heart. It has been a lonely road and I have had much less to say as God is teaching me these things.

I just try to speak the truth in love when I am faced with this type of situation. It is not always received or at least it does not appear to be. Who knows what the Lord can do with a word spoken through His vessels though. I also do not involve my self in fellowship with others when it is nothing but the world. AS we walk closer to the Lord there will be a greater

separation that comes, it can not be stopped.

The words of AW Tozer "The Saint Must Walk Alone" have really encouraged me. I think there is a post here somewhere with that short message

Anyway, I am glad you posted on this subject and would like to hear from others to learn from their experiences and opinions.

Clinging to Jesus,

Mike

Re: How to address SIN - posted by KeithLaMothe, on: 2004/8/2 13:42

Oh, to address the question in the topic ("how to address sin") :

Sin should be addressed as the enemy, and treated as such. Sin is the most deadly poison in existence. Sin destroys men and rots souls, it must not be tolerated, it must be hated, it must be cast away, even if it means cutting off a hand or plucking out an eye.

Re: How to address SIN - posted by lwpray (), on: 2004/8/2 13:50

THE ONLY SOLUTION THAT will loose us from our sins here under God Almighty's broad, blue sky is the blood of Jesus Christ. He loved me and loosed me from my sins in His own blood. Take the sinner and educate him, but you will just educate the dirt in. Refine it—but it is still there. But when Jesus' blood goes over a soul, he is a free man! You shall know the truth. The truth will lead you to the cross, to the Lamb, and to the blood and to the fountain, and you will be free from your sins. But there must be a moral committal. If there is not, there is no understanding. If there is no understanding, there is no cleansing.

Tozer

Re: How to address SIN - posted by rocklife (), on: 2004/8/2 15:37

Repenter, I too dress that way at Splashtown, I wear a whole outfit to make a statement about modesty. I do believe doing that is a witness of how God wants us to dress. The bible says to be modest. I am thankful I don't have a husband, I can see the problems and the limits on outings that can have. of course, some others may feel just fine going out, I hope they can handle lust and resist temptation. Jesus says lust is the same as adultery.

The whole other issue, an important one, is how to address sin?

Jesus says how to do this, but I will tell you from experience, when you start obeying this, you will lose friends who say they are Christians, but are secretly (or openly) worldly. People who love the things of this world don't like God's ways, God's ways are hard. So many, including American pastors, use God's grace to satisfy the lusts of our evil hearts.

Jesus way to confront sin, this is sin among professing Christians, NOT nonchristians. This is ONLY for professing Christians, is Matthew 18:15-17. This is a hard teaching, and even obedient Christians can have a hard time with this at first. I was very convicted when God revealed this to me last year, and after obedience to it, I lost all my friends who were secretly disobedient and unloving towards God.

Before I get into Matt 18:15, I want to pray. Lord, please open our eyes and ears, please prepare the hearts of those seeking You and want to please You and those who truly love You in word and deed, help us be obedient to Your teachings, Jesus. Our flesh wars against us, please help us be obedient to You, Lord Jesus. Help those who want to know You, seek Your word for answers to our daily lives. Help us live Your way, and help us to be true witnesses of You. Encourage us when people hate us for obeying You. Please help us continue to turn to the Bible for our answers, In Jesus name, Amen.

Prayerfully and wisely use Matthew 18:15, and adapt the principles when needed, don't cast pearls to pigs continually, and different bible versions say this verse differently. Seek God to give you understanding how to apply this. NASB puts it very simply:

Jesus says "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of 2 or 3 witnesses every fact may be confirmed. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector."

Ask God how to use this, I have seen that most situations will not go as far as telling the whole church, even when I have seen it go that far, sometimes the person who brings up the matter is rebuked by a disobedient pastor for being unloving and "judgmental". But other pastors have obeyed this teaching and apply this in the church body. Every situation is different, God will guide you if you obey Him.

Ephesians 5:11 also says that talking about sins openly is better than not talking (paraphrasing).

If you aren't sure your friends are disobedient, find scripture that rebukes them. Use the Bible to rebuke, so it's not you who is speaking and being "judgmental," you are just following God and doing what is right by your conscience. Completely rely on the Bible for all your actions and rebuking, and you will know in your heart that you are just obeying God's word and loving Him more than you love sinful man. Pretending your friends aren't sinning, is probably angering God. If you won't help stop the sin so rampant in church, you are allowing it to continue in your quietness.

I don't know if rebuking about clothing is a battle you want to fight, but if there are other obvious disobediences you know about, and you know the clothing is a symptom that their heart is not right with God, then wisely and prayerfully do what the bible says. If it's just the clothes, perhaps diligent prayer and your example is the best way. Often, my private rebukes have been in letters, it is so hard to talk face to face, but letters have allowed me to prayerfully and completely state my case. I use Scripture for all rebukes, because it is God they are sinning against. When they know sin, then they can repent to whom they are sinning.

Most private rebukes have not brought repentance, but surprisingly, some do quickly repent. Either way, I am following God, following Jesus' teachings is my love for God. That's what the bible and prayer is teaching me. I only want to please God, and God has taught me to rebuke in this way. "Better is open rebuke than hidden love" proverbs 27:5.

When applying this, God has led me to follow it in different ways, not always word-for-word in this way, but the principle is to rebuke gently, privately at first, and with the hope of repentance. If needbe, to not shame our Lord and trample His blood, we will have to go the next step, and that is more openly rebuke those who are disgracing our Lord. Do not expect to win any popularity contests once you start doing these things, but Jesus words will comfort you, like "blessed are you when men hate you and speak evil against you, your reward in heaven is great" (paraphrase). Jesus has been there, He was perfect and most hated hearing what He said.

His glory and honor should be more important than the approval of disobedient children. Thank you, Lord, for promising to be with Your children always!

Re: How to address SIN - posted by dougkristen (), on: 2004/8/2 15:43

This is a vital and important topic. I used to be one of those "lukewarm" Christians living in sin and thinking it was ok to "dance on the line" and act not holy. If you believe something and do not do it, it is sin. If you believe that not watching TV is the right thing to do and God showed you that it is sin, then don't do it. Many other Christians justify what we think is sin. I think this is why the church of today is looking no different than the world because we do what the world does and not what Christ wants us to do.

Grace,
Doug Renz

Re: - posted by KeithLaMothe, on: 2004/8/2 16:30

Quote:
-----I too dress that way at Splashtown, I wear a whole outfit to make a statement about modesty. I do believe doing that is a witness of how God wants us to dress. The bible says to be modest.

Profuse thanks to you both for taking the modesty commands seriously. Lust is destroying untold hundreds of millions (billions, most likely) of men, and while the guilt is primarily upon those men, many an immodestly-dressing woman will have much to answer for on judgment day.

I assure you that those of us men who exhort women to modesty aren't "woman-haters," quite the opposite, it is God-given love and desire, so easily turned astray by depravity, that makes it such a problem.

Quote:
-----I am thankful I don't have a husband, I can see the problems and the limits on outings that can have. of course, some others may feel just fine going out, I hope they can handle lust and resist temptation.

Before God broke me of lust, it seemed essentially impossible to be free of it, but about a year and a half later I actually have a difficult time remembering that many of the males I know are probably enslaved to lust. If a man is still thus enslaved, don't marry him, and even if God has freed him do be very careful about helping him maintain purity (of body, mind, and spirit), but if he's truly free he likely can withstand (by God's grace) the temptations one encounters on the street.

When we go downtown to preach there are hundreds of women dressed absurdly immodestly, but it's never been a purity problem because they seem so much more like animals than ladies that I have no real attraction to them. The serious problems come in church or fellowship groups where I'm around fairly seriously Christian girls who apparently just don't know how the male mind works and such, and thus don't dress with appropriate modesty (never anything scandalous, but still showing midriffs, too much leg, too low a neckline, or too tight and thus showing curves); some of these women are genuinely attractive to me, and the immodest dress combined with my emotional desires can make for some sorely tempting situations.

Now, back to the actual topic :) ...

Well, actually, I don't have much more to say on that because it's mostly been said. Thank you very much for your contributions.

Re: sin - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/8/2 17:47

Lord, help me to answer this with your words and thoughts. Whatever is of flesh- let it fall by the wayside and what ever is of You, please let it minister.

This is an area that I am very very familiar with and aware of. I used to be a personal fitness trainer and trained in the gym 5-6 days a week to be in fitness-competition shape. Consequently, my attire was very minimal. I had rock hard abs, biceps, shoulders and legs- and I wanted to show off my hard work. And yes, at the time I was a professing Christian but my soul was not surrendered fully to Christ. I was living in Christian City with the rest of the Jabezers and Left Behinders. :-)

3 years ago, when the Lord opened my eyes to His truth about living a compromised life by not surrendering 100% of my heart to Him, slowly, bit by bit, the Holy Spirit revealed to me, spoke to my heart about changing the way I was doing things. The way I dressed, the way I spent my time (how much of it was supposed to be focused on Him and not the gym), etc.... But first He started with my heart. He changed things on the inside first. He cleansed the inside of the cup.

This is the key. When you clean the inside of the cup first, then naturally, the holy Spirit will speak to you about the outside. It does not and should not start the other way around. It has to come from the heart and not from a man made rule.

As time goes on, my views on modesty narrows bit by bit. I let the Holy Spirit guide me and I ask and receive His leading on these things. I don't want to make up some rule about clothing just because someone believes it to be right or wrong- because I wouldn't be doing it for the right reason.

In my way of dress, I am a long way from where I was 3 years ago. I try to be aware of what I wear and how it will appear to men. Yet, I am sure that in some conservative religious circles I am not dressed modestly enough. To some, only skirts and dresses are modest. I have to listen to the Lord and heed His directions for me.

My husband helps me in this area. It is hard for me to know what is and what is not going to make a man's head turn. This is a big point I am going to make here. This comes from my husband and what he says all the time to me. He says that because of the way I look that no matter what I wear, men are going to turn their heads. In this case much of the responsibility falls on the man. Will he keep his eyes to himself? Is he changed into the likeness of Christ so that he will immediately know to look the opposite way for his own good or even for the good of his wife? I hope so.

I know that I have a responsibility to do what I can to help alleviate the problem and to be obedient to the Holy spirit. But men must also do their part and never use excuses.

As far as confronting someone about sin- especially in this area of clothing. I can tell you that if anyone would have told me that what I was wearing in the gym or outside of the gym was not "christian". I would have never accepted that. In my compromised mind, I had it all worked out why it was ok and i had many other christians to back up those beliefs. i still loved God and tried to be a good person and went to church and sent my kids to christian school, listened to christian music, etc....

The point is : the Lord Himself had to reveal it to me. My heart had to be changed first. Nothing that a person said to me would have made one difference. If anyone looked down on me or said anything- that would have just made them seem critical and unloving and judgemental. I would have distanced myself or just tried all the more to impress them with my other "christian" traits.

That is why I do not approach anyone about this now. Even though I believe that it is God's will to be more modest, I must pray that the Lord will reveal that Himself to a person. I can be an example of Christlikeness in that area -which speaks louder than words many times- but each person is on their own journey and not all are at the place I am at. I must be patient in prayer and in being an example of His real Life.

As the holy Spirit works and speaks in a believers heart - as the inside of the cup is cleansed- the outside will be also. It will come naturally. There are many in the churches who are far, far from really knowing about living the Surrendered Life- so they will not show the evidence on the outside either.

The key is to share about the Surrendered life. To get to their heart. If you can, by God's grace and power, get to their hearts and show them how to be changed inside- then they, on their own, will change the outside too. If there is no evidence in their "outside cup" of inside change- then probably there hasn't been much change at all in the first place. They are either deceived or living in rebellion (whether knowing it or not). They are living a false christianity, believing a false gospel. This is the root of the problem. If you get to the root of the problem- then good will be done. It is better to try to share the real gospel, real christianity with people than go to them and try to fix the outward problems.

Because Christianity is in a state of apostasy, this will be the norm- and it will be worse as time goes on. The church will look and act like the world.

It begins inside though. The outside issues are only evidences of lack of change in the heart. So it is worthless to go to the outside issues first. You must first get to the inside issues of the heart.

Let your LIFE speak for itself. They can accept or reject that. if our life is speaking of LIFE- then others will want that. If our life is speaking rules for the outside of the cup- but not displaying the cleansed inside of the cup- people will not be drawn to that.

Lastly, I am reminded that I must work out my own salvation with fear and trembling. I have a hard enough time just keeping my own self on the narrow path, without worrying about why and how someone else is not staying on it as well as I am. May I walk humbly before my Lord.

In Him, Chanin

Re: p.s - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2004/8/2 17:57

this thought just came to me as I was thinking about how I used to be one of those "lukewarm" Christians.

At that time, I didn't need someone to come to me to tell me that I was dressed immodest or that I was doing such and such wrong-I needed to know the truth about Christ and His gospel about picking up my cross and following after Him. I needed to have a face to face experience, with fear and trembling, with the living God. I needed to see God for who He really is, not who the rest of Christianity says He is. I needed to come out of Christian City.

That is what happened. He revealed Himself to me in a new and mighty way and everything has changed from the inside out. I moved out of Christian City, rented a place in the wilderness for 3 years to get "re-trained" by God Himself. And I am now on my way back into Christian City for little visits to try to share God's truth. :-)

Re: - posted by KeithLaMothe, on: 2004/8/2 18:19

Quote:

-----This is the key. When you clean the inside of the cup first, then naturally, the Holy Spirit will speak to you about the outside. It does not and should not start the other way around. It has to come from the heart and not from a man made rule.

Critically true, thank you for bringing that up, I hope I was not appearing to be focusing on outside stuff without caring about (and starting with) the inside.

Quote:

-----He says that because of the way I look that no matter what I wear, men are going to turn their heads. In this case much of the responsibility falls on the man. Will he keep his eyes to himself? Is he changed into the likeness of Christ so that he will immediately know to look the opposite way for his own good or even for the good of his wife? I hope so.

As I said, most of the blame is with the men even when the women are immodestly dressed, because the men are the ones yielding to lust. Most of them would probably lust after a nun in full habit if they didn't have anything more tantalizing available. If, as a woman you're consciously trying to not be a stumbling block, you've no blame in the matter if a man lusts after you.

Quote:

-----I know that I have a responsibility to do what I can to help alleviate the problem and to be obedient to the Holy Spirit. But men must also do their part and never use excuses.

Amen.

Quote:

-----As far as confronting someone about sin- especially in this area of clothing. I can tell you that if anyone would have told me that what I was wearing in the gym or outside of the gym was not "Christian". I would have never accepted that.

This is something we have to keep in mind when it comes to things like clothing, since most people seem to have an image of some (or all) Christians as being extremely pharisaical and well practiced in "looking-down-our-noses-and-ridiculing-you-for-whatever-isn't-exactly-like-us." There are a few aspects that make something like clothing different from, say, adultery when it comes to applying passages like Matthew 18:15-17

1) It's definitely a case of "clean the inside and the outside will become clean," because either they don't realize the outside is dirty (their inside is already clean) or they know and are in rebellion (inside is dirty); in the second case rebuking them without addressing the internal will either turn them away (not necessarily your problem, the Gospel does that, but we must be loving) or they will comply externally but not be renewed internally and remain in rebellion. There are Holiness churches with people who have grown up there who are essentially impeccable in regards to externals (even the preacher may not be able to get them on anything), but are utter strangers to the regeneration of the Holy Spirit.

2) In the first case, they may simply not know that whatever-it-is is in fact sin. In fact I'm fairly sure most (maybe all) of the less-than-modestly-dressed women in my church and fellowship group are not truly aware of what God expects when He commands modesty, and what immodesty does to their Brothers and the heathen males (and, nowadays, some of the heathen women). These are not to be rebuked as if they were in rebellion against God, they are to be lovingly taught

from the Bible and educated as to the relevant vulnerabilities of the opposite sex.

Quote:
-----The point is : the Lord Himself had to reveal it to me. My heart had to be changed first. Nothing that a person said to me would have made one difference.

Ultimately, yes, there isn't the slightest thing we can do to get sin (or often even ignorance) out of someone else's life, only God can truly convict and change the heart. Nonetheless, we are commanded to teach and exhort in certain circumstances. All we need be concerned with is obeying God in our own lives, and trust Him to deal with the others, but of course our obedience to Him includes interacting with others, sometimes in a teaching or rebuking way.

Quote:
-----That is why I do not approach anyone about this now.

The direct approach, for various reasons, may be advisable to avoid in many cases. If you're really close to the person and have their trust and confidence, it may work; but otherwise it might be better to get at it indirectly, for instance by being in the same small group or Bible study and going over the relevant verses, or lending them a book like "Every Young Man's Battle" (excellent book for both males and females). Whatever God leads you to do. If there's a rebellion issue (the inside is dirty), obviously that must be dealt with before the outside can be properly cleaned.

Scripture reading, prayer, fasting, devotion to the Lord... let us never be primarily concerned with "changing" someone else to suit our desires, let us be concerned with everyone being changed to suit God's desires, including ourselves.

Re: - posted by ZekeO (), on: 2004/8/4 11:41

Quote:
-----I wonder, what if the church won't play its role in discipline? What if the elders won't confront the unrepentant sinner? Â... If even the church leadership won't stand up against fornication and the like, how can we call it a house of God? Â... Perhaps it would be best to pick the most grievous and Biblically provable sin in your congregation, take it to the elder.

That is probably the only way that correction can come in a general format. The Leaders in the church set the temperature in the congregation, if they are compromising, the congregation will be. So within the church people catch what you have not what you say have.

I do not believe that me as an individual in a local congregation has the authority to bring rebuke/correction to any brother or sister, within the local body. The only conditions that would validate such actions is:

1) I have been delegated shepherding responsibilities for this person, I am their bible study leader, cell group Leader etc. The elders in a body have given me that responsibility to look after a person, and if anyone is a sheep, faithful are the wounds of a friend. So then I have a right other than just being friends with someone to speak into their life. On this point if someone doesn't want to make themselves accountable for their conduct, then how can you speak to them and they receive it.

2) I am an elder within the body. 2 Tim 3:16,17 is addressed to a leader of a church not one of the congregation. As an elder of a church I sit at the gates to the church and watch over what comes in and out. A shepherd checks the condition of his flocks.

Quoting Mathew 18 as a pattern for correction may not apply here, because in the NKJV it has the word 'you'. "Moreover if your brother sins against you." Then take these steps, it implies a sin committed against you as a person. I know in essence they have committed a sin against you by causing you to stumble but the biblical injunction is that they offend you in some way. So it is not in the context of them being unholy in some way, that doesn't really affect you. It is interesting to note that this passage of scripture appears between scriptures on becoming like little children and the unforgiving servant. If someone were in the church a correct heart attitude would be of innocence to the carnality in a certain situation. There is something about the innocence of a child, that when they notice something they are sometimes quite pointed in their comments. There is hardly ever a feeling that they are judging, but certainly an embarrassment on the part of the people whose lives do not reflect a heart after God. Mathew 21:13-16

We had a situation with ladies dress code in our church and the elder's wives addressed the ladies in that regard. They simply did not understand that showing the midriff during worship wasn't edifying for men. Also I don't shop for women's clothes but the styles out there seem to promote the adage the less is more. Its hard, because modesty is one thing but dressing like a middle-aged woman when you're still a teen or twenty year old isn't reasonable either, unless of course you belong to the brethren or a group along those lines.

Quote:

-----I'm inclined to think that in such a situation we are to "come out from among them," painful as it might be.

If you are in a fellowship, trusting that the shepherds over you are seeking God, then you have to believe that they have the desire to be righteous in word as well as in deed. If there is not that belief, get on your bike and find a church where the elders have a heart for him.

Quote:

-----So, what do we do, brothers and sisters? How does the common, average disciple share the black and white truth of the Word of God with a generation that has gone completely grey?

I recall reading an account of Finney walking into a factory and the presence of God coming in so strong that people are cut to the heart. A similar situation occurred with Wigglesworth on a train, where a man told him, that he convicted him of sin. No words shared, but certainly the power of a Holy life was manifested. When the presence of God comes sin cannot stay. Listening to Duncan Campbell talk about the Hebrides certainly gives us hope that God is able to do it and that he is willing to trust man with such an outpouring.

I am now reminded of when I watched the Ravenhill interview and he is talking about William Booth. The comments about Booth barking 'pray', to his helpers seems to be a worthy response to this topic.

Zeke

Re: How to address SIN - posted by Yodi (), on: 2004/8/4 12:38

Hmmm... I don't know exactly what I could contribute to this topic or that I could be of any good encouragement. I will say that many good and true things have been said on "both sides".

I guess I can just be honest with where I'm at and admit that I am battling with heart issues right now. Despite my current struggles, I have for sometime been one of the ones to post "everyone is at a different stage of growth" and "God hasn't shown me that is wrong". It is by no means a justification to falling short. We should always strive to be better, to be more of who God wants us to be. But in this life there will always be a process. We will never be there. There's going to be some heart issue we're battling whether it's obvious, outward, intentional immodesty or hidden, inward jealousy. They're both sins. One may be less of an offense or easier not to get mad about because it's hidden. But it's all the same.

I know for me personally I'm trying to learn to not just get angry and discouraged about other Christians' obvious sins, but also to search my heart and lifestyle for where I fall short as well. It's so much easier to see another's faults. But if the mirror were held up to us, would we come clean? Only if we saw Jesus standing in front of us. We do have a responsibility to care for other Christians and one of the ways that's expressed is through rebuke. It's scary sometimes. It's not always accepted by others. But do we rebuke for a right response? We rebuke because it's what God has asked us to do. And like it was mentioned, only God can change the heart. It's not up to us to change a heart through rebuke or God's Word. We can be faithful to do that, but I think prayer should come right after. Because like it was mentioned already, this stuff is skin deep. Rebuke is an outward thing - prayer affects the inside.

So... my point is... keep being set apart; sanctified. You're all right. These kinds of Christians are becoming more and more extinct. But also remember that no matter how high your standards may be, or how clean and holy you appear on the

e outside, for the rest of our lives we will be battling heart issues. So we're all guilty and all need to ask for forgiveness and repent just the same. Be faithful to share the truth, but don't forget to be open to rebuke and correction yourself.

Re: - posted by repenter, on: 2004/8/5 14:27

Thanks for sharing your words of wisdom!

Based on a couple of the responses I hope that no-one got the impression that I think I'm any better than any other person--I know my own heart and I am prone, so prone to wander, so prone to fulfilling my selfish desires--and I know that before I would ever speak to anyone about anything I would need to be walking above reproach (not "perfectly" as I know this is impossible while we yet live in the flesh), but also not walking around with a plank in my eye while I point out the speck in another's.

When I was a younger Christian I used to try to play the role of "junior" Holy Spirit, and I know that the results of that are not profitable.

Thanks for all your help. I think I have some of the answers I need.

Re: - posted by KeithLaMothe, on: 2004/8/5 19:25

Quote:

-----I hope that no-one got the impression that I think I'm any better than any other person

"There, but for the grace of God, goeth I."

So it is. Every good and perfect gift comes from God, so if any of us live holy it is only to His glory, and not to our own. No room for pride or boasting in oneself. I hope people understand this.

Quote:

-----and I know that before I would ever speak to anyone about anything I would need to be walking above reproach (not "perfectly" as I know this is impossible while we yet live in the flesh)

Depends on your definition of "perfect," as I recall there are at least 3 different words translated as such in the N.T. (right?).

Quote:

-----but also not walking around with a plank in my eye while I point out the speck in another's.

That's pretty important if you're trying to help others deal with their specks. Nonetheless, I think a fairly thorough freedom from the sin in question is required: how guilty do you need to be of something in order to be a hypocrite for telling others not to do it?

Quote:

-----When I was a younger Christian I used to try to play the role of "junior" Holy Spirit, and I know that the results of that are not profitable.

I also have some experience in that field of work, sometimes it helps, sometimes it doesn't. I remember one time I unintentionally rebuked someone for smoking (I said something that came out differently than I intended), he wasn't happy, but in the morning he said he agreed that he should be considering God's will in everything.

Quote:

-----Thanks for all your help. I think I have some of the answers I need.

Pray, seek God, obey Him. Never rebuke (or say anything, for that matter) to satisfy some self-centered desire in you, but only when God commands it. I have something like a motto: "If God doesn't care, neither do I."

Re: - posted by disciplejosh (), on: 2004/8/6 1:54

I'll throw in my two cents...

I think Chanin put her finger on it. The key is getting to the heart, when we are pleading with non-believers and especially as we share with believers. Getting them to see it that the heart of the problem is the problem of the heart.

Remember what Jesus said about all of this...

"For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" Matthew 15:19. Our exterior actions are simply an outward indicator of inward contents.

It's the heart that God is concerned about. If our heart has been changed and is being changed by the divine influence upon the heart, there will be a reflection in the life.

Pray, Pray, Pray. And watch God work...

First in your heart and then in the heart of those you are so grieved over.

Re: - posted by revival9 (), on: 2004/8/15 4:15

These issues bug me, too. They are hard to discuss in most Christian circles. I'm often pegged 'judgmental' and 'legalistic' by other Christians, without opening my mouth, because my clothing is different. I cover my head, don't cut my hair or my daughters' hair, we wear skirts and we avoid public bathing. These are not the most important issues, merely external, but they speak volumes in our culture.

One memorable conversation I had with a local pastor, he asked me what qualities or distinctives we were looking for in a church. I prayed, then said "To worship God in Spirit and in Truth, to experience His Presence, and not be looking at somebody's tattooed rear end sticking out of their jeans."

I got the normal response: "How dare you judge people that way, it's the heart that counts, you're being legalistic", etc. It dawned on me... this pastor, like so many others, is telling me there's something wrong with ME, that I have to conform to THEM.

WHO, I ask, is the legalist?

Re: - posted by KeithLaMothe, on: 2004/8/15 6:47

Quote:

-----WHO, I ask, is the legalist?

Very good point. Goes along with how "Free Speech" advocates will try to kick some of us out of discussion groups or otherwise sanction us because of what we say, or how numerous people say "tolerance" like a battle cry but are way more intolerant of us than we are of them, or how some complain that we're forcing our beliefs on them when they want to force us to put our children in government schools, etc...

I think my version of your request would be "To worship God in Spirit and in Truth, to experience His Presence, and be able to look around the room without seeing bare midriffs, thighs, or cleavage."

But I'm probably a legalist, so don't mind me :)

Re: - posted by dairyfarmer, on: 2004/8/15 9:13

Quote:

-----I think my version of your request would be "To worship God in Spirit and in Truth, to experience His Presence, and be able to look around the room without seeing bare midriffs, thighs, or cleavage."

Amen. Wouldn't that be wonderful?