

The Problem of Sin

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This topic covers such a broad spectrum because every real problem we have is related to sin, so we'll just briefly look at two obvious facts pertaining to the problem of sin. Sin deceives. Sin separates.

Paul opens the book of Galatians stating that he was amazed at how quickly they were being deceived by false teachers distorting the gospel. He says in verse 6, "deserting Him who called you, by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel". In chapter 3 he asks, "O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?" Paul is reminding them that they were saved by faith...not works of the law. The issue at the time this was written had to do with transitioning from the old law to the law of Christ, but the root of the problem Paul warned the Galatians of two millennia ago is as pertinent today as it was then: being deceived.

Paul warns that there is a battle being waged between our flesh and spirit. Striving each day to align our will with God's will is a challenge Christians everywhere face every day. When we yield to temptation, the "sin" is disguised by Satan as something that it is not. Every. Time. "But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren" (James 1:14-16).

Satan will lure us into the "works of the flesh" for the gratification of the flesh. We saw how that played out with the prodigal son. He squandered his estate with loose living. Paul says "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19-21). Again he warns, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap." (Galatians 6:7) We should understand that the law of sowing and reaping is certain. Like the churches of Galatia, we, too often desert Gods will and follow after our own desires.

The number of times that we are warned to "be not deceived" implies the obvious. God knew we were susceptible to do just that! Once deceived, the sin that so easily besets us temporarily satisfies a physical desire that is pleasurable in that moment of time. "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin" (Hebrews 11:24-25). "For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness" (2 Thess. 2:11-12). "For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to

various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another" (Titus 3:3).

Separation is always the result of sin, a natural byproduct of sin. Amos asks "how can two walk together lest they be agreed?" Friendships sometime take different paths because of sin. When we are duped by the devil into believing "another gospel" we become separated from God and often times separated from those with whom we once shared a love for the truth. Isaiah 59:2 says "your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear." God created man to have a walking and talking relationship with Him, but when sin entered, Adam and Eve hid from God. Satan's power and ability to deceive and draw us away from God creates a state of existence that will cost us our soul if left unresolved. We still try to hide our sin... we can't hide sin from God! Sin is still destroying us. The law of sin and death/separation is still operative.

Unfortunately this article has not been an upbeat or encouraging message, however, there is an upside: there is hope. Paul shares with us a promise that gives joy beyond measure.... "But God demonstrates His own love for us, in that while we were yet sinners (separated from Him), Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). John tells us how to regain togetherness, "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin." We choose daily to serve the flesh or the Spirit. Triumph over sin requires each individual practicing the fruit of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" and Gal. 6: 7-8 "...but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary."