

Sunday, March 6, 2022

## **CLOSER TO GOD (8)**

### **My Attitude Toward Sin (1)**

#### **Improper Attitudes**

In our examination of drawing closer to God, our theme for 2022, we have been addressing sin – that which hinders our closeness to God. Thus far we have considered what sin is – missing the mark, and last week we noted the wisdom of this world in contrast to God. Today, as we conclude our consideration of sin, we want to examine our attitude toward sin. This will transition into our next section – addressing sin.

There are many different ways that one can view sin, here we want to consider some of these. This is a lesson about attitudes. Attitudes usually determine actions. If our attitude is right, it will tend to being right. If our attitude is wrong, it will tend toward error. In this lesson I want to address some IMPROPER attitudes toward sin. In our next lesson we will notice some proper attitudes toward sin!

#### **I. *We can deny it –***

- a. Many in the world today deny the reality of sin. Atheism, humanism, many modernists, and others deny that sin is real. They understand that if there is no God (or no personally involved God) then sin is not a real thing. Of course, denying sin does not change the fact that we are dealing with evil and wicked behaviors, not matter what you call it.
- b. Even among believers some can deny sin – whether that they are sinners OR specific sins. I have known some who believe they are living perfect lives right now. Consider 1 John 1:8-10 which notes that if we deny sin, we make Him a liar. NOTE: This needs clarification as it is NOT saying we HAVE TO sin, or at any given moment we are in sin, but it is a denial that we have sinned or are capable of sinning
- c. As Christians, we must not forget the reality of sin. It is why the world is in the shape it is in. We defined and identified different types of sins (in 3 broad categories) previously (omission, commission and doubt). 1 John 3:4 tells us sin is lawlessness (acting without law).
- d. As Christians, we must believe:
  - i. Satan is real – 1 Peter 5:8. The names Satan and devil combined are found some 90 times in the Bible. 1 John 3:8 tells us, “He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning.”
  - ii. Our conscience is real – Romans 14:22-23, 1 Timothy 1:5 – Paul served with a pure conscience; 1 Timothy 4:2 speaks of one’s conscience being seared, Titus 1:5 speaks of those with a defiled conscience, 1 Peter 3:16, we live with a good conscience so that when they defame us, they will be put to shame, etc.
  - iii. The cross is real – 1 Corinthians 1:17-18 – a message of foolishness to the lost, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. Galatians 1:3-4, Romans 5:6-8, etc.
  - iv. The condition of this world is broken and filled with evil – 1 John 5:19 – it lies under the sway of Satan.
  - v. ALL of these beliefs imply the reality of sin. We CANNOT deny sin and believe the Bible.

#### **II. *We can mock it –***

- a. Proverbs 14:9, *Fools mock at sin, But among the upright there is favor.* Proverbs 10:23, *To do evil is like sport to a fool, But a man of understanding has wisdom,* etc.  
Jude 17-18 speaks of the apostles, *how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts.*  
2 Peter 3:3-4 speaks of scoffers coming who walk in lusts defying God because He has not returned yet.

- b. For many today, sin is a joke or something to be made fun of. Comedians often trivialize sinful behavior. Many today proudly and openly taunt their sinful conduct. Our entertainment industry mocks at sin by normalizing sinful behavior (fornication, adultery and divorce are seen as the norm, homosexuality is presented as normal behavior – and often, in television they are the smartest, funniest, and most honorable characters; abortion is just another option to the unwanted pregnancy, the comical ads and regularly imbibing in alcohol while ignoring its consequences, etc.) and belittling godly conduct. Some make light of the reality of hell – boasting of looking forward to going there (or so they think).
- c. Sin is NO joking matter – it has eternal consequences.

III. ***We can minimize it –***

- a. Far too many today, rather than calling sin what it really is, make light of it in different ways.
  - i. They redefine it – renaming something doesn't change what it is.
    - 1. Abraham Lincoln (and others) is quoted as asking, "IF you call a sheep's tail a leg, how many legs will it have?" The prompt answer was usually "five", to which Lincoln noted they were wrong. A sheep only has 4 legs. Calling a tail a leg does not make it so. Renaming arsenic to cinnamon will not change the fact that it is still poison and will kill you if ingested!
    - 2. That is what many do with sin – they redefine the word and then claim the Bible does not condemn their behavior – e.g. instead of calling it sin, they call it a mistake, a bad decision or a poor choice.
    - 3. Our society has redefined marriage, gender, roles in the home, morality and even truth. Often, this is to soften or dismiss the Bible's definition of these words to justify sinful conduct and STILL profess godliness.
    - 4. Brethren do this too: E.g., MDR – Matthew 19:8-9, fellowship – to include those practicing or teaching error, etc.
  - ii. They refuse to take responsibility for it –
    - 1. Sin is always viewed someone else's fault - they were born that way, their environment made them the way they are, or someone else was responsible for circumstances that provoked them to sin. While not making light of the fact that such things can factor into what we become – it does NOT take responsibility away from you. **Sin is still sin!** And we still have control over how we deal with it.
    - 2. Ezekiel 18:20, the soul who sins shall die.
    - 3. An interesting example of this was the Jewish leaders accepting responsibility for Jesus' death – consider: Matthew 27:24, 25, THEN Acts 5:28.  
How many today refuse to accept their own responsibility for their sins?
  - iii. They ignore its effects –
    - 1. Sin has consequences – yet some ignore this or think they are immune.
    - 2. Far too many have been desensitized to certain sins because they are around it all the time – our constant pursuit of entertainment, who we associate with AND the choices we make can contribute to this.
    - 3. We hear profanity in the media and think it's no big deal. We see constant sexual immorality and dismiss it as being a portrayal of the world. Some argue about language – "I hear it all the time at school or work, so what does it matter if it is in the movies I watch?" There is a BIG difference – you cannot always control what you hear at school or in the world, but you CAN control what you bring into your homes and CHOOSE to watch and listen to.
    - 4. Consider Proverbs 6:27 says, "*Can a man take fire into his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?*" James 3:5 warns of a great fire kindled by a spark.
  - iv. They soften it -

1. This is a problem today, especially in congregations that refuse to take a firm stand on moral and doctrinal issues. It is tied to the consequences of the previous point – ignoring sin.
2. Many want to be silent about issues that divide brethren or matters of moral living. That is NOT true unity, especially if God cares about those issues.
3. 2 Timothy 4 2-4 – Paul was clear to Timothy that he was preach the word, when convenient and when not convenient.
4. Israel rejected the true prophets because they wanted someone to speak to them, “smooth things” – Isaiah 30:8-11
- v. We do no one a favor when we minimize sin. If the lost come into our midst and all we preach is fluff, pleasant topics or how to deal with their social issues, they may leave feeling good, but they are JUST AS LOST as when they came in!

IV. **We can try and hide from it –**

- a. Many today try to hide their sins from God, others and even themselves. And while they MAY succeed in this life, it will not change the fact that they are still sinners.
- b. David tried to hide his sins – God exposed him – 2 Samuel 12
- c. Jonah tried to run away from God – but He knew where he was all the time – Jonah
- d. Numbers 32:24 notes, “*Your sin will find you out*” – concerning the tribes settling east of the Jordan;
- e. 1 Timothy 5:24, *Some men’s sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later.* Galatians 6:7 warns what a man sows, that he will reap.
- f. If you have sin in your life, you need to face it and repent of it NOW!

V. **We can choose it over God –**

- a. When it comes to sin, some just outright dismiss or ignore it. They know it’s there and even that they are in sin, but they don’t care. The Bible is there and ample evidence for God is present in the world, but they are simply not interested to pursue what that means. Far too many have bought into the teachings of their esteemed professors, amoral entertainment, or online anti-God philosophy with no intention of weighing ALL the evidence. You can go to a college campus and interview students and even faculty and you will find that many have not even opened a Bible, much less truly studied and considered it. Their view of creation is one sided (much like their views of morality). They do NOT want it taught as an alternative. Thus, they are NOT open to honest discussion and debate about origins and the moral condition of the world. It’s, “You either believe like me, or we are going to cancel you.” This is willful sin.
- b. Far too many today simply say, “I don’t care what God’s word says, I’m going to live like I want anyways.” This is the attitude of rebellion and selfishness.
- c. Consider Felix – Acts 24:25, he trembled at the message of Paul but sent him away.
- d. The hardened soil – Luke 8:12, the word is sown, but the devil comes and immediately takes it away lest they believe and respond.
- e. The rich, young ruler – Luke 18:23, when what Jesus told him conflicted with what he wanted to do, he went away sorrowful because he was very rich. His wealth meant more to him than securing eternal life.
- f. How many today simply choose to keep living in sin because they are unwilling to change – 2 Peter 2:14 speaks of those who have “*eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin.*” And it is not about being impossible to stop, but they are unwilling to stop and to put forth the effort to break their bondage to whatever sin it is. IOW, it is easier to continue to live in spiritual squalor, in spite of its misery, than to do the hard work required to really change.

These are some improper attitudes toward sin. Others could be added to these, but this is enough to see where sin can lead if our attitude is not right. In our next lesson we want to consider proper attitudes toward sin. This will then lead to a discussion of how to take care of our sins. So, what is your attitude toward sin? Thin about it!