

Sunday, March 13, 2022

CLOSER TO GOD (9)

My Attitude Toward Sin (2)

Proper Attitudes

Last week, as we continue to discuss sin as it separates us from God, we noted some improper attitudes toward sin – denying sin, mocking sin, minimizing sin, trying to hide it and ultimately just choosing it over God (rebellion). Today, we want to focus on the other side of this proper attitudes toward sin.

I. We can admit it

- a. This is where properly addressing sin must begin.
- b. First, as alluded to last week – we must admit that we ARE sinners – Romans 3:9, 23, 1 John 1:8-10. This will stem from an appreciation of what sin is and what it does to us.
- c. But there is also the personal acknowledgment of sins I am guilty of.
 - i. Many of the attitudes we addressed last week involved refusing to admit and take responsibility for sins.
 - ii. Christians, when we sin, WILL humbly and frankly admit our sins
 - iii. Consider David, after his adulterous sin which was the product of uncontrolled lust, and its consequences – when he was finally confronted by Nathan – he admitted his sin without excuse. 2 Samuel 12:13, “I have sinned against the Lord.” Psalm 51, a penitential psalm likely tied to these sins finds David’s contrite heart – notice how he doesn’t blame anyone else for his sins – just admits it to God and Nathan – Psalm 51:1-4. Notice the first-person pronouns in that text.
 - iv. Consider Paul, even though he was restored to God, he never forgot what he was – 1 Timothy 1:15 – Paul called himself chiefest of sinners; and in spite of the great authority, he received – he still admitted he was unworthy – 1 Corinthians 15:9.
 - v. You learn in these 2 examples, what it means to PROPERLY admit your sins.
- d. Confess your sins to God – 1 John 1:9 – confessing our sins is crucial to God’s forgiveness (and often the forgiveness of others as well). It is admitting your sins to Him – and realize that you CANNOT hide from Him ever.
- e. Confess your trespasses to one another - James 5:16. Something that is also hard to do, but it will help you deal with your sins. Matthew 5:23-24 – when you go to God in prayer and remember your sins against others – reconcile first.

II. We can hate it –

- a. What is your attitude toward sin?
 - i. Do you consider the cost of sin – what God demanded for true forgiveness? What He demanded as a substitute under the Old Law (always the shedding of blood, and even then, it was inadequate (Hebrews 10:1-4)?
 - ii. Do you consider the sufferings we face in the world because of it, etc.?
 - iii. Also consider whatever personal damage you may be experiencing because of sin – whether specific consequences (broken relationships, physical and material damage, emotional trauma, etc.) or even habitual or addictive tendencies because it is so engrained in you. Paul in Romans 7:24 described himself as a wretched man because of sin in his life.
 - iv. Understand that Satan is seeking to control you – 1 Peter 5:8, 1 John 5:19 – the whole world lies under his sway. 2 Timothy 2:26 speaks of those who have been taken captive by the snare of the devil.
- b. A key to properly addressing sin is to despise it for what it is.

- i. One reason many struggle with sin so much is because they do not despise it ENOUGH. They know its wrong and may even detest it, but NOT enough to quit their sinful behaviors.
- ii. We need to despise Satan vehemently. Declare war on him.
- iii. Consider that God (whom we are to imitate) hates sin – Proverbs 6:16-19 – a list of 7 things God hates; Proverbs 3:32, the perverse person is an abomination to Him. Proverbs 15:9, The way of the wicked is an abomination to Him, etc.
- iv. Consider how we too must hate sin:
 - 1. Proverbs 8:13, *The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate.*
 - 2. Psalm 97:10, *You who love the Lord, hate evil!*
 - 3. Amos 5:15, a call of repentance to Israel. They were to hate evil and love good.
 - 4. Romans 12:9 – Abhor what is evil, cling to what is good.
 - 5. Psalm 119:104 - *Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way.*
- v. Understand that hating sin is different than hating the sinner. We are to love all mankind, with the desire to help deliver them. Jude 22-23 – we strive to snatch others out of the fire, hating even the garments defiled by the flesh. 2 Corinthians 5:11 – knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men. Romans 5:8 – God and Jesus did!

III. We can expose it –

- a. If sin is wrong, we need to acknowledge that, condemn and even expose it.
- b. God did – Romans 8:3 notes that God condemned sin in the flesh. We see this throughout scripture in the way He responded to sin – starting with Adam and Eve as they were cast out of the garden – Genesis 3:22-24
- c. Jesus often exposed sin as He addressed the hypocrisy of the religious leaders. Matthew 23 finds Him calling them hypocrites 7 times. Matthew 15:3-9 is another example where He exposes their corruption of God’s laws to bind their own traditions.
- d. Ephesians 5:11 – we are to have no fellowship with works of darkness, but rather to expose them.
- e. True gospel preaching will expose sin – 2 Timothy 4:2-4. John the Baptist exposed sins (Matthew 3:7-8, 14:1-12 which resulted in him being put to death). The prophets exposed sin and often with severe consequences; Paul exposed sins, including that of Peter when he was sinning (Galatians 2:11ff).
- f. We ought to be willing to publicly let it be known that we are opposed to sin. Often, both by word and deed, when we do this, it silences those determined to live in sin, especially around us.

IV. We can resist it

- a. To resist something is to struggle against it. To take whatever steps might be necessary to prevent it from happening. The word is associated with opposing and even setting yourself against someone or something.
- b. Clearly, we need to take a stand against sin to keep it from entering our life.
 - i. James 4:7 – resist the devil and he will flee from you. Also 1 Peter 5:8-9.
 - ii. Jesus gives us an example of resisting Satan when He faced temptations. Luke 4:1-13 finds Jesus answering the devil with scripture. Scripture is a powerful tool in resisting sin (but we have to be willing to listen to it).
- c. When it comes to sin, what measures are we willing to take to prevent it from taking hold of our lives?
 - i. It means to fight or take measures to prevent it from happening.
 - 1. Ephesians 6:10ff speaks of putting on the whole armor of God so that you are prepared to fight against the devil and his forces.
 - 2. Jesus spoke of cutting off your right hand or plucking out your eye – Matthew 5:29-30. NOTE: Jesus is not teaching mutilation, but He is saying to take whatever extreme measures are necessary to prevent sin from invading your life.

3. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 speaks of our spiritual weapons which are utilized to the point that we even bring our thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

ii. Resisting sin might mean:

1. Taking physical action against something that is a temptation - cancelling that subscription, turning off the television or radio, putting filters in place on your computer, avoiding going to certain places, or even severing friendships that are drawing you away from God.
2. Quitting that job or hobby that is hindering complete service to God.
3. It might just be that stubborn mindset where you are determined to stand your ground for what is right. Think again about Jesus who said, "Get behind Me Satan" (Matthew 16:23, Luke 4:8)

V. **We can avoid it –**

- a. Like resisting sin, this is taking measures to make sure sin cannot come into your life. This is about being aware of its presence and where it has the strongest influence in your life and staying away from it.
- b. 2 Timothy 2:22 - Be like Timothy – flee youthful lusts
- c. Be like Joseph who ran away from the temptation – Genesis 39, esp. vs. 12. He ran away from the circumstance.
- d. 1 Thessalonians 5:22 – abstain from every form (kind) of evil.
- e. Proverbs 3:7 – Fear the Lord and depart from evil.
- f. This can be a challenge today, and while you may not be able to avoid every circumstance, often there are many circumstances where we CAN take measures to avoid sin and temptation.

VI. **We can overcome it –**

- a. The fact that sin is present around us, and that Satan will try and cause us to sin, often with some success, ought to move us to resolve that we are going to defeat sin when it rears its head in our lives and around it.
- b. Sin shall have no dominion – Romans 6:1-6 reminds us that when we obeyed the gospel, we were declaring that we were NOT going to continue in sin. Paul develops that and in Romans 6:14 he says plainly, "*Sin shall no longer have dominion over you.*" 1 John 3:6-9 notes that we cannot sin and be pleasing to God.
- c. Genesis 4:4-7 when Cain's offering was rejected by the LORD, He told him that when sin lies at the door that you must rule over it.
- d. 1 John 4:4 speaks of us overcoming those of the world (who have the spirit of antichrist).
- e. 1 John 5:4-5 – whoever is born of God overcomes the world, through faith.
- f. Romans 12:21 – do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.
- g. And recall that in Revelation 2 & 7, the 7 churches were to overcome whatever obstacles came their way to receive the blessings of God – most associated with eternal life.

VII. **We can let God remove it –** clearly this is our goal when we are faced with sin. If we find that we have sinned, we MUST have it taken care of. Whether that means obeying the gospel (Acts 22:16) or overcoming sins AS a Christian (1 John 1:9). We will address this next to remind us of what God has done to make access to Him possible.

And thus we can see some proper attitudes toward sin. Again, I am certain others could be added to these, but we see here enough to understand that if our heart is right, we are going to properly deal with our sins. As long as this world stands we will not be able to rid IT of sin. But we can control how we deal with OUR sins. What about you? And we MUST not forget that our eternal destiny depends on it. What is your attitude toward sin?