

- I. How we live identifies what we are serving and who our father is.
- A. John 8:37-47 . . . I know that you are Abraham's descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. [38] I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father." [39] They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham. [40] But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. [41] You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God." [42] Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. [43] Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. [44] You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. [45] But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. [46] Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? [47] He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God."
- B. Prayer
- II. Our thoughts, desires, words, and deeds identify who we are serving or who our father is
- A. John 8:37-39 . . . I know that you are Abraham's descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. [38] I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father." [39] They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham.
1. There are three principles, or what we could call biblical truths in these three verses.
  2. First, there is value in having the right heritage (*being a descendant of Abraham*) or having a religious upbringing or being a regular

church attendee, but of far greater value is believing that God has and continues to speak, that the Holy Scriptures reveal the ways of God and His will for daily living, that what God says is true, and that to gain this far greater value we must live according to what God says in all our relationships and in the daily circumstances of life.

- a. Paul states this same truth, in detail, in Romans 2:17-29.
  - b. The problem with many of us is not that we don't read the Bible, its that we don't use the Bible to help us gain a good understanding of God and His ways, and to expose the evil in our hearts, and to teach us how to live a godly, God-pleasing life. And because these Jews were not using the Bible in this way, they could read it and still seek to kill Jesus.
3. Second, our thoughts, words, and deeds reveal who we are serving, who we are imitating, and who has the most influence over how we live. In other words, our lives reveal whether we are serving God or the devil. So if you want to know who you are serving – at any given moment – examine your thoughts, words, and deeds in the light of God's word and the life of Jesus Christ.
  4. Third, if you claim to belong to God, that is, if you claim to be born again and that God's life and nature are in you, then live as one who is born again and has the life and nature of God within.

B. John 8:40-42 . . . But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. [41] You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God." [42] Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.

1. Though He uses different words, Jesus restates the fact that in spite of their claim to be good Jews in good standing with God, the proof that they were not in good standing with God was the fact that they were trying to kill Him, something Abraham – who was in good standing with God – would have never done.
2. Then Jesus affirms that their wanting to kill Him verified that they did not belong to God but rather the devil. For if God was truly their Father, they would recognize Jesus as coming from God and as speaking the words of God. And as a result of recognizing who Jesus was, they would love Him – and out of love for Him they would listen to His words and make an honest effort to live according to them.

- C. John 8:43-44a . . . [*Jesus asks*] Why do you not understand what I am saying? [*Then He answers His own question.*] It is because you cannot hear My word. [44] [*And you cannot hear My word because*] You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father.
1. In other words, they preferred, they liked, they even yearned for what the devil was offering them more than they preferred or liked or yearned for what God was offering and wanting them to do.
  2. If we take the principles in these verses and apply them to us – as Christians, then we can say with certainty that –
    - a. When we sin, we push God away and treat Him as if He is unworthy of our obedience and love.
    - b. When we sin, we dull our hearing or even block our ears to His voice – at least in the area of our wilful sin.
    - c. When we sin, we harden our heart to His word and turn our back on His will.
    - d. When we sin, we step off the narrow path and walk on the broad way of destruction.
    - e. And when we sin, we make the world our friend, and we serve the will of the devil.
  3. In other words, we do not JUST commit a particular sin – as if that is all we have done. Every sin we commit is rebellion against God, and it is a move away from God, and it is the degradation of our character, and it is a move toward the devil and the world.
  4. Therefore, the more we willfully sin and the longer we practice specific sins, the greater the distance between God and us, the duller our hearing, the harder our hearts, the more we live like the world, the more victories we give the devil in his war against God, and the more we dishonor God and His reputation in the eyes of the world.
- D. John 8:44b-45 . . . He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. [45] But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.
1. It is one thing to know that the sin the devil entices us to commit is forbidden by God and that we are not supposed to do it. However, it is quit another thing to understand and believe that every sin the devil offers carries with it some form of destruction and death camouflaged in some form of pleasure or power or possessions or fame or riches or something else that makes us feel good while being destroyed – often slowly and incrementally, but occasionally instantly.

2. Now let me ask you, do you really believe that in contrast to God – who is pure light, the devil is pure darkness, which means there is nothing good in him?
  - a. Are you convinced that in spite of what he wants you to believe, the devil is not your friend?
    - (1) You see, what he is selling or offering or tempting you to do may be exciting, pleasurable, and gratifying. It may make you rich, famous, or powerful. It may dull your pain, calm your fears, create a sense of security, and give you hope for a better life. But none of it is good for you.
    - (2) The reality is, everything the devil says and does is intended to make your life worse – whether slowly and incrementally, or all at once.
  - b. Think about this. Just as the devil wanted to kill Jesus, he wants to kill you.
    - (1) Just as the devil’s temptations of Jesus were intended to keep Jesus from pleasing God and receiving the rewards of a God-pleasing life, so his temptations of you are intended to keep you from pleasing God and receiving the rewards of a God-pleasing life.
    - (2) Just as the devil’s efforts with the Jewish religious leaders were intended to get them to be pride-filled, self-serving, power-hungry, and attention-seeking hypocrites, so he wants the same for you.
    - (3) And just as he worked hard at getting Judaism to be a watered down, spiritual weak, God-dishonoring religion, so he is working just as hard to turn Christianity into a watered down, spiritually weak, God-dishonoring religion.
3. If you understand this, then it becomes totally irrational and self-delusional to think that any sin you could commit is good for you or that it can bring you to a good end.
4. So why are we so easily tempted to sin? I think the first and foremost reason is the same reason Eve sinned – we do not trust God completely – and we do not trust God completely because we do not believe He is perfectly and always good.
5. Beyond that, we are easily tempted because we are foolish, and we are lazy in our thinking and in our daily preparation and vigilance against temptation. And we are easily tempted because we are not honest with ourselves about ourselves. And beyond that, we are prideful and selfish. Yet what a price we pay for our foolishness.

6. Jesus' final statement in these 2 verses is insightful. He said, "But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me." In other words, to whatever degree we choose sin and the way of the world over God and His righteousness, to that degree we consider God untrustworthy and His truth unreliable. And so we reject His truth for what we think is a better way.
- E. Then Jesus said, and I will paraphrase vs 46-47, "[*Even though you are condemning me to death as if I were a criminal*] which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? [47] [*Here is the answer.*] He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God."
1. John presented this same truth in his first epistle. And so we read in 1 John 4:5-6, "They (*the false spirits and misleading teachers*) are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them. [6] We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.
  2. And this is why evangelism is so challenging.

### III. Does any sin stand alone?

- A. I am going to take the rest of our teaching time to talk some more about these words from Jesus, "Everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin." And I want to talk about this some more because the idea of a Christian being a slave of sin is often misunderstood or misrepresented.
1. When it comes to single acts of deliberate sin, many Christians think and speak as if their sin is confined to whatever sin is identified as having been committed.
    - a. For example, if they lied, they think the only sin committed was the sin of telling a lie. And if they were selfish or said something mean, they think the only sin committed was the single act of selfishness or a few unkind words.
  2. And when it comes to the ongoing practice of sin, many Christians think and speak as if the last time they sinned should be treated as a single incident, rather than one more sin in a long string of sinful incidents.
    - a. For example, it is common to hear someone who has committed the same sin again for the tenth or twentieth time, say, "Why are you so angry, I just forgot?" or "You mean just because I lied yesterday you're not going to trust me?"

- b. The problem here is that we want to treat our sin as if it is confined to a single thought or act, or as if the last time we committed an often repeated sin, it wasn't bad enough to deserve the response received from the one we sinned against – again.
- B. My purpose in talking about this is to give you a more accurate picture of the evil surrounding any single act of sin. And my purpose for that is to help you see the truth in Jesus' words that when we commit sin we are a slave of sin. And to do this, I will use David's sin of adultery and murder as an example.
  - 1. We talk about David's sin of adultery with Bathsheba as if his sin was only adultery. But let's go further in our thinking.
    - a. One evening, David was walking on his roof, and in looking around he saw a woman taking a bath. Instead of turning away, he continued to look in order to see if she was beautiful enough to be sensually appealing. And upon deeming her sufficiently appealing, he began looking at this woman – who was not his wife – in a way that was to be reserved for his wife – or in his case, his seven wives.
      - (1) Now consider, if David was that prone to look and lust, it is probable he entertained lustful thoughts on a recurring basis before ever seeing Bathsheba. And if this is true, he was certainly not guarding his thoughts so as to think on the things that are pure.
      - (2) Beyond that, David looked at Bathsheba to see if lusting for her would be worth it. And upon finding her worth his lust, he decided he wanted Bathsheba.
    - b. So David sent for her, even though he was married and even though he knew she was married. And according to the way the story is told, it appears that his intent in sending for her was to have sex with her. In other words, his adultery was premeditated.
      - (1) Now keep thinking with me – his premeditation and ultimate act of adultery was fed by a longing for what wasn't his,
      - (2) and it was fed by selfishness – for he did not send for her for her sake, or for the sake of his wives, or for the sake of the nation, and certainly not for the sake of God. He did this solely for his own sake – and that is selfishness.
      - (3) In addition, his adultery was fed by discontentment – for he was not content with his seven wives. And discontentment is fed by ungratefulness toward God. Discontentment is the

result of being dissatisfied with what God has or would give us. And we know from Romans 1 that this kind of ungratefulness toward God is a great evil.

- c. My point here is that David's adultery was not an act that stood alone, as if his only sin was adultery. He sinned in various other ways in order to get to the place where he committed adultery.
- d. But it did not end there, for David wanted a good reputation with the people, and to keep that reputation intact, he tried to make it look like Bathsheba was pregnant from her husband's doing instead of his doing. This was the sin of deceit and the sin of wanting the praises of men more than the praises of God.
- e. When David's planned deceit did not work, he took the next step. He had Bathsheba's husband murdered in a way that made it look as if he died a valiant warrior's death.
- f. And so to cover up his sin of adultery, David concocted a deceitful and unjust plan to murder a man who had done him no wrong.
- g. But there is more. For you see, David pulled Joab into his sin of deceit, his coverup, and his premeditated act of murder.

#### IV. Conclusion

- A. Once again, my point is that David's sin of adultery was not a single sin that stood by itself. Yes, it was only committed once, but to commit that one sin once, he sinned in a number of ways leading up to it, surrounding it, following it, and especially in trying to cover it up.
- B. When we will look at sin from this broader, fuller perspective, it becomes much easier to understand why Jesus says that everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin – for to commit even a single sin, we most often end up committing a number of additional sins. And imagine how much accompanying sin is committed when we knowingly perpetuate or carelessly allow the practice of any sin in our life.
- C. Now it is possible you have never thought about your sin in this way. And if that is true, that is truly sad. But it can be remedied. You can begin honestly examining the larger circle of sins surrounding any act of a single sin or any practice of an ongoing sin. And if you will, you will see how insidious and invasive and destructive sin is in your life. And if love for God does not deter you from sinning, maybe seeing the evil extent of sin and its destructive effects will deter you.