

Family Legacy Institute

Tools For Families Building Godly Legacies

Developing A Biblical Sexual Worldview Chapter VIII

The Pursuit of Holiness

A Bible Study for *Mature* Christ-followers

~by Dr. John P. Splinter

It's a very good thing that God included the full stories of Moses, David and Paul in scripture, because each committed sins of *irretrievable* damage. All three were murderers. How does one make amends to the grieving loved ones of a dead man? And David's adultery doubled his legal culpability before God. Fortunately for David (and us), that's not how God handles our sin. The writer of Psalm 130 captured the essence of God's mercy when he wrote, "*If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness....*" (Ps. 130:3-4). The notion of God offering forgiveness to sinners is a basic tenet of faith in Christ.

However, it's one thing to accept God's forgiveness for sins we've committed against him. It's another thing to forgive **oneself** for having committed sin that wounded the lives of others. And, as Simon Wiesenthal observed in his book, *The Sunflower*,¹ it's yet another thing to forgive a second party for sin they committed against a third party ~ as in a wife forgiving her husband for the devastation their children suffered through his use of porn. In the larger discussion of forgiveness, *someone's damaged life remains damaged*. It's one thing for God to forgive my sin against Him. But by what agency is He able to forgive my sin against my wife, or my children? Shouldn't *they* be the ones offering forgiveness? How can He forgive me for wounding them?

The Good News is that: **a)** the records of sins forgiven, of Moses, David, and Paul, give us hope for *our* forgiveness, even in the depths of our sin; **b)** the shed blood of Jesus Christ is efficacious for *all* sin ~ no matter by whom or to whom. Again, God doesn't reckon sin by determining who sinned against whom. It's *all* sin, and it *all* needs washing away; and **c)** Jesus Christ is able to heal *all* wounds from *all* sources. However, we have a responsibility to repent, and without our repentance and evidence of a changed life, there is reason to be concerned about our eternal destiny. Let's use this four-point outline as a step-by step Bible study dealing with God's Holiness.

A. The Record of Sins Forgiven

We've all heard card-tricksters say, "Pick a card, any card." For purposes of this Bible study, let's change it to "Name a sin, any sin." Some of the most ugly sins revolve around the general

theme of sexuality. Here are a few: Looking at pornography; masturbating thereafter as one fantasizes; bestiality; child rape; prostitution; homosexuality; trafficking; adultery. Yeuch! Yet this is our culture today. It would be nice to close our eyes and ignore it, pretending it doesn't affect us. But it does exist. As was demonstrated in earlier chapters, it's in our churches; it's in our bedrooms; it's in our children's heads. It's everywhere we look. So ignoring it is useless.

Yet God is able to forgive and cleanse even the blackest heart. One of the greatest verses in the Bible is *1 John 1:9 ~ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.* Forgive and purify ~ wow ~ sounds like a cool mountain spring on a hot day. Notice also, the verse *doesn't* say, "Except for the sins of pornography, etc..." You can't out-sin God's ability to forgive. Scripture says, *"Where sin increased, grace increased all the more" (Rom. 5:20).*

Some people are still worried because of the numerical frequency of their sin. For example, a severely addicted person may view pornography and then masturbate five or six times in a single day. So hear the gracious words of Jesus himself ~ *"If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him" (Luke 17:3-4).* And if that process of struggle, failure, and repentance goes on for 30 years ($30 \times 365 \times 7 = 76,650$ times), God will forgive if we sincerely repent. And He'll cleanse us from all unrighteousness 76,650 times, if necessary. Now obviously, nobody wants to remain sexually addicted for 30 years. Any form of slavery is humiliating and shame-producing. *But if you did remain addicted for 30 years,* God would forgive you when you repented.

Naturally, all sinners need to understand what of the voice of God's Enemy sounds like. He....