

## THE EFFECTS OF SIN



### SINNING IS EASY. DOING THE RIGHT THING IS MORE DIFFICULT

Why are we so prone to sin? This article is not written to unbelievers, but to those who call themselves Christians. Despite whom we claim to be in Jesus Christ, we Christians sin a lot. The sad thing is that for many, their sins seem to go by without any conscience of guilt. As you are reading this, think of the past day. What have you done, or maybe not done, that constitutes sin in the eyes of God? You see, sin is the way the deceiver derails us, to the point where we are no longer convicted of our sins, as we become deaf to the voice of the Holy Spirit, the One who guides us and makes us aware of our sin:

<sup>13</sup>Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, **he will guide you into all truth:** for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. – **John 16:13**

This verse does not seem to suggest that the Holy Spirit makes us aware of sin, but that He guides us into the truth, away from the lie. Remember that the devil stands for everything that is contrary to the truth contained in God's Word. The Holy Spirit on the other hand, leads and guides us away from sin, towards truth and a life filled with abundant joy.

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What happens when we sin, and do not even seem to notice it? It becomes habitual – because seemingly there was no consequence, we do it again. Now it becomes a lifestyle. It does not happen overnight, but it is a slow process. Ultimately it leads to spiritual death. The psalmist explains it this way:

<sup>1</sup>Blessed is the man that **walketh not** in the counsel of the ungodly, **nor standeth** in the way of sinners, **nor sitteth** in the seat of the scornful. <sup>2</sup>But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. – **Psalm 1:1-2**

He uses the negative to show the things faithful believer does *not* do:

- He does not **walk** in the counsel of the ungodly;
- He does not **stand** in the way of sinners; and
- He does not **sit** in the seat of the scornful.

Thinking of a race, someone who does not make it to the end still starts the race running. As he loses enthusiasm or energy, he first slows down to a **walk**, then stops and **stands** and finally **sits** down. It is race over. For many believers, this is what happens to them in their spiritual life. They start well, but as the lack of spiritual fitness catches up with them, they slow down to a **walk** (lending out their ears to the ungodly); then stop moving altogether and **stand** (in the presence of sinners); then **sit** down (with the scornful), defeated.

As we lose spiritual focus, slowly the voice of the Holy Spirit fades away from our ears. There is a beautiful scripture that demonstrates how the Holy Spirit operates in our lives:

<sup>21</sup>And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left. – **Isaiah 30:21**

The voice the believer hears is that of the Holy Spirit that guides the direction of his life. Have you lost track of the voice of the Holy Spirit? Because of repeated sin, the Holy Spirit has become quiet. He has not withdrawn from you, but your ears have become so bombarded by the shouting of the world, that the soft voice of God's Spirit is drowned out.

## **GET BACK ON TRACK**

Sin is like a point ("switch" in the USA) in a railway line. The most effective route is usually the straightest one. A train can travel along a straight line, then through a point and continue on its straight path. Alternatively, the point can be set to side-track the train, slow it down, take it away from the straight line, and put it on a different course.

While it may not be a problem for a train, for us as believers it definitely is when sin side-tracks us. There is no short cut to get back on the right track – you have to stop, reassess, reverse, and go all the way back to the position before where the point set you off on a different path and then have its setting changed to allow you to continue straight through. The devil, the one who changed the point originally, is never going to allow a point further down the line to lead back to the main line. It will be a side-tracked road to hell, or a sudden dead end (stopping block). Either way, on this line you are done.

How do we apply this to our lives? Travelling along a railway line is our Christian life. It could be smooth sailing, rhythmic even, as the train gently sways. Going through a switch away from the straight path is how the devil misleads us. We may think we are still on the right track, but we may well have been deceived. When we realise we are going in the wrong direction, we have to stop. Then follows the process of remorse where we are made aware of our sin and the negative result it has on our spiritual life. After that follows reassessment – we look at where we have gone wrong, realise that this is not the right direction, confess our sin, ask for forgiveness and then reverse back all the way to the place before we sinned. With the point reset by Jesus alone, through the working of the Holy Spirit, guided in the right direction again, we can continue. John describes it this way:

<sup>8</sup>If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. – **1 John 1:8-9**

## **CONCLUSION**

Forgiven sin teaches us a valuable lesson. If you are aware of your sin, you also understand how after the sin, you just do not feel good. There is, or should be, a feeling of guilt and remorse. This is the working of the Holy Spirit. He is the voice that points out which direction you should go. When you do not follow His voice, you will sin. The sin is not worth it. Nothing good can ever come from it, no matter how insignificant we may think it is. If a child has burnt his fingers on a hot stove, he knows never to touch it again. That is how we should be every day of our lives. If we have burnt once, that lesson should be sufficient. We have to overcome the temptation of sin each day. Ultimately, we will be rescued from it all. Come Lord Jesus, and free us from this world and its ugly temptations. Be blessed this week. Fight the good fight, finish the race, keep the faith, expect the crown. – **2 Timothy 4:7**

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*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. – John 3:16*