

The Humbling Nature of Sin

By Dennis Cornish

Sin is an affront to God, and sin can, and should, righteously humble you when viewed from the right perspective. Yes, it is pure disobedience and if we are not careful our sin can become a tool for Satan to use against us, constantly pricking our conscience, telling us that we are not true Christians and that we are not worthy to stand in the presence of God.

Instead, what is meant by viewing our own sin in the right perspective is our not letting Satan use it as a tool against us, but rather, that we use it as a means to measure how we are progressing in our sanctification; in how we are growing in our walk with the Lord.

Sin should not abound for the sake of growth, or just because of the preponderance of grace that God has bestowed upon us. It is not righteous fruit and should not be cultivated. Once it begins to bud in our lives, and before it fully blossoms, it needs to be immediately pruned and thrown into the fire. What we can and should do with sin, or even the temptation of sin, is to recognize it for what it is, and that it consists of the enemies attempts at trying to enlist us into his army. The better use of the testing of our faith through the temptation that is set before us, and even our failure at resisting that temptation, is using it to gauge the level of steadfastness that is present in our lives. Or put another way, as a measure of the state of our sanctification to see how far we have progressed since being regenerated, as well as to see what areas of our lives that we need to further turn over to Christ.

The other thing to consider is whether this sin was a temporary setback or a deeper level of backsliding that is not normative in our lives. We always need to be humbled by our failures and then confess our sin and repent of it. If we are truly repentant, and if this is a momentary lack of perseverance on our part, we must accept that through Christ's work on the cross that He has forgiven us and has atoned for our sin, reestablishing or confirming our relationship with God. We

can use these experiences as a reminder to check the pride we may have fostered in our advancement in the Kingdom and to realize that nothing we have done can make God love us any less. At the same time, all our works, our achievements, our service to God in the church, will not cause God to love us any more than He already does. He is a God of love and a God of forgiveness; He remains faithful to His children even while we are faithless.

What we must not do is to allow ourselves to become overwhelmed with the guilt associated with sin. Yes, we must feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit and be ushered into a spirit of contrition and repentance, but we also cannot be paralyzed by the guilt that Satan instills within us as he tells us that we are unworthy. Jesus paid the ultimate price for our sin, and if He has forgiven us, as we profess that He has, then why should we, after we have truly repented, continue to carry the burden of guilt. We were tempted, had a momentary lapse into our old sin nature, but we cannot allow Satan to convince us that we are helplessly bound by our guilt and that we should be ashamed to go before our Father in the nakedness of our unworthiness. This is Satan playing mind games with us and the power of our defense is in the righteousness of Christ and the promises of forgiveness and restoration that we find in the written Word of God. This is where we should focus our attention, letting our minds be filled with the Gospel truth of the assurance of our salvation as we stand firmly upon the solid rock of Christ instead of our remaining caught up in quicksand of Satan's lies.