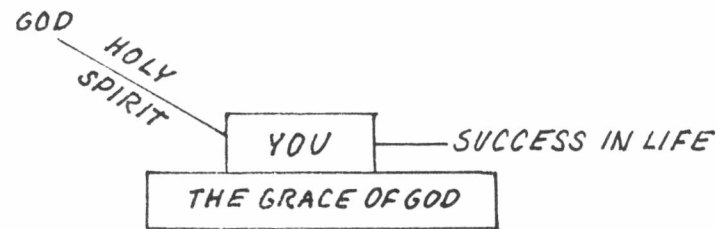


Lesson #10—The Warnings Regarding Sinning Against the Holy Spirit.



Introduction

- A. In these lessons we have considered many facets of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. It has been overwhelming to realize how extensive a provision God has made for us in our "Helper". All of this is surely a manifestation of the grace of God to us.
- B. There is no area of our daily life but what God has designed the necessary and appropriate supply. It is most encouraging to realize how this supply is intimately related to a person—Jesus Christ—in Whom God has blessed us with every provision, and with the blessed Holy Spirit Who has been sent to us to make that provision practical.
- C. In this final lesson in this series we must honestly face the serious warnings that are given to us in the Scripture concerning this great ministry of the Holy Spirit. Too often we are unaware of the nature of our responses to God and to the various facets of our daily life. We have lost a great deal of our knowledge of the truth in the Fall. It may be that we are more sinful than we think we are!

I. The Biblical Context—The Meaning of Sin.

- A. The Biblical statement, I John 3:4.

Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law, for **sin is the transgression of the law.**

Observations:

1. This verse immediately reminds us that sin cannot be understood apart from a knowledge of the law (revelation) of God, and behind the law of God, the very nature of God.
2. It is because of this that the Westminster Shorter Catechism explains sin to be "...any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the Law of God."
3. From this we realize that there are always three important factors to keep in mind: the nature of God, His revelation to us, and our loving obedience.

Christians generally understand that the Ten Commandments and the law of love (Cf. Exodus 20:1-17; Luke 10:27) constitute a brief summary of God's holy moral law for man. And this is all based on God's holy character. Sin may then be defined ultimately as anything in the creature which does not express or which is contrary to the holy character of the Creator. (J.O. Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*, p. 264)

4. To summarize this we must say that sin is fundamentally a transgression against God. It is helpful, however, to ask concerning the characteristics of all such transgressions. It is obvious, when we consider the description of sinful activity in the Bible, or even in our own life, as to what this characteristic would be—**it is always selfishness.**

- B. The Biblical explanation.

1. The explanation of Creation.

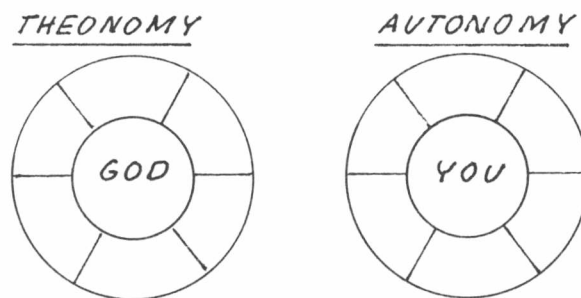
Adam and Eve were created by God in such a way that He would be at the very center of all their life. He would be the authority for all they would believe, the motivation for all they would desire, and the goal for all they would achieve. Nothing, in all of their life or thought, would be divorced from Him. The basic orientation of their life would revolve around Him. He would be in all of their thoughts. This divinely ordained relationship would be the foundation of all their joy, success, and fulfillment.

2. The explanation of the Fall.

When Adam and Eve sinned against God in transgressing His revelation to them they were motivated in that choice, under the deception of Satan, to turn their thoughts away from God and to think of themselves. This was particularly true of Eve.

And when the woman saw that the tree was **good for food** (considering herself), and that it was **pleasant to the eyes** (considering herself), and **a tree be desired to make one wise** (considering herself), she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. Genesis 3:6

In this most serious act Adam and Eve tore God out of the center of their life and placed themselves there. This now defines the story of the human race—**self-centeredness**. We have become a people preoccupied with ourselves and obsessed with having our own way. This may take many very subtle and devious forms. Our selfishness is often dressed in apparent sacrifice for others, in religious humanitarianism, and in religious devotion. Whatever we must pay, and no matter how hard we must work—the goal is obvious—**we must be recognized, we must be honored, we must be exalted, we must be served, and we must have our own way!**



3. The explanation of the first commandment, Matthew 22:37, 38.

Jesus said unto him, **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God** with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

This is **the first and great commandment**.

The reason for this first and more important commandment is primarily found in the nature of God—He is worthy of all the honor, glory, and love that could ever be given to Him. This defines our most fundamental responsibility. However, this commandment also points out our most serious sin of omission—failure to love God—and our most serious sin of commission—choosing self in the place of God.

4. The explanation of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, John 16:14.

He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

Observations:

- a. The Holy Spirit has come to reverse our sinful condition. His one great plan is to bring us to the place of giving Jesus Christ His rightful place in every area of thought, aspiration, action, relationship, and goal.
- b. This is why the new birth is such a radical and transforming beginning of the Christian life and why we are constantly exhorted in the Bible to surrender our body and life over to God. (John 3:3-5; I Cor. 6:11; Romans 12:1, 2; I Peter 1:13-25)
- c. In all of these lessons on the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit we now see this as a basic thread that runs through it all. He has come to help us to see what we are doing in preferring ourselves and to enable us to give to Jesus Christ the rightful place at the center of our life. All failure to cooperate with Him is a serious sin against Him.

Summary:

- A. At first glance this evaluation of ourselves—as basically selfish—seems far too extreme. After all who can deny that we all do a lot of good things and live a rather good life.
- B. Perhaps we can understand this more clearly through the testimony of the noted philosopher and Christian, W.E. Anderson.

It was then (his conversion) that I began to be conscious of sin. It was not that I now remembered all manner of malpractices which had previously been repressed, for they had never existed. What I came to recognize was that my whole world had centered around my good self. I was in the strictest sense of the word egocentric, and though I would not have thought of the term then, this had been idolatry. The true God had knocked at my door, and I had come to His light so that what I was might be clearly seen. (**Why I Am Still A Christian**, E.M. Blaiklock (ed.) p. 26)

- C. Now we must face ourselves with these truths. Are we willing to recognize, as Christians, that so much of our world—revolves around our “good self”?
- D. The real problem in your life and mine, is not found in our actions but in **the kind of a person we are**. It was the Apostle Paul who said;

O wretched man that **I am**.... (Romans 7:24)

- E. We must recognize the harm that we do—just being ourselves. We fail in the most important task of life—being the right kind of a person—with Jesus Christ at the center of life.
- F. When we fail to recognize this as fully as we should, and seek to cover it with good works or superficial words, we fall into pretending.
- G. We must admit and confess our idolatry. All of us, to some degree, worship at the shrine of our own person and life.
- H. Objection to all of this is often raised by referring to the suicide. Is that not an illustration of one who does not exalt self? Even here we must point out the preoccupation and obsession with self—even to the extent of self-destruction. In this same area of thought it is interesting to see how many Christians are so filled with thoughts of their own life and problems that these become the basis for evaluating everything.
- I. Is it any wonder that the Lord Jesus said; Whosoever will come after Me, **let him deny himself**, and take up his cross, and follow Me? Mark 8:34

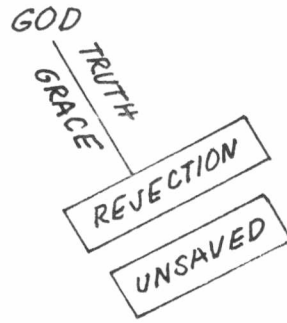
II. The Biblical Illustrations: The Sins Against the Holy Spirit.

- A. Those sins committed by the non-Christian.
 - 1. The sin of resisting the Holy Spirit, Acts 7:51.

Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, **ye do always resist the Holy Spirit**, as your fathers did, so do ye.

Observations:

- a. Stephen, in speaking to the religious leaders of his day, pointed out how the Jewish people had rejected so many of the prophets God had sent to them and how these very leaders to whom he was speaking had rejected the greatest prophet of them all—the very Son of God, Jesus Christ.
- b. This is the sin of every non-Christian—a rejection of the truth. It is the refusal to accept the content of divine revelation. It is the choice of error.
- c. As sinners we prefer to be our own authority—instead of accepting God and His truth as authoritative.



2. The sin of insulting the Holy Spirit, Hebrews 10:29.

Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith He was sanctified, an unholy thing, and **hath done despite (insulted) unto the Spirit of grace?**

Observations:

- a. This verse describes the sinful response of the non-Christian who has been told of the salvation provided through the Lord Jesus Christ. Three things are enumerated.
 - 1). He rejects the Lord Jesus as unworthy of attention.
 - 2). He evaluates the death of Jesus Christ as the execution of a criminal.
 - 3). By so repudiating the message of salvation—he insults the Holy Spirit Who inspired and empowered the message of the Gospel. The Holy Spirit held out to this man the plan of salvation—and he simply turned away in disgust.
- b. The message behind this verse is very clear. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. No one may turn away from the truth without insulting the Holy Spirit. This is the choice of self and of one's own life over against the benefits of truth and salvation.

3. The sin that is unpardonable, Mark 3:22, 28-30.

And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, **He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils He casteth out devils...**
 Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme.
 But **he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness**, but is in danger of eternal damnation.
Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

Observations:

- a. The unpardonable sin is to attribute the works of the Lord Jesus Christ to the Devil instead of to the Holy Spirit.
- b. This terrible sin could be committed more easily when the Lord Jesus was upon earth. Even then it demanded at least three things. (1). A person would need to know a great deal about the work of the Lord Jesus, (2). That person would have to take a theological position that Christ was controlled by Satan and did His work in his power, and, (3). That position would have to be taken publically.
- c. This sin is a rejection of Jesus Christ as God and the attributing of His work to Satan.

B. Those sins committed by the believer.

1. The sin of lying and tempting the Holy Spirit, Acts 5:3, 4, 9.

But Peter said, Ananias, **why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit**, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? **Thou has not lied unto men, but unto God...** Then Peter said unto her, How is it that **ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord....**

Observations:

- a. Ananias and Sapphira agreed to sell some land, keep back part of the money, and give the rest for the use of the church with the pretense that they had given it all. This was a planned deception. It was the attempt to gain the approval and recognition of the church for spirituality when they were in fact unspiritual. This is obviously a self-centered activity.
 - b. This was an attempt to enter into a relationship with the Holy Spirit which was contradictory to His nature and office. It was a spiritual "gamble" that the Holy Spirit would allow this to pass unnoticed. He did not permit it.
 - c. It is important to realize that when a believer will choose to practice error—he becomes vulnerable to Satanic manipulation.
 - d. As believers we must face ourselves with the question of planned deception. When we profess to live in harmony with the Holy Spirit of truth (have nothing to confess) while executing a planned deception of some kind, we are lying to the Holy Spirit and tempt or test Him to see if He will allow us to do it. This is a most serious sin. It is a overwhelming choice for self—for our own way—for error—in the face of everything good.
2. The sin of grieving the Holy Spirit, Ephesians 4:30.

And **grieve not the Holy Spirit of God**, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Observations:

- a. The Holy Spirit has come to set us free from all forms of sin and to lead us into a deep walk of fellowship with Himself. We grieve Him by all aspects of our refusal to cooperate, neglect of the means of grace that would help us spiritually, and choices to maintain sinful practices in our daily life.
 - b. We grieve the Holy Spirit when we choose—
selfishness instead of love,
self-pity instead of joy,
despair instead of peace,
impatience instead of longsuffering,
irritability instead of gentleness,
malice instead of goodness,
unfaithfulness instead of faithfulness,
dogmatism instead of meekness, and
lack of control instead of self-control. (Note Gal. 5:22, 23)
 - c. The self-centeredness of this sin is obvious.
3. The sin of quenching the Holy Spirit, I Thess. 5:19.

Quench not the Spirit.

Observations:

- a. The word "quench" may allude to the Old Testament custom of having a fire constantly burning on God's altar. We may not initiate or permit any thought or action to come into our life which would dampen the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
- b. This sin appears to be related to the ministry the Holy Spirit seeks to perform through us. It would be our resistance, in attitude or activity, of His endeavors to sanctify us, to develop our gifts of ministry, and to use us to bring the Word and grace of God into the lives of others.

- c. We quench the Holy Spirit when we choose not to be compassionate, to neglect the commands to evangelize, and live so that we bear a poor testimony.
- d. What are we saying when we do not wish to be used by the Holy Spirit to help others? Are we saying such activity is wrong? Are we saying we do not have the ability? Are we saying that people do not merit a knowledge of salvation? Any attitude like this is a form of sin that is quenching to the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion:

- A. We have such a kind, gracious, wise, and powerful Helper, in the blessed Holy Spirit, it behooves us to cooperate with Him fully.
- B. There is almost no limit to what the Holy Spirit can do for and with us if only we will obey God through His Word by faith, love, and hope. The kind of life we live can be traced back to one thought—do we want the will of God—or do we want our own will?

My Will + *God's Will*