

#72 “Twelve Reasons Not to Sin”

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The church at Corinth had a lot of sin issues that they needed to deal with, and Paul confronted them about these in the book of 1 Corinthians. As he drew near the end of his letter, he summed up his heart for them by saying, “Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God I speak this to your shame” (1 Corinthians 15:34). The Bible is clear that God doesn’t want us to continue in sin supposing that grace might then also increase (Romans 6:1-2). Such is foolish thinking, for it is grace which sets us free from the power of sin and death. Rather than live in bondage, we can live free (Romans 6:6-7). Christ promises us a way of escape from every temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13), and we have all the resources we need to live godly in Christ (2 Peter 1:3). We will stumble (James 3:2), but we need not live like the world. Most certainly, we need not justify sin as if it is normal. Such is offensive toward God because He wants us to cease from sin (1 Peter 4:1). We are not perfect yet, but by the grace of God, we should be growing more like Christ each day, putting away sin and self and living out Christ.

This is far easier said than done, and in the heat of the battle, it is easy to forget why the battle is worth fighting and winning. Thus, we should think ahead of time as to why it is worth it to walk in holiness and believe God for purity. Here are twelve reasons for going God’s way rather than the way of the devil:

First, we have the prospect of eternal rewards for our faithfulness (2 Corinthians 5:10). The more faithful we are while on earth, the more honor and rewards we will have in heaven. This should seriously motivate us given that we will be spending considerably more time in heaven than we will here.

Second, when we sin, we grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). We wouldn’t walk up to our best friend and slug him or her in the gut, but we do a similar thing to the Spirit of God when we sin. For some reason, offending God becomes impersonal when it should be very personal.

Third, God tells us to be holy (1 Peter 1:16), which He wouldn’t do if it wasn’t best for us.

Fourth, God might discipline us for doing wrong because He loves us (1 Corinthians 11:29-31). Discipline is meant to be a deterrent to wrong behavior, meaning that it is not intended to be fun. Thus, why invoke the loving discipline of our Lord?

Fifth, sinning makes a mockery of Christ’s sacrifice (1 Peter 1:17-19, 1 Corinthians 6:20). As believers, when we sin it is akin to robbing a person (Christ) who just bailed us out of prison. It is just utterly ridiculous and insulting to our Savior Who paid it all for us

to be holy. We need to be mindful of the sacrifice He gave lest we carelessly give into sin.

Sixth, we must walk in holiness so that we can truly love our brothers and sisters in Christ (1 Peter 1:22). Since love is a fruit of the Spirit, it is not going to flow forth from us as from the Spirit if we are grieving the Spirit at the same time by our sin. It is only when we are pure before God that we can be to others what they spiritually need us to be. Sin is not merely an individual matter, but it limits our ability to serve and encourage others.

Seventh, the world needs to see a godly testimony (1 Corinthians 15:34). A righteous testimony allows God to work through His church to show Himself to the world as He truly is. If we are not living holy, sanctified lives, the world will not see Jesus in us (Hebrews 12:14). What a tragedy that would be, given that hell is an awful, eternal reality.

Eighth, sin is devastating by its very nature (Romans 6:23, 1 Corinthians 5:5). God commands us not to sin because He knows it severs relationships, destroys societies, harms our bodies, and perverts our desires and our thinking.

Ninth, sin spiritually incapacitates us. We need to abide with Christ by walking in faith, dependence, and purity if we want His power to work through us to advance His kingdom. When we hide sin in our hearts, God won't even hear our prayers (Psalm 66:18). We need to be healed by confessing our sin to God and to those whom we have offended (James 5:16a).

Tenth, sin is counter to ultimate pleasure. Sin provides a passing, temporary pleasure which dulls the spiritual senses to absolute truth and ultimate reality. Since God is truth and the source of ultimate, enduring pleasure (Psalm 16:11), sin thus alienates us from that which can truly satisfy.

Eleventh, sin looks better than what it can actually deliver. Ecclesiastes 6:9 says, "What the eyes see is better than what the soul desires. This too is futility and a striving after wind."

Finally, twelfth, a guilty conscience is miserable. As believers, the Holy Spirit will convict us of sin such that we will experience internal agony over our sin (Psalm 32:3-4). This can rip us apart on the inside, and it is a miserable way to live. Of course, God forgives us if we repent, but why create such a situation in the first place?

We are not going to get it perfect this side of eternity, but we need to try for the sake of our Savior. As Philippians 2:12 says, "So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling." May we walk by faith today and each day forward such that we let God sanctify our hearts according to His will and pleasure.