

Common Sins – The Nature of Sin
Rom 7; Heb 3

INTRODUCTION:

TRIPP NMM June 16 (PARTIALLY paraphrased)

Since our lives are lived in the daily routine of little moments, it is often hard to see the serious nature of our struggle with sin. It IS actually a big deal. Little moments and “little sins” come and go in our lives.

Without realizing it we can become hardened to the little sins in our lives. (Heb 3)

While important, the big life altering decisions are actually rare in the span of our lives.

Most of us won't be remembered in history books. In 80 years, we probably won't be remembered by anyone we know today.

We all live in little, unnoticed, unremarkable, mundane moments of life, and because we do, it's very easy to back away from the seriousness of our struggle with sin that is constantly being revealed in those little moments.

The little moments of your life are profoundly important precisely because they happen to be the address where you live...The character of any person's life is not shaped by two or three grand, big moments of life. A person's character is formed in 10,000 little mundane moments of everyday life. It is the character that is formed in those little moments of life that determines how you think and respond in the few big moments of life that you encounter.

So those “little sins” are not so little after all:

- the snarky retort
- the “me first” pride
- the “my time” reflex when an interruption happens.
- the flash of lust online
- the anger when someone gets in your way.
- those little bitter thoughts
- your addiction to little pleasures
- the impatience with a loved one
- the flash of anger at those who don't know how to make a left turn at a big intersection (I added that one).

Such little moments come and go so quickly that we may not notice how they reflect a deeply needy heart.

They remind you and me that we have not risen above our need for rescuing grace. They tell us that we still desperately need what we have found in Christ. They call us to be aware and to be serious because the war for our hearts is not over. These little moments point the finger at something that is huge- our struggle with sin and our need for the grace that can be found only in our Savior, the King, the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 7

14 For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. 15 For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. 16 But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good. 17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. 19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. 20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. 22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, 23 but I see a different law in the members of my body,

waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

Paul begins this passage by talking about THE LAW of God – which he calls a good thing, but it can't rescue us from our sin. The law provides no power for obedience.

Paul then points out that ...

SIN IS ALSO A LAW / an Inward Principle–

In Romans 7:8 Paul personifies sin as if it were a “power” that works actively and with purpose. What sin produces is what the commandment prohibits. Sin has the ability to turn a good thing, the Law, to an evil purpose.

Rom 7:8 Sin takes the opportunity of the commandment to move us disobey.

EX: When you see the sign “Stay off the grass”, what do you want to do?

We see this raising kids...

Why? “Sin” as a principle or a law “takes the opportunity” to produce a desire contrary to the command. The contrast between the goodness of the Law and the nefarious purpose of sin is given to demonstrate the sinfulness of sin.

This ‘law’ is found in us – Rom 7

As best as I can understand the teaching of scripture, **at our conversion:**

-The guilt of sin is eradicated – we have a right standing before God – in Christ there is NO condemnation.

-The dominion of sin is broken – it no longer rules over us. We don't have to sin. We have a new heart with new desires, new affections, and a new power.

YET

-There remains the reality of indwelling sin. This is the unhappy experience of all good men, while they continue in the world. – John Haydon.

Owen –Indwelling sin is a powerful and effectual indwelling principle, inclining us toward actions suitable to its own nature. It is a power that remains in believers with a constant working towards evil.

The reality and power of sin was not something we were aware of when we were living in spiritual darkness. When the unbeliever “fights” against ‘sin’, he/she is acting out of a common grace sense of the conscience, not out of a renewed heart pursuing godliness.

EX: Jiminy CRICKET – let your conscience be your guide.

EX: as a non-Christian there were things I didn't do because I knew they were wrong based on common sense or the Criminal Law or even the residue of biblical teaching.

As believers we see the depth of sin because our eyes have been opened to the glory and holiness of God who is sinned against. **The seriousness of sin is found in the One who is sinned against.**

We don't know or get a sense of the power and reality of this law until we try to fight it as believers. Prior to salvation, we are just going along with it. We don't recognize its power until we try to fight against it.

EX: White water rafting – going with the current is fun, but if you ever have to swim against it, you realize how strong it is. SO TOO with sin.

As believers we swim upstream against the law of sin, so we see how strong it really is. **DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME APART FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

The odd thing, according to John Owen, is that those who are the most aware of sin are the most equipped to battle it. As believers, who are alive to God by the Spirit, we have a Spirit wrought

understanding of sin and a Spirit led inclination to follow God. While it is not a perfect inclination, it is an ongoing resource for us to lay hold of by faith.

This law is at work even when we want to do good. Rom 7:21

The law of sin works to derail or ambush us even when we are at our best. The inclination of the spirit is ongoing but so too is the inclination of indwelling sin.

EX: You set out to spend time with God and all of a sudden you are distracted by things you'd never seen or thought about before. "Squirrel"

We tend to minimize or forget the 'law' of sin that is at work within us. When we forget how temptable we are, we don't take the precautions that we should. ... Prov 4 Guard your heart with all diligence;

Indwelling sin is like a Trojan Horse housing desires of the flesh waiting to be unleashed.

EX: do you ever find sinful desires springing up suddenly? It is the residue of indwelling sin.

Indwelling sin loves to team up with external temptation, so the battle is not just against the external temptation but also against the enemy within.

EX: the call is coming from INSIDE THE HOUSE – a scary movie

GOOD NEWS- even though the law of sin is still at work, it's power or dominion over the Christian is broken. Through Christ, the power of sin is broken, though NOT eradicated. It is killed to the degree that it can no longer bear the fruit of eternal death. The power of sin to hold us in bondage through the fear of death is broken.

NOTE – sin is still sin in its nature and purpose. Flesh is still flesh. It doesn't improve. We are called to put to death the deeds of the flesh. We are not called to negotiate with them. Indwelling sin in the heart is always enmity against God. It may be small at times, or it may flare up, but it is always dangerous.

EX: A drop of Arsenic, or a teaspoon of arsenic is still a deadly poison.

Believers are called and empowered to walk by the Spirit so that we do not engage in the desires of the flesh. There is a new law at work within us – the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. In the power of this new desire, we are to make NO provision for the flesh. Rom 13 (posters on dorm wall)

¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts.

As believers, the perpetual and habitual inclination toward sin is broken, but the principle of indwelling sin still remains, and that sin is always inclined toward evil.

This law of sin NEVER RESTS

Can I get a witness?? This year marks 50 years since I came to faith, and I've been engaged in 'full-time Jesus' work for 47 of those years. I was very engaged the other three years as a college student, but I wasn't paid. Guess What? The law of sin is still at work in my life. It does not retire.

The short fuse, defensiveness, sarcasm, selfishness, etc, etc, are still there. Praise God not as prevalent, but still at work.

Indwelling sin is always with us in this life; it sticks with us like a shadow. It is not a wanderer.

While its fruit may make the Headline News, the principle of indwelling sin is not discussed.

While Russia or China may pose some kind of threat to our well-being, we give little consideration to the enemy within, the dangerous companion who is always at home within.

It may seem that sin is crushed but it will return again. Be on the alert and guard your heart with all diligence.

EX: Movies where the bad guy seems dead but then rises up again. We know it's going to happen but for some reason the person in the movie doesn't. Haven't they ever watched movies?

This is why preparation through understanding our enemy is so important. IGNORANCE IS NOT BLISS, it is foolishness.

If we are not careful, this enemy within my burn down our house. HOW?

James 3 5 So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! 6 And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell.

The tongue simply becomes the instrument of indwelling sin for creating chaos. It's not the tongue per se, but indwelling sin that starts the fire. Sin is close at home and so easily entangles us – Heb 12:1

It never leaves us until we depart to be with Christ.

THERE IS GOOD NEWS...

The Spirit of God by the grace of God is also at work. He is also calling from inside the House reminding us that we are beloved children. He bears witness with our spirit so that we can cry out "ABBA FATHER."

The SPIRIT fuels the general desire to please God Gal 5; Eph 5

The Spirit fuels the desire for specific acts of love for God or others – i.e. read Scripture, pray, serve others with time, gifts, or treasure. And at those times the law of sin is ready to oppose those acts of love. Gal 5:17 The sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with one another.

Rom 8:2 – The law of sin and the law of the Spirit of life in us are mortal enemies.

We are to walk wisely as we engage in soul-care for ourselves and to some degree for others.

Eph 5 Be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise...

Sin is **deceitful**- Heb 3:12, 13

¹²Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. ¹³But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. (Heb 10:25)

The heart of sin is a lie. It started in the Garden when the serpent lied about what God had said. The lie continues in our own lives:

"This isn't so bad. Everybody is doing it. What's the harm? There are worse things I could be doing. God knows that I'm weak and He is pretty forgiving after all."

WHO WILL DELIVER ME?

Our deliverance is not found in a 'what' or a 'program', but a PERSON – WHO will deliver me?

While it is helpful to know these things about SIN, the joy and freedom in the Christian life come from knowing the free justifying grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Jesus, the True Human, the second Adam obeyed perfectly for us, And he was raised from the dead to offer us the gift of his life and His righteousness that covers our failures.

Or in the words of the apostles, "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Cor 5:21), and "He himself carried our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to our sins and live to do what is right." 1 Pet 2:24

THE TABLE

Re: Tom Hudson The water in a swimming pool may be 10 years old, and if left untreated you would see its natural condition – green and slimy.

It is the same with our hearts – if left untreated with the Word, prayer, fellowship, worship, etc, we would see the ugly deeds of the flesh. A spiritually stagnant heart gets filthy. **Our hearts need constant communications of life and nourishment from Jesus.** The very moment of their being left to their inherent strength is the very moment of their certain declension and decay.

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