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To Be or Not To Be

James 5:16 [The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.](#)

I am convinced that all people are just weird.

They smell something bad and say “Oh man! This is gross.... Here smell it.”

So how do we respond? We give a strange look, pause, and then say “OK”.

The sad part here is, ... how many of us do this with sin?

We know something is wrong. We know we should shun it and go the other way. But how often do we say “OK” and partake in it anyway?

Hebrews 12:4 [In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.](#)

My question to you today is this ... “Are you even struggling against sin?” Or do you give in the second any temptation comes your way?

Are you easy prey for the enemy?

I once played on a volleyball team that was very competitive. Our captains always told us to watch for the “Links”. Those who were the weak links on the opposing team. Those would be our targets for the night. And it worked every time. Even when the more talented players of that opposing team tried helping their teammate, it left their position vulnerable as well.

Again, I ask, are you easy prey for the enemy?

For your information, your sin doesn’t just affect you. It has the potential of affecting many all around you.

The problem, it seems, is that we categorize sin. We tend to believe that this sin is not that bad, and this sin is really not bad at all compared to this sin or that.

The question then becomes, “How bad does bad have to be to be considered ... bad?” Sounds confusing I know.

The bottom line is that sin is sin. And sin is disobedience to God’s Word. The Law.

1 John 3:4 [Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.](#)

When we categorize sin into our OWN scales, we tend to believe that the “little stuff” won’t hurt us.

Something else that is not too uncommon is that of an individual trying to help another in overcoming a sin... only to find themselves falling into that same sin as a result.

It’s as if they have the key to the prison cell that their friend is in but instead of setting their friend free, they just join them in the cell.

That’s why Paul wrote ...

Galatians 6:1 [Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.](#)

Paul encourages us to shine like the stars in Philippians ...

Philippians 2:14-16

[Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life — in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing.](#)

So are you shining like the stars? Or are you blending into the darkness that is around you as you justify your deeds of darkness?

Romans 13:12 [The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.](#)

Ephesians 5:11 [Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.](#)

Why is it that we want to live on the edge of sin?

We’re supposed to get away from it, not set our camp right next to it.

Put yourself on the edge of temptation long enough, and the enemy will not stop until you are over the line.

Remember, temptation doesn’t slap you in the face. It reaches out to shake your hand. It wants to make you think it’s OK.

In case you didn't know, shaking hands is actually believed to have begun in the dark ages as a sign to say "I come in peace with no weapon in my hand."

And that's just what the enemy wants you to think. That he's not going to hurt you. It's called ... deception.

Hebrews 3:13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

The very nature of sin is deceit. Sin tells you it's OK, when in reality it's not.

All too often people will begin down a path of disobedience thinking "It's OK". And most always that disobedience starts small of course. And every day we stay on this path of disobedience, we grow more numb to that sin, more deaf to the Father's voice and more callous and blind to His call on our life. And to think, it all started with a "hand shake"

It's time for God's people to stop being a thermometer and start being a thermostat. A thermometer simply adjusts to the environment that it's in. A thermostat changes the environment that it's in. I used to call it chameleon Christianity.

Have you ever been to the dentist and he gives you a shot to numb your mouth? He then proceeds to do his work, all the while you feel virtually no pain. Yet, at the same time you know something is going on. In fact, it almost feels, as silly as this may sound, ... kind of cool.

It's very similar to this in the spiritual realm. The more we persist in disobedience the more we become numb and losing our sensitivity to the Father. Compare...

Ephesians 4:17-19

So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

You may be thinking ... "I haven't lost ALL sensitivity." But my question is ... "Do you want to lose ANY at all?"

Do we really want to wake up one day and be like Samson?

Judges 16:20

Then she called, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" He awoke from his sleep and thought, "I'll go out as before and shake myself free." But he did not know that the LORD had left him.

Yeshua said in John 8 ...

John 8:34 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.

This walk we are given is not a call to convenience. It's a call to Holiness. And as Hebrews says ...

Hebrews 12:14 [Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.](#)

Holiness is not just separation from sin. It's separation UNTO God.

For separation from the world just makes you a Pharisee, it's separation unto God that makes you holy.

What do we allow into our lives that just shouldn't be there? I once had an individual tell me "I'm mature enough. I know how to handle it." I thought to myself ... "Mature enough?" and immediately remembered the verse ...

1 Corinthians 14:20 [Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.](#)

["In regard to evil be infants"](#)

Many years ago, while still a teenager, I remember listening to a CD in my room. My brother was over with his family and my two year old niece heard the music so she came in and started dancing to the music. It was really funny. But the next song came on. And though the song was a very funny song, it actually started out with some eerie music. Actually kind of scary. My niece's face went from joy and laughter to immediate fear.

["In regard to evil be infants"](#) Should we really believe we are strong and mature enough to handle something?

["In regard to evil be infants"](#)

Several years ago I remember visiting family in the mountains of upper Washington state. One mile south of the Canadian border. One morning I went for a walk. I was holding two rather large sticks in my hands as I was constantly looking out for cougars. Taking soft steps and always looking around. I came upon a deer. A large buck. I froze. It didn't see me. Of all things, I had to scratch my nose. So I lifted my hand as slowly as I could. It perked up and looked RIGHT at me. Again, I froze. But it began walking away from me constantly looking back as it faded into the brush. It took NO chances. None at all. The second it even sensed danger, it left.

How careful are we in our spiritual walk every day?

1 Peter 5:8 [Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.](#)

How are you walking? Soft and careful? Or tunnel visioned and careless thinking you're strong enough to handle what comes your way?

1 Corinthians 10:12 [So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!](#)

Later that day I took my children for a walk a little closer to the cabin. In fact, we actually stayed on the driveway that was about a mile long.

My children noticed me carrying my big sticks. My oldest one eventually asked "What are you looking

for daddy?” I simply responded with... “Danger”.

Ephesians 5:15-16 Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

James 5:16 The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

What does it mean to be “righteous” ?

1 John 2:29 If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

1 John 3:7 Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

Can sins hinder your relationship with God? Consider ...

Psalms 66:18 If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened;

It's our view of sin that needs to be examined.

In Luke 15 we read the story of the prodigal son. Let's review a small portion of it...

Luke 15:20-22

So he got up and went to his father. “But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.

Notice his confession ... ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

“against Heaven and you”

Compare David's confession...

Psalms 41:4 I said, “O LORD, have mercy on me; heal me, for I have sinned against you.”

Until we view sin as against God, we don't view it right.

1 John 1:5 “... God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.”

How can we have fellowship with Him if we are walking in darkness? Even if it's just a “little” darkness.

It's interesting to note how the author of Hebrews was very clear in saying that sin is not the only thing that can hold you back in the Lord. Compare....

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

There may be things in your life that are NOT sin ... But you know that they are only holding you back in your walk with the Father.

As Paul discussed in 1 Corinthians one might say ...

1 Corinthians 6:12 “Everything is permissible for me” — but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible for me” — but I will not be mastered by anything.

Is there something in your life that is truly not beneficial for you? Is there something in your life that has truly mastered you? Oh, sure, it’s not sin. But at the same time, it doesn’t belong in your life. Have ever considered asking the Father to reveal those kinds of things that may be in your life?

It’s time for everyone to be honest with themselves.

Have you ever written your sins down on a piece of paper? I encourage you to write your full name on the top of a piece of paper and begin listing the sin that you have in your life. It’s hard to do because no one wants to see what they look like... in black and white. Yet consider Paul’s word to the Romans...

Romans 12:3

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

Now then, take a piece of paper. Write your full name on it and start listing your sin. Along with those “things” that are in your life that may not be sin but you know they are keeping you entangled.

Be honest. Don’t try to deceive yourself. Seriously. You might deceive a friend. You might deceive a relative. But don’t try to deceive yourself.

You are who you are ... when no one’s looking.

When done. Really done. Pray. Confess. and Repent.

Then take that piece of paper and BURN it. Representing your decision of getting that sin removed from your life. Never to be found again.

James 5:16 The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

Do you want your prayers to be powerful and effective?

Do you want to be used ...

2 Timothy 2:21 If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

The Father wants to use us. He LONGS to use us. But if we are holding on to any sin, or allowing something to have mastery over us, it will, at the very least, limit how He uses us. And even have potential in causing Him to not use us... at all.

It's time... **to be** ...used by the Father.

We pray you have been blessed by this message. Remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom!

For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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