

The Worst of the Best: The Depth of God's Love in our Worst Moments

Every once in a while in this life we experience something that blows our mind and it completely reorients the way we see the world. Maybe we read a book, see a movie, here a speech, read a newspaper article, view a piece of art, listen to a podcast or radio show and something is seen, read, said or heard; we cannot explain it, but it just resonates with us.

One such time for me was when I was back in college, I was in a spiritual formation class and we began to talk the discipline of fasting. Naturally this turned to explanation of biblical themes which then led to us talking about fasting from food. In the midst of this conversation we began talking about gluttony, which in layman terms is basically the sin of eating or drinking in excess. As someone who has always enjoyed food and if I'm honest probably eats in excess at times this was shocking. I left my class that day wondering how something so enjoyable could turn into a "sin."

The word sin implies that I have broken God's law and separates me from God . . . so How could eating something our body is designed to do, separate me from God? Well, in reality the answer to that question isn't really about eating, it's more about the term excess. Excess to the point that we are taking more than we need and by doing so not fueling our body, but probably trying to cover up something in our mind and actually hurting our body, a miraculous gift of God. What this realization did for me was it stated me on journey to answer the question: Do we understand the impact that sin has on our life?

I cannot be the only one who thinks this way. While we may hear about it regularly; it still pervades our life and culture. You know, you let a cuss word slip here, or some fleeting thoughts about the pretty actress in the movie, or a bit too long of a gaze at the magazine cover in the grocery store, eating that last piece of pizza when I was already full and about to explode anyway, the possibilities are endless. In many ways sin has a tendency to creep into our life in the most unexpected way. From the little white lies we tell to avoid unnecessary conflict that eventually turn into full fledged campaigns of deception as we try to hide our dirty little secrets from those closest to us or to the beer after work that eventually becomes a 12 pack a night habit. Sin creeps in silently, but before we know it, has the ability to expand into something much greater and before we know it, our life no longer belongs to us. What was once a recreational activity or temporary coping mechanism has become the thing we turn to make difficult situations go away.

The other thing about it is that we often placate our own minds into thinking that we don't have a sin problem; we are after all, good people. Sure, we can see the easy to call out stuff. We see the murder, we see the adultery, the theft, the corruption, the drugs, the sex crimes etc. The "BIG" things that violate God's law along with the laws of man. It's easy for us to get caught in this trap and in a way trick our mind into thinking that as long as we don't condone that stuff, we're on the right track and some of the other stuff doesn't matter. You know what I'm talking about right, The "little things?" Anger, gossip, crimes of the mind (a leer here, a thought there), explicit media, gluttony, greed, pride, legal addictions etc. the things that don't necessarily violate the laws of man and often seem to fall into a category of acceptable human behavior.

Again all of this begs the question, “Do we as Christians, people who believe in sin, understand the impact that sin has on our lives?” If we did, we might take it more seriously. Here is what I mean by that?

CLR Illustration

Water pitcher and a cup on the table. The water is labeled “my life” and the CLR is labeled sin.

Pour water on into the cup and drink it, follow up your drink by saying, “This water is good. It’s clean, its clear and it quenches my thirst. But, what happens when I do this, place some CLR into the water. Can I drink this now? No, Why not? Because it’s contaminated, even though it looks the same, I know there is acid in it and that if I drink this it’s going to be a bad, bad situation.”

Ultimately this is what sin does to our lives. Here is the reality: big or small sin contaminates everything. There is no separating sin from sin. Unfortunately, when viewed this way, I have to be honest. I don’t think most of us understand just how much sin can impact our life or even the lives of those around us.

The bible shows us that apart from the Influence of God, the best of us are capable of the worst behavior imaginable. The power of sin was enough to negatively impact the most iconic followers of God.

1 Samuel 11 : 1-17 - Tell the Story

David wanted to minimize the impact his sin would have, but instead of turning to God, he contaminated his life more and more. But not only did it contaminate his life, but the lives of everyone he interacted with. It wasn’t their fault, but they still suffered the consequences.

If, like David, you find yourself stuck in a pattern of destruction, maybe it’s time to think about the impact a relationship with Jesus could have on your life. The bible also tells us that it is impossible to rid our life of sin, we will always struggle with the desire to express ourselves in ways that are contrary to the ways God. However, there is hope.

1 John 1:5-9 (ESV)

⁵This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Jesus offers us a way out, he offers freedom from the contamination of sin in our lives.

The next time you find yourself trying to minimize the impact of something you know is wrong, ask yourself why? Think about how even the smallest “Sin” has the ability to contaminate your whole life

and ultimately separate you from God. Think about how your actions, choices, thoughts, desires, greed, addiction, pride or lust will impact other people around you... what is the potential of that choice to contaminate even the best parts of your life?

Sin contaminates everything and even the best of us have succumbed to the temptations of this world. Even if you don't necessarily believe in Jesus, I hope you can see the validity of the idea that when we choose to welcome evil into our life it still devours us. It begins to control our life and leads us away from the most important things in our life. As a result of this, we have a decision to make, we have to decide what is going to contaminate our life. We can let God come in, and through Jesus purify us and gradually remove the control our sin has over us or we can continue to let sin and darkness contaminate our life and lead us to destruction.

I understand that it might be easy to look up here and think this is an "eternal" conversation as long as you have said a prayer and committed to God than your good. I want to challenge you and say that this cannot be farther from the truth. This decision has very real ramifications that will impact your life, your family, your job, your marriage, your financial security, your personal security . . . all of it

Think about how our church and our community might change if people began to understand the impact that even the smallest sin has on their life.