

## The Sin of Man – Part II

Remember, we're at the point now of grasping this overall perspective, that we're reworking our hearts. The primary revelation that has to occur is rooted in Genesis 1:1, that being the Holiness of God. Because until you begin to see God as he is, you cannot see yourself as you are. That is to say, the sin of man. And, of course, in God's math, that departure from His Holiness, which means our sin, is judged by Him, which apart from Christ brings us to the reality of Hell. But the Holiness of God, with all that departure, all that vileness that's in the heart of man to depart from God; when we add in the cross of Christ, that is the grace that is revealed for the ages to come. And that, of course, at the judgment takes us right into the reality of Heaven. That reality of Heaven is our eternal destiny; isn't something we wait on, it's something we begin to appropriate now. As the principles active in Heaven are active here in our lives as New Testament saints, children of God on planet Earth. But to work that deeply, the revelation that you will get of the grace of God is limited by your revelation of the Holiness of God and limited by your revelation of the sin of man. So, the greater the revelation of the holiness, the greater the revelation of the sin, and thus the greater the revelation of the grace of God; and thus, the greater the revelation of the love of God. And we love because He first loved us. We know love by this - that He laid down His life for us; but if that love appears small because that grace appears small, because our sin appears small, because His Holiness appears small, then we'll have precious little revelation of the love of God. And we will not then be able to love Him, because our revelation of His love for us is so limited. And we won't be able to love our neighbor because our revelation of His love for our neighbor will be so small.

So, the limiting factor in the New Testament life of love is to receive the revelations that we're going through here sequentially in God's math. So, we're at the point of exploring sin. You remember the last time, we looked at four key frames of reference by which sin can be analyzed. In regard to truth and since truth is what God is and how God views everything else, any departure from that is a lie. In regard to faith, it pleased God to do it this way. We can only please God by faith in God; so if we're not operating by faith in God, any departure from that is unbelief in God, which cannot be pleasing to God. And as Jesus said, everything I do, I do only what's pleasing to the Father. And that's to be our lives as New Testament saints to do only that which pleases the Father and the only thing that pleases Him is faith in His Son.

Or obedience. Once we know how God views reality, any departure from that is rebellion and we can obey with one of two mentalities. One is through clenched teeth, grudgingly because we know He said it. Well, all that means when your obedience is grudging, it means you're not operating in love because the New Testament tells us, if you love Me, you'll obey Me. And then in I John, it says, we obey and His commandments are not burdensome. So, if the commandments of God, based on how He views reality, are burdensome to you, it simply means you've not received the revelation of the love of God. And the root of all sin, which we in a few sessions later, we'll come back and re-explore to dive deeply to get to the root of it, is there is only one judge and that's God or me. And we'll begin to approach that a little bit today even as we go back and look at the behavior and decision making of Adam and Eve. You'd think intuitively, well that can't be true, but it is true; that every thought you have, you're either declaring God is the judge of that or I am the judge of that.

So with that understanding, preliminarily, let's ask how deep does sin run in the nature of man? Looking at Adam and Eve - remember, Genesis 2:17; they were given one prohibition. There was only one thing that they were to not do and by not doing it, they would acknowledge that God was in charge of their lives. "From the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat; from the day that you

eat from it, you shall surely die.” So they were given that commandment, but let’s look at the temptation that led them to break that commandment. That will allow you to understand this sin, the original sin and also allow you to understand original in the sense of the origin of sin. That’s Genesis 3:4-5. “And the serpent said to the woman, you surely shall not die. For God knows that in the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” Well see, Satan gave them what God has His purpose that they would be like Himself, in His image, reflecting His character, determined by Him, and so on. So the temptation He offered them to be like God was the exact same thing God had in mind for them. But it’s the methodology that differs. In the New Testament, Satan is called the accuser of the brethren. Well, at this state, when man had not yet sinned, he is not accusing man; he is accusing God.

So, man now has the choice. We have what God said and we have someone who has accused God. Now what happens? So they sought to become like God, but look at how they did it. They sought to become like God by circumventing God. Not by God’s truth, but by declaring that God had lied. Not to glorify God, but to become worthy of glory themselves. Not by believing that God loved them, but by believing and declaring that God did not love them, because He was withholding something from them that was precious and of great value and that they would be better served by having. Not by accepting the judgment of God about what they should have, when they should have it, and how they should have it; but by believing that their judgment was better about what they should have, when they should have it and how it should come. Not by believing that God was righteous, but by believing that they were more righteous to the point of declaring that God was unrighteous by withholding this from them.

Judging God! And it’s been that way ever since for every sin that any man has ever produced. That is the root of the sin nature. So Adam and Eve, by doing that, fulfilled what Paul was trying to describe about fallen man in Romans, chapter 1. Running through verses 18-28, he makes certain statements about that. They suppressed the truth in unrighteousness. Although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, nor give Him thanks. Professing to be wise, they became fools. They exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie. They worshipped and served the creature, not the creator of the creature. They did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer. Well, are those verses pertinent to us? Well, as you’ve heard it said, Romans was written to Christians. So it is pertinent to us.

Now, why were Adam and Eve so willing to believe a serpent rather than to believe God? Simply put, they did not fear God. They did not hold Him in awe and reverence. They did not regard Him as holy. So they did not fear God and they did not fear the serpent. Well, in the absence of the fear of anything, holding nothing in awe and reverence, then what is going to be the response? They are going to succumb to the one who offers them the seemingly better deal. One says, don’t eat, you’ll die. The other says, oh eat, you’ll be like God. So what’s the better deal? Now here’s the point. They chose the one that offered the seemingly better deal based on what? Self determination - that they could determine what the better deal was. And it will always be, because it has always been. With every thought you have, where you have different frames of reference, the idea that you can determine what is best is the root of the sin. That’s why we looked at the Holiness of God before even beginning to explore the sin of man. Sin is disobedience and what you do not hallow, you will not follow. Adam and Eve did not hallow God, so they did not follow God. Recall, the Bible tells us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, the beginning of understanding, the beginning of wisdom. Because if you’re not operating in the awe and reverence of God as Holy, then truth will be whatever you determine it to be as opposed to simply coming to this Holy God and saying, God you tell me what truth is. Because any thought, word, or deed that you have that is not rooted in the fear of the Lord as holy, will be sin.

Jeremiah 10:23 –“It is not in man to direct his own path.” So with every sin, man says, “Oh yes it is. God may have said that, but I say that is not true.” It’s not even in us to direct our own paths, but see, Adam and Eve said, “Yes it is. I can look at these two options and I can determine what the better option is. I can look after my interest better than God can look after my interest.” Proverbs 14:12 says “there is a way which seems right to a man. But its end is death.” Well that way that seems right to a man is that it is in man to determine what is in his best interest. Psalms 37:23 KJV – says “the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.” Well, you can look at that in different ways with different interpretations. One is to say that if you are good, He will order your steps.

But another way, which I think is just as true, is the definition of good...is the man whose steps are ordered by the Lord. And that man is God determined, not self determined. So you can even define good in the sense of...are you self determined or God determined in regard to your present thought and your present behavior. Well that way that seems right to a man ends in death. See all sin leads to death. But you say, but aren’t we saved? As New Testament Christians, what possible relevance could that have to us? Well it’s the following. Because as New Testament Christians, when we continue in the life of sin, we will be saved, yet so as by fire. And that fire will burn away everything that we have done during our Christian walk. The death that occurs is the following to the New Testament saint who continues to live in sin. Dead works because when your sin is producing works, those works will be dead. Dead testimony. What is the primary charge against the church? It’s hypocrisy. We say good stuff and then live like the world. So our testimony is dead. How many of us have provoked the lost to come up and say, would you explain to me the reason for the hope that is within you? Events like that are very few. Well, why are they very few? That’s because we are living like the world. Doing what? Self determination; thinking that it is in us to determine our own ways rather than coming to God and let Him tell us what our ways are to be.

Dead abundant life. How many Christians do we know who are walking in the fullness of the abundant life with the fruit of the spirit emanating from them? Not to show off, but simply by the life of God flowing; because the resistance has been reduced to zero, to the loosing of the Spirit to the loosing of the mind of Christ. See, that’s the fullness of joy. Not an occasional good mood; but the fullness of joy as a lifestyle. So when the saved Christian continues to walk in self determination rather than God determination, what we have is a life that still looks like the world, open ourselves to the charge of hypocrisy, produce dead works, have no life, kill the abundant life, and kill our testimony. Those are all aspects of the death that occurs when we operate in the way that seems right to a man which is to think that it is in him to declare his own ways as opposed to coming to God and let God declare it.

That’s why the Bible talks of the sin nature, and our nature...I use the little mnemonic DNA because that’s the biologic term familiar to a doctor as depraved nature abiding. Look at our conception and birth. Psalms 51:5 – “I was conceived in sin, I was brought forth in sin.” Ephesians 2:1 – “I was dead in sin.” Romans 6:20 – “I was a slave to sin.” See - that’s what we are, apart from Christ. Well, then when we get saved, you say, “well aren’t we now different?” Well, we’re different because the power that raised Christ from the dead is in us; we are indeed different, but it’s like a U-turn on the highway of life. If we lusted the day before we got saved, we will lust the day after we got saved. It is a U-turn; we are now supposed to be going in an entirely different direction. The question is, are we, and how rapidly? Because in the final analysis, the definition of what is spiritual, is that which brings me and others closer, faster, to God. Now most of us settle in, I think, to a fairly slow progression toward God. The reason is, if we slow the flow of the progression toward Christ-likeness, it means we only slowly give up self. And thus, we’re allowed the luxury of continuing in self worship while pretending that we

are doing what the Bible says. So the Christian life so commonly becomes a pretense as opposed to the abundant life with the fruit of the Spirit in full emanation from us.

Now, if you'll allow this series to continue, when we get into the New Testament, and I start talking about things like your cross that you're to take up, there's a certain correlation of things I'm going to introduce now, but not explore...just introduce. You see when the New Testament talks about flesh versus spirit, in the flesh, self is the basis. Well, the root of self is self determination. For self to determine that one can be self determined. So, self determination is the root of self; self is the root of what's called the flesh and the flesh is the root of what's called this world or the system of this world; and Satan is called the god of this world. So any time that we operate in self determination, we are in the flesh, operating by the system of this world and serving Satan. Now does Satan say, "you are serving me"? No, because he doesn't want you to know that. But every thought, every decision you make is one of two things: God worship or Satan worship. Every thought...that's why we're told to capture every thought, you see.

Now, in regard to the opposite of that, what we call the spirit, that is to be God determined. Well, how has God spoken to us in these latter days? Through His Son. So, in the spirit, Jesus is the basis. That's called the kingdom of Heaven. You see, we go to Heaven, but the kingdom of Heaven is to begin to come on Earth through us, but it only does that if Jesus is the basis of your thought and your decisions. That's why we capture every thought to the obedience of Jesus Christ. So, let's look at certain aspects of sin. We are sin. We tend to think of sin as being an act, an individual act; but the acts are simply the expressions of the fact that we are sin. They flow out of that thing called the sin nature. We simply do what gives ourselves, namely the flesh, the most pleasure, and the flesh nature does not derive pleasure from anything that doesn't fulfill itself. And at the root fulfill its own self determination. I can decide what I should have, when I should have it, and how I should get it.

Here's a point about the flesh. We're told to deny it. Well, see we don't like discomfort. But frankly speaking, if your flesh isn't screaming, it probably isn't dying. Because that which is threatened with death will scream. It's just like dieting. If you aren't hungry, you probably aren't losing weight. Sin is also expansionistic. Each sin hardens the heart and numbs us to ever greater sin. It's like the dope addict where the bigger hit is required progressively to give the same degree of pleasure as a small hit gave initially. Sin does not reach a point of satisfaction, satiety, and stop there. Because once we dismiss God, we will dismiss anything. Then we fulfill Isaiah 56:12 – that says "tomorrow will be like today, only more so." See, there is no such thing as a static position in the Christian walk. You're either progressing to the face of God, or you are backsliding doing the moon walk; appearing to go forward while you're going backward. But there is no such thing as treading water, because if you tread water and dismiss that you are treading water, then you will dismiss something worse than treading water, which is to say, backsliding.

So that's why we're told to seek His face, because if we're not seeking, we are drifting from it. Scripture tells us, pay attention, lest you drift. See, Christ paid it all; but the only thing we're left to pay is attention. Attention to being God determined rather than self determined.

Sin is self worship. See, false idols aren't really what we worship. What we really do is have false idols as symptoms that simply represent some appetite of our own that we want to fulfill. Ancient cultures had goddesses of fertility. Well, how were they worshipped? With sexual orgies. The orgies allowed the sexual lust in the flesh of man to be released with full approval, without inhibition, without guilt, without penalty, while calling it worship. So the goddess of fertility wasn't the false idol, it was the

sexual lust in the heart of man that desired release without inhibition, without judgment, without penalty; and thus, they called it worship. You say, well that was ancient. Well, here are some recent examples. The greedy man who relishes with pride his prudence with money. The unbeliever who relishes with pride, his independent thinking. The legalist who relishes with pride, his devotion to the rules. See, he takes something within himself that fulfills self, and projects it as godly. And that's how we will always be when we function in self determination.

Some of our attitudes toward sin. We tend to view, of course, we can only see our present sins in the light of previous sins. That's part of why we see through a glass dimly because we're looking through the filter of being so immersed in sin that we can't even see what sin is anymore. Sin tolerated, breeds more sin. As pornography has increased in our society incrementally, so also can sin take over our souls incrementally. No man addicted to internet pornography started addicted to internet pornography. He started with entertaining a lustful thought insisting on being self determined that no harm would come of it as opposed to being God determined. Because God says, turn away from sin. Flee from sin. Capture the thought, deny self, follow Me, be God determined, you see. As society is no longer shocked by nudity, so are we, even as Christians, no longer shocked by sin, even in ourselves. We all know the story of the frog who cooked incrementally with a slow change in temperature of the water. So the pathway to sinful degeneration even as a Christian, is incremental acclimation or acclimatization. When you acclimate to a certain level of sin, you are already on the pathway to degeneration. Not to lose your salvation, but to produce more dead works, more dead testimony, and more dead abundant life. The pathway to dismissing many sins is to dismiss a few sins. And the pathway to dismissing some sins is to dismiss a sin. This isn't legalism, this is how God views reality. Why else would He say capture every thought. See, we have a tendency, even as Christians, to dilute Scripture power. See, we're told that the Word of God is living and active. And we're also told that it was written by the Spirit and we can quench the spirit. Romans 3:23 – "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." Many dilute into: well, I have sinned, but I've not sinned any worse than the next guy. Lev. 11:44 – be holy as I am Holy becomes: well, be at least as reasonably close to holy as my closest friends so they don't disown me. Romans 6:23 – "the wages of sin is death" becomes: "well, my God is a God of love and I don't think He wants to talk about death." Luke 18:19 – "Only God is good" becomes: "I'm plenty good enough for a God if He is truly good."

Now see much of that Scriptural dilution goes unexpressed, but it is there nonetheless. How do we know? Because God tells us how He views reality. Luke 6:44 – "By their fruit, you shall know them." So our fruit, even as New Testament Christians, produces precious little hungering and thirsting after the Holiness of God. Our fruit is to tolerate sin, to excuse sin and not to confront sin so that we can continue in the luxury of self determination. You see, we will go to any extreme to avoid hurting somebody's feelings. Why? Because we think that they will think less of us if we do so. They will criticize us. Well, Jesus says, anybody who looks like Me is going to be condemned and criticized.

The question isn't, does it hurt feelings? The question is, is it God determination or self determination? And if it's self determination, their feelings become less relevant. I ask you, how many times did Jesus praise the disciples? How many times did Jesus elicit godly behavior by praising somebody? He kept His eyes on what the Father did, what the Father said, doing only what was pleasing to the Father. He would even tell the leaders of the religious community of Israel, "You are like whited sepulchurs full of dead men's bones, you brood of vipers." Did that hurt their feelings? Now we don't hurt feelings just to hurt feelings; we speak with gentleness and reverence in love; but we speak truth. What is truth? Truth is what God is and how God views everything else. So when we withhold truth for fear of hurting feelings, all we're doing is saying what they think of me is more important than what God says for me to

do. They're never going to come closer to God as long as all Christians around them spare their feelings, because their feelings are rooted in self. And self can't be denied when it isn't recognized. In fact, to give you the contrary, if you're not to some degree, on some occasions, hurting people's feelings, you're probably walking in self determination rather than God determination.

Romans 2:4 – “Or do we think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience?” You see, what we take lightly, we will inevitably take advantage of. We tend to take and pervert God's kindness, forbearance, and patience from a window of opportunity to repent into a window of opportunity to sin. It's been said of young people that they have the attitude that consequences deferred are consequences avoided. In other words, if they smoke and five minutes later don't have lung cancer, they think they have always avoided the consequence of their smoking. Now sometimes, we take that attitude toward sin. We take God's patience and regard it as the great escape. He didn't punish me immediately, so He must not care much about it. But to do that is to continue to walk in self determination rather than God determination. You say, “Buddy, do you really need to hammer so hard on the issue of sin in the life of a Christian?” Well, my aim is to be God determined. So as you leave, discern all things and hold on to only what is good. But by the fruits, the church is known. Is the church known for love? Or is the church known for division?

I don't know that I've ever talked to a non-Christian that the first words out of their mouth, when they responded were, well if it weren't for the hypocrisy, I might look at it. That's why I insist on addressing sin. But beyond that, remember, I believe and I'll profess it to you as we go forward that the revelation of the horror and magnitude and the abomination of the filth of sin in us is why the church produces so many dead works, dead testimony, and absence of the abundant life. I do believe that if we're not willing to look at the fullness of the sin in us, then we disregard the opportunity to have the greater revelation of the love of God. We have the revelation of the grace of God which is expression of His love which is about this much, because our revelation of Holiness is that much, and thus, the revelation of our sin is that much. And the revelation of the grace of God, the reason we don't regard it as amazing, living lives being amazed by the grace of God is because we refuse to know His Holiness; and thus, refuse to know our sin. And I believe that is right out of the Word of God. So I'm not here to convince you, I'm here to express it and have you discern all things. And as you go forward, and we go forward in this series, if you differ from that, substantially, of course, we can talk about that. But my intent is to stand up here and loose the truth of God and trust the Spirit of Truth in each of you to discern all things and hold on to what is good. So, I don't say these things to condemn you, I say these things to purify the church, bring you closer to the face of God, change you into the image of Jesus Christ, eliminate hypocrisy, be amazed by His grace, grow in His love, be God-determined, be only God-determined, access the abundant life, bring Him maximal pleasure, bring Him maximal glory, and thus fulfill your purpose on planet earth as Christians.