

The Dark Room



of Sin

Study Book

by John M. Duvall

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Compartmentalizing

Sin

There are Christians in this world who are living a life of duplicity. While they are in the presence of others, they appear godly and wholesome, yet they stand guilty of horrific sins, such as sexual immorality, drug use, social drinking, dressing immodestly, using corrupt or filthy language, etc. Quite often, when these sins are finally brought to the light of day, fellow Christians are floored, saying things like, “Surely not. I just can’t believe they would be involved in such a deed.”

Duplicity = “1 : contradictory doubleness of thought, speech, or action; especially: the belying of one's true intentions by deceptive words or action”
(Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

How can this type of Christian successfully fool so many people for so long? The answer is found in the phrase “compartmentalizing sin.” That is to say, they isolate their sinful behavior into its own dark room. When they are in the presence of other people, they walk in the light of day and stay far away from the sinful behavior. Then, later on, when no one is watching, they unlock their dark room, go in and become a whole different person who revels in the sinful deed. Once their sin is completed, they unlock the door to their dark room and step back into the light of day.

Compartmentalize = “to separate into isolated compartments or categories”
(Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

This dark room of sin could be filled with any number of sins. There are some people who have a dark room of drug abuse. Some people may have sexual immorality, such as fornication, adultery, or even prostitution in their dark rooms. Some dark rooms may be filled with pornography, cyber-sex relationships, or any number of sexual sins. Some people may use their dark rooms to tell dirty jokes, to gossip, to tell lies about others, to habitually lie, or to drink socially or even to the point of drunkenness.

Tragically, some Christians become trapped in their dark room of sin. This choice is generally marked in their lives by a total departure from their previous service to God. I know of more than one example of a preacher who stepped into his dark room of sin one too many times and fell from the faith, rejecting those very things for which he had once stood.

Discussion:

Compartmentalizing sin in your life is the same as practicing hypocrisy. Consider the following two definitions:

1. hypocrite = hupokrites {hoop-ok-ree-tace' } - "1) one who answers, an interpreter 2) an actor, stage player 3) a dissembler, pretender, hypocrite" (Enhanced Strong's Lexicon)
2. hypocrisy = hupokrisis {hoop-ok'-ree-sis} - "1) an answering 2) an answer 3) the acting of a stage player 4) dissimulation, hypocrisy" (Ibid)

When we see the context in which these words are often used, we begin to see the concept of a person pretending to be something that he is not. Quite often, a hypocrite will be attempting to portray a righteous image while masking unrighteous motives, intents, thoughts, behavior, etc.

Read Matthew 23:1-7, 25-28

1. What were the scribes and the Pharisees guilty of doing?
2. With what were the scribes and the Pharisees more concerned?
3. Give some examples of how a Christian could be guilty of doing the same thing as the scribes and the Pharisees.
4. In our "germ conscious" culture, how useful is a dirty cup? What must be done to the cup to restore its usefulness?
5. How useful in the service of the Lord is the person who is living a life of hypocrisy? What must that hypocritical Christian do? What is your responsibility towards that Christian? (Cf. Galatians 6:1-4)

Do You Have a Dark Room of Sin?

Do you have a dark room of sin in your life? It is crucial that you are honest with yourself and God when answering this question. Too often we want to deny that we could ever possess such a room in our lives. Sadly, the evidence is often overwhelmingly to the contrary. You must be willing to look at yourself in the mirror and acknowledge what you truly see.

Consider for a moment the example of King David. King David had an affair with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah. As a result of their illicit sexual activities, Bathsheba became pregnant. Knowing that the pregnancy would surely reveal their sin, David tried to arrange for Uriah to spend some time with Bathsheba, hoping that Uriah would think the soon-to-be-revealed pregnancy was from his own seed. Uriah, being too loyal to the soldiers under him, refused to allow himself the pleasure of being with his wife. After this attempt, King David had Uriah killed by sending him into the heat of battle. After the death of Uriah, King David took Bathsheba to be his wife. After studying this story, you see something missing: David's repentance. David spent a year in denial. He denied that he was in possession of such a dark room of sin within his life. After the birth of the baby, Nathan approached David and revealed David's sin. Finally, David acknowledged his sin and repented. (Cf. II Samuel 11:1 - 12:25)

The longer you deny the existence of sin in your life, the closer you come to spending eternity in hell.



Like David, many people are in denial of the existence of their dark room. They will go in and out of their dark room of sin without truly repenting. In order to truly repent of your sins, you must be willing to acknowledge the sin, both to yourself and to God. Therefore, it is important that you are honest with yourself about the existence of a dark room of sin. The longer you deny the existence of sin in your life, the closer you come to spending eternity in hell.

Let me help you in your search for the possible existence of that dark room of sin within your life by asking you to do two things. First, ask yourself, "Do I find myself sneaking around, hoping no one will see me? Would I be ashamed if seen by fellow Christians?" If you find yourself

engaging in certain acts of which you would be ashamed for your fellow Christians to discover, then you have a dark room of sin in your life.

Secondly, I would like for you to consider the following list of sins. Look deeply into your own life to see if these sins are present in your life. The following list is compiled from Romans 1:24-32, Galatians 5:19-21, Colossians 3:5-11, and I Peter 4:1-3.

Sexual Sins

REF.	SIN	DESCRIPTION	IN MY LIFE?
Rom	homosexuality	Sexual relations or activities between members of the same sex.	
Rom Gal Col	fornication	Sexual relations or activities between two who are not married, at times is interchangeable with adultery.	
Rom Gal Col	adultery	Sexual relations or activities between a married person and someone other than his or her spouse.	
Gal I Pet	licentiousness	Refers to unbridled lust, lasciviousness, shamelessness, which is either fed by or results in a desire for sexual activity.	
Gal Col	uncleanness	Refers to thoughts that are lustful, impure, unchaste, often leading to illicit sexual activities. <u>Application:</u> These feelings are often provoked by pornography, nude scenes in movies or magazines, unchaste dating practices, immodest or suggestive clothing, etc.	
Col	passion	When used in a bad sense refers to those passions or strong feelings which, if allowed to control one's life, will lead to a desire for sexual activity.	

Discussion:

In times past, the discussion of sexual sins might have been a rare discussion, except between the mother and the daughter or the father and the son. However, in our culture, sexual influences and temptations are broadcasted upon a much broader scale. Parents cannot afford to ignore the sexual challenges which their growing children will face. With the growing problem of addiction to pornography, thanks in part to the misuse of the internet, even parents may be struggling with the challenges of sexual sins.

Based upon the definitions in the chart of Sexual Sins, it is possible to develop some preventive measures to help avoid sexual sins within your life. If you were trying to tell a friend or family member how to avoid sexual sins, what type of advice you would give? Refer back to the chart as needed to help define the sexual sins.

1. How can I avoid committing *homosexuality*?
2. How can I avoid committing *fornication*?
3. How can I avoid committing *adultery*?
4. How can I avoid *licentiousness*?
5. How can I avoid *uncleanness*?
6. How can I avoid *passion* as used in a sinful way?

Let's Talk About Sexual Sins

Sexual sins can have a devastating effect on our lives. Of all the sins that can be listed, the sin of fornication or sexual immorality is said to be against the person who is committing the sin. (I Corinthians 6:18) Unwanted babies, deadly diseases, ruined reputations, and destroyed families are all results of sexual sins. Aside from the consequences listed above, the Bible gives more reasons why fornication is a terrible sin.

1. Fornication can kill any and all opportunities to teach the person with whom you had sexual relations. (When you engage in sexual sins with another person, you are having fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Why should they listen to you “preach” to them after you have shared in their sin?) Also, those who hear of your activities will see no need to listen to your religious teachings. Consider how David, through his deeds, gave “great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.” (II Samuel 12:14)
2. Fornication is so horrible that it is the only reason for a marriage relationship to be lawfully ended, freeing the innocent party to remarry. (Matthew 5:32; 19:9; Hebrews 13:4)
3. Fornication will send a person to hell. (Romans 1:29,32; Galatians 5:19,21)

Christians must abstain from engaging in sexual immorality. Consider the following reasons why we must abstain.

1. We have been born again to walk in the Spirit and not in the works of the flesh. (I Peter 1:22-25; cf. Galatians 5:16, 29-31, 22-24)
2. We have been joined with Christ. To commit fornication is to deny that joining (fellowship) with Christ and to be joined with sin. (I Corinthians 6:15-20)
3. God will judge fornicators and adulterers. (Hebrews 13:4) Let us not be named among them.
4. One more reason why we should abstain from sexual immorality is this: Since we are Christians, our bodies are to be living sacrifices. (Romans 12:1,2) Presenting our bodies as living sacrifices means that we will devote our lives to always doing the will of the Lord. This includes abstaining from sexual immorality. An unmarried Christian who truly loves God will be willing to abstain from any and all sexual activities. Also, a married couple must be willing to remain monogamous.

In our culture, there are some who are opposed to the concept of abstinence being the only choice for single people. Our young people and our older folks need to be reminded who must remain celibate. Children, teenagers, and young adults **MUST** remain celibate. Adults who are not married **MUST** remain celibate. The one who has put away his spouse for unscriptural reasons must remain celibate, unless the two are reconciled. (Matthew 5:32; 19:9) The one who has been put away must remain celibate. Christ said, “. . . and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery. (Matthew 5:32, NKJV; cf. Matthew 19:9) One whose spouse has died must remain celibate unless

he remarries. In other words, unless you are lawfully married according to the guidelines laid forth in the word of God, you must remain celibate.

What can lead a person to engage in sexual immorality? There are several situations that can tempt a person to commit sexual sins. When a spouse refuses to fulfill the God given desires of his or her spouse, the foundation for temptations to commit sexual sins have been laid. (Cf. I Corinthians 7:1-5) Keeping friendship with those who regularly engage in sexual immorality can tempt you to engage in or share in the same sins. (Cf. I Corinthians 15:33) Having a “boyfriend” or “girlfriend” who is constantly pressuring you to engage in sexual immoralities can be a temptation. Also, there are various environments which can promote sexual sins, such as exposing yourself to certain movies, going to certain dances, listening to certain friends when they say that sex isn’t all that bad, viewing pornography, establishing an emotional bond that belongs only between those who are married, etc.

As much as I would like to tell you that all Christians are above sexual sins, the truth is that many have fallen prey to its effects. There are young Christians who have engaged in sexual sins. There are even older Christians who have done the same. There have even been preachers who have been caught up in sexual sins. Some preachers have walked in the directions of prostitutes, some have dipped daily into the pool of pornography, and some have even had affairs with members of the body of Christ. No one is isolated from the temptations of sexual immorality. Like any other temptation we face, the key to victory is to never give in to the temptation. If you have given in to the temptations of sexual sins, then it is time to repent and change. No matter how great the emotional tie or the addiction may be, you can change. God will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear. He will provide a way of escape from every temptation. (I Corinthians 10:13)

What can you do about sexual temptations? You must understand that as with all of our God given emotions, our sexual desires have both lawful and unlawful outlets. The lawful gratification of these desires is found only in marriage. According to the Word of God, this is the only lawful outlet for these desires. (I Corinthians 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4)

Parents, you must be training your children in such a way that they will be put on guard against the sexual temptations. You must teach your children modesty and decency which comes with proper love and respect for God and His word. (Ephesians 6:4)

Children and young people, please realize that what the world says is right and what God’s word says is right is two entirely different things. The world says that sexual activity before marriage is fine. God says that sexual activities before marriage is wrong. However, God does say that sexual activities within the confines of marriage, (between only the husband and the wife) are acceptable and lawful. Stay away from sexual temptations and do not provoke others in a sexual way.

Let's Talk About Dancing

The world contains many forms of sexual enticements. Often, some Christians will ignore these enticements. Dancing is one such enticement. I recognize that not all form of dancing produces sexual enticements. However, the primary dancing opportunities which are young people face do feed upon the sexual allure of the particular dance.

When we prepare our children to face the challenges of life, we must equip them with a proper understanding of right and wrong. We should teach our children why something is right or why something is wrong, providing explanations. Quite often we simply teach that dancing is wrong. Period. However, to the developing mind of our young people, that explanation is not enough. We should be teaching our young people the problems and perils of dancing.

For instance, we need to teach our young people that there are three forms of dancing mentioned in the Bible. First, there are dances of rejoicing and thanksgiving. Exodus 15:20 and Judges 11:34 are two such examples. Secondly, there are dances of worship to God. Consider Psalms 149:3 as an example of this. Thirdly, there are dances associated with idolatry and lustful enticements. This type of dancing was associated with the Israelites rebellion and the worship of the golden calf. (Exodus 32:19,20) The daughter of Herodias danced before Herod and pleased him. The normal assumption is that this type of dancing was intended to please the onlookers in a lustful way. (Matthew 14:6-8)

Many modern dances promote and incite the opposite sex in a sexual way. To promote or incite lustful thoughts is considered lascivious behavior, which is sin. (Galatians 5:19) The word lasciviousness is from a Greek word which means, "indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females." (Thayer's Greek Lexicon) Many modern dances feed on the sexual desires within the male and the female. To further show this point, consider the following questions regarding modern high school dances.

1. Why do teenage dances require chaperons?
2. Why is it that many young ladies have lost their virginity, even becoming pregnant, after high school proms?
3. Why do dances involve boys dancing with girls? Why is there an attraction to dance with the opposite sex?
4. Why do boys and girls hold each other close on the slow dances?

Another problem with dancing is the environment. Many dancing environments are filled with revellings which is also a sin. (Galatians 5:19-21) Revelling is defined as, "feasts and drinking parties that are protracted till late at night and indulge in revelry." (Thayer's Greek Lexicon) Many dancing environments fit this description. Consider the night clubs, bars, and parties in which many participants dance and drink alcohol.

Consider other aspects of dancing environments. The dancing goes on until the late hours of the night. Dancing is done in dimly lit rooms. Many who dance do so in clothing designed to sexually attract the opposite sex. Depending on the type of dance, you may be called upon to hold someone

close to you and possibly engage in indecent and suggestive bodily contact. Suggestive words in the music often feed the emotions which build within a dancing environment. Many dancing environments can dull your moral and spiritual senses by exposing you to lewd or lustful emotions.

What are the fruits of most dances? (Matthew 7:16,17) To determine whether dancing is right or wrong, please consider the following questions.

1. What type of influence and effect does your dancing have on others? Will your dancing with or for them cause them to have lustful thoughts about you?
2. Are you dancing because of peer pressure? If you are dancing because of peer pressure, then you will stand a good chance of doing other things because of peer pressure, such as drinking, smoking, premarital sex, etc.
3. Will you still be considered a "light" to the world after the world sees you dancing?
4. What type of friends will you meet while dancing -- godly or ungodly?
5. What type of atmosphere results from the dance you are considering attending? Will there be drinking and uncontrolled, do-what-you-want type of behavior? Are you going to be able to maintain your Christianity?
6. After the dance, what type of behavior are you encouraged to engage in – godly or ungodly? Are you going to be able to maintain your Christianity?
7. Could the dance detract from your living a godly life? Will dancing keep you from being pure and unspotted from the world? (James 1:27)

Every person who is considering dancing should look at the fruits of dancing. This evaluation of the dance must be honest and true. If the fruits of the dance are sexual temptations and sin or any other type of sin, then you should avoid dancing. It would be sinful. Many people who desire to engage in the types of dances discussed in this lesson will often deny the fruits or will say that they can handle the fruit. This type of self-denial has led many young people and older people to do things that they later regretted.

Sins Against God

REF.	SIN	DESCRIPTION	IN MY LIFE?
Gal I Pet	idolatry	Refers to the worshiping of false gods.	
Gal	sorcery	“sorcery, magical arts, often found in connection with idolatry and fostered by it” (<i>Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon</i>). This would include witchcraft, black magic, spells, fortune-telling, etc.	
Rom	haters of God	As the phrase states, this person hates God. He is exceptionally impious and wicked.	
Col I Pet	evil desires	This refers to the desire, craving, or longing to do that which is contrary to God. This could lead to drug use, illicit sexual activity, stealing, etc.	
Rom	wickedness	This refers to anything that the Bible declares to be wrong. If you willfully engage in any type of sin, then you are committing wickedness.	
Rom	evil-mindedness	This is a description of one whose character is to do evil. They possess a deprived heart and are malignant. Their every thought is to harm, hurt, or sin against God.	
Rom	proud	This person puts himself above all others, especially in estimation of his own opinions and abilities. Because of his pride, he rejects obedience to God. He is unwilling to humble himself.	
Rom	boasters	Along the same lines as the proud, the boaster proclaims his own merits to others with the hope of building himself up. Quite often, this boaster is simply an empty pretender.	
Rom	inventors of evil things	This is a contriver of evil plans. He spends his time thinking of ways to hurt, to sin, to cause trouble, to destroy, etc. He plans to do things contrary to the will of God.	
Gal I Pet	revelries	Generally refers to those feasts or drinking parties where all manner of sin is done.	

Rom	undiscerning	This person neither understands the will of God nor does he care to understand. His lack of knowledge and understanding are self-imposed.	
Gal I Pet	drunkenness	Drinking alcohol beverages to the point of intoxication. At this stage, you lose control over yourself, lowering your inhibitions.	
I Pet	drinking parties	Refers to activities such as social drinking. This behavior is problematic because, while some may not get drunk, the effect of alcohol results in a loosening of one's moral inhibitions and restraints. When a person drinks socially, he threatens the very basis of his moral control.	

Discussion:

1. Which other sin is considered the same as idolatry? (Cf. Colossians 3:5)
2. Give some modern day examples of practices which are often accepted by the majority, but fall within the description of "sorcery."
3. What one key ingredient do the "proud" and "boaster" lack within their characters? (Cf. Proverbs 16:19; 29:23; Romans 12:16; James 4:6-10)

Let's Talk About Revelries, Drinking Parties, and Drunkenness

“Revelries,” “drinking parties,” and “drunkenness” go hand-in-hand. Generally speaking, the parties do not get out of control unless the influence of alcohol (or some other drug) is present. Let us spend a few minutes discussing the subject of drinking.

The Bible clearly describes the effects of alcohol. Consider the following verses:

- ▶ “They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, And are at their wits’ end.” (Psalms 107:27, NKJV)
- ▶ “Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, And whoever is led astray by it is not wise.” (Proverbs 20:1, NKJV)
- ▶ “...drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty...” (Proverbs 23:19-21, NKJV)
- ▶ “Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes?” (Proverbs 23:19, NKJV)
- ▶ “Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor, Pressing him to your bottle, Even to make him drunk, That you may look on his nakedness!” (Habakkuk 2:15, NKJV)
- ▶ “. . . have erred through wine, And through intoxicating drink are out of the way . . . they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.” (Isaiah 28:7-8, NKJV)
- ▶ “Drink, be drunk, and vomit! Fall and rise no more...” (Jeremiah 25:27, NKJV)

Not only does the Bible describe the effects of alcohol, it also condemns drunkenness. The first thing we have to understand is that those who engage in drunkenness will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21) Secondly, drunkenness is a “way” in which Christians are not to walk. (Romans 13:13) Thirdly, the people of the world walk in drunkenness, not Christians. (I Peter 4:3) Fourthly, Christians are not to keep company with Christians who practice drunkenness. (I Corinthians 5:11) Drunkenness is clearly a sin and has no part in a Christian’s life.

What about social drinking? Some Christians will agree that drunkenness is wrong, but they will defend social drinking, saying that it not to sinful. Again, let us consider what the Bible has to say. According to I Peter 4:3-5, “drinking parties” belong to the lives of those who are not Christians. He said that we no longer run to the same excess of sin as does the world. The “drinking parties” would be the equivalent to our social drinking. Think about it. “Drinking parties” is listed separately from drunkenness, which shows that they are two different sins which involve alcohol. “Drinking parties” is not the same as “drunkenness.” However, “drinking parties” can obviously lead to “drunkenness” since they both involve the consumption of alcohol. Now, think about social drinking. While social drinking is not the same as getting drunk, we know that social drinking can obviously lead to drunkenness because both require the consumption of alcohol. Based upon this reasoning, it should become clear that “drinking parties” and “social drinking” go hand-in-hand and are the same.

If a person refuses to listen to the scriptures and is therefore not convinced to avoid alcoholic beverages, then maybe the facts of science might shed some light. The form of ethyl alcohol used in beverages has a toxic effect on the mind and body. The toxic effect or intoxication results in a depressed state of the mind and body. “Even in small amounts it acts as a narcotic, and the apparent stimulation produced by alcohol stems from its depressive effect on the higher nervous centers, which normally play an inhibitory role in the human personality.”

“The degree of intoxication will vary with the level of concentration of alcohol in the blood as well as one's susceptibility to alcohol. It is said that alcohol poisoning, which can cause a deep coma for 6 to 12 hours and can be fatal, occurs when the blood-alcohol level is around .4 percent in person of average susceptibility.”

“Chronic alcoholic intoxication, known as alcoholism, leads to serious disturbances that affect the nervous system, the liver, the kidneys, the digestive tract, and the circulatory organs. Several complications, such as neuritis (q.v.), are the result of severe nutritional deficiencies which arise from habitual and excessive ingestion of alcohol. In advanced stages tissues of vital organs are destroyed, causing such diseases as nephritis, cirrhosis of the liver, and enteritis. Mental illnesses associated with a pathological nervous system are also very common. An acute organic condition often occurring in alcoholics, and sometimes precipitated by infections or physical injuries, is delirium tremens (q.v.). Even with proper treatment this condition may occasionally be fatal.” (The above information came from Funk & Wagnalls New Encyclopedia.)

Why is alcohol so popular? The appeal of alcohol to so many people can be seen in the following quote used earlier. “Even in small amounts it acts as a narcotic, and the apparent stimulation produced by alcohol stems from its depressive effect on the higher nervous centers, which normally plays an inhibitory role in the human personality.” (Ibid.)

Please take notice that alcohol affects the part of your brain that would normally play a part in your inhibitions. When a person drinks alcohol, they are able to “relax” and “let go” of themselves. Too often, the silencing of one's inhibitions leads to more drinking, then drunkenness. Many people have done or said things while under the influence that they normally would have been too inhibited to have said or done.

Are alcoholic beverages trouble? Consider this:

- ▶ You know alcohol is trouble when a police officer will arrest you for driving while drinking.
- ▶ You know alcohol is trouble when you end up hugging a commode because you had too much to drink.
- ▶ You know alcohol is trouble when your spouse is threatening to leave you because of what you did at the party where you were drinking. And the bad thing is you do not remember what took place.
- ▶ You know alcohol is trouble when you wake up one morning in the hospital to find out that you killed a little child and her family because you were driving under the influence.

The simple, yet important, conclusion is this: Why should you take a chance? Since alcohol leads to drunkenness, then why take a chance on drinking? Since alcohol leads to alcoholism, then why take a chance on drinking? Since alcohol removes your inhibitions, then why take a chance on doing something you will later regret because you were drinking? Since alcohol aides in your being led into sin, then why take a chance on sinning?

To the teenagers and college students, your buddies and friends may try to get you to drink. Don't do it. You just might live to regret you actions. Or you might not live at all. You will feel much better about yourself waking up in the morning being thankful that you said no. Also, do not hang around people who drink. One day you might be one of their victims. You know the truth behind alcohol. Say no to your friends' invitations to drink. Drinking is not worth the risks.



**IT IS NOT
WORTH THE RISK!**

Sins Against Others

REF.	SIN	DESCRIPTION	IN MY LIFE?
Gal	hatred	Feelings of enmity, ill-will.	
Gal	contentions	Heated disagreements brought on by feelings of strife.	
Gal	jealousies	Feelings of envy, resentment, or bitterness towards another caused by his possessing something that you do not possess. This can often result in a contentious rivalry.	
Gal	outbursts of wrath	Occurs when anger is allowed to heat up and reach a boiling point. Something physical is done to express the intense anger. At this point, anger controls the person.	
Col	wrath	See “outbursts of wrath.”	
Gal	selfish ambitions	Being concerned only with what you want, desire, or are interested in. You give no thought to the desires, concerns, or even the well-being of others.	
Gal	dissensions	An act or attitude which leads to division or discord. Often, this attitude is spawned by selfish ambitions.	
Gal	heresies	“Dissensions arising from diversity of opinions and aims” (<i>Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon</i>). This follows in the same vein or thought as dissensions because one feels his opinions or aims are more important than someone else’s opinions or aims.	
Rom Gal	envy	Along the same lines as jealousy, when feelings of discontent and resentment are spurred by another person’s possessions, qualities, or something of perceived value.	

Rom Gal	murder	This is the unlawful, premeditated killing of another person.	
Rom	maliciousness	See “malice.”	
Rom Col	covetousness	The overwhelming desire to have more. The yearning to possess. Covetousness is often at the heart of contests for money, gambling, wagering, etc. Covetousness is not limited to coveting money. One can covet things, material possessions, another person’s spouse, etc.	
Col	anger	This emotion refers, not to the anger found in Eph. 4:26, but to the emotion that is driven by wrath, indignation, or possibly an agitation of the soul. Often, this anger will result in sinful and hurtful actions, such as words and possibly violent actions.	
Col	malice	This emotion is fed by feelings of ill-will, hatred, jealousy, etc., often prompting hurtful actions and words.	
Col	blasphemy	“1) Slander, detraction, speech injurious, to another’s good name” (<i>Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon</i>). Blasphemy is often a result of anger, wrath, or malice. It is language and words intended to injure.	
Col	filthy language	This is comprised of foul and obscene speech. This covers a wide range of areas, such as curse or swear words, dirty jokes, etc.	
Col	lying	Refers to speaking something false with the intent to deceive.	
Rom	strife	See “contention” due to the strong similarities between the two sins.	
Rom	deceit	This is the intent to hide the truth, whether by word, action, insinuation, etc.	

Rom	whisperers	This is one who sets out to slander others in an underhanded and secret fashion. They talk behind the backs of their victims.	
Rom	backbiters	Along the same lines as a whisperer, a backbiter's intent is to defame or tear down their victims.	
Rom	violent	"1) An insolent man 2) one who, uplifted with pride, either heaps insulting language upon others or does them some shameful act of wrong" (<i>Enhance Strong's Lexicon</i>).	
Rom	disobedient to parents	Children who willingly disobey their parents. This disobedience is generally spawned by an underlying disrespect for their parents and their authority.	
Rom	untrustworthy	This is the person who is faithless. They willingly break covenants. They cannot be trusted to keep their word.	
Rom	unloving	This person has no natural affection or love for others. No matter how great the need, this person possesses no love for the needy.	
Rom	unforgiving	Being unwilling to forgive one who has done wrong.	
Rom	unmerciful	Being unwilling to extend mercy.	

How did you rate yourself in the examination of the charts on sexual sins, sins against God, and sins against other? Were you honest in your self-evaluation? If you marked yes in even one sin, then you must begin to change today. Even a dark room of just one sin is still sin. Engaging in that sin can still cost you your soul.

Discussion:

All of the sins listed in the chart Sins Against Others can be categorized in one of two categories: Unloving and/or selfish. Using the work area on the next page, list each of the Sins Against Others in the corresponding column. Note: Some sins could fall within both categories.

Unloving

Selfishness

Let's Talk About Gambling

What is gambling? An article from the Colliers Encyclopedia contains the follow information on gambling. "In its more limited sense it means an effort to gain something of value by risking the loss of something on a matter of chance. Gambling appeals to two basic traits of human nature, the desire for gain and the exhilarating thrill of uncertainty." (R. Creighton Buck, Gaming and Gambling,, Vol. 10, Colliers Encyclopedia CD-ROM)

Gambling is different than a risk when the risk is in regards to something like farming, driving a car, participating in athletics, etc. When gambling, a person stands to gain at the loss of others, the deciding factor (as to who wins and who loses) being an event arbitrarily selected. In a risk such as farming the profit is not sought at the expense of others and the risk is not voluntarily made by the farmer. I am sure that farmers would be pleased if there were no risks involved.

Does gambling violate God's word and the life Christians are to live? That is a very important question considering how popular gambling is among the world and among some Christians.

One of the basic motivations behind gambling violates the word of God. This motivation is covetousness. As the previous definition read, "Gambling appeals to two basic traits of human nature, **the desire for gain** and the exhilarating thrill of uncertainty." (emphasis J.D.) According to the word of God, covetousness is wrong. (Romans 1:29-32; I Corinthians 6:9-10) To most people who gamble (if not everyone), the most important desire is to win more money. Some say that they gamble because it is fun. But, would they truly be "having fun" if there was no hope of gaining more money?

At the very heart of gambling is the love of money. Regarding the love of money, Paul wrote, "*For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*" (I Timothy 6:10, NKJV) This love of money often develops because a person has placed their primary emphasis on the abundance of things that they possess or would like to possess. Jesus warned, "*Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.*" (Luke 12:15, NKJV)



Consider one more thought. Since gambling is fed by covetousness, then gambling could be considered a form of idolatry (and for many people it has become a form of "idol" worship). The apostle Paul wrote, "*Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*" (Colossians 3:5, NKJV)

While there are other Bible arguments against gambling, the sin of covetousness tends to be the greatest fault of those who gamble. We should never do anything that would either feed covetousness or thrive on covetousness.

Reasons to Leave Your Dark Room

Let us say for a moment that you have a dark room of sin that either you frequently visit or you have locked yourself within. Why should you want to leave that room of sin? Consider, if you would, the following reasons why you should leave your dark room of sin.

Reason One: As long as you stay in your dark room of sin, you will stumble around in the dark. According to Proverbs 4:18-19, the way of the wicked is like darkness. Since the wicked person chooses to walk in darkness, he will always stumble over his wicked deeds. Here is what Solomon wrote, *“But the path of the just is like the shining sun, That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is like darkness; They do not know what makes them stumble.”* (Proverbs 4:18-19, NKJV) Do you want to live your life always stumbling about in the darkness of sin? If you want to walk with sure footing, then leave that darkness by turning to the Light of life, which is Jesus Christ. (Cf. John 8:12)

Reason Two: If you live in darkness, then you are walking under the power of Satan. By choosing to turn from the darkness to the light, you will be choosing to walk by the power of God. Jesus told Paul that He, Jesus, would deliver both the Jews and the Gentiles. He said that their eyes were to be open, *“in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.”* If you will choose to leave that dark room of sin, then you can be delivered from the power of Satan to the power of God. You will receive the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive *“an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in”* Jesus. If you are still using your dark room of sin, then be delivered today, joining all those who have already been delivered and forgiven. (Acts 26:15-18)

Reason Three: While you are going in and out of your dark room of sin, you cannot have fellowship with the light, with Christ. In II Corinthians 6:14, the apostle Paul wrote, *“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?”* (NKJV) Observe that there is no fellowship between righteousness and lawlessness and no communion between light and darkness. You cannot

walk in the light and then step to the darkness and expect to be pleasing unto God. The apostle John takes this point a step further in I John 1:5-7:

“This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” (I John 1:5-7, NKJV)

Fellowship - “a sharing, communion, fellowship”

Communion * - “fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, intercourse”
(*Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*)

* This is translated from the same Greek word translated as “fellowship” in I John 1:6,7.

Every time a Christian walks into his dark room of sin, he is walking in darkness and is no longer in fellowship with Christ. If that Christian claims to be in fellowship with Christ while continuing to come and go from his dark room of sin, then that Christian is a liar. However, if that Christian will come out from his dark room of sin and truly repent of his sin, then the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse him.

Reason Four: As a Christian, you are to be walking as a child of light. You are to “*have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.*” The apostle Paul wrote the following:

Fellowship - “to become a partaker together with others, or to have fellowship with a thing” (*Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*)

“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: ‘Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.’” (Ephesians 5:8-14; NKJV)

Before you became a Christian, you were a sinner, living in darkness. However, after having been born again, you became light in the Lord. Therefore, walk as a child of the light. Such a walk or behavior will yield goodness, righteousness, truth, and all that is acceptable to the Lord. Walking

as a child of light will leave no room for the unfruitful works of darkness. You were to have put to death those works of darkness when you became a Christian. (Cf. Romans 6)

Reason Five: All those who are going in and out of their dark rooms will be overtaken by the judgment day of the Lord. Paul wrote in I Thessalonians 5:4-10:

“But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.” (I Thessalonians 5:4-10, NKJV)

The judgment day of the Lord will overtake all who are walking in darkness. If you are a Christian, then you are to be a son of light and a son of the day. Those who are children of the night are those who are walking in darkness, living in sin. As a Christian, you are to watch and be sober, being in control of your life. You are to put on the breastplate of faith and love. Your faith and love will help you to remain faithful when Satan hurls those darts of temptation in your direction.

In addition to faith and love, you are also to put on the helmet of the hope of salvation. This hope of eternal salvation will give you the incentive to say no to temptation, knowing that nothing is worth jeopardizing your soul's eternal abode. With faith, love, and the hope of salvation, you will lock the door to your dark room of sin and then tear that room down forever. Christ paid a great price so that you could live with Him. Do not throw such a wonderful gift away by going back into sin. Prepare yourself for the judgment day of the Lord by protecting yourself with the faith, love, and hope of salvation.



Discussion:

Review: List the five reasons given for leaving your dark room of sin.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. What other reasons would you give a fellow Christian for leaving their dark room of sin?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

How to Get Out of the Dark Room

Let us say that you have decided to leave your dark room of sin, you are now faced with the question of how to get out of your dark room. How do you escape from that room of darkness? In order to help you answer this question, I would like to go back and examine the story of King David. This time, we will take a look at three steps King David took to leave his dark room of sin. Let us begin by examining David's prayer as recorded in Psalms 51.

Step One: David broke or humbled his spirit. In order to truly desire to leave your dark room of sin, your spirit and self-will must be broken. The only reason you have a dark room of sin is because you wanted it and you built it. Like David, you must leave your selfishness, breaking your spirit through the sorrow of your deed, and turn back to the Lord.

David wrote: *"For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart— These, O God, You will not despise."* (vs 16-17) David knew what God truly desired. God did not desire the fleshly sacrifices which could come from an insincere heart. God desired David to sacrifice his own spirit, his own selfishness, and his own will. To truly repent and turn from his dark room, David had to humble himself before the Lord.

Likewise you must, through godly sorrow, break your spirit and your will, humbling yourself before the Lord. Regarding godly sorrow, the apostle Paul wrote, *"For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death."* (II Corinthians 7:10, NKJV) Undoubtedly, David experienced this godly sorrow. If the knowledge of your sins and the understanding of your soul's eternal jeopardy prompts this type of sorrow within you, then you will break your spirit and will, humbling yourself before the Lord. Only the Lord can lead you out of your darkness. Only the Lord can forgive you of your sins. Take the first step out of your dark room by humbling yourself before the Lord and His word.

Step Two: David petitioned God through prayer. Prayer is one of the greatest opportunities afforded to man, second only to one's salvation in Jesus Christ. When a person becomes a Christian, a relationship with the Lord is established. One of the many benefits of this relationship is prayer. Although David was not a Christian (he was under the Law of Moses, the old covenant), he was a follower of God and lived accordingly. As a result of his relationship with God, David was able to talk to God through prayer. Although the book of Psalms records many prayers, the prayer of David in Psalms 51 shows his true reliance upon God. When a person turns to God in prayer, he is also demonstrating his reliance upon the same God.

When David faced his sin and presented a broken spirit to the Lord, he humbly turned to God in prayer. David began his prayer in Psalms 51 by praying, *“Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin.”* (vs 1-2, NKJV) David understood that in order to be forgiven, the Lord would have to show mercy. David recognized his complete reliance upon the Lord and prayed accordingly.

Not only did David show his need for mercy, he also confessed his sin in his prayer. David wrote, *“For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight — That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge.”* (vs 3-4, NKJV) Not only do we learn that David acknowledged his sins, but we also see that David faced the guilt of his sins. His sins were always before him. Why did David confess his sins before the Lord? He confessed his sins because it was the Lord against whom David had sinned.

After confessing his sins through prayer, David took the next step and prayed for the Lord to cleanse him of his sins. David wrote, *“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me hear joy and gladness, That the bones You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities.”* (vs 7-9, NKJV) It was important to David that he be cleansed of his sins. David's guilt was eating him up. He had sinned against the Lord. He recognized that no one could help him but the Lord. So, rightfully so, David turned to the Lord to receive that which only the Lord could give: The forgiveness of sins.

After requesting through prayer to be cleansed, David also prayed that he would be restored to the relationship he had once shared with the Lord. David wrote, *“Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners shall be converted to You.”* (vs 12-13, NKJV) Many Christians fail to realize that once they

possess a dark room of sin, they have left the fellowship of the Lord. (This was explained in Reasons to Leave Your Dark Room.) Like David, Christians who have built a dark room of sin in their lives, must, after praying for forgiveness, seek to be restored to the fellowship of the Lord.

If you truly desire to leave your dark room of sin, then you should pray to God. Confess your sins to the Lord, pray for mercy, pray for forgiveness, and then pray to be restored to a covenant relationship with the Lord. This step of prayer is crucial to your leaving your dark room of sin.

Step Three: David resumed a life of faithful obedience. Once David saw the fruits of the consequences of his sins, he pulled himself together and worshiped the Lord. *“So David arose from the ground, washed and anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he went into the house of the Lord and worshiped. . . ”* (II Samuel 12:20, NKJV) While David’s life would never truly be the same, he returned to the course of faithfully serving the Lord.

Like David, to complete your departure from your dark room of sin, you must return to faithful service. Once God has forgiven you of your sins, do not return to your dark room of sin. Replace those visits to the dark room with wholesome and godly activities such as daily Bible reading, going to worship services, teaching others about Jesus, praying, etc.

Once David faced his sin, he knew to whom he had to turn. David possessed this knowledge because he had been taught the word of God, as it was under the law of Moses.

Under the New Covenant of Jesus Christ, the New Testament, the answer of deliverance can only be found within Jesus Christ, the son of God. Jesus came to this earth to *“give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death.”* He came to guide your *“feet into the way of peace.”* (Luke 1:79, NKJV) If you are in darkness (sin), then follow the light of Jesus (His word) and you will find peace, walking only in the Light.

How to Get Out of the Dark Room

Consider King David

Step One: Break (Humble)

Your Spirit

Step Two: Petition the Lord in Prayer

- *Pray for mercy.*
- *Confess your sins to the Lord.*
- *Ask for forgiveness.*
- *Pray that you will be restored to the Lord.*

Step Three: Resume a Life of Obedience

In John 8:12, Jesus said, *“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”* (John 8:12, NKJV) When a person follows the light of Jesus, he will not get caught up in sin. The light of Jesus, through His word, will illuminate all that is sin along with the consequences of those sins. The person who is following Jesus will follow that light of life all the way to heaven. In John 12:46, Jesus goes on to declare that whoever believes in Him would not abide in darkness. One who believes enough in Jesus to follow Him will do his best to avoid sin, thereby no longer abiding in darkness.

What can you do to be delivered from your dark room of sin? If you will come out of your dark room and follow Jesus Christ and His teachings, then you will be delivered from the “power of darkness.” You will be delivered by redemption through the shedding of Jesus’s blood. The apostle Paul wrote, *“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”* (Colossians 1:13-14, NKJV)

How can you come to know Jesus and the path upon which He will direct you? As stated earlier, the answer is simple: Study the Bible. Seek the word of God. If you will consult the word of God and all of its wisdom, then you will be led away from darkness. In Proverbs 2:10-11, Solomon wrote, *“When wisdom enters your heart, And knowledge is pleasant to your soul, Discretion will preserve you; Understanding will keep you,”* (NKJV). (Cf. James 1:5-7)

Wisdom and knowledge will lead you to that salvation which is found by turning to Jesus and His teachings. Jesus paid the price so that you could be freed from your bondage to sin. This freedom will only come if you humble yourself to the will of the Lord. If you are not a Christian, then your first step in humbling yourself before the Lord is obedience to Jesus’s call to salvation. Here is what you must do: If you truly believe that Jesus is the son of God (John 3:16), then you must repent of your past sins (Acts 2:38), confessing your belief in Jesus Christ (Romans 10:9,10), and then be baptized into Christ. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4) At this point, all of your past sins are washed away and you will have been redeemed. Turn away from all manners of sin and you will be able to serve the Lord in righteousness, thus destroying your dark room of sin.

How to Get Out of the Dark Room

If you are not a Christian

- *Humble yourself before the Lord.*
- *Believe in Jesus.*
- *Confess your belief.*
- *Be Baptized into Christ.*

At this point, all your sins are washed away and you will have been redeemed.

If you are a Christian, but you have been going in and out of your dark room of sin, then you, too, must determine to leave, forever, that dark room of sin. In order to accomplish this departure, you must be forgiven. Here is what you must do: Humble yourself before the Lord, petition the Lord in prayer (praying for mercy, confessing your sins, praying for forgiveness, praying for restoration), and resume a faithful life of obedience. If you will do so, then the Lord will surely forgive you. (Cf. I John 1:8 - 2:2)

How to Get Out of the Dark Room
If you are a Christian

- *Humble yourself before the Lord.*
- *Petition the Lord in prayer.*
 - *Pray for mercy.*
 - *Pray, confessing your sins to the Lord.*
 - *Pray for forgiveness.*
 - *Pray for restoration.*
- *Resume a life of faithful obedience.*

Discussion:

1. Of the three steps needed to leave your dark room of sin, which step do you believe would be the most difficult? Why? _____

2. What sacrifices did David learn the Lord truly desired? _____

3. Does the Lord expect the same sacrifice from us today? _____

4. When facing the guilt of sin, what does godly sorrow produce? _____

5. When David petitioned God in prayer, what four things did he either acknowledge or request? _____

Staying Out of the Dark Room

The number one element needed in staying out of the dark room of sin is determination. Ultimately, you will do what you desire to do. Although you may struggle between that which is right and that which is wrong, if your desire to do that which is wrong is stronger than your desire to do that which is right, then you will eventually give in to sin. So, you must begin with developing a determination to leave your dark room of sin.

Once the determination is in place, you should fuel it with the knowledge and wisdom to which we referred earlier. According to the writings of Solomon, knowledge and wisdom are beneficial to the person who is striving to live a godly life. To receive the benefits, you must first put wisdom into your heart and then, secondly, allow knowledge to be pleasant to your soul. Once this is the condition of your attitude towards the word of God, then you will study your Bible on a daily basis and make application of what it teaches.

Determination = “3 a : the act of deciding definitely and firmly; also : the result of such an act of decision b : the power or habit of deciding definitely and firmly.” (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*)

What benefits will be reaped by placing wisdom within your heart and making knowledge pleasant to your soul? Consider the following list of benefits as described by Solomon in Proverbs 2:10-20.

Wisdom and knowledge will deliver you from “*the way of evil.*” (vs 12) Too often, a person will find himself on a particular path before realizing what type of path he has chosen. At first, the deeds associated with the path seem innocent and harmless. However, this wayward person finds that the farther he walks, the more treacherous the path becomes. Before he knows it, he is sloshing through mud puddles, tripping over stones, and battling thorn bushes. By the time it is too late, the path has led this foolish person to a pack of wild dogs standing ready to consume him. Wisdom and knowledge would have kept this poor soul from such a deadly path. With wisdom and knowledge, he would have seen the signs and the ultimate end of this path and would have avoided it all together.

EXAMPLE: Joseph avoided the “*the way of evil.*” When Joseph was working in Potiphar’s household, Potiphar’s wife made sexual advances towards young Joseph. Joseph had to choose either pleasure with Potiphar’s wife or pleasure in the sight of God. Instead of creating a dark room of sin for himself, Joseph fled from the presence of Potiphar’s wife. While this action resulted in a false accusation and time spent in jail, Joseph was ultimately blessed by God. (Genesis 39:1-23)

Wisdom and knowledge will deliver you from “*the man who speaks perverse things.*” (vs 12)

Many people are easily lured into a sale by a smooth-talking salesman. This type of salesman knows exactly what to say to gain the attention and confidence of the gullible buyer. He paints a picture of the product in a light that makes the product irresistible. Although the buyer knows he really cannot afford the item, he feels compelled by the sales pitch to make the purchase. Then, once he has the item at home and the creditors begin to demand payment, he soon realizes that what he purchased was not worth the price he will pay. Many people are lured into sin by a perverse speaker. He paints a picture of the sinful deed as something great and glorious. However, the gullible listener soon finds himself realizing that the deed was not worth the price. Wisdom and knowledge will help you to discern and detect the lies and perverse speaking of those who would entice you to sin. Wisdom and knowledge will remove your gullibility to those who would sell you sin for the cost of your soul.

EXAMPLE: When King Jeroboam turned the northern nation of Israel to idolatry, God sent a young prophet to speak out and to prophecy against King Jeroboam. God had instructed the young prophet not to eat or drink anything while on the assignment and to return by home by a different route. When the young prophet was leaving to return home, an old prophet told the young prophet that the Lord had sent a message for the young prophet to eat with the old prophet. While this message was obviously false, the young prophet did not exercise his wisdom and knowledge. Had he done so, the young prophet would not have heeded “*the man who speaks perverse things*” and he would not have died on his final trip home. (I Kings 13)

Wisdom and knowledge will deliver you from “*those who leave the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness.*” (vs 13) There are two paths through life. You must make a choice as to which path you will follow. One path is the path of uprightness. All the deeds and choices associated with this path are right and will lead you to heaven. In stark contrast, the second path is the way of darkness. The deeds of this path are sinful, selfish, and hurtful to one’s soul. This path will lead you to the very depths of hell. Wisdom and knowledge will help you to recognize and choose the path of uprightness. The road signs will be clear to those who possess and exercise their wisdom and knowledge.

EXAMPLE: A great example of one who left the “*paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness*” is King Solomon. During the first part of King Solomon’s life, he faithfully served the Lord. Solomon knew to turn to God for wisdom in governing God’s people. (I Kings 3:4-14) However, later in his life, Solomon allowed himself to be influenced by his many foreign wives. The influence was so great that Solomon’s heart left the Lord and clung to his wives. This resulted in Solomon allowing idol worship to be instituted within the nation of Israel. (I Kings 11:1-13) Had Solomon, to whom God had given much wisdom, simply used that wisdom and knowledge, he would not have left “*the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness.*”

Wisdom and knowledge will deliver you from those who “rejoice in doing evil, And delight in the perversity of the wicked.” (vs 14) Just because a person is having a good time does not mean that you should join the party. Upon closer inspection, you will find that they are rejoicing in having done that which is evil. These “party animals” are happy because of those things which are perverse and contrary to God. Wisdom and knowledge will teach you to avoid those who find pleasure in sin. (Cf. Romans 1:19-32)

EXAMPLE: During the life of Abraham, his nephew Lot took up residence in the wicked city of Sodom. The men of Sodom were not ashamed of their wickedness. Their open attempt to molest Lot’s visitors and the emotions surrounding their activities revealed that they apparently rejoiced in doing evil and delighted in the “*perversity of the wicked.*” Thankfully, Lot used his wisdom and knowledge (along with some strong encouragement from his visitors) to decide to take his family and leave Sodom. Had Lot and his family remained, they would have perished with all those who “*rejoice in doing evil, And delight in the perversity of the wicked.*” (Genesis 18-19)

Wisdom and knowledge will deliver you from those whose “ways are crooked, And who are devious in their paths.” (vs 15) The Hebrew word translated as crooked means twisted or distorted. There are unscrupulous people in the world who, using devious methods, would twist a story to gain your confidence. They offer a distorted view of something to get your attention. There have been many gullible people taken advantage of in financial matters by devious people because they could not recognize a crooked path. They, being deceived, offer up thousands of dollars for phony stocks or bonds, only to find they had been duped. In the same manner, many people have offered up their souls to twisted or distorted tales of sin without consequences. Wisdom and knowledge would have prevented such tragic losses.

EXAMPLE: When King Ahab decided to retake Ramoth in Gilead, he consulted about 400 of his prophets. His prophets told him, “*Go up, for the Lord will deliver it into the hand of the king.*” Although the prophet Micaiah warned Ahab that his prophets were lying to him and that he would die, Ahab chose to listen to the 400 prophets. The story of Ahab ended with an arrow, shot at a venture, finding its way to a vulnerable portion of Ahab’s armor. Had Ahab listened to the words of Micaiah, to the wisdom and knowledge of the Lord, then he would have rejected the crooked ways of his prophets and their devious paths. (I Kings 22:1-40)

Wisdom and knowledge will deliver you from “*the immoral woman, From the seductress who flatters with her words.*” (vs 16-19) Sexual immorality can be an alluring scent to the gullible and morally blinded person. In our society, there are plenty of sexual enticements bent upon turning the gullible man or woman into a floundering fool. Some people are so worldly in thought and desires that they can be allured and seduced by just about anything or anyone. The enticement may be the call of sexual pleasure, the expected building of one’s self-esteem, the thought of revenge, jealousy, selfishness, etc. Wisdom and knowledge will open the eyes of the gullible person to the simple fact that sexual activity outside of marriage is dangerous, sinful, corrupting, and defiling, placing one in the very path of God’s mighty judgment. (Cf. Hebrews 13:4)

EXAMPLE: After the death of his wife, Judah went to Timnah. When Tamar, Judah’s daughter-in-law, learned that Judah was going to the city of Timnah, she went and put on the apparel of a harlot, which included a veil, and sat in a spot on the way to Timnah. As Judah approached the veiled Tamar, being tricked by her apparel and not knowing who she was, he asked if he could have sexual relations with her. After agreeing upon the price, Judah and the veiled Tamar engaged in sexual activities. As a result, Tamar conceived and Judah was ultimately forced to provide for Tamar and her sons. Had Judah exercised wisdom and knowledge, he would not have been tricked by the immoral woman, the seductress who flatters with her words and apparel. He would not have had sexual relations with his daughter-in-law. (Genesis 38:1-30)

Wisdom and knowledge will enable you to “*walk in the way of goodness, And keep to the paths of righteousness.*” (vs 20) In the aforementioned benefits, a common thread is seen. Had the persons heeded the wisdom and knowledge that came from God, they would not have been lured from the path of righteousness. As in the case of Joseph, they would have made the right choices. As in all the examples, a person does not sin unless he steps onto the path of sin. While this path can be deceiving, it is revealed by wisdom and knowledge of God’s word. By studying God’s word and applying His word, you will recognize the difference between the way of goodness and the way

of evil. Hebrews 5:14 reads, *“But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”* (NKJV) When you study the word of God daily, you will understand why and how you should walk in the way of goodness and keep your life on the pathway of righteousness.

Staying out of the dark room of sin requires you to maintain the desire to keep yourself clean. The benefits seen in Proverbs 2:10-20 will only work to keep you clean if you desire to stay spiritually clean. This can be accomplished by putting on the armor of light. Consider the words of the apostle Paul in Romans 13:11-14 when he wrote:



“And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.” (Romans 13:11-14, NKJV)



Paul gave specific examples of what are considered to be the works of darkness. Paul lists revelry and drunkenness, lewdness and lust, and strife and envy as works of darkness. He continues by saying the solution to overcoming these works of darkness is to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and to make no provisions for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts. In other words, you put on Jesus through obedience to the Gospel’s call (cf. Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3-4) and then, and this is just as important as the first part, you make no provisions or plans to fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Any willful sin takes planning and opportunity. To stay out of your dark room of sin, you must make NO provisions to fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

After having put on Jesus and His teachings, if you will allow Him to direct your steps through His word, and make no provisions to engage in sin, then you can remain free of your dark room of sin, having destroyed that room forever.

Discussion:

List the seven benefits of wisdom as seen in this section.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

In

Conclusion

Do you possess a dark room of sin? Do you serve God while in the presence of other Christians, yet walk into your dark room of sin when no one is looking? If this is your situation, then you have put your soul in eternal jeopardy. God knows when you go into your dark room of sin. Heed the words of God when he said, “. . . *you have sinned against the Lord; and be sure your sin will find you out.*” (Numbers 32:23, NKJV) Come out of your dark room of sin, never to return. Ask God to forgive you so that you can return to fellowship with Jesus Christ.

If you have never obeyed the Gospel’s call to salvation, then make the decision to do so today. Jesus defined the gospel as, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” (Mark 16:15-16) If you will do so, then your sins will be forgiven and you will be saved, just as Peter so taught, “*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.*” (Acts 2:38-39, NKJV) This gift promised by the Holy Spirit is salvation. (Cf. Acts 2:21) This salvation can be yours if you will come out of your dark room of sin and follow the Lord.

Carrying Around a Heavy Weight

I guess we all make mistakes from time to time. Some of our mistakes are simple errors in judgment, while others are nothing but sin. Admittedly, it is not a pleasant task to own up to sin within your life. (This is especially true when such sin would bring embarrassment to either you or your family.) When we tear down those "dark rooms of sin," we generally do not want other people to remind us of the past existence of those dark rooms. Those were the times when we were at our worst; times best learned from for the sake of experience, but forgotten for the sake of self-forgiveness.

The ideal circumstance would dictate that once God has forgiven you, you would never have to face that sin again. "God has forgiven me. Therefore no one should ever bring it up," some would hope. However, you and I both know that life does not always work that way. While God does forgive us of the guilt of our transgressions, the forgiveness does not always remove the physical

consequences of the sin. Consider the man who has committed adultery. While God will forgive him, he still faces the consequences of his wife putting him away. He will lose his family. Consider the example of King David. God forgave David of his sin with Bathsheba. However, David's family still reaped the consequences of David's actions. I have no doubt that for years to come, there was "behind the door talk" of David's sins.

Knowing that we cannot run from the consequences of our sins, we must do our best to bear the burden of those consequences. Do we become indignant every time someone reminds us of our past sins? Should we declare unfair treatment when we learn that people are still talking of our sin? Should we give up and say, "What's the point of changing if people are still going to hold it against me?" While the treatment may be unfair, we must do our best to rise above any unjust treatment, knowing that God has forgiven us. In the end, God will be the only one who will serve as our final judge.

Quite often, the most painful process of life is the spiritual healing process. The very first step is often the most challenging. We do not like to see our selves as soiled or stained. Pride will often hinder such recognition. A fine example of a man who overcame this pride is King David. David wrote, "*For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart— These, O God, You will not despise.*" (Psalms 51:16-17, NKJV) After the acknowledgment of his sin, David had to humble himself before the Lord. He had to offer up a broken and contrite heart in order for God to forgive him of his sins. Humbling yourself before the Lord will begin the spiritual healing process.

One reason a person may often remember certain sins above others is due to the impact the sins have on the lives of other people. For instance, let us say that fifteen years ago, Bob received four speeding tickets in one month, never paid the fines, and was sentenced to ten days jail time. Now, Bob repented of his sins and God forgave him. Bob went before the church and asked their forgiveness for bringing reproach upon the church. Now, fifteen years later, would Bob be surprised if someone asked him of the incident? Yes, the reminder of the jail time would probably surprise Bob, since the impact upon the church and his family was short-term and Bob had offered the fruits of repentance.

Let us now alter the scenario. Let us say that, instead of receiving speeding tickets, Bob had a three-month affair on his wife. The events of the affair took him deep into pornography, sexual sins, including adultery. Once Bob's wife caught him and his sins were revealed, he repented of his sins. God forgave him. Because of the immediate emotional pain and suffering experienced by Bob's wife, she went home to her parents, taking their baby boy with her. He followed her and convinced her to give him another chance. Bob asked his wife to forgive him of his unfaithfulness. She forgave Bob. Bob and his wife returned to their home and spent the next four years rebuilding their relationship. Fifteen years later, should Bob be surprised if questioned about his sin? The reminder

or remembrance of the sin would probably not surprise Bob. The degrees of hurt and the emotional impact of the sin, not to mention its effect upon extended family members, make such a sin harder to forget.

Consider one more change in the scenario. Let us say that Bob's wife, instead of staying with him and rebuilding the marriage, chose to exercise her right to divorce him. Fifteen years later, should Bob be surprised if questioned about his sin? Not likely since the impact of his sin was so great that it altered the rest of his life. Bob would always have to face some level of consequence for his sin.

As stated before, sin can impact many people, not just the guilty person. We must always be willing to accept the consequences of our sins, even if that consequence means hearing of our sin years later. I wonder how often people questioned Paul or reminded Paul of his sins? Consider also Aaron, the brother of Moses. His lack of strength resulted in the death of many people. Had he stood up and opposed their request, they might not have built the golden calf and worshiped it. I wonder how often someone reminded Aaron of his deeds. Of course, since the Bible does not reveal that information, we truly cannot know. However, we do know that Paul referred to his own past sins on several occasions. Of course, his sins impacted the lives of many, many people.

If you are carrying around a heavy weight of past guilt, then turn that heavy weight into an object lesson from your life. The first thing you need to always remember is that since you have repented, God has forgiven you. Do not lose sight of that undeniable fact. Secondly, learn from your mistakes and improve your life. Analyze the sinful moments, learn what led up to the temptations, identifying your weaknesses and then work to make yourself stronger. Thirdly, use those instances of questions and reminders as teaching opportunities. If someone asks you about a particular sin in your past, use that opportunity to convey the lessons you learned from those sins. Use the opportunity to encourage that person to never walk the same sinful path as you walked.

Admitting our ugly and soiled moments of our past is not often easy. If you can travel through the roads of life, without anyone reminding you of your past mistakes, then be thankful to the Lord for such blessings. However, if you do have to face those difficult reminders of sinful moments of your past, then remember that God has forgiven you. Also, remember that you have learned a valuable lesson, and that you have decided never again to engage in that sin. If you will do this, then you will not become discouraged. You will remain strong knowing that a great reward lies ahead of you on the other side of death. Do not let the heavy weight of your past sins keep you from serving God faithfully in the present. Remember, while sin is not without its consequences, God will reward you for living righteously, just as He will reward all sinners who turn to Him.

