

## **BACK TO THE BASICS OF FAITH**

### *Beware of The Sin Formula*

There are a few things of which we must accept as we journey forward in the Christian faith. The first of which is the fact that we, each of us, is indeed on a spiritual journey. We begin at the point where we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and continue into eternity. Amazingly enough, our spiritual journeys are very distinct; no two are 100% alike. They are different and special because we are different and special.

God could have designed us to be any other creature on the face of this earth, but He made us thinking, thriving human beings. If you give this fact a few minutes of really deep thought, you will have no choice but to come away with a greater appreciation of just how awesome our Heavenly Father is. He's a super intelligent spiritual being and as such, He has designed you and me to be really intelligent spiritual beings too. The interesting thing about this important point is that He didn't zap us with a 1-2-3 whammy and make us instantly everything that we could be. We are not automatically born perfect; we are made perfect through our choice to be like Jesus Christ.

*Hebrews 10:11-18 (The Message) says "Every priest goes to work at the altar each day, offers the same old sacrifices year in, year out, and never makes a dent in the sin problem. As a priest, Christ made a single sacrifice for sins, and that was it! Then he sat down right beside God and waited for his enemies to cave in. It was a perfect sacrifice by a perfect person to perfect some very imperfect people. By that single offering, he did everything that needed to be done for everyone who takes part in the purifying process. The Holy Spirit confirms this: This new plan I'm making with Israel isn't going to be written on paper, isn't going to be chiseled in stone; This time "I'm writing out the plan in them, carving it on the lining of their hearts." He concludes, I'll forever wipe the slate clean of their sins. Once sins are taken care of for good, there's no longer any need to offer sacrifices for them.*

In this passage God makes it very clear that the New Covenant between Him and humankind wasn't going to be written on paper and it wouldn't be chiseled in stone either. It was going to be written on the hearts of men and women who desire to walk by the spirit of Christ. The single act of our Lord and Savior to sacrifice his life wiped our slate clean for all eternity. Because of this single act, we can continue forward in God's plan without being paralyzed by sin and its consequences. Jesus Christ voided out the process of having Priests offer sacrifices to cover our sin. By accepting him as the head of our lives, we are made whole.

Most of us have behaved as though we couldn't quite grasp the enormity of what Christ accomplished. It has taken a mighty long time for us to collectively get to the stage where we finally understand a little something about walking by his example. It's no coincidence that we understand more about walking in Christ because we have learned a good deal more about

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employing the stuff he used to get things done. What did he use to get things done? He used a magnificent thinking substance called faith. Yes, I call it a thinking substance, because faith is super intelligent too. Hebrews 11:1 tells us that it is the substance of things. Well what does that mean... "*the substance of things*"? The dictionary defines the word "*substance*" as that of which a thing exists. So everything that is—is because faith was deployed. It is the building material of the universe. Through a thought or series of thoughts, it can take nothing and transform it into something.

As followers of Christ, God has given us the power to command faith, but let's not get it twisted; faith is not our slave. It is super intelligent; it's supernatural. It knows when our hearts and minds are disciplined enough to deploy it. It knows the extent to which we are lining up with the Word. It will not produce a new car when we can't even trust God for a full tank of gas.

Adam was created as the perfect human specimen. Because of his sin, you and I are not perfected at birth. We are not born flawless and perfect human beings, but again, Jesus Christ came to take care of that. But even so, surely God in His foreknowledge knew man's propensity to make wrong decisions, therefore He knew there was a possibility that Adam would make a mistake, and he made a colossal one. Adam broke fellowship with God because he had doubt in his heart. You know the story, in Genesis 2:17(NLT), God instructed him and his wife, Eve, not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, saying "*If you eat of its fruit, you will surely die.*" On the other side the devil was saying the complete opposite; "*You will not surely die, the serpent said to the woman.*" Genesis 3:4 (NIV) The devil tricked Adam and Eve into disobeying God by telling them a lie.

Doubt is mistrust. On its own, it can be a stumbling block, but doubting God is the refusal to take Him at His Word. This kind of doubt is a little something we call "*sin*". There are only two sides of the coin; one side truth, the other, a lie. If you and I do not emphatically trust God's Word, then we are going to trust a lie. There is no in between. That is what Adam and Eve did. They sinned because they trusted a lie from the pit of hell over what God had told them. In Genesis 3, we see an outward manifestation of the contents of Adam and Eve's hearts. They made a statement to heaven above and hell below that defined who they were. They turned their backs on God by first listening to a lie, believing it, and then acting on this belief by actually eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Adam and Eve etched in stone the exact formula for death, destruction, darkness, and despair. This formula is listening to a lie, believing it, and then acting upon it. These are the building blocks of sin. Sin has a devastating effect on humankind. It causes us to deviate from God's plan, and therefore makes us less than what He intended us to be. Very little in life will compare to the importance of knowing the difference between the truth and a lie. This is why it is so important to study and know God's Word. You and I must know it for ourselves so that we are not tricked by the devil into believing something that isn't true. We know from Adam and Eve's example that even though the enemy has a bag of tricks designed to take us out, we have a

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choice. We can choose to remain faithful to the Word, or we can turn our backs on the Word and act accordingly.

Faith and sin are building material. They both have the ability to shape and mold our reality. Adam and Eve did not demonstrate faith. When they were tempted by the devil they acquiesced into sin, and that sin shaped their destiny...it changed their reality, and it changed ours too. How did NOT listening to God's Word shape and mold Adam and Eve's reality? Well the first and most damaging way in which sin changed their reality was by causing a separation between them and God. Their relationship with Him suffered a devastating breach, one that caused Adam to lose his fellowship with God, and to also lose his power and authority in the earth. Whenever we believe a lie from satan over the truth of God's Word we lose stamina, momentum, and time on this Christian journey. Stamina and momentum we can regain, but time is lost forever. Once it's gone we can't get it back.

This is exactly what the devil wants. The devil wants to snuff out our lights and wipe away any opportunity we have to move God's plan forward. He wants to stop us dead in our tracks. He knows that if he can get us to sin he has started a chain reaction of negative consequences that could ultimately end in death, but let's go a bit deeper than that. Adam lacked no good thing. God gave him power, dominion, and authority of all he could survey, and when he disobeyed God--God didn't take it back. No! Adam transferred that power, dominion, and authority to the devil. Yes, the devil swindled Adam out of his inheritance, the very same way he swindles us out of ours...by getting us to believe his lies, trust them, and then act upon them.

Beware of the sin formula. God wants us to grow, thrive, and increase. He wants us to understand that sin and faith cannot exist together, and that we cannot go higher unless we come clean about those parts of ourselves that are still in darkness, and bring them into the light of His truth. In order to please God we must trust His Word. We have to trust that doing the right things pays off big time. We must trust that God would never, ever steer us in the wrong direction. Quite the contrary. He will steer us in the direction of increase and abundance.

To trust God is to demonstrate our love for Him. We cut ourselves off from faith when we don't trust Him and live by His Word; we are not able to produce results. The next time you engage in something you know that God wouldn't be pleased about, stop! Sometimes the areas of our lives where we have the most trouble are the areas where we've allowed a lie to persist. Take the time to really think about what you are doing. Understand that if you are not following the formula of faith, then you are prescribing to the formula of sin, and those little secrets are the ones that are hurting your walk with God. For so long the devil has lied to you and told you that they don't matter. Don't believe it, and don't act on them. Trust that as you turn away from sin, that God will reward you, and that you will continue to grow and flourish in faith.

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