

SELF-DECEPTION: DENYING SIN

Joe Slater

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8).

Can you feature anyone having the nerve to say, “I have no sin”? The Gnostic false teachers against whom the apostle John wrote were doing exactly that! Their bizarre doctrine held that the sins committed by the fleshly body didn’t affect the inner person (spirit). Such a radical disconnection between flesh and spirit meant that even the vilest immorality caused no harm to the spirit! And yes, people actually believed it!

Surely no one today buys into that, do they? Perhaps not that precise scheme, but you might be surprised how many fail to see that their sin matters to God and threatens their eternal wellbeing. As long as they avoid the “big” sins (you know – adultery, murder, grand larceny), the rest are inconsequential. Laziness, pride, vulgar language, selfishness, ingratitude, and the like, are viewed as minor, run of the mill issues. As one popular slogan says, “Don’t sweat the small stuff!”

Obviously, some sins are more severe than others. The Law of Moses recognized that, and so does the New Testament. Jesus Himself spoke of “*weightier matters of the law*” (Matthew 23:23). But He neither said nor implied that “less weighty” meant unimportant.

Only Jesus our Savior can truthfully say, “I have no sin.” He challenged His critics, “*Which of you convicts Me of sin?*” (John 8:46). Jesus “*was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin*” (Hebrews 4:15). That’s what qualified Him to give His blood as the supreme sacrifice for our sins.

Let us not deceive ourselves, but recognize our sinfulness and receive cleansing by the blood of Christ!

DON'T QUIT!

Everyone knows that the greatest hitter in baseball history was Babe Ruth. But did you know that Babe Ruth struck out 1330 times, twice as often as he hit a home run! Suppose he had quit the first time he failed at the plate? He would never have had the great career he went on to have!

Sometimes we strike out in the game of life as well. We fail at something and we are tempted to just quit. The apostle Peter often failed in serving Christ. In fact, when Jesus was on trial, Peter denied he knew Him three times, the last time “*cursing and swearing*” (Matt. 26:74). But he didn't give up! Peter repented and went on to become a great leader and preacher in the early church.

John Mark quit on the apostle Paul during his first missionary journey and Paul refused to take him along on his second missionary journey. But Mark repented and also became a great minister, so that even Paul later said, “*Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry*” (2 Tim. 4:11). God used Mark to write the second book of the New Testament, the Gospel of Mark.

Friends, how do you handle failure and defeat? Do you let sin discourage you in God's service or do you repent of it and persevere in His service? Sometimes we will all strike out, but let us all be like Babe Ruth and step back up to life's plate determined to hit a home run next time!

--Travis Quetermous (via *Bulletin Gold*)

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“God never gives us discernment in order that we may criticize, but that we may intercede.”
(Oswald Chambers; via *Leadership Magazine*)

Out Of The Ashes

Jehoiakim, King of Judah, once cut up part of the word of God and burned it in the fire. The king’s rejection didn’t destroy the message, however. “Then Jeremiah took another roll and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire; and there were added unto them besides many like words” (Jeremiah 36:22).

No man can destroy the Word of God. Unbelief will never kill the Bible. “The word of the Lord endures forever” (1 Peter 1:25). The Bible is fixed. Its truth remains unaffected by revolutions on earth.

The gospel system is as lovely now as it was when first given, and it has as much power to save as it had when first applied to a human heart. We see the grass wither at the coming of autumn; we see the flower of the field decay; we see man, though confident in his strength, and rejoicing in the vigor of his frame, cut down in an instant; we see cities decline, and kingdoms lose their power. But God’s word is the same now, and has the same power and authority not, as at the first.

The Word cannot be destroyed by burning it. The word of God is written where men cannot reach it – it is written in the hearts of believers. One might destroy every copy of the Bible, yet children of God could put it together again. God’s word would rise up out of the ashes – as it has done so many times before – to haunt and convict its would-be assassins.

--Bobby Key (deceased), via *Old Paths*

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God is more interested in making us what we ought to be than in giving us what we think we ought to have.