

How Does God View Sin?

Joy Martin

Is any sin considered "respectable"? I was stimulating by reading the book of Jerry Bridges called *Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate*. This really hit home! I began to think about our human tendencies to label our sins--there's a list of "really bad, awful sins"--you know, like murder and adultery. There are a few in the middle, "not quite so bad" sins. I'm sure you can come up with these. But worst of all, we Christians often have a list of sins that seem almost "respectable" ones. How do we manage this kind of mental gymnastics in ourselves? All sins, any sins, are what nailed Jesus to the cross. We only call them "respectable" because they seem minor or natural. We apply "bandwagon" excuse that children often use--something is okay because "everybody does it."

Have you noticed a major shift in our country about how common certain sins have become so ordinary, so much a part of everyday life, even for Christians, that we begin to accept them? Yes, they may be "wrong," but they just seem "natural." If television sitcoms and Hollywood movies portray anything about our moral convictions, we are in serious trouble! The story lines suggest that having sex before marriage, living together and having children without marriage, cheating on one's spouse, foul language and curse words--these are just everyday life. The consequences of these actions are never realistically portrayed. As Christians, we rightfully mourn this loss of strong moral convictions.

But we often overlook our own sins that seem petty to us in comparison. How our categorizing sin must grieve the heart of God. We excuse our sins--we just made "a mistake" or a "bad decision," so divorce is the answer; we had a "little fling," but it really doesn't mean anything; we cheat on income tax ("the government gets too much anyway) or we cheat on tests (I "had" to pass this course), we "rob" our employer by taking home supplies or consistently wasting time; we tell lies, but just "little white ones" because truthfulness would have caused trouble! We watch pornography, but of course that's not the "real thing"--it's just recreation, and doesn't mean anything serious. We excuse our sins, "Well, at least I didn't do that..."(fill in the blanks--murder, homosexual acts, incest, child molestation, etc):

Perhaps we need to examine our own hearts in these areas we may overlook. Do we consider these "respectable" sins?

- Pride
- Anger and hot temper
- Selfishness
- Worry and anxiety
- Discontent
- Unthankfulness
- Lack of Self Control

- Judgmentalism
- Envy and jealousy
- Coveteousness
- Love of power and control
- Lust
- Gossip, slander, and other sins of the tongue
- Holding grudges
- Irritability and impatience

Those are sins of commission--things that we do wrong--and that is a mighty convicting list. But what about all the sins of omission? These are the sins committed because we don't do what God most desires--Not loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and body? Not caring for the needs of others in practical, demonstrable ways? Not loving others; Not being quick to forgive? Not sharing the wonderful Gospel that transforms lives?

I'm asking God to help me see those sins that I may consider "respectable" or "not so bad" and then repent and forsake them. Let us join David in praying, "Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me, and know my thoughts; And see if ...any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139:23-24).

The Psalmist prayed, "Let the words of mouth and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:13-14).

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