

WOULD YOU EVER SIN DELIBERATELY?

I want to begin this morning with a question, and it is one that I would like you to think about seriously before you fire off an answer. The question is this: *“Would you ever sin, deliberately?”*

“Would you ever deliberately sin?” Ponder that for a few moments as we get this lesson underway. Or maybe we should ask the question another way: *“Do you ever sin, deliberately?”*

Most of us, I assume, would answer both questions with a firm *“No!”* We do not, and we do not intend to ever sin deliberately. If we are Christians, and most of us are, we understand something of the seriousness of sin. It is not something to be taken lightly or ignored, and it is certainly not something we do with deliberation. We do sin, don't misunderstand me. We all know perfectly well that we are far from perfect, and without intending to do so, we know that there are countless ways every day that we sin and fall short of the glory of God. Even so, we do not sin deliberately. We do not just decide that we are going to do something that we know is wrong. Even though we may be tempted some times, and we there may be times when we are weak, we know that we would be committing spiritual suicide to deliberately sin against God.

I assume most of us think and feel that way. And I hope that because of this lesson, when we leave here this morning we will feel even more convicted about that.

God certainly does not want us to sin or take the matter of sin lightly. In **Romans 6:23**, Paul wrote, *“the wages of sin is death.”* That is, for sin—any and all sin—that has not been covered by the blood of Christ and forgiven, one will be punished with death. Now since everyone dies, those who are saints, covered by the blood of Christ, as well as everyone else, obviously the death Paul is talking about is spiritual death, not physical.

Spiritual death is referred to in numerous other places in the Bible with terms such as *punishment*.

- In **Matthew 25:46**, Jesus spoke about eternal punishment; that is, spiritual death.
- In **2 Thessalonians 1:7-10**, the Bible reminds us that *“...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints...”*
- **Jude 1:7** speaks about some who will undergo *“a punishment of eternal fire.”*

Spiritual death is also spoken of as involving *“torment.”*

- **Luke 16:23 and 28** speak about a place of torment.
- In **Luke 13:27 and 28**, in describing the destiny of the wicked, Jesus said the Lord will say on the day of judgment: *“Depart from me, all you workers of evil! In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

- In **Mark 9:43-48**, Jesus gave people this warning: *“And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. 45) And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. 47) And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, 48) 'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.”*
- In **Revelation 21:8**, the writer there penned these words: *“But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”*

Someone has said, preaching about hell is negative. That isn't true! Preaching about hell is not negative, going to hell is negative! It is your worst mistakes, fears and nightmares all put together and multiplied a million times! Let me assure you, those who die unprepared to meet their God are never better off. Many times I hear people say that about a loved one who has been dying a slow, tortuous death. When they finally pass, they say, *“Well at least they are not suffering anymore.”* Well now, that depends, doesn't it? Do you remember what the rich man said in **Luke 16:27, 28**? After he had died and gone to that place of torment, he begged that someone be sent to his five brothers who were still alive in the world. He said; *“send someone to warn them lest they come to this place of torment.”* Death, my friends, may be the beginning of real torment for many people.

Let me put a little footnote on that matter as well. Scholars tell us Jesus spoke more about hell than he did heaven. Preaching on hell is not negative. Going to hell is negative!

And that is why one must not take sin lightly and certainly why we must never sin deliberately. But let's think about this matter of deliberate sin for a few minutes together. Open your Bible, if you will, to the **10th chapter of Hebrews**, and read **verses 19-31**.

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, 20) by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, 21) and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22) let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23) Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. 24) And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. 26) For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27) but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. 28) Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. 29) How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?

30) For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." 31) It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Now, that is a fearfully wonderful and a wonderfully fearful passage of Scripture! It would do you a lot of good to spend some time thinking about all of the things the writer says there. But did you notice there in **verse 26**, he says, *"For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins."* Your version may use the phrase, sinning "wilfully." The Greek word that is translated there as wilfully, or deliberately is *hekousios*, which *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* tells us means, *"voluntarily, willingly, of one's own accord, to sin wilfully as opposed to sins committed inconsiderately, and from ignorance or from weakness."*

Well, what does that mean? Does that mean if we sin one time after we become a Christian that we are doomed to eternal torment? No, that is not what he is saying. He is talking about a continued, persistent pattern of wilful or deliberate sin.

I believe there is an interesting parallel over in the book of **Romans, in chapter 6, verse 1**, where Paul writes, *"What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?"* Paul raises that question and then he answers it in **verse 2**. He says, *"By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?"*

Another scripture that parallels this same thought can be found in **1 John 1, beginning in verse 5**. John writes:

"This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6) If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth."

John is saying we cannot have fellowship with God while we are walking in darkness. Of course there are a lot of people who think they can. They have not been taught the truth. They have been taught and believed a lie, and so they think they can think all kinds of things that are sinful, say all kinds of things that are sinful, and do all kinds of things that are sinful, none of which has any bearing on their spiritual relationship with God. John says, if we walk in darkness we lie and do not practice the truth.

Well, was John saying that it is possible for Christians to lead a sinless life?

- Absolutely not!
- Notice he goes on to say in **verses 7 & 8**: *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."*

Notice when we walk in the light, we still have sins to be cleansed by the blood of Christ. These, of course, would be unintentional sins; the sins we commit because we are ignorant of

the will of God, or because in a moment of weakness we gave into temptation. They are still sins, and they must still be repented of and confessed, but they are sins that are still being washed away by the blood of Christ.

But as the Hebrew writer put it, “...*if we go on sinning deliberately*,” that is a different matter altogether. That is why I began this lesson with the question, “*Would you ever sin deliberately?*” I hope all of us are very clear about this, and I hope that all of have made up our hearts and minds that we are not going to do that, to “*go on sinning deliberately*.” We do not want to put ourselves in a position where the blood of Christ can no longer wash away our sins. We don’t want to put ourselves in a position where there no longer remains a sacrifice for our sins.

But before we leave this point, I want us to take a look at something that maybe we have given enough consideration to, which is, that it may be possible for us to sin deliberately without really realizing it.

You might think, well how can one sin deliberately, or wilfully without realizing it? Doesn’t the idea of sinning wilfully or sinning deliberately imply that one is conscious of such sinning? Ordinarily that is true, but there is a kind of sinning that people do all the time, and they do it with their eyes wide open. They know better but they do it anyway. What kind of sin is that, which we can do knowing full well we are doing it; sinning deliberately if you will?

Well, remember, there are many ways to sin. And there are at least two kinds of sins. There are the sins of *commission*, and the sins of *omission*. To put it another way, sometimes we sin by the things we do, and sometimes we sin by the things we do not do.

Open your Bible once again to the book of **James, chapter 4**, and think about what is found in **verse 17**. James writes, “*So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.*” How many times have you said—I am sure I have said it, or thought it many times myself—“*I know I ought to do such and such, but I am just not going to do it?*” Now, I want you to stop and think about that; think about what we are saying!

“I KNOW...I OUGHT...BUT I AM NOT GOING TO DO IT!” If that isn’t sinning deliberately, I am not sure I know what sinning deliberately is! If one says, “I know I ought to do such and such,” and then they don’t do it, that could be a sin of omission being committed wilfully or deliberately. James says it is! He says, “*To him it is sin!*”

People are committing this kind of sin all of the time; they are sinning deliberately. I could stand up here for another hour giving you all kinds of examples of this kind of deliberate sinning, but let me just give you one, and I think from that you will be able to see many other ways this principle can be applied to what we do and do not do.

Open your Bibles once again and go back to the passage found in **Hebrews 10**, but this time I want you to look at **verses 24 & 25** where the Word of God tells us,

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

There is no telling how many people, on just this one thing by itself, sin deliberately every week! Every week, in almost every congregation I am familiar with, anywhere from one-third to one-half of those who consider themselves as Christians and members of the church, do not make it to Bible study on Sunday morning. They are in the habit of neglecting the meeting together. About the same number, and about the same people do not make it back to worship on Sunday evening, or to Bible study on Wednesday evening. I'm not talking about people who cannot make it because of their job, or because of health issues preventing them from being present, I am talking about those who could meet together, but have decided not to. They have probably even said, "Well, I know I ought to go, but I'm just not going to go this morning," or "I know I ought to go, but I'm just not going to go tonight."

Let me ask you, those of you who as the Hebrew writer described as having a habit of neglecting the assemblies, "WOULD YOU EVER SIN DELIBERATELY?" Would you not agree that it would be good for you to meet together for Bible study and worship? Now if you have something else that you are doing that is even better, that honors God more, shows your love and seeking for God better, then by all means continue in doing that. But most of the time, that isn't what is happening, is it? People neglect meeting together because that is not a priority to them. They know it would be good for them to be there, but they fail to do it.

Someone might say, "Well show me a scripture that says we have to meet together three times a week!" That misses the point; a very important point. James says, "*Whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.*" Now, as I said last week, "I'm not trying to get you to church. I'm trying to get you to heaven."

In the video lesson that will be shown tonight, brother Kyle Butt is going to be discussing the subject of "A Loving God and An Eternal Hell." In that lesson, brother Kyle will help show that people who end up in hell are people who have chosen to go there. Oh, they didn't choose to go to a place of eternal torment, but over and over again they made deliberate choices to sin. THEY KNEW THE RIGHT THING TO DO, BUT CHOSE NOT TO DO IT!

Has that been your practice? Have you been guilty of sinning deliberately? If so, you need to realize that you still have access to the blood of Christ. Even those sins can still be cleansed but not if you do not repent of them and confess them to God.

Now some of you may be thinking to yourself, "I know the preacher is right, and I know I need to make some changes." And then you will be struggling with yourself whether or not you should respond. Let me simply remind you what the Word of God says: "*Whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.*"

The lesson is yours, and the invitation is from God. If you need to come, will you come while together we stand and sing!