

The Besetting Sin

By George C. Clark



“Seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that so easily besets us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus. . .” (Hebrews 12:1-2)

In the life of every individual, there is a “besetting” sin that can tower like a mountain between the individual and God. This is “*the sin which doth so easily beset us*”, and it differs according to the person. What is a besetting sin to one may not trouble another at all. Sometimes this persistently assailing evil is obvious to others, while in other cases it is hidden in the heart and known only to the individual and to God. In either case, it can be perplexing and harassing, and, if allowed to linger and grow, it may end in tragic moral failure. Practically every believer wrestles with an habitually assaulting sin, even those whose service to Christ is of outstanding quality.

Examples of this are Moses and David. These men of God walked humbly in the will of God, but when they grew weak in faith and weary in their warfare against evil, their besetting sin reared up its ugly head to challenge them. Fortunately, they knew that the only way to run from God is to run to Him, and when they fell, they cried out to Him. We might say that our besetting sin can either drive us closer to God, if we go to Him for help, or it can drive us away from God, if we yield to its desires.

There is a way which, if carefully followed,

will bring us complete victory over our besetting sin, but first there must be a desire to live a holy life before God. It may sound strange, but there are many who pray to God for help to overcome the impurity that hotly pursues them, and, at the same time, in their hearts they do not desire to give it up. There is relief the conscience can feel, and a pious feeling that comes when one prays for deliverance from sin, even if he does not wholeheartedly desire to be set free. This insincere praying can continue for years. I know saints who seem addicted to evil practices, and yet they offer continual, insincere prayers for deliverance. The trouble is that their real prayer is not the one from their lips but the one coming from their heart. They make a show of praying for deliverance, but deliverance is not really their desire. The prayer they should offer is that God might take away their secret desire for sin, for they will never be delivered until there is a sincere desire for God’s holiness in their heart. And if you do not have that desire, you may as well stop reading this tract and leave it for someone else.

Smaller sins are spoken of as “weights”. These are little things which do not appear to be dangerous to one’s soul; yet, they hinder progress in God. One’s besetting sin is fed by these smaller errors. If we rid ourselves of them, God will rescue us from the other. A sinner convicted of sin is first stripped of his weights and then is purged by the holy Ghost from the frightful “*sin that so easily besets us*”.

Just as the sinner enters the kingdom of God by first laying aside “weights”, or small sins, and then is cleansed from his besetting sin, the backsliding saint “*returns to his vomit*” the same way. First he grows slack in faith and begins to partake again of little “no-harms”. These smaller sins then produce sustenance for the besetting sin to reappear, and once the besetting sin reappears, the believer finds himself in a new struggle for his soul.

Once the backslider returns so far into sin as to partake again of his besetting sin, he is in dangerous territory; that is, he is in the blasphemer’s neighborhood. Now, whether he has blasphemed or not depends largely upon the circumstances that led

him into this dark territory. In each case, final judgment can only belong to God. But this is a perilous predicament in which to be, regardless as to how one arrives there, for only a small percentage of those who have backslidden so far as to wallow again in the mire of their besetting sin ever come back to Christ. Many in this situation have tried and found that they “*cannot cease from sin*.” Jude described such backslidden brothers as “*trees whose fruit withers, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots*” (v.12). The Apostle Peter said that “*If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire*” (2Pet. 2:20-22).

My friend, the desire to repent from any error is a gift from God. One who feels no conviction for sin, small or great, is abiding already in God’s wrath. David told the truth when he said the man is blessed whom God chastens (Ps. 94:12).

Now, suppose your besetting sin is a tendency to hate someone, perhaps someone who has wronged you. Do you really desire the complete victory over this evil which has been the chief cause of your failing God, time and again? Your first step might be to go visit this person and talk things over. But you say, “I can’t go.” Why? Your besetting sin won’t let you. That’s it. Do you know that God has thousands of children in this condition? Yes, He does. And every one of them on their way to hell. You don’t want to go with them, do you? If you don’t, get on your knees right now and ask God to take this sin out of your heart. Remember, “*If a man say, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar. For he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment have we from Him,*

that he who loves God love his brother also” (1Jn. 4:20-21).

Well, one might say, “This person whom I hate is not my brother. He is my enemy.” Then we shall have to find another Scripture. “*But I say unto you which hear, love your enemies, do good to them which hate you*” (Lk. 6:27). So it is with every major spiritual problem we may face. The Scriptures condemn it, then tell us where to go for help to get rid of it. May God help each one of us to overcome with joy the “weights” of little errors and “*the sin which doth so easily beset us*”. “*For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” (2Pet. 1:11).

I must say here that there is a place in God for all who have His Spirit to live where sin is not practiced at all. This state of holiness is known as consecration, or entire sanctification. Such believers as these are designated by Jesus as “*wise virgins*”, and by Paul as being “*without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing*”, and by John as “*the bride of the Lamb*”. This “*bride of Christ*” is not the body of Christ as a whole, but only that part of the body that keeps itself pure. “*The same*”, said Jesus, “*shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels*” (Rev. 3:5).

FOR COPIES OF THIS TRACT, AND INFORMATION ON OUR OTHER MATERIALS, WRITE TO:

ORDERS

P. O. Box 99 Burlington, NC 27216-0099

Visit us online: Isaiah58.com

Don’t Let This Tract Die.

Pass It On, Please.

“What Must I do to be Saved?”

When is a person saved, and how can he know it? Is the baptism of the holy Ghost necessary? What about speaking in tongues? Must we do good works to be saved in the end? Find out what the Bible really says in this CD series - write for it!