

## You Shall Be Holy

'I am the Lord your God; so purify yourselves and be holy for I am holy; neither defile yourselves with any manner of thing ... therefore you shall be holy for I am holy ... say to all the assembly, "You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy"' (Leviticus 11:44 & 45; 19:2).

'If you will obey My voice in truth and keep My covenant, then you will be My own treasure from among all peoples; for all the earth is Mine. You will be to Me a kingdom of priests; a holy nation' (Exodus 19:5 & 6).

'The Lord has declared this day that you are His own treasure as He promised you, and you are to keep all His commandments. He will make you high above all nations which He has made, in praise, in name and in honour, that you may be a holy people to the Lord your God, as He has spoken' (Deuteronomy 26:18 & 19).

How do the ancient commandments that were given to the ancient Hebrew nation, relate to us today? The answer to that question is simple: God said, "I am the Lord. I do not change" (Malachi 3:6). What offended the Lord in ancient times, offends the Lord now; what pleased the Lord then, pleases the Lord now. When the early church was underway and the Gospel was taken to the Gentiles, those who accepted the Lord were expected to behave in a holy manner, and the same applies to believers in this time in history. As it is written in the scriptures, we are to: 'Live as children of obedience to God. Do not conform yourselves to the lustful desires as when in your former ignorance (of God's requirements for His people). As the One Who called you is holy, you yourselves should also be holy in all your behaviour. It is written, "You shall be holy for I am holy"' ... 'You are a chosen race; a royal priesthood, a holy nation; a people for God's own treasure that you might proclaim the excellence of Him Who called you out of darkness into His marvellous Light' (1 Peter 1:14 to 16; 2:9). We can see through these scriptures that the Lord expects His people to live holy lives, regardless of what time in history they are on earth. We as believers, have been chosen and set apart to reflect God's holiness.

This Bible study is about Christians behaving badly. It is not about the unsaved who know no better, it is about Christians who should know better. As Derek Prince says repeatedly in his sermons; "When Christians are not preparing themselves for the second coming of Jesus, their level of holiness is below what it should be." There are hundreds of ways in which we miss God's target of holiness which He calls sin, but He actually expects us to be holy, because He is holy. We cannot be holy in our own strength, but if we ask the Lord for His help, He will show us in His Word what He expects of us. Just as giving our lives to Jesus is our decision, so is the way we behave after salvation our decision. We must make a conscious decision to 'Abhor all that is evil; cling to that which is good' (Romans 12:9). 'The wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus our Lord' (Romans 6:23). We can see by these scriptures that we are in control of our own behaviour and we can choose to do what is right, or we can choose to do what is wrong. Certainly the devil tempts us, but the decision to give in to temptation or to overcome it, is wholly ours to make. What people do not realise is this; sins that were considered serious enough in ancient days to have the person put to death, are just as serious in God's eyes today. What happens now is, we are warned through the scriptures and those people who refuse to listen to the Bible, are put to death spiritually and could end up in the lake of fire unless they repent and turn away from their sin. The judgements and sentences handed down by God in the Old Testament for sin, will be the same judgements handed down by the Lord on Judgement Day. This is made clear in the scriptures. 'For the cowards, unbelievers, sinners, the vile, murderers, all the sexually immoral, those involved in magic, sorcery (the occult and illegal mind-altering drugs), idol-worshippers and all liars, their fate is the lake of fire' (Revelation 21:8). In the Old Testament, people were put to death for these things. Here in Revelation, the Lord says people who practice these things will be put to the second death. We must get sin out of our lives if we are to escape judgement.

The word 'holy' means to be devoted to God, to be set apart, to be morally and spiritually excellent. In simple terms, to behave in a manner befitting a person who walks with the Lord. What does God mean by 'The wages of sin is death?' God means that the price we pay for sin is eternity in the lake of fire, also known as the second death. We know that God is a holy God and as such, He has set a benchmark or a standard for all of His created beings to follow; both angels and humans. The word 'sin' simply means to 'miss the mark'; therefore God's definition of sin is to fall short of His benchmark or His standard. It is to behave in a way that is 'worldly' or 'carnal' and He calls it sin. We are all sinners. 'All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23). 'If we say we have not sinned then we are deluding ourselves and the Truth is not in us; we are liars ... If we claim we have not sinned, we contradict His Word and make Him out to be a liar and His Word is not in us' (1 John 1:8 & 10).

The Lord's high level of behaviour is very hard to maintain, but we just have to get on and walk the narrow path and live in such a way that will ensure our entry into heaven. 'Enter through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction and many are those who are entering it; but the gate

is narrow and the way is straitened that leads to eternal life, and few are those who find it' (Matthew 7:13 & 14). 'Strive to enter by the narrow gate for many I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able' (Luke 13:24). Destruction means eternity without God – the lake of fire. To avoid that we must live holy lives before the Lord.

The only way we can be as pure as He expects of us, is to deny or disregard our own desires and interests. 'Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to be My disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me' (Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23). 'He who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me' (Matthew 10:38). 'Beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that defiles body and spirit, perfecting our holiness in the fear of the Lord' (2 Corinthians 7:1). The fear of the Lord means we need to respect Him and be aware that He is always watching. Nothing goes unnoticed – whether good or sinful; whether in thought or action. Once we give our lives to Him, His holy presence is always there.

To give in to the flesh is to sin. If we combine scriptures, we can see that the Lord expects us to clothe ourselves with Jesus and make no provision for indulging the flesh (Romans 13:14); we must walk in the Holy Spirit so we do not gratify the flesh ... those who belong to Jesus should have crucified the flesh with its desires (Galatians 5:16 & 24); we are to abstain from the sensual urges that wage war against the soul (1 Peter 2:11); since Jesus suffered in the flesh for us, so we have to arm ourselves with the same thought. Whoever has suffered in the flesh is finished with sin, so that he should no longer spend his life living by his own desires but for what God wills (1 Peter 4:1 & 2); those who walk after the flesh, indulge in the lust of polluting passion and despise authority (2 Peter 2:10); we must not love the world or the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him (1 John 2:16) and the Lord knows how to rescue us out of ungodly passions and keep us from falling, and present us before the presence of His glory in exceeding joy (Jude 1:24).

We have been given freedom from sin – not the freedom to sin – and there are many Christians who really do not know the difference and they continue in their sin and think it is okay because God will forgive them. That way of thinking is very carnal and immature. 'What then? Shall we sin because we do not live under the Law but under grace? Certainly not! ... And having been set free from sin, you have become the servants of righteousness ... But now since you have been set free from sin and you have become the servants of God, you have your present reward in holiness and its end is eternal life; for the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus our Lord' (Romans 6:15 to 23). The death God is talking about here is not physical death but eternal, spiritual death; also known as the second death (Revelation 21:8).

The question we need to ask ourselves is this: do we want to go to be with the Lord in heaven or not? Are we prepared to sacrifice the comforts of our own lives in order to live wholly for the Lord, whatever that may bring? There are several ways of describing our way to heaven: Inheriting the Kingdom of God; sharing in the Kingdom of God; going to be with the Lord and going to glory all mean the same thing. Salvation is a free gift, but once we are saved, we need to allow God to purify us so we can be more like Jesus. The Bible reveals in several places that believers will cry out to God but will be rejected and miss out on heaven because of sin. 'For I (Jesus) tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees, you (a believer) will never enter the Kingdom of God' (Matthew 5:20). Jesus was speaking to religious people because He said, "Your righteousness." Non-believers are not righteous, so it is obvious Jesus was speaking directly to believers.

'Many will say to Me on that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name and driven out demons in Your name and done many mighty works in Your name?" And then I will say to them publicly, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who act wickedly"' (Matthew 7:22 & 23). How many non-believers would be prophesying in Jesus' name and casting out demons? Jesus is very obviously talking to believers.

'Jesus said, "Friend (indicating a believer), how did you get in here without a wedding garment?" Then the king said to the attendants, "Tie him hand and foot and throw him into outer darkness." There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, for many are called but few are chosen' (Matthew 22:12 & 13). We do not call a stranger, 'Friend', so again it is obvious that Jesus was referring to someone He knew – a believer. To confirm what Jesus was saying here, we see that the 'wedding garment' is the righteous acts of a believer (Revelation 19:7 & 8). Without righteousness there is no 'wedding garment'.

'The Kingdom of heaven can be likened to ten virgins (indicating God's people; believers) ... those who were prepared went in with Him to the marriage feast and the door was shut. Later the other virgins came and cried out, "Lord, Lord. Open the door for us!" But He replied, "I solemnly (sadly) declare, I do not know you"' (Matthew 25:1 to 12).

Following that, we have the long parable of the servant of the Lord who was given one talent, but because he refused to use the talent given to him by the Lord, the Lord said, "Take the talent away from him ... and throw the good-for-nothing servant (indicating a good-for-nothing believer) into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:14 to 30).

Further on we have the parable of the lazy servant who would not help God's people and Jesus said to them, "Solemnly (sadly) I declare to you, in so far as you failed to do it for the least of these, you failed to do it for Me." Then they will go away into eternal punishment (Matthew 25:45 & 46). Jesus actually said, "Begone from Me you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matthew 25:41). It is obvious the above verses refer to lukewarm believers, not to people who have never been saved. A servant of the Lord is a believer; so is a friend and a virgin.

The strongest indication that Christians, or the children of the Kingdom, can miss out on heaven because of their unholy behaviour was revealed by the words spoken by Jesus – direct and straight to the point – without a parable. "I (Jesus) tell you, many will come from east and west and will sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven while the children of the Kingdom will be driven out into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 8:11 & 12). How could Jesus make His warning any clearer than that?

Our aim is to warn Christians about sin, that according to the scriptures, could keep them out of heaven. 'Whoever breaks these commandments and teaches others to do so, will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who practices them and teaches others to do so shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven' (Matthew 5:19). When Paul said the 'wages of sin is death', he was talking to Christians. We know that because in the previous sentence he said, 'You have your present reward in holiness and its end is eternal life' (Romans 6:22). He was warning Christians to lift their level of holiness or the result – the wages – would be eternal death or missing out on heaven. If we are to be ready for Jesus' second coming and be as pure as God expects, then many of us are going to have to change our ways. Jesus pointed out the ways in which we can identify God's standard so we can see the areas where we go wrong. At the end of His discourse Jesus said we must be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:21 to 48). That is a very high standard indeed!

There are many sins listed in the Bible that are not considered all that bad in this modern world but God doesn't change and what He defined as sin in the Hebrew scriptures, is still considered sin in His eyes today. Just because the level of behaviour has lowered dramatically, does not mean that God has lowered His standards. On the contrary; He expects our behaviour to be holy and we have to lift our standards, not expect God to lower His. The sins listed here are spoken of in the Bible and all bring with them severe chastisement and judgement from God ... and were written to sinful believers.

'Let us (the believers) walk in the Lord properly as in the day of His coming, not in revelling and drunkenness, immorality, debauchery, licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy' (Romans 13:13). 'The desires of the flesh are opposed to the Holy Spirit and the Spirit is opposed to the flesh ... The practices of the flesh are obvious. They are adultery, immorality, impurity, indecency, lustfulness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger and ill temper, selfishness, divisions, heresies, party spirit, envy, murder, drunkenness, orgies and the like. I warn you (believers) beforehand, that those who do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God' (Galatians 5:19 to 21).

'Brother goes to law against brother before unbelieving judges? The very fact of your having lawsuits with one another at all is sin. Why not rather let yourselves be cheated? But you are doing wrong even to your own brethren. Do you not know that the unrighteous and the wrongdoers will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: the impure, immoral, idolaters, adulterers, those who participate in homosexuality, cheats, swindlers, thieves, greedy graspers, drunkards, foulmouthed revilers, slanderers, extortioners and robbers will never inherit the Kingdom of God' (1 Corinthians 6:6 to 10). So here we have a direct statement, that those who do such things as believers will not be accepted into heaven. We are not even allowed to take fellow Christians to court. The Lord could not get any clearer than that!

'Immorality and all impurity or greediness must not be named among you as God's people. Let there be no filthiness, obscenity, indecency, nor foolish and sinful talk nor coarse jesting. For be sure of this: that no person practicing sexual vice or impurity in thought or in life, or one who is covetous – for he is in effect an idolater – has any inheritance in the Kingdom of God. Let no one delude and deceive you with empty excuses and groundless arguments for these sins, for through these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience, so do not associate or be sharers with them. Look carefully then, how you (believers) walk!' (Ephesians 5:3 to 7).

The sins mentioned here are often ignored by professing Christians who don't like to be told that we have to live under God's rules; His regulations for His people. They often make empty excuses and groundless arguments for these sins. The Word of God is strong and sure and must be listened to and acted on if we are to secure our salvation. Just because we no longer have to adhere to the sacrificial law given to Moses, does not mean we can live our lives by doing our 'own thing'. We need to understand that the laws of God were given to Moses for one reason – it was to make mankind conscious of sin (Romans 3:20). 'What do we conclude then? Is the law identical with sin? Certainly not! Nevertheless, if it had not been for the law I should not have recognised sin. I would not have known about covetousness and I would have had no sense of guilt if the law had not said; you shall not covet' (Romans 7:7).

We will attempt to itemise and explain the sins written in the verses above, that are obscure, misunderstood or ignored in our modern world. Remember all these sins were illegal in Moses time. Some were punishable by stoning to death! We have used modern descriptions of 'old' sins so they can be more easily understood.

Extortion and swindling are serious crimes and are sin (1 Corinthians 6:10), but there is a way people extort that is sin but not a crime. One true example is about an elderly widow who had a very expensive vehicle her husband had bought shortly before he died. A couple in the church offered to buy the car from the widow. She was still grieving, and not being familiar with the market value, agreed to accept a much lower price for the car. The Christian couple bought the car then sold it at market value, making a substantial profit. The elderly widow was devastated when she found out how the couple had swindled her. What they did was not illegal, but it was immoral. Christians do that kind of thing all the time. That is what this Bible study is about ... Christians behaving badly. People who should know better and should act in a manner that glorifies God, not in a way that turns the unbeliever away from God.

Stealing, theft and robbery are all sins. Early Christians were told to stop stealing and work for a living and give to those in need (Ephesians 4:28). Accepting too much change after paying for a purchase is theft and God sees even if the cashier doesn't. Taking 'perks' such as pens from the workplace is theft. Refusing to pay income tax is theft. Not repaying a loan is a form of robbery.

Murder is sin – we all know that, but people don't need to kill each other to commit murder. Just hating your neighbour or holding malice are as evil as murder in God's eyes (Matthew 5:21 & 22). Abortion, although acceptable in the modern world, is actually murder. It is the deliberate killing of another human being. 'You did form my inward parts; You did knit me together in my mother's womb. I was not hidden from You when I was being formed in secret, intricately and wonderfully wrought in the depths of the womb. Your eyes saw my unformed substance and in Your book all the days of my life were written before ever they took shape, when as yet there were none of them' (Psalm 139:13 to 16). If the Lord knows the whole life of an unborn baby before it has taken shape; before it has seen any daylight, then abortion is taking the life of a living person. Just because the tiny person cannot speak up for itself, is helpless and dependent, does not make it any less a human. We were all once in that same unformed, unaware state of being, hidden in the depths of our mother's womb; we were all tiny, helpless people, all with potential, all with talents, abilities and gifts that were not yet realised. Should we have been put to death at that helpless stage of our development? No, and neither should any unborn child.

Selfishness and greediness are sin. Hoarding is sin. Keeping an abundance of items just for the sake of having them is sin, so that would include so-called 'collectors' (Matthew 6:19). We cannot serve two masters and collectors are bound by their possessions (Matthew 6:24). They need to sell what they have and give to the poor if they want to show that they really are not bound. When Jesus told a young man with many possessions to sell what he had and give to the poor, he was so bound by his possessions he went away grieved (Matthew 19:21 & 22). We are to guard ourselves from greed and covetousness, and that includes hoarding and 'collecting' because the Lord considers it idolatry (Luke 12:15; Colossians 3:5).

Dangerous wickedness. This is really obscure but can be explained. A student who takes a rifle and shoots at classmates with the intent to harm them, is dangerously wicked. The man who hid in the boot of a car firing at innocent shoppers while his friend drove the car, were both dangerously wicked. Suicide bombers are dangerously wicked.

Deceit is exactly that. It is sinfully deceiving another person. Modern words for deceit would be fraud, ruse, deception or scam. 'Like a madman who casts firebrands and arrows, so is the man who deceives his neighbour then says, "Was I not only joking?"' (Proverbs 26:18 & 19).

Envy, jealousy and covetousness are all sin. One of the Ten Commandments tells us not to covet anything that belongs to someone else. 'You shall not covet your neighbour's house, wife, servant, ox, donkey or anything that is your neighbour's' (Exodus 20:17). The Lord says it is a form of idolatry. 'The man who envies

is one who is covetous for he is an idolater and he has no inheritance in the Kingdom of God' (Ephesians 5:5). As we read earlier, we are to guard ourselves from all greed and covetousness for that is idolatry. So again we can see that these things can keep believers out of the Kingdom of God.

Slander is not considered a serious crime in our modern world, but in the Bible it was considered as serious as extortion and people who slandered would not have any share in the Kingdom of God – or in other words, they would not get into heaven (1 Corinthians 6:10). That is serious.

Pride was the sin that caused the devil to be cast out of heaven, and it can cause believers to fall into the same condemnation as the devil. That would mean the loss of their salvation (Isaiah 14:11 to 15; Ezekiel 28:17; 1 Timothy 3:6). Jesus said being filled with pride is evil (Mark 7:22 & 23).

Foolishness is the opposite of wisdom and God says the wisdom of the world is foolishness and worthless to God (1 Corinthians 3:19 & 20), and Jesus said foolishness is evil (Mark 7:22 & 23).

Drunkenness, over eating, revelling, carousing, debauchery and a party spirit are all sins and are activities Christians should not participate in. These actions are all self-explanatory. Christians should never party on, get drunk, revel and carouse. Drunkenness and overeating are equally serious sins in God's opinion. 'Do not get drunk for that is debauchery' (Ephesians 5:18). 'Do not associate with winebibbers; be not among them or among gluttonous eaters, for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty' (Proverbs 23:20 & 21). Compulsive eating, which God calls gluttony is so serious, the drunkard and glutton were once stoned to death, and we notice that gluttony and drunkenness was equal to stubbornness and rebellion (Deuteronomy 21:18 & 21). 'If the servant (a believer) is wicked ... and begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with the drunken, the Master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and will judge him with the hypocrites; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth' (Matthew 24:48 to 51). Here again, we have the believing servant behaving wickedly and is rejected as being a hypocrite. That is serious.

Quarrelling, enmity, strife, ill temper, anger, divisions are all sins. Bad temper and nastiness are both sins. 'Let all bitterness, indignation, wrath, rage, resentment, anger, animosity, quarrelling, slander, abusive language be banished from you with all malice, spite, ill will of any kind' (Ephesians 4:31). Verbal abuse and insulting people by calling them derogatory names is sin (Matthew 5:22). The hard one to explain here is 'divisions'. That means to cause factions or dissent. To start off a new church with the blessing of the pastor is good. To break away with ill feeling and take some of the flock is sin, because it is dissent and it causes division.

Idolatry is sin: We are not to make graven images; this means idols of any type and we are not to bring idols into our homes (Deuteronomy 7:26). Buddha's, wooden masks, Egyptian gods etc are all idols and even the people who make idols are cursed by God (Deuteronomy 27:15). We are not to worship or bow down to anything or anyone. Only the Lord God and Jesus our Saviour are worthy of worship. There are other idols that are not as obvious as the ones mentioned here. If anyone loves anything more than God, that is an idol (Matthew 10:37), whether it be mother, father, son or daughter. Some people love their pets more than they love the Lord. If people stay home from church because their dog is sick, then they are putting their dog before the Lord. Worse still, if they bring their dog to church then they have made their dog an idol. If anyone has a pet that takes the place of a child, then that pet is an idol. Some women have dolls that they keep and dress up to take the place of children. The doll is an idol. If anyone spends an hour applying make-up and beautifying themselves before leaving their homes, then they have made themselves an idol. Putting anything at all before the Lord is making that thing an idol and that is sin.

Witchcraft and sorcery are sins. Idolatry and witchcraft go hand-in-hand with rebellion and stubbornness (1 Samuel 15:23). Witches or sorcerers were to be put to death (Exodus 22:18). Witchcraft in any form is a terrible sin against God. He calls it an abomination (Deuteronomy 7:25; 29:17). Witchcraft includes sorcery, tarot cards, magic, horoscopes, iridology, freemasonry, wicca, crystal balls, tealeaf reading, fortune telling and anything that is considered supernatural. If anyone is or has ever been involved in any form of witchcraft, they need to repent and be delivered of the evil spirits that come with such practices.

Blasphemy – taking the Lord's name in vain is sin. People actually use the name of Jesus as a swear word. Even using shortened or altered versions of Jesus' name is blasphemy. Unless one is praying and is speaking to the Lord, using the phrase 'O my God!' is blasphemy. People who frequently send the letters 'OMG' in text messages and in emails are blaspheming. If anyone continues to blaspheme, they could be turned over to the devil to be taught a lesson (1 Timothy 1:20). Jesus said it is evil (Mark 7:22 & 23).

Not honouring our parents is sin. 'Honour your father and your mother for this is the first commandment with a promise; that all may be well with you and you may have a long life' (Ephesians 6:2 & 3). If you do not

honour your parents, all will not be well with you from God. Committing elderly parents to a nursing home then forgetting them is not honouring our parents. Shouting at them, abusing them, ridiculing them and generally treating them with disdain is not honouring them and it is sin.

Lying is sin. 'All men are liars' (Psalm 116:11), but we still need to concentrate on being truthful, sincere and honest (1 Corinthians 5:8).

Unforgiveness is sin. If we don't forgive others then we will not be forgiven – and if we are not forgiven we can not enter the Kingdom of God. Not only that, if we refuse to forgive one another, God Himself will hand us over to the devil, or the 'tormentors'. (Matthew 18:21 to 35). Taking other Christians to the Court of Justice is sin and those who do that will not share in the Kingdom of God. Sometimes forgiveness is needed more than 'winning'.

Wicked thoughts are sin. Sin is not only action; we can sin in our thoughts too. 'Every man who so much as looks at a woman with lust in his heart, has already committed adultery with her in his heart' (Matthew 5:28). 'All these evil desires (including sexual sin and lust) come from within and they defile the man (or woman)' (Mark 7:23). God designed sexual intimacy for marriage and all sex outside of marriage is sin. There are, unfortunately, some Christians who think that sexual sin is okay. It certainly is not okay with God and the scriptures show us why. God was the One Who created families for a good reason; children need both a mother and a father. A single parent is immediately at a disadvantage and so are the children – common sense tells us that. It is sad for the children, that so many people go ahead and have children outside of marriage. It's not just the personal shame of illicit sex, but the sheer workload involved in raising children without the 'God designed' help of a supportive spouse. Then of course we see the difficulty children have when they don't know who their father is, or he is absent from their lives. Sexual sins include adultery (sex with a married person other than your own spouse), fornication (unmarried sex such as de facto relationships), people who indulge in incest (sex with a family member), people who indulge in pornography and the vile, ghastly people who sexually abuse innocent children. We must make a note here: The children born to these such people are innocent; as are the children who are abused by these perverted people. The victims are always innocent of the sin perpetrated against them. They are never to blame. Children are always innocent and can freely ask God to heal the terrible, emotional wounds these activities can cause. It is bad enough when these sexual perversions happen in general society, but it is utterly abhorrent when church-goers act this way. Jesus said, 'You are of your father, the devil, and it is your will to practice the lusts and gratify the desires of your father ... he is the father of all that is false' (John 8:44). Unless it is forced, sexual sin is an act of the will. Sex is a choice and all Christians should choose holiness over lust.

Here is a list of sexual sins quoted in the scriptures: indecent conduct and impurity (pole dancing, stripping, nudity etc); licentiousness (disregarding rules of sexual conduct which would include rape, incest, paedophilia, etc); filthiness and obscenity (pornography and nude 'art'); foul-mouthed, indecent foolish talk and coarse jesting (dirty jokes, double entendre comments, swearing) 'Let no foul or polluting language or worthless talk ever come out of your mouth' (Ephesians 4:29); sexual vice (sexual vices are exactly what it says ... artificial devices used in the sex act which had been popular for hundreds of years before the New Testament was written); impurity in thought (sexual fantasies); homosexuality, lesbianism and prostitution are all abominations to God (Romans 1:24, 26 & 27). In the Old Testament, adultery was a crime punishable by death (Leviticus 20:10). There are only two references regarding masturbation in the Bible, and it does not say masturbation is sin. 'If there is among you any man who is unclean because of a nocturnal emission he is to go outside the camp and bathe in water and after sunset he may re-enter the camp' (Deuteronomy 23:10 & 11). 'If a man has a seminal emission, he is to bathe in water and he will be unclean until evening. Any clothing on which there is any semen shall be washed with water' (Leviticus 15:16 to 18 & 32). This same verse also says the husband and the wife have to wash afterwards and they will be unclean until evening; and we know the Lord does not regard married sex as sinful. However, if a person is engaged in sexual fantasies and is obsessed with sex or masturbation, then that would be sin.

Who was Jesus talking to when He spoke about righteousness? He was speaking to the religious people of His day. There is sexual sin taking place in some modern churches. How can any church allow a homosexual person to be a priest when the office of a priest is a holy calling before the Lord? How could any priest – who is supposed to be serving God – molest innocent children? People who do these things are not sincere Christians. God expects us to be holy and these sinners are not being holy before the Lord. Those people who are involved in a church and commit sexual sins, really need to turn away from the sin and ask forgiveness from God and also their victims, whose lives have probably been ruined. Do they seriously think God cannot see what they are doing? Do they really believe they can get away with it? Remember one major thing: We will all have to stand before God on Judgement Day and give an account of what we have done in our body whether good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10).

One great lie from homosexuals, is that their behaviour is 'normal' or that they are 'born that way'. It is not normal and they are not born that way; it is a matter of choice just as any sexual promiscuity is. God said it is their will to practice lust. Their will; their choice. They can choose to be promiscuous or they can choose to be celibate. Another great lie from homosexuals is; that more than 10% of men lean toward that perverted sexual orientation but the truth is, it is less than 1%. Why do they lie so much? Who is the father of lies? The devil is (John 8:44). Clearly then, they are following their father just as Jesus said. However, the number is not as important as knowing God's thoughts on the subject. 'God gave them up to the lusts in their own hearts, to sexual impurity, to the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves; abandoning themselves to the degrading power of sin because they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and served the creature (themselves) rather than the Creator, Who is blessed forever! For this reason God gave them over to vile affections and degrading passions. For their women exchanged their natural function for an unnatural one; and the men also turned from natural relations with women and were set ablaze with lust with one another – men committing shameful acts with men and suffering in their own bodies and personalities, the inevitable consequences and penalty of their wrong doing and going astray, which was their fitting retribution. And so, since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them over to a base and condemned mind to do loathsome things. Though they were fully aware of God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do these things themselves, but approve and applaud others who practice them' (Romans 1:24 to 28 & 32).

That is scripture! That is what God says. If we ever have any doubt that God hates homosexuality and all other sexual sin, and will reject those who practice such behaviour we only need to read the Bible. 'Men shall not lie with a man as with a woman: it is an abomination and detestable. Neither shall you lie with any beast and defile yourself with it; it is confusion, perversion and degradedly carnal ... Whoever commits any of these abominations shall be cut off from among his people. So keep My charge: do not practice any of these abominable customs. Do not defile yourselves with them. I am the Lord your God' (Leviticus 18:22 to 30). 'For the sexually impure and homosexuals, those who abuse themselves with men...' (1 Timothy 1:10) ... 'Be sure of this: that no person practicing sexual vice or impurity ... has any inheritance in the Kingdom of God' (Ephesians 5:5) ... For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap decay, but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit, reap eternal life' (Galatians 6:8). 'Shun all sexual immorality. Any other sin which a man commits is one outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body' (1 Corinthians 6:18). Sexual immorality is the one and only sin, where the sin is against one's own body, which should be treated as the temple of the Holy Spirit and should not be defiled. All other sins are outside the body.

'The woman shall not wear that which pertains to a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all that do so are an abomination to the Lord your God' (Deuteronomy 22:5). How clear is that? Women are not to dress up to look like a man. Men are not to dress like a woman. It is an abomination to God for men to wear clothing that is designed for women, yet that is exactly what homosexuals and people who call themselves 'cross-dressers' do, and they flaunt it. The disgustingly horrible Mardi Gras is one example of mass abominations. God hates that behaviour; has strictly told people not to practice such things and one day, they will all have to face God and explain their actions. There is never an exception. When God says 'All' He means 'All' and ... 'All that do so are an abomination to the Lord your God'.

Incest is 'wickedness and an outrageous offence; an abomination'. Read the fullness of the prohibitions in Leviticus 18:6 to 30. We are not to have sex with anybody except a spouse. We are not to view the naked bodies of any person except a spouse or a young child in our immediate biological family and then only to bathe them. We must not see the nakedness of our fathers, mothers, grandparents, stepparents, sisters, brothers, stepsisters, stepbrothers, nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, daughters-in-law, sons-in-law, sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law, grandchildren, neighbour or even our own child who has become an adult. Sex with animals is also listed here as 'confusion, perversion and degradedly carnal'. In all these scriptures we can see how strongly the Lord our God feels about carnal sex and from these scriptures we can see how God detests sexual sin; that is any sex, whatsoever, outside of marriage. Biblical marriage is between a man and a woman; definitely not between two women or two men or an incestuous couple or with a child. We have to have such a pure heart, that we can't even look at a person other than our spouse with any sexual desire. 'I (Jesus) say to you that everyone who so much as looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart' (Matthew 5:28).

'We must not gratify lust (evil desire) and indulge in immorality as some of them did – and 23,000 suddenly fell dead in a single day' (1 Corinthians 10:8). God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. He would rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. God says, "Turn back. Turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die?" (Ezekiel 33:11). God is literally calling out to turn those away from their evil lifestyle and so they can live with Him forever. God, our heavenly Father, loves everybody but hates the sin and will punish those who indulge in such things unless they turn to God, change their ways, stop the sin and then He will

forgive them and welcome them into His Kingdom. God will restore their lives as long as they turn from the sin. If they continue in their sin, it will keep them away from God and thus out of heaven. 'The Lord is slow to anger and great in power but will by no means clear the guilty' (Nahum 1:3). So if anyone is indulging in any sexual sin, whatsoever, they need to stop it, repent, tell God they're sorry and ask Him to clean them up from the heart. When He has done that, they will not want to do those things any more. The desire to be like that will wash away. God does not want anyone to perish; He wants everyone to go to heaven but people will not if they continue living a debauched lifestyle. That is what Jesus came for; to love, save, forgive and restore lives. Remember this; God the Father loved us before we loved Him (1 John 4:19). God is long-suffering and patient toward us, not desiring that any should perish, but that all should turn to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

Many Christians conform to the world and will not stand up for righteousness. They prefer to be friends of the world and accept wicked behaviour because that is easier than losing friends, having their family reject them or losing their jobs. They think it is okay to smoke, drink alcohol, worship sport, swear, speed while driving, evade taxes and party on like the world does, but they are walking on dangerous ground and are in danger of losing their salvation. The Bible says we are not to conform to the world, but are to be transformed by renewing our minds so we may prove what is the perfect will of God (Romans 12:2). 'Do you not know that being the world's friend is being God's enemy? So whoever chooses to be a friend of the world takes his stand as an enemy of God' (James 4:4). How can an enemy of God get to heaven? We are not to associate with the world. 'Do not be deceived! Evil companionships corrupt good character. Awake to your right minds and sin no more. For some of you do not have knowledge of God. I say this to your shame!' (1 Corinthians 15:33 & 34). This verse tells us that there are people sitting in our churches week after week, who do not know God! Jesus may say to them, "I never knew you." We need to lead these people to salvation.

Remember we are not talking about sincere, dedicated, born-again, Holy Spirit filled Christians who love the Lord and walk in His ways. We are talking about lukewarm believers of any denomination who regard sin as their way of life; people who may complain that there is nothing but rules and regulations and they protest at the strict rules we have to follow. Firstly, that is rebellion, and secondly, holiness is what God expects of us. God said he would vomit lukewarm believers out of His mouth (Revelation 3:15 & 16). In general everyday life we must constantly adhere to rules and laws. That is the way life is in general on earth, so how much more should we be preparing for eternity? God's standards are very high indeed and it takes a great and constant effort, and it is a battle to maintain the level of behaviour God expects from His people. We have the assurance though, that when we do sin we can confess our sins to God, He is faithful and just and He will forgive our sins (1 John 1:9), but if we reject the Word of God, then He will reject us (1 Samuel 15:23). If we are ashamed of God here on earth, then on Judgement Day, He will be ashamed of us (Hebrews 11:16).

'Speaking of this as he (Paul) does in all his letters, there are some things in those epistles that are difficult to understand, which the ignorant twist to their own utter destruction just as they do with the rest of the scriptures. Let me warn you therefore Beloved, that knowing these things (about sin) beforehand, you should be on your guard, lest you be carried away by the error of wickedness and fall from your own faithfulness, but grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus our Messiah. To Him be the glory now and forever to the day of eternity. Amen' (2 Peter 3:16 to 18).

Amen and God bless you.

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