

Rossville Church of Christ Doorpost Devo



May 7, 2023



Encouragement from God's Word

Matthew 5:29-30 Disciples Kill Sin

Is sin more like a mistake or misstep or is it more like a deadly self-destructive poison? Is temptation just a desire that is deemed taboo by some cultural norms or is temptation a real wartime threat in a spiritual battle? What we believe about sin deeply affects how we respond to sin. The world around us does everything possible to trivialize and minimize sin. In the eyes of the world, the problems we face in our lives are almost never due to our rebellious choices that reject the design and plan of God.

Scripture Plan: Read

Mon, Tues, Wed.:

1 Cor. 12:12-31 Each Night

Thurs., Fri., Sat.:

Matthew 22:34-40 Each Night

Devo Plan

1. Mon.--Read and Pray Together
2. Tues.--Read, Pray, Ask Questions, and Discuss
3. Wed.--Read, Pray, and Think about how to Apply
4. Thurs.-Sat.--Repeat steps 1-3 with New Passage
5. Sunday--Pray and Reflect on What was Learned in Worship and Class

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Discussion Questions

1 Cor 12:12-31

Discussion Question #1: What does the body teach us about the unity we should have in Christ? What would happen if all the body parts performed the same function?

Discussion #2: What is the basis for Christian unity? In what ways is this difficult? What are some practical ways to work toward unity?

Discussion #3: What are some different roles in the Church today? What role do you have and why is that role important? What roles do others have that you can't do?

Matthew 22:34-40

Discussion #1: Why is loving God the most important commandment? Why does Jesus emphasize this so much?

Discussion #2: What does it mean to love God with our hearts, souls, and minds? What are practical ways to do each?

Discussion #3: How is the second commandment "like" the first? How does our love for God impact our love for neighbors?

Apply and Obey

To obey what God says, this upcoming week I will...

I will share what I learned with...

Prayer Points

- Lord, Thank You--for your creative and unique design that reveals your love for us.
- Lord, We Praise You--that you are worthy of all our love and adoration.
- Lord, Help Us--to love you with everything we are and to display that love to our neighbors and in the unity we have as a church family

Rather, the world usually identifies low self-esteem as the issue. The problem is not the real guilt of sin but the feeling of guilt and shame that has been imposed on us by arbitrary religious standards. Indeed, we should have a healthy self-esteem rooted in our ultimate value and worth as designated by God. Truly, guilt can be destructive and dangerous if it is not tempered by the amazing reality of grace and forgiveness. Yet, as much as possible, society says that responsibility never lies with the individual. We are taught that sin is not the heart of the issue.

Lest we place too much blame on culture for their warped view of sin and begin to be satisfied in our self-righteousness, we must look at ourselves and our own understanding of sin. Too often, I know that I seek to justify, trivialize, or downplay the sin in my heart and life. It is all too easy to dismiss a certain sin as not being that bad in comparison to another's struggle. It is all too convenient to overestimate my own ability to resist temptation because I want to get close to the edge without going over. It is all too simple to blame someone else for my sin rather than take responsibility for my own evil choices. But the more we are aware of the deadliness of sin, the more attuned we will be to fighting and resisting temptation. Knowing that we are daily engaging in spiritual warfare is half the battle. This mindset reminds us to be alert and aware of the attacks of the enemy. Satan loves to lull us to ease, luring us to believe there is little danger in sin or temptation. He wants to draw us out into the battlefield thinking we are walking in a field of daisies. It is much easier to strike a target that does not know he is being hunted.

If all of this sounds like fearmongering or overly morbid, pay attention to the words of our Lord Jesus. Christ was never subtle or passive about the horrifying threat of sin in the heart. Jesus took sin more seriously than anyone else because he was more keenly aware than anyone of its soul-suffocating effects. He commanded his disciples to think soberly and rightly about sin and to respond with drastic measures. Consider what Jesus says in Matthew 5:29-30:

"If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell."

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the *doorposts* of your house and on your gates." --Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Jesus sees sin as an aggressive cancer that can destroy a person eternally. This is not a hateful statement. This is a lovingly severe dose of reality for people like us who are often numbed to reality. Sin must not be trifled with or treated half-heartedly. Jesus teaches his disciples to cut off sin at the source. This may and often does require extreme measures. While Jesus is not commanding literal amputation here, he is instructing his disciples to be willing and ready to make sacrifices that are as inconvenient, difficult, and as ghastly as chopping off a hand.

This means some of the decisions disciples make in response to sin will seem like overkill. They may seem foolish or prudish or moralistic. But for those of us who follow Jesus, we must trust our Master's warning. Living in the way of Jesus means we must identify the affections, thoughts, behaviors, and patterns that lead us to sin and do whatever necessary to cut those things out of our lives at the very source. That may mean refusing to watch what the world watches. That may mean refusing to listen to what we normally would listen to. Our very souls are at stake. Our souls are more valuable than our hands. They are more valuable than an eye. They are more valuable than anything else we might want to cling on to in this world. Yet, holding on to anything that leads us down the path of sin is like holding on to a live grenade because we think it might be useful to us later. We must let Jesus shape our attitude to sin more than the world does. What Jesus warns is toxic is often identified by the world as harmless.

This call of discipleship may appear too heavy for us to bear. How can we face the hordes of Satan's legions? How can we stand up to the temptations all around us? How can we put sin to death even when the sacrifice is extremely costly? Jesus has not left his disciples without massive help in the fight. We have been given the Holy Spirit to put to death the deeds of the body. The Spirit has equipped us with the sword of His Word to attack the lies of the enemy. Prayer is a gift to keep us watchful and trusting in our powerful Father who helps us. Disciples fight. Disciples put sin to death. Even so, disciples never do this alone. Disciples lean on God and His Word, just as Jesus showed us in his battle with temptation in the wilderness. Armed with God's Word and God's Spirit, we can have confidence in the sanctifying power of the Lord. Though it will be a fight until the day we die, disciples find strength in the Lord and trust in Him for ultimate victory.

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the *doorposts* of your house and on your gates." --Deuteronomy 6:4-9