

The Deceitfulness of Sin

by Hendrik Joubert

What images does the word sin conjure up in your mind; murder, rape, theft and other morally detestable actions – things others do? A brother in Christ once explained to me that when you live in the “*real world*,” lying forms an integral part of life as every businessman has to lie in order to be successful. In the Bible Christians are warned that sin is deceitful, and that one may eventually be hardened by it. *...but exhort one another daily, while it is called "TODAY," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.* (Hebrews 3:13)

In what way would sin be deceitful? Could it perhaps be that we believe it is acceptable for us to lie when we feel we may avoid embarrassment, trouble or to be a successful businessman? Then there is the white lie, the lie that you tell to make someone feel good, or to avoid making them feel badly. In **Ephesians 4:25** we learn that believers in Christ are to put *away lying*, **"LET EACH ONE OF YOU SPEAK TRUTH WITH HIS NEIGHBOR,"** *for we are members of one another.*

Could it be that we do not see the wrong in taking (stealing) from our employers because we consider them rich, or perhaps because we see it as a *supplement* to our poor salaries? In **Ephesians 4:28** the Christian is exhorted *to steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.*

Would I be justified to revert to poor behavior if my boss treats me harshly? *Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.* (1Peter 2:18) Notice our example: *For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:* ²² **"WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH";** ²³ *who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;* ²⁴ *who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.* (1Pet. 2:21-24)

At times life may seem overwhelming and the cross we have to bear a little too heavy. Then we meet to remember the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord and the price we have to pay does not seem that high any more. Consider the following statement recorded in **Hebrews 5:8**: *...though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.* The statement that *He learned obedience* may seem challenging, at least for me. God has to obey no one, yet God the Son had to do the will of His Father. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?* (Hebrews 2:1-4)

Here we enter another area of sin many will not be convinced of. The general perception in the religious world is that what we believe and practice doctrinally does not matter, *as long as we worship the same God.* This misconception, like many others, are plainly contradicted when Jesus quotes what God previously said through the prophet to illustrate the timelessness of the principle that when men make the rules, worship becomes vain, or useless leaving us in our sin: **"AND IN VAIN THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN."** (Matthew 15:9)

Because the simple meaning is considered outside the realm of possibility many fail to see the condemnation of the creeds of men written in church councils and synods. Decisions at these councils are considered inspired, however they change from year to year and follow the dictates of society. God's word is changed in order to be politically correct, and His love and His grace is used to justify this behavior. As early as the first century Jude warns that *certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.* (Jude 1:4)

To say that the consequences of ignoring these warnings will be disastrous would be an understatement considering that the catastrophic consequences are eternal. The unfortunate reality is that many will not heed the warning and will face Jesus in the judgment with a false sense of security: *Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'* (Matthew 7:22-23)