

## Lessons From A National Disgrace

It does not take very long for news of the latest public scandal in our government to reach the ears of the American public. The majority of scandals inevitably produce political and legal issues which are not to be discussed in an article dealing with spiritual matters. But there are serious moral issues which can teach important personal lessons.

The first principle is that our sin will find us out. Private sins are fully known to God. Psalm 90:8 says, "Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance." Hebrews 4:13 adds, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Moses wrote, "... be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23). Sins with or toward another have a way of becoming known either by actions (Mark 7:20-23) or by consequences on others (Joshua 7:19-21, 25).

The second principle is that leadership demands godly character and morality. Some have said that this is a private matter and character does not count, only job performance. But it was not so for those who seek to please God. God demanded godly character and morality from the nation (Deuteronomy 17:18-20), its leaders (Exodus 18:21), the church (Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Peter 5:2-3), in the workplace (Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 4:1) and in the home (Genesis 18:19; 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14).

The third principle is genuine repentance. The worldly view of repentance is just sorrow for getting caught, while the godly view of repentance is sorrow for transgressing God's law. Paul wrote, "For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter" (2 Corinthians 7:8-11). Worldly repentance produces a temporary fix of the situation while godly repentance produces a change in heart and conduct.

The fourth principle is the consequences of sin. David's confession in 2 Samuel 12:13 was simple but honest: "I have sinned against the Lord."

God's message through the prophet was, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die." However, he still had to live with the consequences which included a violent future for his family (2 Samuel 12:10), insurrection from among his own family (2 Samuel 12:11), and humiliation from his wives being violated (2 Samuel 12:11). Nathan finished by declaring, "Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die" (2 Samuel 12:14). The lamentable end to David's sin was the death of an innocent child.

With God's help, we will continue to bear the indignities and embarrassment of continued scandals. While "sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34), the lessons of personal morality that can be learned from these national disgraces are of far more importance to us in gaining our inheritance.

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