

Can We Change Sin?

Introduction. It is difficult for me to believe that the conscience of America is dead. I still believe that deep down inside, most people know when they are doing wrong.

We need to be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:17-21). Defined literally, sin is a missing of the mark. But it came to denote an act of disobedience to divine law (1 John 3:4). Several places in the Bible quote specific sins (Matthew 15:19; Romans 1:29-31; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:3-5; Colossians 3:5; 1 Timothy 1:8-10; Revelation 21:8). These passages assure us that we will not go to heaven if we commit these sins.

So it seems that people will be willing to do anything to change sin. We do not want the conscience bothering us, so we do what we can to relieve the problem. So we are left with the question, "Is there anything we can do to make sin not be sin anymore?"

I. ***What If We Legalize Sin?***

- A. Many people today use prohibition as an example of the good legalization of sin can do. When prohibition was enacted, our per capita alcohol consumption dropped considerably. Advocates now want to legalize gambling, homosexuality, marijuana, etc.
- B. Has God's word changed in all these years? What about abortion or unscriptural divorce and remarriage? Those are all legal. The laws that alter God's word do not change the way God feels about unrighteousness (Psalm 19:7-11). Always remember that sin is a missing of the mark and God makes the mark.
- C. We can witness as many crusades as people can dream up, but it will not change the fact that sin is still sin. Our approval or disapproval ultimately means nothing. God is the one who will decide through the standard of the Bible (John 12:48).

II. ***What If We Look At The Opinion Of The Majority?***

- A. Look at how many people accept premarital sex, but that still does not make it right (1 Corinthians 6:18; Hebrews 13:4).
- B. A surprising number of people are beginning to accept homosexuality. Poll numbers accepting it as a valid way to live are rising. But how much plainer does the word of God have to be (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)?
- C. The scriptures are very plain as to what constitutes homosexuality. In 1 Corinthians 6:9, the word "effeminate" means men who have made themselves like women and become the passive partner in a homosexual relationship. Likewise, "homosexuals" are the active male partner in the relationship.

- D. All over the country, churches are saying that homosexuality should no longer be considered a sin. Homosexual congregations are springing up everywhere. In our society, it is getting to the point where it is not even frowned upon. In fact, we are considered "close-minded" because we do not accept these individuals.
- E. Can we excuse ourselves by saying that we were born with it? Can we escape the wrath of God by standing upon the majority's feeling of acceptance when we commit a sin?

III. ***What If We Change The Name Of Sin?***

- A. Look at how society changes the names of sins in order to take away the negative social connotation.
 1. Murder of the unborn -- abortion or termination. The Bible speaks of inward forming in relation to Job, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah and John the Baptist (Job 31:15; Ecclesiastes 11:5; Isaiah 44:2, 24; Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:41-45). This clearly demonstrates that abortion is the murder of something which has been internally formed by God, not the simple termination of an inanimate "fetus" (Psalm 139:13).
 2. Fornication and adultery -- love affair, making love, having sex. We have already seen that the New Testament condemns fornication between married and unmarried persons.
 3. Homosexuality -- gay, alternate lifestyle, life choice. Homosexuals refer to "life partners" but the Bible says, "Abusers of themselves with mankind," "reprobate," "against nature," etc.
 4. Alcoholism -- a disease or simply a problem.
- B. Simply put, changing the names of sin lessens its impact and that is exactly what the world desires (Isaiah 5:20). Whatever we choose to call it, it is still sin. No matter what the name, it still influences us for evil.

IV. ***What If We Are Ignorant Of Sin?***

- A. No matter if we are smart about sin or not, God will still punish the wicked. In 1 Timothy 1:13, Paul declared that he committed sin ignorantly but he still needed mercy. If he would have been excused, why would he need mercy?
- B. Under the Old Law, even when someone committed a sin which they did not realize, they were under commandment to make atonement for it (Leviticus 4:22-26). That shows it is still sin.
- C. A lot of people make the argument that those who have never heard the gospel will not be condemned.
 1. What makes us sinners? Is it sin or the gospel (Romans 3:10; Isaiah 64:6; Romans 1:16)?

2. If someone had never heard the gospel and was saved, then the most horrible thing I could ever do to them would be to teach them the gospel.
3. Does that make sense? It is not the absence of the gospel that condemns; it is the presence of sin.

V. ***What If We Consider The One Who Is Committing Sin?***

- A. For some reason unknown to me, we have a terrible habit of excusing sin based on who is committing it. Think about all the people out there who are willing to excuse sin if it is committed by televangelists, Presidents or even the Pope himself.
- B. We see congregations where the preacher or the elders are in sin, but no one does anything because of the position those men hold (1 Timothy 5:20).
- C. If the apostles or Jesus Christ saw someone in sin, you had better believe that they did not excuse someone because of their position. Consider how many times Jesus condemned those in power above Him; or consider how many times Paul had the opportunity to condemn sin in governors or kings (Matthew 16:21-23; Acts 24:25; Galatians 2:11-14).
- D. We absolutely cannot allow ourselves to be carried away from the condemnation of sin by the position of others. I do not care if it is your mother, father or someone you deeply respect, if they are in sin, they need rebuking (James 2:9).

VI. ***What If We Excuse Sin?***

- A. In Genesis sin entered the world. If you look closely at the account, you will notice that Adam blamed Eve and God, while Eve blamed the serpent (Genesis 3:12-13).
- B. With the first sin, came the first excuse. We try everything to explain away our sin. Every sin man can think of has been blamed on a bad childhood or abuse. Although there are some things which can tempt people to commit evil, it is still sin and cannot be excused.
 1. For example, what about the man who marries and divorces five times because he said he was molested as a child?
 2. What about the person who divorces for the cause of spousal abuse but not for fornication?
 3. What about the person who is a drug addict because they want to escape the memories of abuse?
 4. What about a couple who says, "We are really in love" or "We are engaged" so they commit fornication?
- C. I am not trying to be harsh, critical or unloving, but offering some excuse for our sin is not going to get us out of it. We are held account-

able for our sins, and that is that. We must be zealous and repent (Revelation 3:19).

Conclusion. I hope all of you see that no matter what, it is still sin. We need to deal with sin (Romans 4:7-8; 8:1). You are going to have that chance now (1 John 3:7). Paul was told in Acts 22:16, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." If you are in sin, do not delay any longer. Come to Jesus.