

Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate
by Jerry Bridges

Session 3: Ungodliness & Unthankfulness (Ch. 7 & 10)

“Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” by Jonathan Edwards
Deut. 32:35 – “Their foot shall slide in due time.”

This *seems to imply* the following things relating to the punishment and destruction to which these wicked Israelites were exposed:

- A. They were always exposed to *destruction*; as one that stands or walks in slippery places is always exposed to fall.
- B. They were always exposed to sudden unexpected destruction.
- C. They are liable to fall *of themselves*.
- D. That the reason why they are not fallen already, and do not fall now is only that God’s appointed time is not come. There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell, but the *mere* pleasure of God (*sovereign* pleasure, arbitrary will, restrained by no obligation, hindered by no manner of difficulty).
 1. There is no want of *power* in God to cast wicked men into hell at any moment.
 2. They *deserve* to be cast into hell; so that divine justice never stands in the way, it makes no objection against God’s using his power at any moment to destroy them. Yea, on the contrary, justice calls aloud for an infinite punishment for their sins.
 3. They are already under a sentence of *condemnation* to hell.
 4. They are now the objects of that very same *anger* and wrath of God, that is expressed in the torments of hell.
 5. The *devil* stands ready to fall upon them, and seize them as his own, at what moment God shall permit him.
 6. There are in the souls of wicked men those hellish *principles* reigning, that would presently kindle and flame out into hell fire, if it were not for God’s restraints. These principles are active and powerful, exceeding violent in their nature, and if it were not for the restraining hand of God upon them, they would soon break out, they would flame out after the same manner as the same corruptions, the same enmity does in the hearts of damned souls, and would beget the same torments as they do in them.
 7. It is no security to wicked men for one moment, that there are no visible means of death at hand. It is no security to a natural man, that he is now in health, and that he does not see which way he should now immediately go out of the world by any accident, and that there is no visible danger in any respect in his circumstances.
 8. Natural men’s prudence and care to preserve and care to preserve their own lives, or the care of others to preserve them, do not secure them a moment.

Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate
by Jerry Bridges

9. All wicked men's pains and *contrivance* which they use to escape hell, while they continue to reject Christ, and so remain wicked men, do not secure them from hell one moment. Almost every natural man that hears of hell, flatters himself that he shall escape it; he depends on himself for his own security.
10. God has laid himself under *no obligation*, by any promise to keep any natural man out of hell one moment. God certainly has made no promises either of eternal life, or of any deliverance or preservation from eternal death, but what are contained in the covenant of grace, the promises that are given in Christ, in whom all the promises are yea and amen.

Application: O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in: it is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you, as against many of the damned in hell. Consider:

- A. *Whose* wrath it is: it is the wrath of the infinite God (not man, not kings).
- B. It is the *fierceness* of this wrath that you are exposed to.
- C. The *misery* you are exposed to is that which God will inflict to that end, that he might show what that wrath of Jehovah is.
- D. It is *everlasting* wrath. It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness and wrath of Almighty God one moment; but you must suffer it to all eternity.

How dreadful is the state of those that are daily and hourly in the danger of this great wrath and infinite misery! But this is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation that has not been born again, however moral and strict, sober and religious, they may otherwise be. Oh that you would consider it, whether you be young or old! There is reason to think, that there are many this congregation now hearing this discourse, that will actually be the subjects of this very misery to all eternity. We know not who they are, or in what seats they sit, or what thoughts they now have. It may be they are now at ease, and hear all these things without much disturbance, and are now flattering themselves that they are not the persons, promising themselves that they shall escape.

And let every one that is yet out of Christ, and hanging over the pit of hell, whether they be old men and women, or middle aged, or young people, or little children, now hearken to the loud calls of God's word and providence.

Therefore, let every one that is out of Christ, now awake and fly from the wrath to come. The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over a great part of this congregation. Let every one fly out of Sodom: "Haste and escape for your lives, look not behind you, escape to the mountain, lest you be consumed."

Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate
by Jerry Bridges

► **Chapter 7: Ungodliness**

1. Root Sin: Theologians often consider pride, selfishness, and unbelief as root sins. The sin of *ungodliness* is even more basic, widespread, and apt to be the root cause of our other sins. And this is one sin we are all guilty of to some degree (pg. 53).
2. Definition of Ungodliness: Living one's everyday life with little or no thought of *God*, or of *God's will*, or of *God's glory*, or of one's *dependence* on God (pg. 54).
3. Sinful Attitude and Actions: "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness [sinful attitude and focus] and unrighteousness [sinful actions in thought, word, deed, and motive]" (Rom 1:18).
4. God-centered Perspective: "We have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col 1:9-10).
5. Glory of God: "Do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor 10:31).
 - a. Desire that all I do be pleasing to God.
 - b. Desire that all my activities of an ordinary day will honor God before other people.
6. Coram Deo: Living before and in the presence of God.
 - a. Example of David and the Psalmists (Psalm 23, 46, 62, 63).
 - b. Example of Jesus (John 15 & 17).
 - c. Example of Paul (Epistle Prayers).
 - d. Example of Brother Lawrence.
 - e. Example of Ryan Hall (Olympic Runner).

"Antipsalm 23" by David Powlison

I'm on my own.
No one looks out for me or protects me.
I experience a continual sense of need. Nothing's quite right.
I'm always restless. I'm easily frustrated and often disappointed.
It's a jungle — I feel overwhelmed. It's a desert — I'm thirsty.
My soul feels broken, twisted, and stuck. I can't fix myself.
I stumble down some dark paths.
Still, I insist: I want to do what I want, when I want, how I want.
But life's confusing. Why don't things ever really work out?
I'm haunted by emptiness and futility — shadows of death.
I fear the big hurt and final loss.
Death is waiting for me at the end of every road,
but I'd rather not think about that.
I spend my life protecting myself. Bad things can happen.
I find no lasting comfort.
I'm alone ... facing everything that could hurt me.
Are my friends really friends?
Other people use me for their own ends.
I can't really trust anyone. No one has my back.
No one is really for me — except me.

Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate
by Jerry Bridges

And I'm so much all about ME, sometimes it's sickening.
I belong to no one except myself.
My cup is never quite full enough. I'm left empty.
Disappointment follows me all the days of my life.
Will I just be obliterated into nothingness?
Will I be alone forever, homeless, free-falling into void?
Sartre said, "Hell is other people."
I have to add, "Hell is also myself."
It's a living death, and then I die.

Read Psalm 23: Powlison says, "Can you taste the difference?"

► **Chapter 10: Unthankfulness**

1. Story of 10 Lepers: "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except for this foreigner?" (Luke 17:11-19).
2. Downward Moral Spiral of Ungratefulness (Rom 1:18-32).
3. Give Thanks in All Circumstances (Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:16-18).
 - a. Make a habit of thanking God continually.
 - b. Thank God for salvation and for opportunities for spiritual growth and ministry.
 - c. Thank the Lord frequently for the abundance of material blessings He has provided, but never set your heart on wealth (1 Tim 6).
 - d. In times of difficulty, thank God by faith for what He is doing in the circumstances to transform us more into the likeness of Christ.
 - e. Prioritize thanks, praise, and adoration in times of personal prayer.
 - i. Example of C.J. Mahaney: "There is no reason for this."
 - ii. Example of Corrie ten Boom: Giving thanks for lice.

In her wonderful book, *The Hiding Place*, Corrie ten Boom relates an amazing story about the importance of being thankful. Corrie and her sister Betsy were held in a concentration camp known as Ravensbrück, where they lived in barracks that were plagued with lice. Lice were everywhere—in their hair and on their bodies. One day, Betsy said to her, "Corrie, we need to give thanks to God for the lice." Corrie said, "Betsy, you have gone too far this time. I am not going to thank God for lice." Betsy said, "Oh, but Corrie, the Bible tells us, 'In everything give thanks.'" Still, Corrie did not want to thank God for the lice. As it turns out, Corrie and Betsy were trying to reach the other women in their barracks with the message of the gospel, and they had been holding Bible studies. Corrie found out later that because of the lice, the guards would not go into those barracks, and therefore, they were able to have their Bible studies. As a result, they led many of the women to the Lord. So it turns out that God can even use lice.

Copyright © 2008 by Harvest Ministries. Taken from an online article by Greg Laurie:
<http://www.crosswalk.com/devotionals/harvestdaily/11580967/>

For This Week:

Read Chapters 8 & 9: Anxiety, Frustration, and Discontentment