

'All Along I Thought I Was Serving God'

Note: This is the third in a series of articles by John Burton on understanding the threat of sin in the life of Christians. For part one, [click here](#).

Check out this lengthy but wildly troubling story of an encounter by John Mulinde, a leader with a world ministry on every continent except Antarctica. God told him, "If I had come today to take My Bride, you wouldn't be part of that. I wouldn't take you."

Here's his story:

Then suddenly a bright light hit my eyes. My eyes were closed. I was on my knees with my head on the ground, but a bright light hit me. I lifted up my eyes and said, "What is this?" I opened my eyes and I couldn't look in the light. Even when I closed them, it pierced into my eyes. I bowed my head again, and I was trembling and thinking, "What on earth is going on?" Then I heard a voice, deep and calm. He called my name three times. I couldn't answer. There was no strength in me to answer, but inwardly I was saying, "I'm here." He called me—"John"—three times.

Then He said to me, "I knew you before the creation of the world, and I chose you and set you apart to serve Me as a witness in these last days. I want to say to you, if I had come today to take My Bride, you wouldn't be part of that. I wouldn't take you." I can't describe the shock that came upon me. I think I was in shock. I didn't even respond. It hit me. He repeated it. He said, "I wouldn't take you. For it is written, 'He will appear to those who wait upon Him' (Is. 49:23, paraphrased). You're not living your life as a person waiting upon Me. You're allowing all kinds of filth to come

into your life. You're living like one who cares not." As I said, I couldn't speak with my lips.

At that moment I was thinking, "This can't be happening to me. I gave up my job to serve the Lord; I gave up my house that my father had given me because I wanted to go to the mission field. I gave up this, I gave up that; this can't be God saying to me that He wouldn't take me." None of my theology and teachings could accept that. He spoke to me these words written in the book of 1 Corinthians 6. He quoted them; I found them later. I couldn't even remember that they were in the Scriptures, but later on I found them in the Scriptures. It says: "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:10). "THE HEART IS DECEITFUL ABOVE ALL THINGS, AND DESPERATELY WICKED" (Jer. 17:9).

He went on to say to me, "Your life is so full of filth. You walk with an outward appearance, and you cover many things in your heart. You forget that I am the Lord who examines the heart. You are not ready to meet Me." He began to say to me, "If your life is full of this and this and this and this, then are you ready for My appearance?" As He measured the various things, I could say, "OK, Lord, have mercy." But then He mentioned one thing that my heart rejected. In my own understanding, I had never turned into that. He said, "If your life is full of fornication." And everything in me said, "Oh, no. That cannot be." I said it in my heart, and the voice stopped. For a moment there was silence. Then He said to me, "There is no crooked word that comes out of My mouth. Do you call Me a liar? But because you don't even know your own heart, I will show it to you. Remember this day when you were in this place at this hour?"

Brothers and sisters, I didn't even remember. I practically

saw myself back in that very moment—not as a memory, but as a reality. I was back in that moment. I saw myself sitting in the taxi waiting for the taxi car to be filled. Then I was looking out at some lady with all kinds of filthy imaginations. The moment it came back, I thought, “Oh, God, I have sinned against You.” He said, “No, you haven’t sinned. You live in sin. You live in that. You live from morning to evening in such imaginations. Even in your bed at night you indulge in the same. I know every moment of your private life. I know your thoughts. You don’t even fear, even sitting in church. Someone steps up on the platform to serve Me and you strip them naked in your imagination. You imagine all kinds of things. I am the Lord who examines the heart. Have you not read that he who even looks upon a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her (Matt. 5:28)?” Pictures began to pass before me of how my imagination works.

This isn’t something of which I could say, “Lord, I fell in sin. Lord, I was weak.” It was my way of life. It was my constant way of life. I was comfortable in it. I was comfortable that no one else could see it, but God was saying, “I see it. I am the Lord who examines the heart.” I was so ashamed, but then He said, “That’s not the worst of all. You still live in this.” He began to mention things that appear humanly small: the envy, the manipulation and undercutting of one another so that you remain appearing the best, so that you appear to do the best, to preach the best, to work more miracles, to be more anointed; all the manipulation and self-promotions, all the grudges we hold in our hearts when we see someone else being promoted or recognized before us.

The way the Lord brought it up, it was so filthy. I cried and cried, and at some point I was so intent on my grief. Then He raised His voice and said, “Keep quiet and listen.” “I NEVER KNEW YOU; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS!” I kept quiet, and He went on and on and on, unveiling more and more things. Even the things which appear so small, at that

moment appeared so rotten. I felt like I was standing before the judgment seat with everything being thrown out. I wanted to say, "Stop, stop, I accept it all," but He wasn't stopping. At some point I was just saying, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry." He said, "Keep quiet." I wasn't speaking loudly; I was speaking in my heart. He said, "Keep quiet and listen."

As He continued I thought, "I must have been deceived. All along I thought I was serving God and yet I'm so filthy inside. I must have been deceived. The devil must have taken my life captive a long time ago." At that moment I thought of the miracles we were witnessing. I thought of the healings. I thought of all those wonderful things, and suddenly my heart sunk. I thought, "The devil has so deceived me that he could even use me to produce counterfeit miracles; to produce things I thought God was working—and yet it was the devil all along." The voice kept quiet for a moment, and then He said to me, "Why are you imagining such thoughts? I don't do miracles because you're worthy. I do miracles because I love My people before whom you stand to preach. Have you never read of how they will come to Me on that day and say, 'Lord, Lord, in Your name we worked miracles, cast out demons, and prophesied'? Then I will say to them, 'Get out of My sight, you workers of iniquity. I never knew you'" (Matt. 7:21–23, paraphrased). He said, "Don't depend on the miracles to assess your worthiness. Your worthiness isn't in the signs and wonders you witness in ministry. I do miracles because I love the people, and My name shall never be left without witness on earth." He said, "Have you not ever read that without holiness, no one will see God (Heb. 12:14)? It's not the miracles; it's the holiness that comes from God." He spoke to me the Scripture in the book of Hebrews.

Here's the full-length sermon he delivered at the International House of Prayer in Kansas City—possibly one of the most powerful sermons ever:

Do we need to confess our sins as believers? Should we be sin-

conscious?

Yes and yes.

False-grace teachers would say that it's not necessary to confess sins because there is no sin in us. God's grace has eradicated it.

Folks, let me be very, very clear: that is a heretical teaching that absolutely puts people at risk of hell.

1 John 1:8-9—If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness

Life Application Bible Notes:

Being God's people does not mean denying sin (1:8), but confessing it. Because all people are sinners, Jesus had to die. Because sin is not completely eradicated from the lives of those who believe in Jesus, God graciously gave his followers provision for the problem of sin.

It's not only critical, but it's wonderful to live in a state of continual repentance! God's love for us is so amazing, that running away from sin and to Him is awe inspiring!

As we daily allow God to search our hearts and reveal issues that are barriers to his love fully impacting us, the freedom and resulting life is amazing!

I often hear people say that Christians shouldn't be sin-conscious. Not only is that not biblical, it does us a disservice. Ignoring sin doesn't disarm it; it empowers it! Allow God to reveal the darkness and set us free!

2 Corinthians 7:1—Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God

We must remain diligent regarding sin. As we grow in grace and knowledge we will have the strength to remain stable.

2 Peter 3:14—Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these things, be diligent that you may be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless

2 Peter 3:17-18—You therefore, beloved, since you know these things beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own firm footing, being led away by the deception of the wicked. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory, both now and forever. Amen

Click here for parts one and two of this article. Coming Wednesday: Five Marks of the False Grace Message.

John Burton has been developing and leading ministries for over 20 years and is a sought-out teacher, prophetic messenger and revivalist. John has authored nine books, has appeared on Christian television and radio and directed one of the primary internships at the International House of Prayer (IHOP) in Kansas City. Additionally, he planted two churches, has initiated two city prayer movements and is currently directing a prayer and revival-focused ministry school in Detroit called the Lab University. John's mandate is to call the church in the nations to repentance from casual Christianity and to burn in a manner worthy of the King of kings. He is equipping people to confront the enemies of God (established religion, Jezebel, etc.) that hinder an extreme, sold out level of true worship.