

How Josh Duggar Reveals a Critical Flaw in the Church

Sin, death, repentance, grace: They're the core elements of what we believe, and by putting them into practice, we set ourselves apart from the world as we strive for holiness.

But holiness is not perfection, as the recent case of Josh Duggar revealed. Brothers and sisters, we were quick to forgive as Christ forgave us, and for that I am thankful.

Duggar recognized his wrongdoing, confessed, repented and has spent his life making up for it. His sin led to his salvation, and we rejoice in that.

However, as I scroll through reactions on social media, I am not without a heavy heart as I see how we as Christians try to cover up our sin, to protect our own and whitewash their wrongdoings without consequences.

Unfortunately, I think this applies too often to sexual abuse in the church. How often do we preach about forgiveness, practice it and let those who participated in sexual crimes take places in leadership?

Forgiveness and moving along doesn't mean we are without consequences. Though Josh deeply regrets his actions, he's still haunted by them, as are the victims of his sexual abuse and others.

Though all sin is equal in terms of separating us from the Father, sexual sin is different from others in terms that it's both an internal and external expression of one's flesh. To engage in sex outside of God's intent means we are saying that we know better for ourselves than God does, and we sear our souls in an attempt to gratify our flesh.

Lies can be forgiven. Bitterness and hatred can be overcome. Debts can be repaid. The church continues to function in and around these issues, but when sexual sin comes into play—particularly those who victimized others—the church treats it the same, acting like lives were not destroyed because of selfish desire.

The sexual culture of the world has made its way into the church and not because of sex itself. I see this in two different ways: First, that sexual shame has so incapacitated the church that we refuse to acknowledge the pain of a heart crying out for attention and healing, and second, that the church acts as if an inappropriate heterosexual relationship can be brushed under the rug because “boys will be boys.”

I feel like the same concepts have been applied to the gateways of sexual sin: pornography by way of culture, videos, books and general conversation.

When we excuse this as not unusual behavior, we’re enabling our brothers and sisters in Christ to hurt each other and themselves. Sexual sin leads to destruction; there’s no way around that.

Gay or straight, Christ in us has allowed us to overcome the sin of this world. He is our judge and our advocate, but the flaw in the church is that we see His whitewashing as a way of avoiding consequences.

God’s grace, while it extends to us here on earth, is more about spending eternity worshipping Him, not about getting out of our punishments. When we sin, we will suffer. I’m not calling for a boycott of *19 Kids And Counting* or harassing this family who is trying to seek the Lord in the midst of a storm.

Should they be isolated? Absolutely not.

But forgive and forget is an attribute of the Father, not of

humanity. I believe God gave us common sense, and while we are not judge and jury for eternity, we have an obligation to protect the lives around us from those who have sexually victimized others.

Josh Duggar walks in freedom now from his past, and that is something to celebrate, but the church should do its due diligence and not brush sexual sin under the rug for the sake of a reputation.

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