

Is This Sin Causing a Breach in Your Spiritual Covering?

Have you ever cried out for breakthrough, wondering if it would ever come? Do you have patterns that hinder your life, but that you cannot seem to change?

Sometimes these struggles are due to a breakdown in relationship—whether with God due to sin, with others whom God has placed in our lives or with authorities He has placed over us.

There are areas of struggle that can lead to a breach of covering or they can be a bridge leading to repair and healing. A breach of covering makes us very vulnerable to attack from the enemy of our souls. To remain in a place of right relationships, we need to continually take stock of how willing we are to allow God to convict and cleanse us. We should ask ourselves these questions: Am I willing to let God do the work He needs to do in my life? How badly do I want God's intervention? Do I want a breach or a bridge between myself and the Lord?

Submission: An Attitude of the Heart

To be a good spiritual leader, which we are all called to be at some level, we need input from other people. We need to have a council of elders or a multitude of counsel who protect us. We should not be an island to ourselves; we cannot go it alone because in the multitude of counselors, there is safety (Prov. 11:14).

We must have respect for and accountability to one another, and willingness to submit to other spiritual leaders. Submission is an attitude of heart. But it does not mean you always have to agree. There have been people in authority over my life throughout the years whom I did not agree with, but I

was called to respond to them with respect.

God will honor our submission, whether to His written Word or godly spiritual leaders. We are covered as we submit to the Lord and learn how to respect, appreciate and honor His appointed authorities in our lives. There we find freedom and true accountability.

Staying Covered

We stay covered by honoring godly authorities in our lives. This includes honoring God Himself, the ultimate authority; His Word, which is our constituted authority; if we're married, our spouse; and then our pastors, ministry leaders or those positional authorities, like government leaders. Of course, they should also be yielding to God so they can impart to us those things that they've learned by experience and through the study of His Word.

We need to have daily devotion time so that we can know Christ, our ultimate authority. Service for the Lord cannot be done apart from abiding in Christ, for we can do nothing without Him.

As we submit ourselves to the Lord, we are walking under His covering. A vivid example of this is seen in Exodus 12, during the first Passover. When the spirit of death came over Egypt, the Israelites were told to stay in their houses and to place blood on the doorposts from the sacrifice of a lamb. When the spirit of death came through, the homes with blood on the doorposts were passed over and saved.

The same is true of us, as Christians. We are saved from death by the blood of Christ shed on the cross at Calvary. When we yield ourselves to the work of the cross and the power of the Resurrection, we are yielding ourselves to God's lordship. I remember when, as a young Christian, I said, "Oh, Jesus is my Savior, but He's not my Lord." Later I came to realize that if He's not my Lord, how can He be my Savior? How can I be

protected if I am not under His covering?

Paul says in Corinthians that we no longer belong to ourselves, but we have been bought by the blood of Christ. Jesus paid the high cost of love so that we might be redeemed and call God our Father. We are sons and daughters of the living God, joint heirs with Christ!

The Passover for us means that we should stay under the blood, under the cross, yielded to the character of God and the lordship of Christ in our lives. This is what keeps us protected and covered so that no breach can come into our lives, homes, families, businesses or churches.

Truth or Consequences: Walking Out From Under Our Covering

A breach happens when we walk out from under God's covering. If we choose to walk in rebellion or sin, we become uncovered and vulnerable. We cannot blame God because He always desires to give us His best and has made provision for us to walk in victory under His covering.

When we willfully choose to sin or not to honor God, we experience defeat. We always have a choice. We should be those who imitate Christ, who made provision for our sin, so that we could be cleansed, freed and covered. God desires for us to walk in the victorious life of freedom by following Christ through simple obedience, which is the highest form of worship.

We must love the truth more than our own lives. Truth is not just doctrine or conforming to the standards of others; it's submission to the authority of Jesus Christ, who is the truth, the way and the life (John 14:6).

We can learn from others' failures and prayerfully avoid those sins in our own lives. Scripture exhorts us to take heed lest we fall (1 Cor. 10:12). We can be vulnerable to attacks if we are not careful. We are not to think more highly of ourselves

than we ought (Rom. 12:3). But we can trust that God, who first called us, is able to keep us.

“May the very God of peace sanctify you completely. And I pray to God that your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, who also will do it” (1 Thess. 5:23-24).

The Word of God, not feelings or opinions, should be our barometer of truth at all times.

The Subtlety of Sin

Sin is subtle, and that's why we need accountability to others who can speak into our lives. In the home, husbands and wives need each other so we can share constructively out of love. We all have blind spots, things we don't recognize in ourselves. Iron sharpens iron, in the home, the church and the marketplace.

When we speak the truth in love and season it with grace, we can have discussions without becoming angry, wounded or bitter. Children do not always recognize the wisdom of parents because they haven't experienced things in life that the parents have gone through. Parents must be loving in their instruction and speak truth in a way that is constructive so their children grow under the nurture of a healthy relationship. And one day they will say, “Wow! Mom and dad were right!”

We need to ask the Lord to help us receive whatever truth is spoken into our lives so we can grow. When we yield to His authority, we go deeper in the Lord, deeper in consecration and wider in our influence.

Sometimes we allow a point of entry because we are unwilling to deal with an area of disobedience. Hebrews 10:26-29 has been really good for me as I process this in my own walk:

“For if we willfully continue to sin after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation, which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who despised Moses’ law died without mercy in the presence of two or three witnesses. How much more severe a punishment do you suppose he deserves, who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded the blood of the covenant that sanctified him to be a common thing, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?”

I don’t want to get into a theological treatise about these verses, but it does bring conviction to me that I must be yielded to His authority, character, nature, Word and Spirit. I want to honor God by not walking in willful disobedience.

We may think that we can handle certain things in our lives, but the Lord knows areas where we are weak, and the Holy Spirit wants to guide us away from danger. He may even use someone we do not expect to warn us of a breach where the enemy could enter into our lives. If He can use a donkey to speak to Balaam, a prophet, we should not be surprised at who He uses to speak to us (Num. 22:27-28)!

A Broken Down Wall Hurts Us All

Jeremiah 39:1-8 tells how the king of Babylon besieged the nation of Judah. After about 1.5 years the city wall of Jerusalem was broken through. The people of Judah fled but were pursued and overtaken by the enemy. Their houses were burned, and the walls of Jerusalem were broken down. It is exactly what the prophets of old had been telling the people would happen if they did not turn from sin and return to the Lord. They rejected those warnings and continued in sin, walking away from the Lord’s covering. This opened the door to attack by enemies who breached the walls of the city and brought destruction.

The same can be true with us. Our disobedience can open the door of attack in our lives and cause a domino effect that affects not just our own lives, but the lives of others as well. Our wrong choices present a bad witness and wound those around us who are watching. They're watching our witness. They're watching our leadership. They're a part of our lives and they'll be affected when we, privately or publicly, respond according to the flesh rather than the Spirit of God.

If we're under God's ultimate authority, which is Jesus, and His constituted authority, which is the Word, we have been delegated and commissioned by God to be an ambassador for Christ to the world around us.

Have We Left Our First Love?

When we willfully submit ourselves to the flesh rather than submitting ourselves to the Lord, we walk away from His covering. We leave our family, church or other areas of influence vulnerable to attack.

Do we want our children to be covered? Do we want those in our congregations or those we work with to be covered? Together we can be under the covering of the Lord and walk in the fullness of the Godhead bodily and in the fullness of God's intended blessings.

We've seen many people over the last few years who failed God, and we've seen the fallout throughout the body of Christ. Public failings of Christian leaders give comic fodder to those who shake their fists at God.

We're all vulnerable to temptation. But how we handle that temptation determines if we fall into sin or not. Every day, my heart cries out, "God, even as King David prayed, help me not to allow the hidden sins, presumptuous sins or anything else in my life cause others to stumble. I want my life reflect Your glory, God, so You will be glorified in all that I do. I'm nothing without You. There is nothing without You."

Let us pray not to be enamored with the flesh. We don't want to have the lust of the flesh or the pride of life overtake us. Let us be yielded to the Spirit of God and the goodness of God. Let us love the truth more than our lives, as we cling to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, the one who is the giver of life. Let us run to His altar of mercy, asking daily for His grace, where we can find healing and deliverance in our lives.

Confession or Cover-Up?

When we recognize compromise or a vulnerable place in our lives, we must confess it and ask God for His grace and mercy to overcome the works of the flesh. 1 John 1:9 is a great reminder of His grace: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Adam and Eve sinned willfully against God, then they ran away from Him—covering themselves in fig leaves—instead of running to Him. When we sin or when we're vulnerable, we need to run to the Lord, for He is faithful to forgive us of our sins and cleanse us from our unrighteousness. But if we stay in compromise, it becomes easier and easier to keep walking away and staying untethered from the Lord. Eventually, we will be so deep in our pit that we won't know how to get out.

When we cover up our unconfessed, willful and blatant sin, we also lose our joy in the Christian walk. We try to justify our sins, but Scripture tells us we're justified by faith, not by excuses. Any area God may be addressing in our lives needs to be dealt with so we are not leading ourselves and others into compromise and causing them to stumble. Once there is a breach in our lives, we need to face it, confess it and receive God's instruction and freedom.

"For freedom Christ freed us. Stand fast therefore and do not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1).

Repairing the Breach and Restoring Relationship

Let's remind ourselves to be lovers of truth and seekers of truth. Let us be under God's ultimate authority, the Lord Jesus; and under His constituted authority, which is His Word, His character, His nature and His Spirit. Let us be under the delegation of God's authority by also being under authority. We have authority when we are under authority, and we also respect the authorities in our lives. There are always levels of positional authority and delegated authority. We may not always agree with them, but responding in appreciation and respect, even to those with whom we disagree, helps us walk in the fullness of God's blessing.

Let us not be those who walk in the pride of life, the lust of the flesh or the lust of the eye. Let us always be vulnerable to God and one another, but not to the things of the world. We trust Jesus, our Savior, healer and deliverer, to help us walk in the fullness of His breakthrough and His blessings. The Bible says that the Lord Himself is the master of breakthrough, our Baal Perizim.

Isaiah 58:12 says the Lord is the repairer of the breach. Let's allow Him to continue to do His work in and through us, so that the process of restoration can occur. Confess your sins to those who can speak into your life. Come before the Lord—not with a cover up, but being vulnerable, transparent and honest. Seek forgiveness from the Lord and from those you may have offended. Initiate the healing process in your own life and close any breach that may have happened. Find other Christians to whom you can be accountable with transparency and vulnerability.

Let us ask the Lord to help us be the people He has called us to be—imitators of Christ—and walk in the victorious life of freedom! {eo}

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