

The Numbers 32:23 Solution to Your Sin Problem

I did it again. Sigh. You'd think I would be more careful. But for several weeks, cleanup from Hurricane Irma has required us to step into overgrown areas to clear downed trees. Those overgrown spaces were also full of Brazilian pepper vines.

For those who are not familiar with Brazilian pepper plants, they're in the poison ivy family. And, as I wrote in a blog post several years ago, I am highly allergic to Brazilian pepper.

Problem is, my reaction to this plant follows a sneaky track. I'm lulled into a false sense of security because my skin doesn't react the same day. It doesn't react the next day, either. And in those two days, I convince myself that I managed to skirt disaster.

However, by the morning of the third day, a few red spots appear on my arms. A day later those spots begin to itch. With each successive day the itching increases and blisters soon appear.

What drives me especially crazy is that the spots often show up in places that never actually touched the offensive plant.

This reminds me of yet another parallel to sin. When I give in to sin in one area of life, the consequences may not be immediate. So I convince myself that it doesn't affect anyone else and no one else need ever know.

But days, weeks, months or even years later, the consequences of sin will break out. Slowly, insidiously, when I least expect it, what I thought were unrelated areas of my life will be affected. People will get hurt—people who had nothing to do with the original act of sin.

It might appear in a lack of self-control. A poor attitude. Impatience with others. It could be revealed in my struggle with temptation because I had given in to that sin before. It may be exposed in my priorities: the people I spend time with or the way I spend my time or money.

There's an oft-quoted Bible verse in Numbers 32:23b that says "be sure your sin will find you out." Yes, indeed. Even more than Brazilian pepper or poison ivy.

Don't underestimate it—and don't think for a moment that it won't happen to you.

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