

Avoiding Sexual Sins and Scandals

Be sure to read Gary Curtis' companion article, "Are Sexual Sins Worse Than Others?" at [this link](#).

In his first epistle to the Corinthian Christians, Paul enumerated sinful categories that would preclude wrongdoers from participating in the future kingdom of God.

"Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God"(1 Cor. 6:9-10, NLT).

Did you notice that many of these sinful, disqualifying practices were sexual sins? They include sexually active singles and sexually unfaithful married persons, as well as same-sex practitioners and sexual abusers.

Sexual Sins Among Christians

These sin issues were more directly reviewed when Paul led the Corinthians believers to acknowledge that "such were some of you" (1 Cor. 6:11a, ESV). Habitual sensual sins can retain strong powers over us, even though sincere believers have been spiritually cleansed from sin ("washed"), set apart for God's exclusive use ("sanctified") and made right in God's sight ("justified").

Paul taught the Roman believers that sensual thoughts and actions continue to tempt us to obey sin's power and practices (Rom. 7:14-24). But, we who are saved "in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11b) are

empowered by the abiding Holy Spirit. He calls us to “cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete holiness because we fear God” (2 Cor. 7:1b, NLT).

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In 1 Corinthians 6:13, Paul explained that our redeemed bodies are not for sexual immorality but for the Lord. Instead of repeatedly succumbing to sexual temptations, we must preplan ways to resist and flee from sexual temptations and sin’s destructive influences (1 Cor. 6:18a).

Then, Paul warned that believers who commit “sexual immorality” sin against their own bodies (v. 18b), which are “temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God ... Therefore honor God with your bodies” (vv. 19b-20, NIV). Sexual sin assaults the pure lordship of Jesus Christ in our lives and breaks trust with the whole body of Christ. No wonder we are told to “run from sexual sin” (v. 18a, NLT).

Sexual Scandals Among Christians

Sexual sin gives place to appetites that can only beget further immoral behavior and even result in sexual scandals among Christians.

The term “sexual immorality” is derived from the Greek *porneia*. Do you see the root word there? It is “porn”—the shared root of the English word “pornography.” Make sense? Pornography (in all its forms and functions in our sexually saturated society) is a massively corrupting factor. It can stain our thoughts, pollute our minds and prompt sexual sins and scandals, whether in our lustful thoughts or practices (Matt. 5:27-30).

The English word “scandal” is derived from the Greek

word *skandalon*, which means “stumbling block, snare or trap.” Today, “scandal” can refer to discreditable or immoral conduct or damage to reputations caused by such conduct or misinformation. Grocery store tabloids are scandalous when they report malicious or defamatory gossip, whether well-founded or not.

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Scandal is relative. In our jaded society, what causes a scandal at one time or place might not cause one at another. There can be no scandal without a scandalized public, and with the internet, there seems to be no bandwidth too small to help spread it.

Scandals’ impact is controlled by the narrative of those who share, discuss or defend them. From politics, we learn that truth or lies can be affected by so-called “fact-checkers” or even by the intention of the tellers. Some “facts” are, in fact, misinformation or even disinformation.

What is spoken of as a “young woman” may turn out to be a preteen, changing the validity of the alleged accused. What was confessed as an “inappropriate relationship” was a crime and punishable by law at the time it was committed.

Today, as members of the household of God, we must purify ourselves, or God will purify us. His justice and judgment will prevail.

“For the time has come for judgment, and it must begin with God’s household. And if judgment begins with us, what terrible fate awaits those who have never obeyed God’s Good News?” (1 Pet. 4:17).

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