**Making Sin Convenient**

“A man walks into a bar…” No, this isn’t the beginning of a bad joke. It’s a set-up for a serious discussion we all need from time to time. Depending on the circumstances, a bar would not be the best place for any Christian to be, but if a person is a recovering alcoholic, frequenting an establishment where alcoholic beverages are flowing freely would be particularly ill-advised. Why? Because an alcoholic is especially susceptible to the temptation to drink. If he were to “fall off the wagon”, his first mistake will not have been to buy a drink, his first mistake will have been to place himself in circumstances that made it very convenient to order it.

The apostle Paul tells us, “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts” (Romans 13:14). Many among us often wonder why we struggle to avoid sinning against God. If we take the time to examine the circumstances leading up to “an event” and are brutally honest with ourselves, we will find, in many cases, that we have set ourselves up for failure. We have taken seemingly innocent steps that, in the end, have placed us in the position of easily falling to temptation. We have made sinning too convenient! God knows how our minds work. That’s why He has given us warnings about making sin easy.

In Proverbs 5:3-5, the wise man warned his son about the equivalent of a red-light district of his day. In verse 8 he advised, “Keep your way far from her and do not go near the door of her house, or you will give your vigor to others and your years to the cruel one.” You see, the first mistake is not turning into her doorway, the great error in judgment is taking the route that leads past her house in the first place!

We need to work to build lives that are conducive to right living, not unrighteousness. Who have I chosen as my associates? What kind of websites have I made readily available? What kind of television programming have I placed at my fingertips? Each of us has decisions to make, but in general, we should work to make sinning against God as inconvenient as possible. Paul said to “examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form (appearance) of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22). He told Timothy, “Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart” (2 Timothy 2:22). Now there’s good advice: Run from the appearance of wickedness and join with good hearted folks in filling our lives with righteousness, faith, love and peace. It’s all about making faithfulness more convenient.

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