



“Hidden Sin” (Selected Scriptures)

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Intro: Several events over the last few months have been used by the Lord to move me in sharing a special message with you today. We will be back in I Thessalonians next weekend...

See I Timothy 5:24; The meaning of this seems to be that some people’s sin is overt (open and observable; not hidden, concealed, or secret), while others only come to light after a period of time, sometimes not until the person stands before God. Open and obvious sin has a tendency to bring judgment before **the** judgment. No one is surprised when one hears of the alcoholic who dies prematurely due to liver failure, or the drug addict who overdoses, or the prostitute found dead in a back alley. Tragedies that we wish could have been avoided, but tragedies that no one is surprised by.

A few years ago I had the privilege of speaking for the Homecoming at my home church home in South Carolina. I saw people I had not seen in years, one, a relative who all of the family knew had lived a life filled with drugs and rebellion. I was taken aback at how old they looked, but at the same time I was not surprised. Years of overt sin had taken its toll, and had reached the place of judgment ahead of the judgment.

All sin brings about the same ultimate end (James 1:14-15), but in some ways unobvious or hidden sin can be much more deceptive and dangerous. Why is this?

1. Some unobvious sin is sin that we simply don’t see as sin.

- * The Pharisees were confident of their own righteousness while looking down on others. They did not see the sinfulness of their own hearts.

- * When Evan Wickham was with us a few months ago he shared how he had grown up in church as a preacher’s kid, and how he was always looking at other people’s sin, yet never really saw the depth of sin in his own heart. He said that in the past year God had been revealing to him the utter the sinfulness of his own heart.

* I remember not too long after becoming a Christian God showed me how conceited I was, and it was a bit surprising because I had never thought of myself as conceited.

* See Mark 10:17-23; Do you think this man saw the greed and materialism of his own heart? We certainly hope he began to after this encounter with Jesus, but the impression you get is that he never really saw the utter sinfulness of his own heart.

* Sin that we do not see will one day bring about terrible consequences for those who have never come to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Matthew 7:22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

* Sin that we do not see is deceptive and dangerous. But so is the sin we do see, and yet keep "hidden."

2. "Hidden" sin is utter foolishness.

* See Heb.4:13; I Cor.4:5; Luke 8:17

3. Despite its foolishness, man has a tendency to try and hide sin.

* See Gen.3:8-10; I Kings 22:29-37; II Kings 5:19-27

4. Hidden sin sometimes brings sudden destructive consequences (in this life).

* Judas' sin drove him to suicide.

* See Joshua 6:17-19; 7:1ff, 10-13ff; Is Achan in heaven? I don't know. But there is one Bible character that I know is in heaven and yet made a mess out of his life while here on earth. Samson had issues with his fleshly nature that he never let God deal with. It began with his desire for a woman that was not God's will for his life (a Philistine). On his way to visit her on one occasion, he killed a lion. Later on he was on his way to see her again, and he scooped out some honey that was in the lion's carcass (a sinful act), but he kept it hidden from his parents. As you follow the story of Samson, you discover a very independent man who ultimately hit a wall that brought ruin and destruction to his life. Twice in the story God tells us that the events leading up to Samuel's ruin took place over 20 years. Hidden sin that has no immediate consequences tends to cause the sinner to become more brazen (bold and without shame) in their sin. Over time the sinner develops a calloused heart.

* Jimmy Swaggart, Jim Baker

5. Sin left hidden grows, and the consequences grow along with it. The longer left hidden, the greater the future consequences.

* The best thing that can happen for someone who has hidden sin in their life is to come clean (See John 3:19-21).

* The second best thing that can happen is they get caught before they “hit the wall.”

CONCLUSION

* I've seen people get caught in hidden sin (I'm talking about professing Christians). Some I have caught red-handed. And the consequences were greater for some than with others. Consequences are always connected to the type of sin (some sins naturally carry greater consequences), and the length of time they kept the sin hidden.

* Acts 5, story of Ananias and Sapphira

* The drinking and drugs you are doing behind your parents back will one day catch up with you (Num.32:23). The pornography you are indulging in...the sexual sin...the money you are stealing...the self-righteousness...

* Prov.28: 13 He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. 14 Blessed is the man who always fears the LORD, but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble.