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the opposite sex, who are not their spouses. Too often, the outcome is fornication, infidelity, and broken homes. Likewise, when recovering alcoholics frequent establishments that serve alcohol, they set themselves up to sin. Consider the folly of recovering drug addicts choosing to befriend people who abuse drugs (cf. **1 Corinthians 15:33**). The list is unlimited. The fact is that we choose our circumstances, be they our workplace, our companions, or our environment. Why do we burden ourselves with situations that we are certain to stumble in and commit sin?

3. *Temptation is the birthplace of sin.* We need to realize that we have not sinned until we give in to our temptations. This does not mean we should push the threshold of temptation to the maximum. Rather, we should know that even if we are tempted, we do not have to give in! We can still turn it around! We can still avoid sin! We need to simply say NO! This is why the Spirit teaches us to

"abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22). We are instructed to *"resist the devil and he will flee from us" (James 4:7).* We are told to *"flee sexual immorality" (1 Corinthians 6:18).* We are commanded to *"abhor what is evil, cleave to what is good" (Romans 12:9).* We must acknowledge that even in the heat of temptation, as Satan is turning up the thermostat, we choose to avoid sin by not giving place to the devil (**Ephesians 4:27**)!

Indeed, sin is all about choices. We make choices between right and wrong, good and evil, acceptable and unacceptable, pleasing and not pleasing, truth and error every day of our lives. These choices will determine our eternity. Ultimately, the choice is between life and death! It is important to understand: it is one thing to know right from wrong and another thing altogether to choose right over wrong. Ask yourself, "What kind of choices am I making?" Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com ♦

ONE MAN SAID

"I do not go to church on Sunday because I was never taught to go when I was young, so I did not form the habit," so said one man. Another man says: "I do not go to church on Sunday because I was forced to go when I was young, and it grew distasteful to me." Someone else said: "One excuse is as good as another when you do not want to do a thing." Still another man said: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord," **Psalms 122:1.** We ought to pay attention to the wisest one! - **borrowed** -

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

- Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3
- Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24
- Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30
- Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21
- Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27
- Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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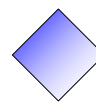


Schedule of Assembly

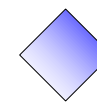
Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com



The Voice of Truth



June 5, 2011

Lack of Knowledge
By Jimmy Pettigrew

God had a controversy with his people because there was no knowledge of Him in the land. *"Hear the word of Jehovah, ye children of Israel; for Jehovah hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor goodness, nor knowledge of God in the land." (Hosea 4:1)* The basis for destruction was the lack of knowledge. *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I also will forget thy children." (Hosea 4:6)*

It was not that knowledge was not available, but that they had rejected it and it is seen as a rejection to God! Indeed, knowledge is priceless! *"Receive my instruction, and not silver; And knowledge rather than choice gold." (Proverbs 8:10)* The knowledge of the ways of God is always a greater possession than material wealth like silver and gold. The things of God are always best for us. Thus, only *"fools hate knowledge" (Proverbs 1:22).* But, *"Wise men lay up knowledge..." (Proverbs 10:14)* *"For wisdom shall enter into thy heart, And knowledge shall be pleasant unto thy soul" (Proverbs 2:10).* "For wisdom is a defence, even as money is a defence; but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom preserveth the life of him that hath it!" (**Ecclesiastes 7:12**).

God intended that knowledge play a vital role in the lives of His people. We are to be (1) *"filled with all knowledge" (Romans 15:14; Colossians 1:9);* we are to abound in knowledge (**2 Corinthians 8:7**); We are (2) to *grow in knowledge (2 Peter 3: 18; Colossians 1:10).* Knowledge is one of the (3) *Christian virtues we are to add to our lives (2 Peter 1:5-11).* In fact, God places such a premium on knowledge that the word "knowledge" itself is the key word of one of the epistles - **2 Peter**. In fact, God places such a premium on knowledge that He told Israel that (4) He desired *"Knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings" (Hosea 6:6).*

How is your knowledge of God's Word? "Can you prove when and where the church was established? Where is Jesus' sermon on the new birth found in the New Testament? Who was the first Gentile convert? Who accompanied Paul on his first missionary tour? A test was conducted with a freshman class at a College Bible department, in which 91% of those who took the examination were members of the church. Some of the results obtained from this test are interesting.

1. 33% of the students did not know that Jonah was a prophet who was on a ship bound for Tarshish and 33% did not know he preached in Nineveh.
2. 17% did not know **Romans** was the sixth book in the New Testament.
3. 31 % did not know that **Jude** follows **3 John**.
4. 55% did not know who wrote **2 Timothy**.
5. 45% did not know who wrote **Revelation**.
6. 21 % did not know that Isaiah wrote **Isaiah**.
7. 56% did not know that Luke wrote **Acts**.
8. 20% did not know that Lydia sold purple.
9. 92% did not know that Christ's conversation with Nicodemus on the new birth is found in the gospel of **John**.
10. 87% did not know from which cities Moses sent the spies out against Canaan.

Let us notice some of the curses and tragedies of ignorance. (1) Ignorance was one of the sins which crucified Jesus (**Acts 3:17; Luke 23:34; 1 Corinthians 2:8**). (2) Ignorance alienates one from the life of **God (Ephesians 4:18)**. (3) Ignorance precipitates the establishment of one's own righteousness (**Romans 10:3**). (4) Ignorance causes the individual to err (**Matthew 22:29; 2 Peter 3:1-9; Acts 17:29-30**). (5) Ignorance leads people to wrest the scriptures to their own destruction (**2 Peter 3:16**). (6) Ignorance causes people to be destroyed (**Hosea 4:6; Isaiah 5:13**). (7) Ignorance will keep one from being converted scripturally (**Matthew 13:15**). (8) Ignorance will cause people to ultimately be lost (**2 Thessalonians 1:7-**

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10; Acts 17:30-31).

With ignorance prevailing as it does among members of the body of the Lord, let us now read **Hosea 4:6** and

tremble: *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge. I will also reject thee."* ♦

"Dost Thou Steal?"

By Jarrod Jacobs

In **Romans 2:21-22**, the apostle Paul warned the Roman Christians about the dangers of hypocrisy. He noted some tell-tale signs of hypocrisy when he wrote, *"Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?"* It is a careful student, and thus a careful teacher, who recognizes the fact that he cannot teach a person one thing and then practice something different! To do so breeds hypocrisy and results in the loss of good influence upon Christians and non-Christians. Yet, hypocrisy is an easy trap in which to fall! Many have played the hypocrite, while denying this reality. When spending time in self-examination, are we acting as hypocrites? Let us study and see.

The Word "Hypocrite"

The word "hypocrite" as used in the Old Testament means: "one defiled in mind and conscience, yet concealing it, and pretending to be outwardly what he is not inwardly; to have zeal and affection towards God, when his heart is far from him" (*Wilson's O.T. Word Studies*, p. 224). W.E. Vine translates "hypocrite" in this way: "primarily one who answers, then a stage-actor; hence the word became used metaphorically as a dissembler, a hypocrite" (*Vine's*, p. 582). In other words, one who says one thing and does another, a pretender.

Pretend To Be Someone You Are Not

Sadly, there are those who are "Christians in name only". In other words, they are hypocrites. While they pretend to be Christians, they are actually children of the Devil, not unlike the Jews in **John 8:44**.

The Old Testament records occasions where people literally pretended to be someone else. For example, in **Genesis 27:1-46**, we read of Jacob deceiving his father. That day, Jacob received the blessing that belonged to Esau. How was this accomplished? He dressed and acted like his brother (**Gen. 27:18-30**). This is literally what it

means to be a hypocrite. Yet, we do not have to dress as someone else to be a hypocrite!

In the New Testament, we read the account of "Christians" pretending to be unselfish givers, when in truth, they were selfish. This is found in **Acts 5:1-11**. Ananias and Sapphira pretended to give all the money gained from selling a possession (**v. 1**). In truth, they kept back part (**v. 2**), and were found to be liars (**v. 4-5**). **Acts 5** shows us that hypocrisy is a vulgar thing that needs to be avoided at all costs.

The hypocrite has always been presented in a negative light throughout the Bible. On 15 separate occasions, Jesus rebuked the people listening, calling them "hypocrites." After reading these definitions, does this sound like you? Are you pretending to be a Christian? Are you an actor?

Teach One Thing And Do Another

Many today have an attitude that is often expressed as: "do as I say, and not as I do." My friend, this will not work. This concept was what the apostle Paul was fighting against in **Romans 2**. How sad it is to see the transparent efforts of some to teach others the way of God while they themselves act as the Devil!

The Pharisees were known for teaching one thing, and doing another. In **Matthew 23:1-12**, Jesus told the multitude and the disciples not to act like the Pharisees, *"For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men..."* (**Matt. 23:4-5**). If you are like this, rest assured, people can see through you. You are fooling no one!

Conclusion

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that

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Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (**II Cor. 13:5**). It is up to all of us to keep away from hypocrisy, and make sure it is not in our lives. Are you a pretender? Do you teach others that *"now is the day of salvation"* (**II Cor.**

6:2), but live like there is no tomorrow? Do not be a hypocrite! Live for Christ! Who knows what good we can do in the Lord's kingdom when we live that sincere, genuine life, that reflects Christ in all we do (**Gal. 2:20**)!

Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com ♦

Sin is All About Choices

By Jonathan L. Perz

Throughout history, men have used just about every conceivable excuse to justify sin in their lives. Consider the time at the foot of Mount Sinai—in the midst of Israel's wicked idolatry—when Aaron tried to justify his poor choice. When questioned about the calf he fashioned for the Israelites to worship at their request, he told Moses, *"And I said to them, 'whoever has any gold, let them break it off.' So they gave it to me, and I cast it into the fire, and this calf came out"* (**Exodus 32:24**). Whether it is a one-time act, or a continually repeated sin that besets one, statements such as, "The Devil made me do it," "I had no choice," or "I could not help myself," have often been heard. Nevertheless, such thinking is foreign and contrary to the word of God.

The Bible teaches that sin is a matter of individual choice (cf. **Ezekiel 18**). It begins with discerning good from evil (**Hebrews 5:14**) and then refusing the evil and choosing the good (**Isaiah 7:15**). A sure and consistent pattern for such thinking can be clearly established from the beginning of time.

In the garden, Adam and Eve were given free will, as well as some very specific instructions. They could eat of the fruit of every tree except one, which God declared off-limits. When tempted by Satan, Eve made the wrong choice—she partook of the forbidden fruit, as did Adam (**Genesis 3:1 ff**). Though Eve blamed Satan, and Adam blamed Eve, they each bore the consequences of their individual sins, as each had made the choice to commit that sin. Pointing the finger elsewhere never justifies sin, nor does it remove the consequences.

In like fashion, Moses committed a sin when—instead of glorifying God and obeying His instructions—he glorified Aaron and himself, choosing not to follow God's command. This incident is found in **Numbers 20:7-13**. The Israelites needed water and God specifically instructed Moses on how to provide that water (**v. 8**). Moses did not heed the instructions exactly (**vs. 10-11**), thus he suffered the consequences of his wrong choice. Even when the choice to sin is made in the heat of the moment, the consequences remain.

King David is another testimony to the fact that sin is a matter of individual choice, and God will hold man accountable. David, walking on his roof one evening, came upon an awkward situation. A woman (not his wife) was bathing where she could be seen. David, now faced with a choice, subjected himself to the temptation—instead of turning away from the compromising situation. In so doing, one sin led to another—before long a great evil was done for which David suffered grave consequences (**2 Samuel 11-12**). Even if we are faced with a tempting situation, the choice to turn away and avoid its consequences is still available—thus, rendering our actions inexcusable.

In truth, the examples are boundless. Sin is all about choices. James wrote, *"Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted of God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death"* (**James 1:12-15**). From this passage, we can acknowledge some simple facts about sin, temptation and choices.

1. *God does not tempt man.* God might allow man to be tempted (cf. Job's temptation by Satan), but He does not directly tempt man. As a matter of fact, with each temptation man suffers, God is faithful, in that He, *"will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it"* (**1 Corinthians 10:13**). This verse is bona fide proof that we, as individuals, must bear the burden of choice with each and every sin!

2. *We are tempted by our own desires.* Often, we place ourselves in bad situations. We considered the example of King David, who made the choice to be enticed, and in turn, was enticed. In like fashion, people today do the same thing. For example, men and women often allow themselves to be in compromising situations with those of

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