**Your Sins Will Find You Out**

*by Harry Osborne*

Why does a child wait until his mother's back is turned to sneak that cookie out of the jar which she said he could not have before supper? Why do most burglars break into homes at night when no one is at home? Obviously, each does it this way so that he will not get caught. Whether it be by a mom or the police, the wrongdoer wants to escape the consequences of his offense. Even though one knows his action violates the law which governs him, he is more likely to commit the violation if he thinks he can get by with it.

Catching one who thinks he has committed the "perfect crime" not only provides for just punishment, but also serves as a great deterrent to future offenses. In the early years, parenting is made much easier if you convince a child that you have eyes in the back of your head. A child caught in the act of sneaky misconduct will think twice before misbehaving again.

In the justice system, the same principle holds true. Crime is rampant because criminals believe they can get by with breaking the law. When sentences are slow to be enforced and shortened tremendously by a ridiculous system of paroles, criminals get the message that crime ***pays****,* not that it ***costs****.*

In the spiritual realm, God declares the absolute rule that wrongdoing will be discovered and punished. God gives time for the evil doer to seek forgiveness through repentance, but those refusing to do so will suffer the consequences (Rev. 2:21-23). The nature of God assures us of this fact *"for the Lord is a God of justice"* (Isa. 30:18).

**Lesson from Israel**

When God commanded Israel about that which they were to do in entering the promised land, He told them that compliance would bring great blessings for them. However, he also warned of the certainty that wrong would be discovered if they did not obey Him. Note the warning:

*But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the Lord; and be sure your sin will find you out* (Num. 32:23).

When the Israelites disregarded that warning and thought that their sins would not be seen, they were wrong. God spoke of the people's sins to Jeremiah saying, *"For My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face, nor is their iniquity hidden from My eyes"* (Jer. 16:17). In fact, God not only knew their evil deeds, He knew the thoughts behind those deeds. This is made clear as He says, *"I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings"* (Jer. 17:10). In another place He declares, *"I know the things that come into your mind"* (Ezek. 11:5).

**Application to Us**

Let there be no mistake about it - God knows ALL of the facts about our actions. Any sin we have committed, He knows about. If we did it away from the eyes of any human and have kept it secret from everyone on earth, God still knows. When we remember this fact, the words of Solomon should cause us to reflect more deeply upon the coming judgment:

*For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether it is good or whether it is evil* (Eccl. 12:14).

The thoughts which we may have disguised to others are also fully known by God. Whether it be our motive for action taken or planning of future action, God knows our thought (cf. Acts 5:1-4). The Hebrew writer affirms this fact in noting that the word of God declares the insight of God by addressing the "thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). He further states this truth by saying, *"And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account"* (Heb. 4:13).

But what will be the result of God knowing about our sin? Will He just turn His back upon it and let us get by unpunished. No, remember His warning, *"Be sure your sin will find you out."* That warning is made more pointed when we are told that God will bring *"tribulation and anguish, on* ***every*** *soul of man who does evil"* (Rom. 2:9).

Lest we think our sin might be tolerated without consequence, God states this solemn fact:

*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption* (Gal. 6:7-8).

No one will get by with sin! Anyone who thinks he can so mock God and His promise of punishing sin is only fooling himself. Evil actions in life will inevitably bring the fruits of such corruption into the life of the sinner.

**Sin Has Consequences**

It is true that many sins have a consequence in this life. The users of alcohol and other drugs suffer the physical problems associated with such. Illicit sexual activity often brings disease or unwanted pregnancy. Lying causes one to be rejected by those around him. Hatred and jealousy bring misery. The list could go on and on of the temporal effects of sin.

However, the consequences of this life are not the ultimate punishment for sin. Ultimately, sin has the eternal consequence of hell which will eclipse every temporal problem caused by sin. It is that eternal punishment that should serve as our greatest warning about the effects of sin. We are told,

*But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death* (Rev. 21:8).

Jesus says it will be "everlasting punishment" (Matt. 25:46). While teaching of the place in more detail, Jesus termed it "hell" and said it is a place *"where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched"* (Mk. 9:44). Such language not only clearly portrays the eternal nature of that place of punishment, but also graphically symbolizes the continual state of death that characterizes hell. On this earth, death is a passing state. In hell, it is an eternal existence.

**Examples of Old**

In the Bible, we read of repeated cases where men of faith recognized these facts and lived accordingly. Joseph did not see the privacy of the situation as covering the sin which Potiphar's wife suggested. Joseph’s answer to the evil enticement remains a sobering question with which to face sin: “How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” (Gen. 39:7-10). Moses also remembered the abiding presence of “Him who is invisible” and made his decisions accordingly (Heb. 11:24-27). Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were young men far away from friends and families, but they did not see such as a license to sin. It may be that no family members would have ever known of their sin, but God would have. That was enough for these young men of faith to live according to God’s law at all times.

When I was a teenager, I remember brother J.M. Gillpatrick preaching a sermon in which he asked if we would do the same thing in private if we knew a movie would be shown of our actions at Sunday morning service. He then noted that God records every moment, public or private. I have never forgotten the point! Let us have the same determination to live righteously, recognizing that we will give answer to God (2 Cor. 5:10). Sin cannot be covered, but must be forsaken (Prov. 28:13). Be sure your sins will find you out.