

The Far Reaching Consequences of Sin

First Day of Unleavened Bread

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As John mentioned in the sermonette, you know our minds are on certain things today, this First Day of Unleavened Bread. The subject of sin is much on our minds as well it should be. The fact, I think we all know, is that sin begins up here between the ears. That's where it begins. We also understand that sin is the transgression of God's spiritual law. We won't turn there, but Paul says in Romans 7:14 that "*the law is spiritual and I*" (meaning Paul was referring to himself and all of us too) he says, "*I am carnal, sold under sin.*"

Sin is the transgression of God's spiritual law. The first sin began in Satan's mind and it ended up with his rebellion. And guess what? Satan wants us to follow in his footsteps. We know in Ephesians 2:2, again we won't turn there; Mr. Armstrong said for years that Satan broadcasts. We are told in Ephesians, Paul says that "*he is the prince of the power of the air*" and he says, "*who now works in the children of disobedience.*" He is active and he wants God's people to follow in his footsteps.

Let's go to James by way of introduction, again with the understanding that sin begins in our minds first. James 1 and we'll read verses 14 and 15.

James 1:14. *But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. ... (KJV)*

Now all of that happens in the mind. All sin begins in the mind.

14) Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: ... (KJV)

In other words, when it is not dealt with, when it's not stopped (the thoughts in our mind; the pictures in our mind) it brings forth sin.

14b) ... and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death. (KJV)

And, of course, Christ in the Sermon on the Mount gave us the example by saying that, "*You've heard of old times that you shouldn't commit adultery, but I say unto you that whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery in his heart.*" That, of course, occurs in the mind. No physical adultery took place. It all occurred in the mind. Paul is saying that when lust conceives, it brings forth sin and then ultimately, if it's not stopped, sin brings forth death.

The issue is that if the thoughts or the pictures are not stopped in our mind, then sin will ultimately lead to action and that action will hurt other people, not just the individual, but it will hurt other people.

So the subject of the sermon today is:

The Far Reaching Consequences of Sin

We need to realize more than ever that we cannot sin in isolation.

That is the first point we want to make today. You cannot sin in isolation.

Sin affects others and if we love our neighbor as ourselves and we want to do unto others as we would like others to do unto us, we don't want our sins to harm or hurt anyone.

Sin has mental and emotional and physical components to it. Now the mental aspect of sin we have already alluded to, and if we have a wrong thought or wrong picture and we dwell on it and focus on it, it will lead to sin. We know that in David's case (we won't turn there). We've been through that example so many times in 2 Samuel 11. He was on a rooftop and he saw Bathsheba and she was washing herself. Did he stop it there? Did he turn away and walk off the balcony? He didn't. He let it progress and let it continue. He sent messengers and he took her and then as we're going to see a little later, one thing leads to another, leads to another, and leads to another; and so many people get hurt. So many people get hurt.

Now we all understand that some sins need only occur in the mind to be sin. We just talked about adultery. It can occur in the mind. It doesn't go any further physically, but it's still a sin. Coveting is the same way. We want something that somebody else has and we covet and covet and covet. That is in the mind. We don't have to actually go and steal something or take something away from somebody, but the sin occurs in the mind. It doesn't even have to lead to a physical act to be sin. So that's the mental aspect of sin.

There is also an emotional aspect of sin. For example, the emotion of anger leads to sinful thoughts and sinful actions. I think we've all been there, probably the men more than the women, of mentally punching somebody's lights out. We've been through that exercise of just pasting somebody right in the nose. That's a sin. It occurs in the mind. There's an emotion along with it that gets the body revved up and the mind revved up and then we think of things we shouldn't be thinking. That's why in Ephesians 4 we're told, "*be you angry and sin not.*" Don't let the emotion carry you to sin. Stop it.

Then there is the physical aspect of sin that we've already alluded to with David. He acted on the thought. He acted on the lust and he took the object of his lust and allowed a physical aspect of the sin to carry on through.

Now regardless of the type and/or the scope of sin, it affects other people. Some people say, "Well you're only going to hurt yourself." That is absolutely not true. We have to come to understand that. It doesn't just hurt us. It hurts a lot of other people.

It's like throwing a stone into a pool or a little pond and you see the ripples spread out and they go to the very edges. They reflect back and come back and they just go back and forth and back and forth and that's the way sin works. It affects other people.

For example, look at the children molested by Catholic priests. Those poor kids; little boys and girls. They are scarred for life, and very few of them will ever have normal human relationships in their physical lives. They can't because of what some priest did to them.

Another example is coveting something and how even the act of coveting can affect other people. Coveting involves jealousy or envy of what somebody else has that we might want. Then if not stopped, we can get frustrated because we don't have what we covet. And if that's not stopped, we become unhappy because we don't get what we want. Then if that isn't stopped, we take out our unhappiness, our jealousy, our frustration on those nearest to us and around us. Parents take it out on their children. Children take it out on their parents and it's all because sin wasn't stopped when it first came into the head. And even if no one else finds out about the sin, even if it stays in the head in this case of coveting, there is still a penalty to pay because, as James said, "*A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.*" If somebody just covets and covets and covets and he's in the Church and knows what he should be doing but yet still covets, he gets angry with himself. He's double minded and guess what? The mate and the kids and other people around pay that penalty. They might not know what's going on. They might wonder what's happened with Dad, but yet they are paying a penalty for, in this example, the father's sins.

So the lesson we need to learn is that we cannot sin in isolation. It doesn't happen. Sin affects other people and it affects all those around us. Sin leaves terrible scars on the perpetrator of the sin, but also the people around. Quite often they are the loved ones of the person committing the sin.

So that is the first point. We cannot sin in isolation.

The second point is that sin leaves scars, not just on the individual but on others also.

When we sin, it leaves scars on others also in addition to the one who is committing the sin.

Let's look at three examples. The first one we have alluded to already and that is Satan. Let's go to John, chapter 8 and look at verse 44. The sins of Satan have scarred all humanity down through the millennia. Christ is trying to get across a concept and He is also nailing the religious leaders of the day, the Pharisees and the scribes and the Sadducees.

John 8:44. *You are of [your] father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. ... (KJV)*

Satan had lusted for the first time in the history of creation and he did not stop it. He followed up on it.

44b) ... He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. (KJV)

We see in this one verse he is a murderer and a liar. Look at the world today. Look at the results of Satan's sins. Look at the scars on all humanity because of his murderous attitude and the fact that he lies and deceives. The world is just going crazy. In the last week the headlines almost turn your stomach. A woman was walking her baby (I can't remember where it was in the United States) she was walking her baby and two young kids, teenagers, came up to her and asked for her wallet. I don't think she had anything. They shot her in the leg and shot and grazed her head. Then they shot her baby in the face. It happened this week. It's time after time after time. Look at the scars on humanity as a result of Satan's sins. That's just one.

The second is Adam and Eve. Romans 5:12. You see, it could have been stopped there, but it wasn't and look at the result. Look at what we are told. Look at the results of one sin. Paul is saying:

Romans 5:12. *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; (By one man) and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (KJV)*

That one sin changed the course of mankind forever. That sin resulted in untold misery for billions and billions of human beings ... one sin. You see, our sins leave scars on others: Satan, Adam and Eve and then the one we alluded to in the introduction, David. As we know, David is the poster child for sin and the consequences and scars of sin.

Let's go to 2 Samuel 12 and read just two verses of this account. We are breaking into the context of Nathan confronting David, but read it from the standpoint of our sins and their effect on other people. There are five areas that affect other people in just these two verses.

2 Samuel 12:10. *Now therefore (Nathan is nailing David) (Number 1) the sword shall never depart from your house; ... (KJV)*

As a result of this sin, how many people died? How many people were injured because the sword never departed from David's house?

10b) ... because you have despised me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.

11) Thus says the Lord, Behold,

(Number 2) *I will raise up evil against you out of your own house, ... (KJV)*

Think of the misery and the scars and the hurt of this evil coming toward David and the consequences hurt so many other people.

(Number 3) ... *and I will take your wives before your eyes, and give [them] unto your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. (KJV)*

The whole nation knew about that. You could sit there and watch it if you wanted to. Look at the scars resulting from that, because it encouraged other people to do likewise. It brought disrespect on David and the office of the king and set a horrible example.

12) For you did [it] secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.

14) Howbeit, because by this deed ...

(Number 4) ... *you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, ... (KJV)*

As a result of this sin, and look at the consequences. It encouraged other people; it brought down barriers for them to blaspheme God.

(Number 5) ... *the child also [that is] born unto you shall surely die. (KJV)*

One sin and look at the consequences of that one sin:

- David and Bathsheba's son died.
- This incident caused people to blaspheme God's name.
- David's son Amnon raped Tamar, David's daughter.
- As a result of that, Amnon was killed by Absalom, Tamar's brother.
- David's son, Absalom, rebelled and took all those women. They took David's wives in plain sight.
- Then Absalom was killed, and then there was continual war with the Philistines.

It just wouldn't stop. It was just over and over and over again because God wasn't with David in that regard because of this sin. Who knows how many people died, how many people were disfigured, how many people lost arms or legs and how many people were traumatized over the decades because of that.

- Then David, because he was off track, numbered Israel and 70,000 people died.
- Then David's son Adonijah rebelled and he was killed.

All this because he was on a balcony, lusted and acted on it.

Boy, if that doesn't show us that you can't sin in isolation and our sins leave scars on other people and affect others, I don't know what does. So the lesson for us by looking at these scars is, we'd better think twice before we sin lest others suffer greatly because of our sins. Not just think about ourselves, but we need to think about others and the effect those sins would have on others.

The third point we want to make is, what are the consequences and what are the scars of sin on us and those around us that might be affected by our sins?

We know Christ's blood wipes away our sins forever; as far as the east is from the west, but there are consequences and there are scars remaining from those sins that don't go away. God has forgiven us, Christ has forgiven us and wiped it away, but the scars still remain. The effects still remain.

Let me draw a physical analogy. When I was a young kid, it's probably my earliest memory, I was about three years old and I was playing out in the alley with my dad. Back in west Texas you have alleyways behind the houses and you put your garbage cans out there. It's a great place for throwing rocks for kids and just having a good old time. Dad was out working and I tripped (a little three-year old) and I put my hands down and fell forward, and there was a broken Coke bottle sitting there with a jagged edge. It cut my wrist. It missed the tendons and the ligaments and the main artery by about a quarter of an inch. It cut from here all around to the other side, just laid it open. I can remember going to the hospital with this big bloody rag around my wrist. Thankfully it was only about ten minutes away. If you were out in the country, you could have bled to death, probably. I can remember them using chloroform; they put the cloth over my face. I was just kicking and screaming and that's the last thing I remember. When I woke up there was this gigantic series of stitches, and to this day, almost seventy years later the scar is still there. They weren't as sophisticated back then in the way they did stitches, so it was pretty ugly. It fades a little every year, but it's still there. It's a visible evidence of that event almost seventy years ago.

Now we're drawing an analogy of consequences and scars. Let's look at four long-term consequences, four long-term scars of sin.

A. One of the consequences and scars of sin are memories and flashbacks we carry, sometimes for the rest of our lives, of the sins we have committed.

If we have hurt someone or done something awful, it could be years, decades and we have flashbacks of those sins. God does remove our sins; no question.

Let's go to Psalm 103 and read verses 10 through 12. Thankfully God wipes away our sins, but the problem is we are human and flashbacks and memories come back upon us. We're so thankful for what we read in verse 10.

***Psalm 103:10.** He has not dealt with us after our sins; (What a blessing!) nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. (KJV)*

If we were God we probably would have blasted ourselves off the face of the earth and turned ourselves into oblivion, if we were God and things were reversed. But thankfully, God is a patient and loving and merciful God.

11) *For as the heaven is high above the earth, [so] great is his mercy toward them that fear him.*

12) *As far as the east is from the west, [so] far has He removed our transgressions from us.*

13) *Like as a father pities [His] children, [so] the Lord pities them that fear Him. (KJV)*

The Hebrew word is very interesting for “pity”; it’s Strong’s 7355. It’s the Hebrew word “racham” and it means literally *to fondle*, like you would fondle a little baby or a little child. It also says, *by implication, to love, especially to have compassion*. As a parent would have compassion on a child, God has compassion on us, those who fear Him; and we can be so thankful for that.

But the problem is, as humans, memories by the sinner dredge it all up again. I’ve had it, you’ve had it. You just get a flashback sometime and think, “Oh, how could I have done that! I was so stupid!” They come back on us and that’s a scar. It’s a scar like that one on my arm that will just be there.

David said (we won’t turn there) but in Psalm 51:3 he says, *“I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.”* You can believe that David, until the day he died, thought about, “Oh if I had only not done that; (or) if I had only just turned around and walked back into my quarters.” But he didn’t and we all, like David, have flashbacks of previous sins.

Then, in addition to that, the people who have been sinned against or who witnessed sins by another individual have memories because of their hurt or because of what they saw. So that brings it up all over again in the lives and minds of other people. In some cases, brethren have a hard time letting go of that, letting go of the memories, letting go of the feelings, emotions and all of that.

Let’s go to 2 Corinthians, chapter 2 and see a whole Church that had that problem. We know in 1 Corinthians, Paul put this man out of the Church because he was having illicit relations with his step-mother and he had no contact with Church members and they accepted it and Paul got on them and said, “You’ve got to kick this guy out.” Then he repented and then because of the memories and because of the hurts maybe and all of that, they had a hard time bringing him back. Paul says:

2 Corinthians 2:6. *Sufficient (it’s enough) to such a man [is] this punishment, which [was inflicted] of many.*

7) *So that contrariwise (in opposition to that) you [ought] rather to forgive [him], and comfort [him] lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. (KJV)*

Finally, when he came to himself, those memories, those flashbacks, those thoughts came back; “How could I have done this; how could I have been caught up in this?” People get depressed from that and they go downhill from that. He had repented and

he was cut off from the Church because certain people there wouldn't let it go. They just wouldn't let it go.

The beautiful thing about God is He always gives us a solution to our problems, no matter how bad, there is a solution to our problems. To overcome these consequences, these scars of sin, what we need to develop is purity of spirit, purity of mind and purity of body. God says, "If you will be pure, then you can wash all this stuff away." We won't turn there, but in Psalm 51:10, what did David say? "*Create in me (what?) a clean heart.*" He says, "*Renew a right spirit within me.*" David knew; his whole life is crashing down on his head and on his shoulders and he said the only solution is to have a clean heart and a clean spirit and a right spirit. Christ said it also on the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5. He said, "*Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God.*"

So God gives us a solution about these memories and these flashbacks. We need to forgive ourselves in the sense that God has already forgiven us. We need to forget and look forward, not in the past. If we have been on the receiving end of someone's sins, we need to forget about those sins that have been repented of and move on.

Let's go to Philippians 3 and verse 13. Under the first consequence or scars of sin are these memories and flashbacks, God gives us the solution here in Philippians 3:13; something that's sometimes difficult to do, but it can be done through God's holy spirit.

Philippians 3:13. *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but [this] one thing [I do] forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before (which obviously is the Kingdom of God), (NKJV)*

So whether we have committed the sin or we have been a recipient, in both cases scars are there, memories are there. As we're going to see, we need to acknowledge our sins and take responsibility for them, but then once we learn the lesson, forget and go forward. If we have been on the receiving end, we need to do the same thing. So that's the first; flashbacks and memories.

B. The second consequence or scar of sin is habit patterns that we get ourselves in, sinful habit patterns.

The old saying is, "old habits die hard" and, boy, is that true. We establish many habit patterns in our early life, things we don't even remember as little kids because we're watching Mom and Dad and they have an influence on us. The Russian novelist, Dostoyevsky said, "The second half of a man's life is made up of nothing but the habits acquired during the first half." That's true. Some of us have more bad habits than others. Some of us have more baggage than others depending on how we were raised. But you see these bad habits, and it's not just things we do but what we think, what we say. These bad habits give a foothold to Satan. He goes right in and jumps on them.

Let's go to Ephesians, chapter 4. We'll begin in verse 22 and go through verse 32. Paul understood this. He's trying to educate the Church there and, by extension, us

today, that we have to be aware of the habits and habit patterns of thinking that we have grown up with and we have to deal with them and do something about them.

Ephesians 4:22. *That you put off concerning the former conversation (conduct) the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; (KJV)*

That applies to all of us.

*23) And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;
24) And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (KJV)*

We have to get rid of these ways of thinking and those ways of acting.

25) Wherefore putting away ... (KJV)

Now he launches on some things that need to be put away.

25b) ... lying, ... (KJV)

People lie all the time. Politicians lie all the time. Parents lie to their kids; kids lie to their parents. Workers lie to their boss; bosses lie to their workers. It just happens all over. You can't watch the evening news without watching somebody lying to someone. It's the way this world functions.

25 continued) ... speak every man truth with his neighbor: ... (KJV)

What a concept! Just be truthful.

*25 continued) ... for we are members one of another.
26) Be angry and sin not: ... (KJV)*

Because anger is an emotional facet of sin.

26b) ... let not the sun go down upon your wrath. (KJV)

The implication is if we let the sun go down on our wrath, the anger is still there and, guess what? It's going to lead to sin in the mind, in the emotions and in the deeds.

27) Neither give place to the devil. (KJV)

If we don't deal with these habit patterns that lead to thoughts and to actions, we give place to the devil. Now the Greek word for "place" is Strong's 5117 and Thayer says it can mean *an opportunity*. Don't give Satan an opportunity. It can also mean *power*. Don't give Satan power over you. It can also mean *an occasion for acting*. Don't give Satan an occasion to act in your life by having these thoughts and habit patterns.

Once again, God always provides a solution. We won't turn there; James 4:7. We know that. What does it say? "*Submit yourself to God; resist the devil and he will flee from you.*" That is a promise. God always gives us an out. God always gives us a solution. Let's go on to verse 28. He's saying this is how you put off these habits that can beset us.

28) *Let him that stole steal no more: ... (KJV)*

It's not like breaking into someone's house and robbing somebody. It could be stealing an idea and not giving credit for it, something as simple as that.

28b) *... but rather let him labor, working with [his] hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needs.*

29) *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, ... (KJV)*

There can be corrupt communication other than lying. It could be gossip. It could be filth. It could be just about anything.

29b) *... but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

30) *And grieve not the holy spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

31) *Let all bitterness (that's an emotion), and wrath and anger and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice: (KJV)*

Malice is intent. You can say something with intent to do evil or intent to hurt someone and that is malice. You're not saying these words for their good; you're saying these words for their harm. He says you've got to put away that malice.

You see, Satan wants to keep us in these habit patterns of sin. We need to ask ourselves questions. I have to ask myself questions every day. Just ask, just think about it with me and these are just examples. There could be many others.

- How do I react to criticism? What is my reaction to criticism?
- How do I react when I get frustrated? I get frustrated sometimes, because you want to see something happen. You want to get through to somebody. You want to change something and it doesn't happen. It certainly doesn't happen right away and you get frustrated.
- How do I react when I don't get what I want? Hissy fit? Stomp around and throw things; mutter and grumble and all of that.
- Am I more or less selfish now than I was before? Am I more selfish or am I more giving?
- Am I more stubborn now than I was before? We're told that stubbornness is as the sin of witchcraft. Or am I a little easier to deal with, easier to be entreated?
- Am I controlling my temper more than I did before?

Those are all habit patterns that we get ourselves into, starting at birth. We need to change these habit patterns that get us into trouble. Look at verse 32. God, again, gives us solutions.

32) And be kind to one another, tenderhearted (not angry; not unforgiving, but tender), forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. (KJV)

So the answer here to dealing with bad habit patterns is we have to resist and then we have to change. We see it in God's word.

C. The third consequence or scar of sin is weaknesses we have that have not yet been conquered.

We all have weaknesses and the longer we've been in the Church the longer we've had God's holy spirit with us, the more we see that we are so weak, we are so small, we are so frail and so susceptible. Apart from God's spirit, we can't do anything right. We can't accomplish anything; we can't have a sane thought, sane words or Godly deeds apart from God's spirit. We see that.

Over time in God's Church you see, what we do is build up barriers. We build up walls that shield us from sin. The longer we don't commit a sin the stronger the wall is, the higher the wall is, the thicker the wall is. We build it and build it and build it over time so that this sin that we used to commit, we now have this gigantic strong wall between us and that sin so that it's not as attractive as it used to be. It isn't as enticing as it used to be. But when we commit sin and as we politely like to say, "when we slip"; when we sin, guess what? Those walls begin to come down. They're not as high; they're not as thick as they used to be. Those walls begin to come down and in some cases, they are broken entirely down and then we become more susceptible to repeat the sin again, once we give in.

For example, I can't watch violence, particularly things like fist fights. If I watch that and you've got a good guy against a bad guy, within about five seconds I'm there with the good guy just pounding the bad guy to death. It just goes through your mind and you're just beating on this guy and pretty soon you feel the emotions and you're thinking about what you would do to this guy and retribution and vengeance and all of that. It gets me going and it's something I can't do. It's hard for me, but the more I would do it the worse it gets. The less I do it, then the wall comes back up and everything calms down and everything is okay.

Satan is shrewd. He only attacks where we are weak. He's not stupid. He's not going to attack us where we are really strong and we've got it nailed. He's going to attack us where the barrier is down, where the wall isn't so high, the wall isn't so thick. As we've seen with David, he faced many problems of his own making: family rebellion, family sedition, war, intrigue and all of that.

Today God's people (all of us) face many problems because of the scars of our past sins. We face problems. It could be drugs from before we came into the Church. We have people that can't think straight. The drugs have screwed up their minds so much, it's hard for them. Their attention span is short, they can't think through a complicated process. It's the same with alcohol. It's just a scar. Particularly today with the powerful drugs, and also you bring a barrier down from the spirit world that separates humans from spirit. People who have had drug problems have problems with demons for the rest of their lives. You see those scars still remain. Those weaknesses still remain and that's why we appeal to our young people. Don't do that. Don't take the first snort. Don't take the first hit, because it can change your life for the rest of your life. Others have had horrible environments growing up and they carry that baggage with them: abuse, yelling, screaming and all kinds of things and they carry that with them into their adult life. You see, that's a weakness and Satan knows that and he goes right after it. We are warned not to give in to those weaknesses.

Let's go to 2 Peter, chapter 2. Once we erect the wall, once we erect the barrier we have to stay away from whatever it is. We have to run away from whatever it is that got us to sinning in the first place. Again this is something we can be so thankful for.

2 Peter 2:9. *The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations,*

Lock that in your mind. Now go to verse 20.

20) For if after they have escaped (from these temptations, these sins) the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome (something they had given up and rejected before), the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

21) For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, ... (KJV)

Not to have been called, not to know God, not to have been baptized, not to have received the holy spirit...

21b) ... than, after they have known [it], to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. (KJV)

You see, everything that we've covered up to this point (the flashbacks, habit patterns and the weaknesses and all of that) it is so unnecessary. Why? Because, you see, God's way is not to put the bandage on after the cut. God's way is to prevent the cut from occurring in the first place. God's way is to prevent us from sinning in the first place. That's why parents are so concerned about their children and why you train them and talk to them and you appeal to them, because you don't want them to sin as we have sinned. You don't want them to bear the scars and consequences so you tell them, "Look in the Bible. This is what God says and if you do this, you don't have all

these scars, you don't have all these consequences, you don't have all these flashbacks, you don't have all these habit patterns" ... bad stuff that you've developed over the years.

All of us know the areas where we are weak and so God's way is to prevent us from going there in the first place: not putting the hand on the stove. Believe Mom and Dad when they say, "It's hot and you're going to get burned." So we pull the hand back and say, "Okay, I believe and I'm not going to do that." You see, that's the instruction in the Bible, "Don't do this because it's going to scar you for the rest of your life."

Again, God always has a solution. 1 John 4:4; this is the solution for our weaknesses and our bad habits and our flashbacks and our memories etc. Notice what he says. I just love John's writings because it is so plain and simple with short sentences.

1 John 4:4. *You are of God, little children, and have overcome them: ...*

Why have little children overcome this?

*(4b) ... because greater is He that is in you, than he (Satan) that is in the world.
(KJV)*

So the solution, you see, of overcoming our weaknesses is to pray daily for more of God's holy spirit, for God to strengthen us more against our weaknesses, and rest assured these weaknesses can be overcome. Nothing is impossible with God, nothing. If we yield ourselves to God, anything can be overcome, anything at all.

D. The last consequence of sin. This is the ultimate scar. Our conscience can become seared.

To this day I can take a needle and follow the scar and I can poke around there and I don't feel a thing. About that wide to about that long; that's where the scar was and the nerve endings were cut. You could jab a needle a half inch into the wrist and I don't feel it, because the tissue is dead. There is no feeling there.

There's a lesson there. You see God teaches us spiritual lessons from the physical that if we don't deal with the memories, if we don't deal with the habit patterns, if we don't deal with the weaknesses, guess what? Permanent scars can result. Scars that don't go away.

Now beginning in a pattern of sin while professing to be a Christian; I'm not talking one sin, but allowing ourselves to be in a pattern of sin over a period of time while still professing to be a Christian leads to the following. Let's go to 1 Timothy 4 and we'll read the first two verses. If we claim to be a Christian and yet we go for months and years in a certain sinful habit pattern, this is the result.

1 Timothy 4:1. *Now the spirit speaks expressly (and guess what time this refers to?) that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith ... (KJV)*

We see that happening.

1b) ... giving heed to seducing spirits ... (KJV)

We see people with itching ears, looking at all kinds of doctrines, all kinds of “new” understanding and new teaching and they are carried away.

1 continued) ... and doctrines of demons; (KJV)

Those teachings are from the devil and from demons and they draw people away from the truth of God.

2) Speaking lies in hypocrisy; (notice) having their conscience seared with a hot iron; (KJV)

The Greek word for “seared” is Strong’s 2743 and it literally means *to brand*. I punched cattle as a teenager out in west Texas for a couple of summers and I got to brand some cattle. I was just thrilled. You get that red hot iron and lay it on the haunches of this cow and it bellows and then smoke and the hair smells. You feel powerful as a young kid. You pull that thing away and up pops the animal. Five minutes later the cow is just fine, but that area where the brand was, there is no feeling there. It can mean to cauterize. If you cauterize a wound, it means you burn out all the flesh that’s going to die or that is already dead. Going on Strong’s says, *by implication, to render not sensitive*. What we are being told here is that if we depart from the faith, give heed to seducing spirits and we follow people that speak lies and hypocrisy, he said you will become insensitive over time. It doesn’t happen right away. You would become insensitive over time.

Now Paul says something in a similar vein in Ephesians, chapter 4 and verse 19. In other words, when people are insensitive, they are not aware and their conscience is gone. They’re not bugged by guilt or grief anymore. Notice this one verse.

Ephesians 4:19. *Who being past feeling (cauterized, branded) have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. (KJV)*

We see that. I just marvel at some of the leaders of some groups who claim to be the only person God is talking to; the apostle, the prophet, the voice of God on this earth. It leads to lasciviousness, uncleanness and it’s backed by greed and, I would add, pride.

The words “past feeling” here is Strong’s 524. Thayer says, *to become calloused; to be insensitive to pain or to be apathetic*. Just don’t care anymore; it just doesn’t bother you anymore. No guilt, no grief, just go ahead and commit sin without feeling.

So you see there is a huge danger if we get into a habit pattern of sin over time and do nothing about it. What happens? The conscience is seared. It doesn't speak to us anymore. It doesn't bother us anymore. It's dead. So then no guilt is possible. You never feel guilty because the thing that causes us to feel guilty is our conscience and that is seared. It's past feeling. It's insensitive. There is no remorse and if there is no guilt and no remorse, the only thing that person has to look forward to is the lake of fire.

The key, the gate to get to that point is the feeling that can come into our head that we can allow a certain amount of sin in our life. A little bit; we can allow this, just a little bit of sin and then guess what? Satan attacks our weaknesses, it grows and grows and grows and then all of a sudden we allow more sin and we feel okay about it. God understands. He understands I'm human. He understands I'm weak. So ten years later the person is sinning more than they were ten years before and yet they've had God's spirit allegedly for ten years. Then it goes on and on until finally there is no feeling. There is no guilt. There is no remorse.

So again, God provides a solution. Resist it now and call upon the power of the Father and you can turn it around. I can turn it around.

Now the fourth and last point. As I said, God always provides a solution for us. The fourth point is that: there is a solution.

We're going to talk about four facets of that solution when we find ourselves in a habit pattern of sin. When we find ourselves doing things we know are not right.

A. We first need to acknowledge our sins.

We cannot do anything until we acknowledge sin. Let's go to Numbers 32:23. They are coming up to the promised land and Moses is talking to Gad and to Reuben, because they lived on the east side of Jordan and yet God wanted them to go to the west side and fight against all those that inhabited the promised land.

Numbers 32:23. *But if you will not do so, ... (KJV)*

Aid your brothers going across the River Jordan.

23b) ... behold, you have sinned against the Lord: (notice this) and be sure your sin will find you out. (KJV)

We have to keep the goal in mind. The end result is the Kingdom of God. When somebody gets in a pattern of sin and you sit down and counsel with them, one of the hardest things to break through is when they don't acknowledge their sin and they don't accept responsibility for their sin. It's always somebody else's fault, the circumstances and minimizing the sin.

The fact is God is on His throne! God is up there in heaven and He knows everything. Who are we kidding? Who are we trying to kid? We can hide it from this person and hide it from that person or come up with all these reasons and excuses and God is looking down and just shaking His head and saying, "What's with this person? I know their heart. I know their mind. I was there. I saw what they did. Who are they trying to kid?" You see, we can't solve a problem, it's impossible to solve a problem unless one admits they have a problem. You can't repent of a sin that you don't acknowledge. This is the time that we need to get in and dig into that, and today denial, in my experience, is a huge problem where someone gets off track and they will not admit it. They will not come to grips with it. You can sit and talk, you dance around the barn and dance around the barn and dance around the barn and you never go in the barn door, because there is no admission of sin or guilt.

You see, during those nine months when Bathsheba was pregnant, it was quiet. Nothing happened to David; no voices, no dreams, nobody coming in to David. David ignored his sin and my guess that in his prayers he ignored his sin. He just put it away. "God allows a certain amount and, yes, I probably screwed up but, hey we're together and we have this child." David ignored the sin.

The message for us is, look at what happened to David. We cannot, dare not ignore our sins and sweep them under the rug because Satan will get in and expand them and change our thinking, sear our conscience and we are off to the races.

But the good news is once David was confronted he quickly admitted his sins and acknowledged his sins. When Nathan confronted him and told David the story, David said in 2 Samuel 12, "I have sinned against the Lord." He didn't back off. He didn't try to obfuscate, didn't try to minimize it. He said, "I have sinned, not against you guys here in the court, I have sinned against God," David said. Then in Psalm 51, what did he say? "*I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. I have sinned and done this evil in your sight.*" Once he was confronted, all the pretenses dropped; all the charade dropped and he got on his knees and repented.

That's what God wants from us. We have to acknowledge our sin. All too often our ego and our pride prevent us from acknowledging our sins. All too many blame others, just like Saul did with the Amalekites. We've been through that so many times. Samuel told him to wipe out everybody; kids, moms, dads, sheep, goats, oxen. Wipe them all out. Then Samuel came on the scene. What did Saul say? "Hey, I've done everything God wanted me to do." Then when he was confronted, did he admit it like David did? He said, "No, the people did it. They spared the best of this and the best of that." Saul didn't acknowledge his sin because, in reality in his heart he didn't want to destroy evil. He wanted to take some of that evil and use it for his own purposes.

But the wonderful thing is, when we acknowledge our sins, when we admit our sins we start to feel clean. I've done that and it's just like all of a sudden it's like taking a Godly bath and you feel clean. Also you feel like a giant weight has been lifted when you just fess up and say, "Yup, I did it. I'm sorry." Go into detail with God and say, "I did this

and this and this and I don't ever want to do it again." But only by acknowledging our sins can we deal with them. That's the only way.

B. So that leads us to the second point, the second solution that God gives us. That is after we acknowledge the sin we have to repent of the sin.

We must repent. Let's go to Luke 13 and begin in verse 1. We must repent. Christ was teaching a lesson here and He went back into recent history in Judea and was trying to teach the people that were around Him some lessons about sin and repentance.

Luke 13:1. There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. (KJV)

Pilate killed a bunch of them.

2) And Jesus answering said unto them, "Suppose that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?"

3) "I tell you, No: but, except you repent, you shall all likewise perish." (KJV)

They were looking down on these people saying, "Well, the reason this happened is they must have been sinners." We would say today, especially back in the Worldwide days, somebody got sick and they would say they got sick because they're sinners; there's something going on, there's a big sin there.

4) "Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think you that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?"

5) "I tell you, No: but, except you repent, you shall all likewise perish." (KJV)

We have to vomit it up and get rid of it. Job said, "I abhor myself. I repent in dust and ashes." David said, "I have sinned against You, God. My sin is ever before me. I am so sorry."

You see, first we have to acknowledge the sin and then we have to repent of the sin. We focus on that this week; putting sin out of our lives as Dave mentioned in the prayer.

C. We have to deeply, deeply realize that our sin caused the blood of Jesus Christ to be shed.

If this doesn't change our heart and mind, nothing will. That our personal sins have caused the blood of Christ to be shed.

Let's go to Matthew, chapter 26. We read a version of this on Passover evening. We will read verses 27 and 28. Christ takes the cup and we went through this the night before last.

Matthew 26:27. *And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave [it] to them (each of the disciples), saying, "Drink you all of [it]."*

Why?

28) *"For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."* (KJV)

Then in Acts, chapter 2, Peter gave a sermon that brought it to light for all of the people that were listening that day and for us here today. We'll read verses 36 through 38. He is summing up; He's at the conclusion of his address and he says:

Acts 2:36. *Therefore let all the house of Israel know... (KJV)*

We are spiritual Israel.

36b) *... assuredly, that God has made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ.* (KJV)

All of us have been responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ because of our sins.

37) *Now when they heard [this], they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, "Men [and] brethren, what shall we do?"* (KJV)

And Peter said, "Repent, repent, repent." Then they were to be baptized. We have been baptized, "and then you shall receive the gift of the holy spirit." We have the gift of the holy spirit. But nothing happens until repentance occurs. Part of the repentance is to realize that we must take personal responsibility for Christ's death. For my sins He had to die, not for the world and other people and all that, but for me personally Christ had to die. I caused it because of my sins.

D. We must realize that we have displeased our Creator and our Father when we sin.

We make them unhappy with us. We say we love God with all our heart; I've been on my knees and I say, "God, I love you with all my heart and yet I did this. How could I do that? If I love you with all my heart, why do I do this?" Why did I think this thought or say that or hurt somebody? You come to the realization, how can I be so disobedient if I really love Him with all my heart? How could I do this?

In 1 John 3:22 it tells (we won't turn there), but it says whatever we ask we receive because we keep His commandments and we do those things that are pleasing in His sight. If we want to love God with all our heart, then before we ever sin or while we're wrestling with a thought, we think how can I do this? If I go forward with this, if I don't

stop it now, God is not going to be happy with me. I'm going to displease Him and I love Him with all my heart and I don't want to do that.

David said in Psalm 51, he said, "Hide your face from my sins and blot out my iniquities," because he wanted to be made right with God and he wanted to please God. We must too.

Hebrews, chapter 10 (we won't turn there) tells us "it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," and we don't want to go there. If we please God, we won't go there. If we displease God, we are there. It's a fearful thing and ultimately the lake of fire is the end of it all.

So, summing up this point D is all that we think, all that we do, all that we say should have one purpose, to make God happy with us and make God pleased with us. There's nothing greater when your children make you, as a parent, happy. I don't care, our children are in their forties and fifties and if they do things that please you, there's nothing greater than that in this physical sense, that your kids make you pleased. There's a lesson there. God put that in us for a purpose because what we want to do is please our heavenly Father and make Him happy with us.

So let's summarize now. Let's go to Hebrews, chapter 12 and we'll read the first verse. Paul says to the Hebrews around the Middle East:

Hebrews 12:1. *Wherefore (and us today, spiritual Hebrews) seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, ... (KJV)*

All we have in the Bible, all the examples.

1b) ... let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset [us], ... (KJV)

"Beset" in the New King James, it's translated "ensnares us." The NIV says, "entangles us." We know that sin is a weight. It's a burden and sin easily entangles us or ensnares us because Satan, as a roaring lion, wants to destroy us. Then he says:

1 continued) ... and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. (KJV)

Let's understand, when parents sin it affects the kids. When kids sin it affects the parents. When ministers sin it affects the entire Church. When Brethren sin it affects the other brethren and the list goes on and on. As I said before, we cannot sin in isolation, we just can't. God's way is to prevent the sin from occurring in the first place. That should be our goal, to prevent sin from occurring in the first place, so then we don't have to deal with the scars of sin that we've been talking about today.

But when we do sin and we're all imperfect and we do, the solution is immediate acknowledgment of the sin and repentance. That is the solution.

Let's go to one last scripture in 2 Corinthians, chapter 7 and verse 9, Paul's dissertation on repentance. He was saying before that you can have worldly repentance because you got caught like the little kid with his hand in the cookie jar. You can be upset that you're going to get a spanking, but you are really not repenting of the deed that the little kid did.

2 Corinthians 7:9. *Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, ... (KJV)*

You know, tears coming down the little kid's face.

9b) ... but that you sorrowed (there was a goal to it) to repentance: (KJV)

You sorrowed to the point that you began to repent. Repentance is Strong's 3341. The root word is 3340; this is 3341. It means *feeling shame because of guilt including reformation*, meaning to reform oneself; to change. Also by implication it means *a reversal, a change of course*. You're heading towards sin; you're heading towards Satan. You turn the rudder and go the other way. The root word for "repentance" is 3340 and it means *to think differently*.

We were talking last night about overcoming sin and habit patterns and one of the fellows brought up the fact that you can't change until you change the mind. That's what this word means, to think differently than we did before.

We should sorrow because Christ had to die for our sins. That should cause us grief and sorrow because Christ had to die for our sins and that sorrow should propel us to change who we are. That sorrow should propel us to change to be like our older brother whom we have crucified, to be willing to die for all mankind and for us in particular.

So the next time we are tempted to sin, remember the effects that our sins have on other people. Only Christ can wipe away our sins and we celebrated that two nights ago, but we can never repay Him. We can never repay Him. What we can do is to prove to God that we will never commit those sins again, that we are not the same person today who committed those sins. We don't have the same mind. We have a different mind and that we are a different being and that being is becoming more like Jesus Christ every day in words, thoughts, deeds.

So let's go forward and during this week, let's go forward from here to be a new person in Jesus Christ and let's avoid the scars of sin.