

The gospel has the power to remove sin and change the human heart. Inherent in the gospel message is the power of an omnipotent God. That power alone is sufficient to save the vilest sinner and transform the hardest heart - apart from any human arguments, illustrations, or ingenuity." (2)

The gospel message is this. As sinners we need God's forgiveness to be free from the penalty of sin which is God's wrath and condemnation. (John 3:36) We need to be free from the power of sin in our lives. (Romans 6:11-22) God has made only one way for all mankind (John 14:6) for the forgiveness of sins. (Romans 6:23) Our Creator-God became a man in the Person of Jesus Christ (John 1:1-14) through the virgin birth (Matt. 1:21-23) Christ lived a sinless life and allowed sinful men to crucify Him. He died and physically arose from the dead three days later. (1 Cor. 15:3, 4) He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. (1 Peter 2:24, Isaiah 53:5, 6) We must receive Him as Lord and Savior. We must repent of our sins. (Luke 13:3) "Repentance begins with a recognition of sin. Sorrow for sin (2 Cor. 7:8) is a sense of anguish at having sinned against God. Repentance involves a change of direction, a transformation of the will ... a willingness ... a determination to abandon stubborn disobedience and surrender the will to Christ which will inevitably result in a change of behavior." (4) "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Romans 10:9)

Transformed lives

Paul wrote, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators (pre-marital sex), nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate (homosexuals), nor abusers of themselves with mankind (sodomites), nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. 6:9-11) These people were changed (2 Cor. 5:17) "Believers can no longer be slaves to sin. God does not declare someone righteous whom He does not also make righteous. The life that is void of holiness has no claim to justification. Those who think they are Christians but are enslaved to sin are sadly deceived. The desire to know and obey God's truth is one of the surest marks of genuine salvation" (5) The Bible gives many examples of transformed lives such as John 8:1 -11; John 4:4-42; Luke 19:1 -1 0; and, Acts 19:18, 19. If you acknowledge your sins and realize that only God can change you, plead to the Lord for His grace and mercy.

- (1) The Vanishing Conscience - John F. MacArthur, Jr.
- (2) Ashamed of the Gospel - John F. MacArthur, Jr.
- (3) The New Birth - Arthur W. Pink (pamphlet) Chapel Library 2603 W. Wright St. Pensacola, FL 32505
- (4) The Gospel According to Jesus - John F. MacArthur, Jr.
- (5) Faith Works - John F. MacArthur, Jr.

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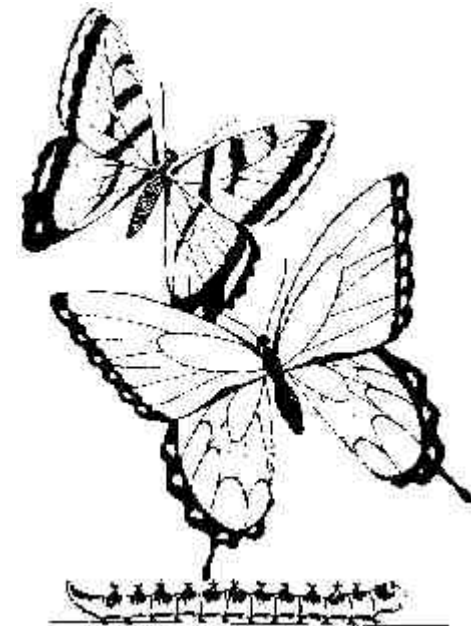
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The CORNERSTONE

BIBLICAL ANSWERS TO CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

YOU CAN BE CHANGED



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God's creative purpose for man

Every human being is a unique creation of God. "Know ye that the LORD he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves." (Psalm 100:3) Our Creator is one God (Deut. 6:4) manifest in three equal Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 28:19) Jesus Christ created all things. (John 1:1-3, Col. 1:16) We are created in the likeness and image of God (Gen. 1:26, 27) "a little lower than the angels" (Ps. 8:4, 5) We are eternal beings (Matt. 26:46), with a body, soul, and spirit (1 Thess. 5:23) and we will exist forever either in Heaven or Hell. The chief end of man is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever. (1 Cor. 10:31) As moral and rational beings we glorify God by obeying His Commandments found in Ex. 20:1-20. Jesus summarized the 10 Commandments. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Matt. 22:37-39) God requires perfect obedience to His laws in thought, word, and deed and these laws are written in our hearts with our conscience bearing witness. (Rom. 2:15) We must give an account of our obedience to our Creator on judgment day. (Heb. 9:27) at the resurrection of our bodies. (2 Cor. 4:10) Adam and Eve were created without sin and were able to fulfill the purposes for which God had created them. They walked and talked with their Creator on a daily basis.

Root cause of all human woes

Everyone realizes that all of humanity has fallen far short of God's creative purpose for man. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23) Our woes began when our first parents, Adam and Eve, sinned by rebelling against God's strict orders not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Gen. 2:17) Their disobedience brought sin, separation from God, death, damnation, and Satan's influence upon every human being. (Rom. 6:23) Our sin begins at conception. (Ps. 51:5, Ps. 58:3) Society and even much of the Christian church over the centuries has had great difficulty in accepting what God says about the devastating effects of sin and the extent of human depravity. "...evil has contaminated every aspect of our humanity - our heart, mind, personality, emotions, conscience, motives, and will." (Jer. 17:9) "Sin corrupts the character (Rom. 3:10-12), defiles the conversation (Rom. 3:13-14), and perverts the conduct." (Rom. 3:15-17) (1) "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, (pre-marital sex) murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness (lewdness) an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." (Mark 7:21-23) The outward evidence of an evil heart is shown by the 17 evil works of the flesh. (Gal. 5:19-21) To make matters even worse we are living in the last days which are described as "perilous times" (2 Tim. 3:1-7) which shall be as it was in the days of Noah. "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." (Gen. 6:1 1) and also as it was in the days of Lot" (Luke 17:26) in which there was much sexual perversion. (Gen. 18:20:19:28) A graphic description of our times is given in Romans 1:18-32. Satan's influence is upon us and society as a whole. (Eph. 2:2, 1 John 5:19) His activities are now increased. (Rev. 12:12) He uses our sin nature to cause us to sin through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. (1 John 2:16) He is a murderer, destroyer and liar, (John 8:44, 1 Peter 5:8) and will cause us not to want to live for God. He uses the "pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:25) such as drugs, alcohol, sex, materialism to make us think that this is what life is all about. Jesus asked, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36) Sin brings self-destruction (Rom. 6:23, Gal. 6:7) and a much shortened life span. (Ps. 55:23, Pr. 10:27, Eccl.. 7:17) Eventually Satan will make our life "hell on earth", however this is only the beginning. We will not only miss God's purpose on earth and God's forgiveness for sins, but at death our soul and spirit immediately go to hell

and remain in a conscious state of torments (Luke 16:19-31) until the resurrection of our body and judgment. (John 5:28,29) At the great white throne judgment (Rev. 20:11-15) every sin will be judged and all will be cast into the lake of fire along with Satan to be tormented day and night forever. (Rev. 20:15)

Failure of human efforts

Secular society is unable to understand (1 Cor. 2:14) nor admit that the root cause of all human woes is sin and human depravity. Rarely are evil acts called sin and external causes are blamed such as child abuse, poverty, TV violence, permissive parents, lenient courts, the devil, lack of education, racism, corrupt politicians, weapons, alcohol, drugs, hate or not enough laws. These things are NOT the root cause of evil. "Human wisdom and human philosophy are making the state of humanity worse, not better. And the more the world depends on human wisdom, the worse these problems will become. We cannot change ourselves. Self-help techniques and recovery programs might temporarily help people feel better about themselves, but they have no power to remove sin or change the human heart. Only the gospel can do that. "It is the power of God unto salvation" (2)

Acknowledgement of sin

Adam and Eve would not admit personal responsibility for their sin and are classic examples of "blame-shifting" therefore it is no wonder that our humanistic God-rejecting society would perfect many ways to excuse sinful behavior even calling the most grievous sins a disease. "The therapy industry is clearly not solving the problem of what scripture calls sin. Misdiagnosis means any prescribed treatment will be utterly ineffective. Sin rules every human heart ... if we do not understand our own sinfulness or see our sin as God sees it, we cannot understand or make use of sin's remedy. Those who want to deny their guilt or hid their own sinfulness cannot discover sin's cure. Those who try to justify their sin forfeit the justification of sin. Until we understand what an utterly abhorrent thing our sin is, we can never ever know God" (1) The 10 Commandments reveal our sin. (Rom. 3:20) Frequently people feel sorrow that their sins have hurt themselves, family, and others however our sins have first and foremost offended our Creator. King David confessed to the Lord, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight..." (Ps. 51:3, 4)

God's ability to change lives

Our sin nature has contaminated our hearts from which we have found is the source of all sorts of wickedness and human depravity. We have a spiritual problem therefore only a spiritual solution will do. We need a new heart and this is exactly what God does in the new birth. (John 3:3-7) "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep mine judgments and do them." (Ex. 36:26, 27) The new birth is necessary for the forgiveness of sins and to receive the gift of eternal life and a transformed life. The new birth is not the work of man through human resolution, reformation, religious ceremonies or baptism. The new birth is "of God" (John 1:13) "Regeneration (being born again) is solely the work of God and man has no part or let in it. Personally we have no more to do with our spiritual birth than we had for our physical". (3) "God's Word – the message of the gospel – is the vehicle through which God's transforming power invades the life and brings about the new birth.