

The Cascading Affect of sin in our Marriage

By Steve Goode

I have what seems to be a simple question to put on the table to Christian husbands and wives, and I am very curious what some of the answers may be. You may be one of those that know the textbook answer to this question, but in your heart is it really what you believe and practice? Do you really believe that in the scope of your marriage that you can sin in a way that does not affect your family? If you don't understand what I am asking then let me try another approach. Is there such a thing as a victimless sin? I mean after all the purpose of the vice-squad in police departments is to investigate crimes that have no victim, so there must be such a thing as a victimless sin. For those of you who may stop reading at this point I am being extremely sarcastic so stay with me a moment more if you think I have lost my moral compass.

It sounds like that before I proceed any further we need a clear definition of what sin really is. To do this I am even going to go against my policy of forbidding five dollar words in my articles and make an exception to make my point. Sin is a "vitiating state of human nature in which the self is estranged from God." (Collegiate Dictionary) In other words sin by its own definition propels us away from God. Vitiating means that you have been rendered totally ineffective when it comes to God's purpose for your life! With that in mind the Bible says, "You have set our iniquities before you, our secret **sins** in the light of your presence." (Ps 90:8) It appears that not only does our sin affect all we will ever have the privilege to experience; it is also never done in secret. This is why in a Christian's life that sin ought to be so putrid to our spiritual noses that it makes us physically sick. Sin holds the power to completely separate us from God if we allow it to manipulate and influence our daily lives. (Rom 6:23)

Before anyone gets too anxious I want to be very clear that God has provided a way for us to be forgiven of our sins throughout the New Testament, (Rom 5:8; Rom 10:9) but this does not change the fact that our sin has consequences that **will** be carried out. Just like when our children say they are sorry and we forgive them, but they still have to take the spanking. This now carries us back to our initial question of how the consequences of our sin will affect more than just the spouse who commits the sin. To help you understand how sin has consequences that go beyond us I would like to take you back to the 1990's when I was a patrol officer in Greensboro North Carolina on the north side of town. It was around nine o'clock that night when a family was returning home from dinner. The daughter was driving the car and her mother was sitting in the front passenger seat. The daughter went to make a left turn across oncoming traffic and did not give enough room to an oncoming car that T-boned her mom's door on the passenger side of the vehicle. It was my duty that night to investigate the death of her mother who had been killed almost instantly from the impact of the crash. The daughter was grief stricken and broken over the loss of her mother. She was so sorry for the mistake that she had made, but nothing she did would ever bring her mother back. The daughter will live the rest of her life knowing she caused

the premature death of her mother all because of one wrong turn. It was never the daughter's intent to harm even one hair on her mother's head, but it doesn't make the outcome any less tragic. This illustration is a perfect example of how our sinful actions can cause consequences we never imagined or anticipated. We see illustrations of how whole families were lost based on the actions of the spouse. If you don't believe me take time to read about David and Bathsheba where David physically and spiritually lost one child after the other all because of his sin. (2 Samuel 12) Take some time and read how because of Achan's selfish sinfulness he brought death to his family and several more innocent men. (Josh 7:1-15)

I have a question for any Christian spouse caught up in their own sin right now. I have gone over some pretty extreme illustrations, but I want to ask a different question regarding your children or spouse. You may never cause physical death to a child or spouse because of your sin, but there is something that is even more final. Are you willing to stay in a state of disobedience to God at the risk of your son, daughter, or spouse suffering a spiritual death? Is the pleasure of your sin really worth risking it all? (Matt 18:6; James 4:1) I wish we could call Heaven and speak with David about his favorite son Absalom and how David lived with the regret of knowing he played a part in his son's rebellion and spiritual death. I believe it hurt him more than the physical death of Absalom. To know that David's sinful and disobedient actions drove him into lust, adultery, and ultimately the murder of Uriah. (2 Samuel 11) Although God forgave David for his sins the consequences were left to be paid.

There are many ways spouses will try to rationalize away the scope of their sin in marriage. I have heard wives say that their husband really doesn't care anyway in the case of affairs, and I have heard husbands say that no one really got hurt because it was only internet pornography. Some spouses have become so hurt and disillusioned that they have lost their ability to care about their sin. All of these excuses are a dangerous and spiritually deadly place to be. Do you fit into any of these categories today? Are you neck deep in your sin to the point you don't feel like you can break free from the addictive chains of your sin?

Wherever you may be let me encourage you to let it stop right here and now. (Ephesians 4:22) God's Word can bring you out of the pit that you are in and into an obedient and content relationship with Christ. (2 Peter 1:4-8) Stop listening to the voices of friendly opinion and understand that God's plan for your life has most likely been on your nightstand or book shelf all along. (2 Tim 3:16) Seek Godly counsel and know that God is waiting to forgive you and to give you a second chance right now. Obediently accept his offer of forgiveness and restoration while there is still time and before the consequences grow! (Rom 5:8; Rom 6:23; Rom 10:9)