Respectable Sins

Session Two

***Hook***

PROGRESS REPORT What have you discovered this week about “respectable” sins?       As you have begun to apply what you learned from session I, what new choices have you made? What challenges have you faced?       In what ways has knowing God’s view of all sin — including the more “acceptable” ones — influenced you this week?

Get Focused

As Paul and John grew Christlike, they became increasingly aware of, and sensitive to, their sin. They described themselves as sinners in the present tense — “I am,” not “I was.” “And,” Jerry Bridges writes,.“if you and I are to make any progress in dealing with the acceptable sins of our lives, we must say the same.”

Sorenson, Stephen; Gerald Bridges; Jerry Bridges (2007-08-31). Respectable Sins: Discussion Guide: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate (Kindle Locations 306-308). NavPress. Kindle Edition.

***Book***

**Chapter Four; The Remedy for Sin**

John Newton:

“My memory is nearly gone; but I remember to things: that I am a great sinner and that Christ is a great Savior.”

THE MOMENT WE RECEIVE SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST, WHAT DOES GOD DO FOR US REGARDING THE GUILT AND REIGNING POWER OF SIN? (Rm 6:1-2; Col 1:13-14)

SO WHAT THEN IS THE REMEDY FOR SIN?

1 Cor. 15:9 (Written in AD 55)

Ephesians 3:8 (Written in AD 60)

1 Timothy 1:15 (Written in AD 63 or 64)

WHAT IS THE PROGRESSION OF PAUL’S SELF-AWARENESS?

HOW DOES THIS FIT WITH OUR MODERN IDEA OF SELF-ESTEEM?

ASK: WHAT HAPPENS, IN LIGHT OF PAUL’S SELF AWARENESS, TO PAUL’S VIEW OF CHRIST AND GOD? (1 Cor 15:10, Eph 3:9-21, 1 Timothy 1:16-17)

HOW DOES THE GOSPEL HELP US TO LOOK AT AND DEAL WITH OUR SINS?

Jerry Bridges mentions three reasons why we need to look at the gospel.

1. It plows the ground of our hearts so that we can see our sin.
2. Not only does the gospel prepare me to face my sin, it also frees me up to do so. Facing our sin causes us to feel guilty….so I need the assurance that my sin is forgiven before I can even acknowledge it, let alone begin to deal with it.

By acknowledging my sin, I mean more than a halfhearted admission to myself that I acted selfishly in a given instance. Rather, I mean a wholehearted, defenseless admission, “I am a selfish person, and that particular act was only a manifestation of the selfishness that still dwells within me.” Bridges, Jerry (2011-09-09). Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate (p. 34). Navpress. Kindle Edition.

WHAT DOES GOD USE TO CONVICT US OF OUR SINS – INCLUDING OUR SELFISHNESS AND JUDGMENTAL ATTITUDES? (2 TIMOTHY 3:16)

Romans 4:7-8 - HOW DO THESE VERSES GIVE US ASSURANCE AND THE ABILITY TO FACE AND ACKNOWLEDGE OUR SIN SO THAT WE CAN DEAL WITH OUR SIN?

WHAT ASSURANCE DO WE HAVE THAT, WHEN WE ACKNOWLEDGE OUR SINFULNESS AND ASK FOR GOD’S FORGIVENESS, HE WILL FORGIVE US AND NO LONGER HOLD OUR SIN AGAINST US? (1 John 1:9)

ASK: WHY DOES GOD NOT COUNT OUR SINS AGAINST US? (Isaiah 53:6)

“To the extent that I grasp, in the depth of my being, this great truth of God’s forgiveness of my sin through Christ, I will be freed up to honestly and humbly face the particular manifestations of sin in my life.” Jerry Bridges

1. The gospel motivates and energizes me to deal with my sin.

Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:15 - WHAT DO THESE VERSES SAY WE ARE TO DO WITH OUR SIN? Put to death.

HOW DOES THE ASSURANCE THAT GOD DOES NOT COUNT OUR SIN AGAINST US, HELP US?

HOW DO WE APPROPRIATE THE GOSPEL DAILY?

WHAT SCRIPTURES CAN WE USE TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO OURSELVES AND REMIND US OF ITS TRUTHS?

IN MATTHEW 5:6, WHAT DID JESUS PROMISE ALL WHO PURSUE RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHO EARNESTLY DESIRE TO SEE THEIR SIN PUT TO DEATH AND BE REPLACED WITH THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT?

**Chapter Five; The Power of the Holy Spirit**

“God does not forgive because He wants to be lenient with us. He forgives because His justice has been satisfied.” Jerry Bridges

Romans 6:2, 8

WHAT DO THESE TWO VERSES COMMUNICATE ABOUT OUR CONDITION OF SIN?

ASK: IF THIS IS TRUE, HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN ROMANS 6:12?

ASK: IF WE HAVE DIED TO IT’S AUTHORITY, POWER, AND REIGN, WHAT DOES THIS VERSE MEAN?

GALATIANS 5:16-17

WHAT HOPE IS PROMISED AS WE SEEK TO “PUT TO DEATH” SINS THAT KEEP COMING BACK? WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “WALK BY THE SPIRIT”?

Psa 119:11 - AS WE ASK GOD TO ENABLE US TO DEAL WITH OUR SIN, WHAT MUST WE STORE UP IN OUR HEARTS?

There is a fundamental principle of the Christian life that I call the principle of dependent responsibility; that is, we are responsible before God to obey His Word, to put to death the sins in our lives, both the so-called acceptable sins and the obviously not acceptable ones. At the same time, we do not have the ability within ourselves to carry out this responsibility. We are in fact totally dependent upon the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. In this sense, we are both responsible and dependent. Bridges, Jerry (2011-09-09). Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate (p. 41). Navpress. Kindle Edition.

HOW CAN WE BE SURE THAT GOD THE FATHER AND THE SON, WORKING THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO LIVES WITHIN EVERY BELIEVER, WILL HELP US DEAL WITH OUR SIN AND DIRECT OUR SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION?

WHAT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT DOING WITHIN EACH BELIEVER? (2 Cor 3:18)

WHAT EXACTLY, SPECIFICALLY, DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT DO?

**Chapter Six; Directions for Dealing with Sins**

1. Address sins in the context of the gospel. Remember, we have been forgiven and the penalty and guilt for sin has been removed. We have been credited with Christ’s righteousness. Never deal with sins apart from this context.
2. We must learn to rely upon the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. Remember, it is by the power of the Holy Spirit that we put to death the sins in our lives (Romans 8:13).
3. While depending on the Holy Spirit, we must realize our responsibility to diligently pursue all practical steps for dealing with our sins. “Work as if it all depends on you, and yet trust as if you did not work at all.”
4. Identify specific areas of acceptable sins. Give thought to situations that trigger the sin.
5. Bring to bear specific applicable scriptures to each of our subtle sins. Memorize, reflect, and meditate on these scriptures.
6. We should cultivate the practice of prayer over the sins we tolerate. Through prayer we acknowledge our sin, acknowledge our need and dependence on the Spirit, and continually acknowledge the presence of those persistent sin patterns in our lives.
7. Involve one or more other believers with us in this struggle against our sins. This should be MUTUAL.

Take heart, as you begin target and attack certain areas of sin in your life, it may get worse before it gets better. Take heart, this is not unusual. The Holy Spirit will use these times of disobedience and failure to help you see how deeply rooted your subtle sins are and how totally dependent you are on His power to help you.

***Look***

For Group Discussion (For Review)

1. How does the truth that God has forgiven our sin free us to honestly and humbly face our sin?

2. What hinders us from recognizing our sin? Why do we allow sin to “reign” in our lives? (See Romans 6:12.)

3. How might our lives change if we consistently pray about subtle sins and ask for the Holy Spirit’s help each time we encounter situations that might trigger these sins?

4. Why do we, in the author’s words, “need to preach the gospel to ourselves,” to read biblical assurances of God’s forgiveness?

5. How should Jesus’ work — the forgiveness that His death and resurrection accomplished — motivate us to deal with our sin?

***Took***

For personal reflection and study

During this session, which insights did you particularly appreciate and why?

If you trust Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, do you find it easy or difficult to comprehend God’s forgiveness and infinite love for you? Why?

If you’re a follower of Christ, God has completely forgiven your sin and will work with you to put to death expressions of sin in your life – including “respectable” ones. What does this mean to you personally?

In this space, write out 1 John 1:9 from your favorite translation of the bible. Between now and the next session, memorize and reflect on this verse’s personal promise.

Write out a brief prayer thanking God for the promise of 1 John 1:9 and what is means to you personally.