

The child of God's greatest discouragement are the sins we commit as Christians. Why do we fall into the same traps and tracks as our old man?

How does God respond to the genuine believer who sins?

The believer doesn't practice the habitual sins of the old man. 1 John 3:9-10, says that the one born of God doesn't sin. But this can't mean all sin, because in 1 John 1:8-9, we are to confess our sins. There is a struggle with sin, and we have an Advocate, Christ Jesus, to whom we go when we do sin, 1 John 2:1-3. But the believer finds himself in foolish sins often, not walking in the Spirit of God, Gal. 5:16.

How do I think about sin as a genuine believer? The passage here in Gen. 20 is an imperfect parallel. We must have faith like Abraham, 2 Cor. 5:7. We are sojourners and pilgrims as he was, 1 Pet. 2:11. Our citizenship is in heaven also, Phil. 3:20. We don't practice sin so grace may abound more!

- Abraham didn't have all the enabling of the Holy Spirit of God as we do now, Rom. 8:9.

To the Text in Genesis 20:

- V2, Abraham is nearly 100 years old.
- Abraham has seen God as just and a judge in Sodom/Gomorrah, Gen. 19:12-29.
- Abraham has seen that God is an international God, rescuing Lot from 5 nations, Gen. 14.
- Abraham has seen God restore and keep promises to him in Gen. 12, 15, 17. God has given promises to bless the world through Abraham's seed, and *THE* Seed of Gen 3.
- Abraham has already seen Sarah taken by another (Pharaoh) under the same circumstance in Gen. 12.
- Abraham has already used his own means to bring a son through Hagar when God had promised a son through Sarah, Gen. 16.

So why would Abraham do this again? Is it because Sarah is beautiful as said before in Gen. 12:11? Is it because Sarah has been lucrative for Abraham? It is because these are the ruts and tracks of sin in Abraham's life. **It is likely he assumed God needed his help to keep His promise.**

How does God react to His people when they sin?

- V3, God speaks to Abimelech to about his grave sin of taking another man's wife.
- God is protecting Abraham and Sarah and keeps His promise to them, V4-7.
- God sees Abimelech's integrity towards Sarah, but still sees it as a sin against Himself. It is not a sin against man, but against God, V9.
- Abimelech is ignorant of the sin, but he is still being judged for his sin, V9.
- Abraham's responses to Abimelech about how this happened:
 - V11, Abraham thought the Abimelech and the region didn't fear Yahweh God, Abraham was worried for them.
 - V12, it wasn't a complete lie, Sarah was his sister, it was a half-truth.
 - V13, because God has caused Abraham to wander, Abraham and Sarah agreed to respond to questions about their relationship. Abraham is acting like a pagan not acknowledging Yahweh God's promises to him to others.

How does God react to this? God is still faithful; He keeps every promise.

- V14, Abimelech gives Abraham oxen, sheep, servants, and gives back Sarah.
- V17, Abraham prays for Abimelech and his house, and the women bore children again.
 - As the apple of God's eye, He hears the prayers of His people, Ps. 17:7-8.

Application: This is the faithfulness of God when I fail. How much more do I realize the end intended for me when I obey and keep His commandments.

Conclusion: What Can I Count on God to Do When I Sin?

- God is not reactive, but actively pursuing His will, He is Sovereign, faithful, and pursues His glory.
- God is meant to be feared in all circumstances, in weakness, He keeps us, 1 Thess. 5:14.
- God is still fully satisfied concerning our sin. Justice is satisfied in Christ. God passes over the sins committed by His elect and looks forward to Christ, Rom. 3:25.
- God is still faithful because of the cross, He keeps His covenant with us. He confronts us through His word, His rebukes are to make us like His Son.
- God is sanctifying me in His perfect wisdom – towards Christlikeness. Even in old age Abraham is being sanctified because of what Christ has done, Rom. 8:28-30.
- Discipline from God shows that He loves us. Pro. 3:11, do not detest His correction. Pro. 3:13, happiness results from wisdom. Heb. 12:10, we partake in His holiness because He disciplines us.

Further Discussion and Application

What are the blessings of God's correction and discipline in our lives? What is the estate of those who aren't corrected by the Lord? What are the promises that ensure that God will continue to pursue Christlikeness in us until we are perfected in Him (in death or rapture)?

We aren't left alone as believers in Christ. What benefits of being a child of God do we possess? Why is such great care taken for God's people and His eye towards us being one of love? Why can we be confident of God's power to save us and keep us?

As we think of others that are without Christ in this world, what can we proclaim to them about the salvation that we have received and been taught? What does Christ teach us concerning our salvation? What does a redeemed life look like to those in the church and to those in the world?

What must we put on (Eph. 4, Col. 3) as the beloved and elect of God? Why is mercy towards others an adornment of Christ? Why is speaking truth? What is the truth about those apart from Christ? Why do they need the Lord to cover their sins and take away their iniquity? Spend a few minutes praying for the lost and loved ones who don't know Christ.