

The South Broadway Edifier

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Church of Christ
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Meeting Times
Sunday
AM
10:00 Bible Study
10:50 Worship
PM
6:00 Worship
Wednesday
PM
6:00 Bible Study

We're on the web!
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Coping With Our Mistakes

Nobody knew Jim was the one who did it, so he just shrugged and turned away. He didn't get far before there was a hard tap on his shoulder and, in an accusatory tone, someone said, "But I saw you do it!" While still walking away, he mumbled, "It's no big deal," and when someone voiced an insistent, "What?!" he said, "It didn't hurt anyone... everyone does it—in fact you've done it yourself!" Jim managed to avoid them for a while, and he hoped it was over.

Wait, wait, wait. Is that how we handle our mistakes? Do we deny them? Are we skilled at making excuses for what we do wrong? Is it our goal to escape facing problems we have caused and wish they will somehow go away? When we make a mistake—whether spiritual or physical, sin or just a slip-up—we need to stop and notice how we are dealing with it.

Denial Isn't Resolution

"When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer" (Psalm 32:3-4). It's sleepless nights. It's fear of being discovered. You can't get it out of your head. You feel like something is dying on the inside; your strength is gone, and life has lost a sense of joy, peace, and meaning.

When David tried to keep silent

about his sin, when he hid and denied it, his life was eaten up by it – spiritually, emotionally, and physically. To make matters worse, living a lie sears the conscience (1 Tim 4:2). Hearts are dulled, and spiritual ears and eyes aren't open to pure truth anymore (Mt 13:15).

Self-justification leads us to "call evil good, and good evil... put darkness for light, and light for darkness... bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Is 5:20). But the truth is still there. Denial, lies, and rewriting doesn't change or resolve anything.

Excuses Aren't Resolution

"The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate"... "The serpent deceived me, and I ate" (Gen. 3:12-13). Beginning with the very first sin, the art of excuse-making was born. So which excuse will we use today: bad crowd, bad parents or childhood, public school, stress, physical illness, weakness, "It didn't turn out as planned," "I can't help it," "I was made this way," "Everyone does it," "It didn't hurt anyone," "I have stronger desires than others," "You don't understand my life"...?

"Abraham is our father" was a popular first century Jewish conscience salve (Jn. 8:33-41). But explanations and exceptions and excuses don't change the past—they don't make a mistake into something right, and they don't make sin into righteousness.

Welcome, Visitors!

Escape Isn't Resolution

"But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord" (Jon. 1:3). We don't like to be around problems. So we avoid people we have offended and hurt. And we don't feel like being around people who are peacemakers—people who show us our problems and urge us to resolve them. We scoff at Jonah—fleeing from the presence of the Lord! But how often have we run and hid from dealing with mistakes and sin? I asked a friend why people kept using drugs and alcohol when it clearly often didn't make them feel good and exacerbated their problems. She said it was because it dulled what they didn't want to feel and made it so they didn't have to face life. There is a sense in which the book of Ecclesiastes is one man's attempt to escape life (and death). But distraction, pleasure, burying one's self in work, and numbing one's senses are all empty. In the end, nothing has been resolved. The problems, mistakes, and sins are still there.

Repentance, Admission, and Forgiveness Are Resolution

Remember David who was being consumed by the guilt of his sin in Psalm 32? Now see how it was resolved: "I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,' and you forgave the iniquity of my sin" (Psa. 32:5). It's not about pride, what others think, always being right, or defending one's self. Those things fuel denial, excuses, and escape.

We need to be people who resolve our mistakes. When we're wrong, whether it is sin or not, we accept it, admit it, and apologize. As sons of God, we are peacemakers (Matt. 5:9) who want to quickly agree with our adversaries (Matt. 5:25). And we crave forgiveness more than having a false veneer of perfection. So we admit our faults to others (Jas. 5:16). We confess our sins (1 Jn. 1:9). We say that we're sorry and ask to be forgiven, without denial, excusing, or hiding. This is how things are really resolved with one another and with God.

David Diestelkamp

Are You Beautiful?

Modesty aside, do you think you're attractive? Do you think you're beautiful, if you're a woman, or handsome, if you're a man? Are you concerned about being beautiful, staying beautiful, and being around beautiful (handsome) people? No one wants to be ugly. All of us, to some degree, want to be beautiful or handsome...or, at least, attractive. But how do you determine who is or who is not beautiful? How do you define beauty and attractiveness? For many people, and especially for men, attractiveness and beauty are judged purely by what we see physically—by what a person looks like; by his or her outward appearance.

This was Samson's problem! You will remember that most of the stories about him in the book of Judges involve a woman: first, his Philistine wife (Judges 14:1-20); then a prostitute (16:1-3); and finally, Delilah (16:4-21). And how was it that Samson chose his women? It was by what she "looked" like to him! That is certainly how he picked his wife. He saw this Philistine woman in Timnah, and he wanted her; so he said to his father, Manoah, "Get her for me, for she looks good to me" (14:1-3; 14:7 – NASB).

Are we as shallow as Samson was in how we "judge" beauty today? Does "beauty" depend on what a person "looks like" to us? Are we too physically oriented when it comes to how we define "beauty"? Let me ask you: what is "attractive" to you? On what basis do you decide who is "beautiful"?

Well, let's talk about this from God's perspective for just a minute. How does God define beauty? What's attractive to Him? One thing is for sure: God does not see as man sees! When He looks for beauty, He doesn't look so much on the outward man. God looks at the person's heart (cf. 1 Sam. 16:7). Physical strength and physical beauty are not what God considers attractive. "He does not delight in the strength of the horse; He does not take pleasure in the legs of a man. The Lord favors those who fear Him, those who wait for His loving-kindness" (Psalm 147:10-11). "The Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the afflicted one with salvation"

(149:4). God can make hundreds of strong horses or human legs; He can make strong and beautiful human bodies. And so to see strong legs run—legs that He has made, and made to run—this does not “delight” the Lord.

What the Lord “favors” is those who fear Him and patiently wait in faith for His loving-kindness (cf. 147:11). You see, a respectful, patient, and trusting heart is one thing that our God simply does not make. Such a heart is something that a man voluntarily chooses to give back to God...and this is what “delights” the Lord! And with God, you don’t have to fret about whether or not you’re physically beautiful or attractive enough, because what is not physically beautiful (the afflicted), God will “beautify...with salvation” (149:4). And the salvation that the Lord gives to a person who turns in faith to Him makes that person beautiful to God. So understand, God does not define “beauty” like we do! He looks, not at the outward, but at the inside...at the “hidden man of the heart” (cf. 1 Peter 3:4).

Now please consider that since this is how God judges beauty—not looking at the outer man but at the heart—shouldn’t we judge beauty the same way? In the book of Proverbs, there is a section where a father and mother are strongly urging their son to avoid the adulteress woman (Prov. 6:20-25). The son is specifically told: “Do not desire her beauty in your heart, nor let her capture you with her eyelids” (6:25). There is a “beauty” that must not attract us. It is the outward, the physical, the flesh! Instead, we must look for the inner beauty. We must teach our children (especially our sons) not to be attracted primarily by outward beauty. We must look more inwardly at what the inner man looks like before we decide if she really is attractive. One who is physically attractive on the outside but ugly on the inside is just plain ugly! She is not beautiful!

I am afraid that we simply have not taught our children enough about what makes one beautiful. We live in a society that emphasizes and is obsessed with outer physical beauty! And we get caught up in it, too! We need to help our children to look at—and for—the inner beauty of a person. And we need

to set the example for them by doing the same ourselves.

Do we delight in the physical...the outward? Or, like God, do we delight in the inner spiritual beauty of a person? Do you see and appreciate the beauty of saved men faithfully serving God, regardless of what the outside looks like? For ourselves and for our children, we need to develop and look for the inner beauty, the attractiveness that comes out of a person’s heart! So, once again, are you beautiful? Well, I guess that all depends on how you define beauty!

Rick Liggin

Take Heed To Yourself

If you’ve ever flown on a commercial airline you have witnessed a flight attendant giving safety instructions “in case of an emergency.” First-time flyers may give undivided attention to the routine while experienced flyers busy themselves with their electronic devices or other distractions. The memorized instructions have become so ignored that some flight attendants have turned the memorized instructions into a comedy routine which delights even the most frequent flyers and distracts the nervous ones from the seriousness of the information.

I recently attended a half-day seminar designed for caregivers of loved ones who have been diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease and dementia. Before discussing how to deal with the common physical and cognitive issues of the patients, the doctor projected onto a screen a picture of a flight attendant going through the safety routine. He specifically drew our attention to the instructions given in the event of the loss of cabin pressure which causes oxygen masks to drop from above. If traveling with a small child or other person unable to administer the oxygen without help, one is instructed to put on his own mask before aiding a dependent one. This instruction goes against what one would do by instinct but is necessary because one must be able to breathe in order to help the helpless. The doctor’s point to the caregivers was to take care of yourself (physically and emotionally) so that you can provide the care needed for the loved one.

There’s also a lesson in this regarding our spiritual health. I immediately thought of the apostle

Paul's instructions to Timothy to "Take heed to yourself and to doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you" (1 Tim. 4:16). A few verses earlier, Paul had urged Timothy to make sure he was able to "be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (v.12). Timothy would be able to help his brethren to conduct themselves in righteousness only if his own life was in order. The true Christian is to "look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others" (Phil. 2:4). In order to do this, he must first put his own life in order. I am not suggesting one must have attained sinless perfection before teaching others, but he must at least be self-controlled and submissive to the Lord and willing to repent when confronted with his sin.

Besides the previously mentioned admonitions which Paul gave to Timothy, the notice James issues to teachers that they will "receive a stricter judgment" (Jas. 3:1) is followed by some "take heed" warnings about the need to control an unruly tongue. Also, the Hebrew writer's lament that some, by reason of time, "ought to be teachers" but instead needed to be taught the very first principles (Heb. 5:12) proves that teachers need to "take heed to themselves" in preparation to effectively teach others.

Elders are told to "take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers..." (Ac. 20:28). While there is no fault in placing emphasis on evangelism, the shepherds' primary role is to "shepherd the flock of God which is among you" (1 Pet. 5:2). The kingdom of Christ is not advanced by evangelism unless the existing flock is protected, fed, and maintained. This requires discipline and gospel preaching and teaching that includes refutation of false doctrines (even when advanced by sincere, morally upright, but mistaken religious people). The apostle John wrote, "Look to yourselves" as he warned about someone coming among them who "transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ" and commands "do not receive him" (see 2 Jn. 7-11).

The apostle Peter tells wives who want

Prayer Requests

Shut-ins

Ruthie Monroe, Maxine Cagle, and Goldie Sturgeon Sick

1. Roberta Lynch, a friend of Bettye Goins, is battling cancer.
2. Brittany Moore, the step-daughter of the Bentleys' son, is in need of prayers for her health.
3. Judy Branch has been having health problems.
4. Sherry Garner is being treated for cancer.
5. Daniel Harper, a friend of the Goins, continues to need prayers for family difficulties.
6. BT Davis is doing better, but continues having health concerns. Prayers are appreciated..
7. Bettye Goins is having some sight problems due to her diabetes and complications from her surgery. Keep her in your prayers.
8. Betty Goodwin, a friend of Bettye Goins, is facing possible kidney failure. Prayers are appreciated.

Absent

1. Look around and see who is missing. Pray for them, give them a call, send them a note, or stop by for a visit. Let them know they are missed and encourage them to gather with the saints.

their unbelieving husbands to become obedient to the Lord to be submissive and display "chaste conduct accompanied by fear" (1 Pet. 3:1-4). In other words, he is essentially telling them to first "take heed to themselves," and it will be noticed.

Fathers who want to bring up their children "in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4) will succeed only if they will first "take heed to themselves" and be the spiritual leaders and examples in the home. Fathers who become "busy" with other activities which take priority over their children are guilty of spiritual child neglect. This includes preachers. It is good for preachers to be able to hold gospel meetings, attend lectureships, and be involved in other spiritual works, but those who over-book themselves for such activities, taking them away from home too much, need to learn to turn down some requests and opportunities. To do otherwise is like a parent on the plane affixing his oxygen mask on his face first and then proceeding to help other passengers while leaving his own child to die.

Al Diestelkamp