

DISTINCTIONS IN SIN

Galatians 5:19-21

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Many throughout the ages have attempted to classify or categorized sins in a fashion contrary to God's teaching
- B. Others have failed to recognize that God does make a distinction. They say, "Sin is sin, always has been
- C. Our object is to show the distinction God makes, and make proper application in our lives.

DISCUSSION:

I. HUMAN DISTINCTIONS

- A. Catholicism makes two categories: mortal and venial
 - 1. Mortal sin: a grievous offense against God's law
 - 2. Venial sin: less serious offense against God's law
- B. Liberal theologians among Protestants classify sins on the basis of "relevancy" and "situations."
 - 1. Fletcher, situation ethics: murder, adultery, stealing, etc. could be "right" depending on circumstances
 - 2. Same system adopted by secular humanist and is being taught in school as "values clarification."
- C. Denominations have changed their "views" on drinking alcohol, homosexuality; adultery and remarriage
- D. Among brethren there is a tendency to classify sin according to consequence, as big or little
- E. Some sins have more serious physical consequences
 - 1. But God makes no such distinction 1Jhn 3:4; 5:7
 - 2. Classifications are of human origin
 - 3. All sins are mortal, that is, possess the power to destroy the soul Mk 7:14-23; Isa 59:2

II. DIVINE DISTINCTION IN SIN

- A. The Bible does not comprehend a "sin of ignorance" in the sense of no accountability
- B. Seems to be a distinction between unintentional sin, and presumptuous or "high-handed" sin. Yet this regards the attitudes or hearts of the sinners
 - 1. Not a distinction in guiltiness, both are guilty
 - 2. In Old Testament, Lev 5:17-19 indicates that sins of ignorance could be atoned without adding a penalty but, the presumptuous (deliberate) sin could not Lev 6:1-7 restitution plus one fifth more must be paid
- C. N. T. continues to regard this distinction "overtaken" (unintentional or non-presumptuous) Gal 6:1
- D. Willful or intentional sin Heb 10:26

III. HOW DOES THIS DISTINCTION AFFECT ME?

- A. Concern among brethren regarding our relationship to God as his children. Does a man become an "apostate" each and every time he sins Psa 37:23, 24

- B. Lord presents no hope of escaping condemnation because of weakness or ignorance Lk 12:47,48
- C. The Bible does not teach that God accepts the contrite, remorseful, heart of the believer in place of repentance. 2Cor 7:8-11; Psa 19:7-14

IV. AM I ACCOUNTABLE TO ANYONE

- A. Nothing happens if people are not accountable
 - 1. A secular psychologist observed the social value of confessing sins to one another, being accountable
 - 2. Catholic said only had to confess sins to a priest. Protestants. said only had to confess to God.
 - 3. Freud said we didn't have any sins to confess! (Christian Leadership Letter Nov 1987)
- B. Personal accountability is a thing about which there can be no doubt Ezek 18:20; 2Cor 5:10; Rom 14:12
- C. Am I accountable to others? To the extent that my behavior affects others, I am surely accountable to them. Must I, then be judged by them?
 - 1. To the extent that others have authority over me (employer, parents, teachers), I am Judged by them
 - 2. Christians are affected by my behavior.
 - a. I have a relationship and a responsibility to my brothers and sisters in Christ
 - b. Most of the time my offensive behavior calls for personal reconciliation Matt 5:23,24
 - c. If offense is so public as to reflect against, demean, or degrade whole church, correction and reconciliation should include whole church
- D. Accountability is one thing - sharing each other's burden is something else Gal 6:2,5
 - 1. I need your prayers I do not need to give you a list of my private sins for which I must repent and ask God's forgiveness
 - 2. Understanding we are all fellow-strugglers helps us feel for each other. The ability to ask for your help privately or publicly is a part of the great fellowship we share.

CONCLUSION:

- A. Distinction in sin affects me to the extent that I must:
 - 1. Be certain never to sin willfully against God
 - 2. Not rely on ignorance, folly, or passions as an excuse
 - b. Be diligent to study the Bible and by it know sin
 - c. Be brought to remorse and turn from sin
- B. I believe we can recognize sin and what it does, as well as recognize the one who is bent on our destruction
- C. May we all come to that knowledge of God's truth and live by His word so we will be able to hear Him say: "well done thou good and faithful servant."