

WILFUL SIN

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In Hebrews 10.26 we read, “For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin”.

Sin is anything that is disobedience to God.

Wilful means the determination to do things one's own way without regard for God and His way. These are deliberate acts. For example, we have heard people say, “Since I belong to Jesus and cannot be lost, I can do as I like and say what I like since I am still saved”.

They even quote Titus 1 15, “to the pure all things are pure” and, therefore, they are pure and all that they do and say is pure. They can even go to places of ill-repute and vice, watch anything on television or at the cinema. They are pure and untouchable; they are above criticism, suspicion or punishment. They quote Romans 8 31-39 where it says that nothing can separate a Christian from Christ.

Years ago, a common expression was, “Once saved, always saved” which some took to confirm the meaning that since I am saved and can never be lost I can do anything.

It is true that even genuine Christians backslide. Their spiritual state may vary from time to time. But this is not apostasy or the abandonment of faith.

The absence of spiritual Christian leaders may cause some believers to backslide as in the case of the Israelites when Moses was absent on the mount talking with God (Exodus 32). And there are Christian leaders, so called, who are not spiritual.

And there are many churches which do not have spiritual leadership but they have a vicar, pastor or minister, churchwardens and stewards, but the emphasis is not on the Gospel, Bible study or evangelism but activities like Coffee Mornings, Mother and Toddler Groups, Jumble sales, concerts and preaching a social gospel... Be nice to everyone, if you can.

Solomon loved many women. He built temples to their pagan gods, taxed the people unfairly and cruelly so, and he was evil (1 Kings 11. 4)... yet he started well as a man willing to obey God. The same can be said of Demas in 2 Timothy 4.10.

I have heard it said that backsliders were never Christians in the first place. If they were, they would never have backslidened. But we can all backslide. Consider Peter and Thomas. No Christian is perfect or immune from sin and mistakes.

Luke 18 recounts the parable of the sower. Some seed fell on good ground and was received gladly but had no root and, at the time of temptation, fell away. This is a picture of someone who receives the Gospel with joy but that joy does not last. Some have equated this with backsliding.

Wilful sin is deliberate sin. If the sinner repents he returns to fellowship with God (1 John 1.9). But repentance is not just saying sorry. It is abandoning that sin once and for all. It calls for God's help and grace and our will power. Someone has likened repentance to overcoming a drug addiction.

It may be simplistic, but I once heard someone say, “God delights to mend broken things and broken lives”.

There are sins of ignorance (Acts 3. 17) but repentance is still applicable. There are sins committed unwillingly, unintentional sins, sins of which you were initially unaware but they still call for repentance.

God accepts the truly repentant and contrite heart (Psalm 51.17). But repentance has to be true and sincere involving a new attitude and God's forgiveness and cleansing

There is a difference between initial repentance which leads to conversion and repentance from sin after conversion.

All who truly repent, and the emphasis is on truly, will experience the mercy and forgiveness of God.

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