

The Old Paths

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“I’m Not Bothering Anyone!”

Jarrod Jacobs

Often we find folks who justify their sinful behavior by saying, “I am not bothering anyone.” This excuse may sound thoughtful, but it is not. In fact, when we study the nature of sin, we learn that when we commit sin, any sin, we “bother” others!

Let us begin by noting that when we sin, we have “bothered” both the Father and the Son! Remember, it is sin that nailed Christ to the cross! Christ came to this world so that He could die (Jn. 18:37). From Genesis 3:15 to the end of the Bible, we see our Lord Christ as the sacrifice for our sins (Rev. 13:8)! At the same time, we read in the Bible about the degree of love possessed by God. He loves man so much that He gave His only begotten Son as the supreme sacrifice (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8; I Jn. 4:9-10). Therefore, let us not say that when we sin, we are not “bothering” anyone! God and Christ will both disagree with that statement!

Furthermore, our sins often “bother” men! When we are young, our sins affect the lives of our parents. Though we may not like to admit it, it is still the truth! In addition to this, there are some sins we commit that not only affect our parents, placing undue worry and emotional and/or financial strain upon them, but our sins can result in society (through taxes) paying for our housing and food for a time (i.e., prison)!

We also recognize that for the Christian, when we sin and refuse to repent, it places a burden upon the church, wherein the church must withdraw from us (II Thess. 3:6, 14-15; I Cor. 5:5-7)! The church cannot continue to be in fellowship with a person who is “walking disorderly”, or literally, “out-of-step” with God! Therefore, one’s sin has affected an entire congregation of God’s people! (One’s sins have also placed a burden on a family of Christians who now have a family member from whom the church has withdrawn, II Thess. 3:6; I Cor. 5:11!) In light of these things, how can we say that the sins we commit do not “bother” anyone? In fact, just the opposite is true! *“For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself”* (Rom. 14:7).

Yet, if it could be proven that there is a sin which “bothers no one”, remember that this sin has an effect upon the one who has committed it! Sin separates us from God (Isa. 59:1-2), and sin results in spiritual death (Jas. 1:15; Rom. 6:23)! Knowing that this is the case, who can believe that man can engage in sinful activities, but “bother no one”? It’s impossible!

Let’s stop offering excuses for sin. Rather, let us admit our sin, repent of it, and live as God wants us to live (Acts 17:30; Jn. 14:15)! In so doing, we can have a positive effect upon ourselves and upon others, influencing folks for good and not evil (Matt. 5:16; Col. 3:17).

Gambling Vs. Love Of God And Man

Ron Halbrook, Shepherdsville, KY

Though gambling has become socially acceptable and legal, it is not right according to what God teaches us in the Bible. God teaches us to love Him with all the heart, mind, and soul, and to love our fellowman as we love ourselves (Matt. 22:37-40). Everything else God teaches us depends on these two principles (vs. 40). “Love” in this sense comes from a Greek term, AGAPE, referring to the highest kind of love: a love based on principles of truth and right, and a love seeking the best interests of its object rather than mere self-gratification.

Since love of God and of fellowman must be the motives for all our conduct, how do these two principles relate to gambling? God teaches us that we may receive gain in ways which demonstrate love to all parties to any transaction. We may receive gain in the following ways: 1. the process of labor (Eph. 4:28); 2. exchange of goods and services (Matt. 13:45-46); 3. gifts (Matt. 6:1-4). Each of these methods of receiving gain is honest, showing respect for principles of truth and right and for the welfare of all parties involved.

Gambling is a wager on some chance event, with the result that the “winner” takes gain from others without respect for principles of truth and right and without seeking the welfare of all parties involved. Therefore, gambling is a means of taking dishonest gain. The fact that the other participants agreed to take part does not mitigate the dishonesty

involved, any more than "kickbacks" in a business deal are mitigated from dishonesty by the agreement of the parties involved. Gambling is an exercise in covetousness, seeking mere self-gratification without regard for truth and right or the best interests of everyone involved.

Gambling is sinful, an offense against God and a curse to our fellowman. Because all of us have sinned from time to time, whether through gambling or other deeds, God sent His Son into the world to die for our sins (Rom. 3:23; Jn. 3:16). The death of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary demonstrates both the justice and the mercy of God: Sin was punished (justice), but punished in a way which extends forgiveness to sinners (mercy). Thus, God proves Himself to be "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26). Since God does not force anyone to receive this gift of His grace, we may choose to receive it or to reject it. We receive it by faith in Christ when we repent of our sins (a change of heart resolving to turn away from sin), confess our faith in Christ as God's Son, and submit to immersion in water (Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 8:35-38; 22:16; Rom. 10:8-10; 6:3-4).

As a fellow-traveller from time to eternity, I urge you to turn away from gambling and to do everything in your power to convince others to turn away from it. Such a course is based on our love for God and our fellowman because we recognize that gambling is a curse to the human heart, to the home, to the church, and to the nation. Our lawmakers act contrary to love of God and fellowman by legalizing gambling. Churches debase God's standard of morality by promoting it. All

who participate in it act to the detriment of themselves and others.

There are no winners in gambling, whether it be in casinos, at the races, in bingo parlors, or in lotteries and raffles. No such activities meet the tests of true love for God and our fellowman.

Editor's Note:

Lord willing, Brother Halbrook will be holding a gospel meeting for us July 19-21. In light of this, I asked him to send us some Bible articles to print before he arrived. I hope all benefit from his writing. Make your plans now to be here for the gospel meeting and invite friends and neighbors to come. Flyers are in the foyer.

"The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much" (James 5:16).

Are you praying daily for our work here at Caneyville? Are you constantly asking for God's blessings on our elders, deacons, preachers, Bible class teachers, our elderly, the widows, the spiritually weak, and every brother and sister in Christ? We have a great and powerful tool in prayer. Use it!

The Few

Author Unknown

Some assemble with the church just for the walk,
Some go to laugh and talk.

Some go the time to spend,
Some go to meet a friend.

Some go for speculation,
Some go for observation.

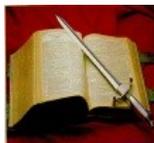
Some go for sins to cover,
Some go to meet a lover.

Some go to doze and nod,
A few go to worship God.

Editor's Note:

I found this poem in a book of old lessons and writings from a dear friend of mine and thought it was worth sharing in the bulletin. Jesus said that those who worship God "must" do so "in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:24), for these are the kind of people God is looking for to worship Him. Let us consider our reasons for being here today. Our assembling is not for "free baby-sitting," nor is it "social hour." This is not an opportunity for business deals, nor is it simply a way to "kill time." We are assembled to worship our King and Creator. Let us remember this as we worship God today!

Your Bible questions answered ...
www.youtube.com/TheOldPaths1994



I want the truth, give me book, chapter, and verse!
Come and meet with the church of Christ in Caneyville.
Location: 103 N. Main Street Caneyville, KY

Meeting Times:

- Sunday Bible Study ----- 10:00 a.m.
- Sunday Worship ----- 10:45 a.m.
- Sunday Worship ----- 5:00 p.m.
- Wednesday Bible Study ----- 7:00 p.m.

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Preacher/Editor: Jarrod Jacobs Phone: (270) 589-4167