

Sin, You and Christ
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It seems that everything today is categorized and specialized. This fact often makes it difficult to talk about something as general as sin. Where is sin? Is it only in the city? Is it only with the “bad” people? Is it only with the non-Christians? A mature Christian understanding tells us that sin is not limited to a particular type of people or area in the world. It cannot be specialized as some phases of our life can be. A baseball pitcher only pitches and a quarterback only plays quarterback. Simon and Garfunkel sing only a certain type of music and Bronson rides only his motorcycle. These are all examples of the way people specialize. But sin? Sin is like the dirty air in our big cities. It is always there, to be shared by all, no matter what your specialty is within that city. The presence of sin exists everywhere because this world has cut itself off from God, and it all began with Adam and Eve. It is not that we are guilty or responsible for their sin, but we certainly have inherited the *result* of their sin which is this separated world.

What does that mean? Does it mean that we cannot avoid sin? No! But we know that *temptation* in this world will always be there and that is why we say that life is a “battle.” We are always battling temptation to sin. The greatest example of being tempted and yet resisting the sin is when Jesus Christ was tempted by Satan. He was promised all the earthly power of a king, but it was sin which was to be avoided.

The problem of temptation and sin therefore creates both a constant “pressure,” and a constant “tension” in our lives. We are constantly pressured by our egos to cheat and lie, most often to “save face.” Some of us are pressured by our friends to forget our *own* will and to succumb to outside forces, *i.e.* drugs. And all of us are surely pressured by our environments to be “lukewarm” in our faith. We have all heard the story: “I’m a good Christian, I go to church every Sunday” – as if the total Christian life is limited to the church building!

It is because of such pressure that we live at all times in a type of “tension.” We know what things are like and what we are “pressured” to believe, and yet we know how they *should* be. That is the tension! They way it is and the way it should be. This does not mean that this tension is bad, for that is what makes us care about life. As long as we feel this “tension” whenever we are “pressured” to sin, we will be taking the first step to resist temptation.

But just knowing that sin is everywhere and knowing how to avoid sin does not tell us about the killing of sin. Avoiding sin does not guarantee the killing of sin. We all know that some sins are to be avoided, but that others are to be attacked! What about the actual defeating of sin? The only way to kill sin is to get to the very heart and cause of sin. The problem has been that we seem to be more interested in the *results* of the sin itself. Racism, for example, one of the greatest sins of this age, will not be solved only by cleaning up the ghettos, or by the marching lines, or even by the great social programs of

our government. These are the results and problems of racism. But the root of racism is a much more basic sin – it is the evil of which tells one man that he is greater than another, that he doesn't have to respect the image of God that each human was created in, and all because he is black. When all the problems are resolved and all the programs are completed, one man may still hate another, a *white* man may still hate a *black* man, and it is the hate which is the sin and must be destroyed.