

Pursuing God—A Seeker's Guide

Chapter Eight *Destroying the Future*

1. I've seen a lot of divorces in my life. I'm sure you have seen plenty also. One of the leading reasons for divorce is sex prior to marriage. Why do you think that is so?
2. Do you believe that a person who is active sexually outside of marriage or even a practicing homosexual could be converted? Please explain your answer.
3. Read chapter eight aloud.
4. Paul paints a dismal picture in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10:

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

Why does Paul say, "Do not be deceived"?

5. Why do you think Paul mentions these particular sins? Are you OK if you commit other sins as long as you stay away from these? Why or why not?
6. Paul has more to say about sin and being in the kingdom of God. Read this:

And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:11)

Obviously Paul is speaking to people who *used* to be fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites, etc. There is so much hope in these words, for it means that God can convert anyone. Do you see anything in this passage that makes you think you could continue in such a sinful lifestyle once becoming a Christian?

So, do you have to clean your life up to come to Christ? Why or why not?

7. The passage teaches that God can give you a brand new beginning. He washes you, sanctifies you and justifies you by the Spirit. These words are important. To be washed means that you are cleansed from your sins, no matter what they were. To be sanctified means that you are set apart to God as His own possession. To be justified is a courtroom word. It means that, even though you are a sinner, you are declared to be right with God on the basis of what Christ has done for you.

Concerning the last word, think of two ledgers. On the one is your sin and on the other is Christ's righteousness. In justification, your sin is put on Christ's ledger and Christ's righteousness is put on your ledger. It is "just-as-if-I'd" never sinned and "just-as-if-I'd" kept the law. On the basis of Christ's righteousness you are accepted by the Father.

Suppose Christ walked into this room and said to you, "You are now washed from your sins, set apart as mine, and declared righteous before My Father." How would this impact you? Do you think a person who has experienced this could casually continue in his sin?

8. At the end of the chapter I talked about scars. There will likely be some if you have lived a life of disobedience prior to coming to Christ—and we all have! But this does not mean that you are bound to the old desires you used to have or that you can never be free from such a lifestyle of disobedience. Discuss how scars have shown up in your life if you are already a believer, or how they can be seen in others who are Christians. What is the benefit or harm of these scars?
9. Do you think it is possible for any person to come to Christ and be the same as before? Explain your answer. Should we call a person a Christian if he or she not been changed morally?

Note: We have said that we should never lose hope, for even the most sinful of people may be changed. And we have said that we cannot be so arrogant as to believe that we can hold on to our sins when we come to Him. Salvation is about being free from the penalty of sin, the power of sin, and the even the presence of sin in the future. The true believer has now been given the Holy Spirit to reside within him so that he can experience freedom from sin daily. We all know that the Christian will not be perfect until heaven. Yet, nobody may come to Christ and hang on to a lifestyle of sin at the same time. They come to Christ with a profound change of mind about sin. This is called repentance. We will discuss that in the next chapter.

For next week: Please read chapter nine. The next two chapters will be very important for you.