



Biblical Soul Care in the Local Church

Biblical Counseling
and the Operations
of the Heart,
Part 2



Where does sin come from?



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The world encourages us to see the wrongs we do as coming from outside of us:

- Nature = our environment: I'm a product of what happens to/around me
- Nurture = family and friends: I speak and act based on how **people** affect me

Where does sin come from?

Scripture takes us to the epicenter of all sinful thoughts and actions.

- Mark 7:1-23
- Scripture alone speaks to sin in the heart as the root producing bad fruit

The Process of Personal Sin

- James 1:14-16

What is the cause of arguments, fights, quarrels, and conflicts in relationships?

What does the average person answer?



What is the Bible's answer?

James 4:1-2

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More literally: “From where wars and from where fightings? Are they not from here, from your desires for pleasure that wage war inside you?”

What is the Bible's answer?

James 4:1-2

- “quarrels” = wars, conflicts, battles, contentions
- “conflicts” = fightings, clashes, disputes
- “pleasures” = passions/desires; unfulfilled selfish desires

What is the Bible's answer?

James 4:1-2

- “lusts” (verse 2) = intense desire, a longing for
- “you **set your heart** to have what you **do not have**... you are envious **to obtain** and **cannot obtain**, **so** you fight and quarrel...”

How does the New Testament describe what is wrong with people?

- lusts of the flesh
- deceitful lusts
- idolatrous lusts

Titus 3:3



How does the New Testament describe what is wrong with people?

“The New Testament repeatedly focuses on the ‘lusts of the flesh’ as a **summary** of what is wrong with the human heart that underlies bad [sinful] behavior.” (David Powlison)

How does the New Testament describe what is wrong with people?

- In unbelievers: Ephesians 2:3; 4:22
- In believers: Galatians 5:16-17; Colossians 3:5ff

“... the most significant inner conflict in Christians is between what the Spirit wants and what we want.” (David Powlison)

Biblical lists of idolatrous lusts:

- Galatians 5:19-21
- 2 Timothy 3:1-5

Modern labels for idolatrous lusts:

- Man's approval, attention, health, wealth, pleasure, safety, comfort, leisure, sports, security, significance, respect, certainty, fairness, success, possessions, freedom/independence, money, ministry, education, marriage, family, traditions, self-esteem, perfectionism, workaholism, love, control, appearance, peace, etc...

Modern labels for idolatrous lusts :

- Each are manifestations of either the world, the flesh, or the devil (1 John 2:15-17)
- Not limited to sexual desire
- Inordinate or ruling desires driving our behavior

Overcoming deceitful lusts

By God's grace through a "true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence."

God "has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust (evil desires)."

2 Peter 1:3-4

Overcoming deceitful lusts

“...put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.”

Romans 13:14

In dealing with desires of the heart, biblical counselors are concerned with the **lordship** of the desire.

The **object** of any desire can be good or bad; the issue with any desire is in its **ruling status** in your heart.

Will I sin to **get** this desire? Will I sin if I **don't get** it?

How would you use Scripture to give hope and to help a counselee recognize, repent of, and replace idolatrous lusts?

What biblical **process** might you pursue to help him/her **replace** ungodly desires with desires to honor, glorify, and love the Lord?

Because God has made us worshipers, our hearts are always expressing loyalty and devotion to something.

We are made to be meaning-makers, so that our hearts are always in the **process** of desiring and interpreting.

The Holy Spirit uses Scripture to expose the true nature of our desires and to teach our hearts to treasure what God values most.