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The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

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Daniel 2



YOU CAN UNDERSTAND PROPHECY!

How to Prevent Sin

By Herbert W. Armstrong

Do you realize that if it is wrong to *do* a certain thing, it is wrong to harbor THOUGHTS of that thing in your mind?

"All have sinned," says the Scripture.

What *is* sin, anyway?

Satan ought to know — and he is the invisible influence who sways the course of this world.

Hollywood is considered by many as the world's mecca of sin. The newsstands in Hollywood used to carry a very worldly booklet, written in a very light, breezy and satirical vein, titled *How to Sin in Hollywood*. It gave a definition of sin. The definition is expressive, and not far from the truth. Here it is:

"Sin is *thinking thoughts* you ought not to be thinking about things you ought not to be *doing* while you are *thinking* that kind of *thoughts*."

God's definition is, "Sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4, Authorized Version) — the law of LOVE, as defined by the Ten Commandments.

Jesus said: "What comes *out* of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed *evil thoughts*, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness [all violations of the law — the Ten Commandments]" (Mark 7:20-22).

"ALL have sinned," says the Scripture. And what man, especially what Christian, is there who has not time and again experienced the struggle against sin described by the apostle Paul?

"What I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. . . . For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice" (Rom. 7:15, 19). Who is there who has not LOST that struggle, perhaps many times?

Of course no man, of himself, can live above sin. "With men it is impossible," said Jesus, "but with God all things are possible."

And Paul continues (Rom. 8:4, 14) to show that the only DELIVERANCE from this "body of death" is through Jesus Christ and the indwelling power of God's Holy Spirit — "that the RIGHTEOUS REQUIREMENT of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. . . . these are sons of God."

Yes, but we have OUR part in it, too. And it all centers in the MIND.

REPENTANCE of sin means, literally, to *change* one's *mind* in respect to sin. If we repent and are baptized, accepting Jesus Christ as Savior, the promise is we SHALL receive the gift of the Holy Spirit "and be renewed in the spirit of your *mind*" (Eph. 4:23). The presence of the Holy Spirit is the RENEWING of the *mind*.

How does sin actually happen? "Every man is *tempted*, when he is drawn away of his own lust [desire], and enticed. Then when lust [the desire IN THE MIND] hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin:

and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jas. 1:14-15, AV).

The TEMPTATION is in the *mind*. When you *think* about the thing that tempts you — let your mind dwell on it — turn it over in your mind — whether it be a desire to GO someplace, to DO something or to HAVE something you know is wrong — that *thinking about it* finally conceives — leads to *action* — and breeds SIN.

You finally DO the thing you kept thinking about, wanting to do. If you keep thinking about it, after a while you'll be UNABLE to resist it.

That's why you've lost so many of these struggles against sin — you kept *thinking* about it, desiring it, wanting it.

The way to prevent sin is to let God's Spirit fill the mind. "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2).

The way to put a thing OUT of the mind is to put an *opposite* thought IN the mind.

So often I have noticed parents of babies strive so hard to "shush" up the baby when it is crying. There's either something causing pain, which should be removed, or something in the baby's mind that is causing its crying or fretting. Just saying "shush!" or commanding the baby to stop fussing doesn't usually get very good results.

We reared four children, and long ago I learned the trick of quieting the baby by *getting its mind on something else*. Instead of commanding it to stop crying,

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the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet."

Notice that this does not specify what day is the Lord's Day, only that John was "in the Spirit" on this day. It does not say that he had all of the vision and wrote all of the material for this book on one day of the week. If that was the meaning, it would have been a monumental task for one day!

If he were talking about a day of the week, a 24-hour day, what day would he be talking about? If we let the Bible interpret the Bible, we should look at all the scriptures referring to the first day of the week. Do any of them say that God or Christ is Lord of that day? No!

If we look at all the scriptures about the Sabbath, we find that Christ was Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28) and that God said the Sabbath was His holy day (Isa. 58:13). Therefore if we use the scriptures, rather than human reasoning, we could only conclude, if we are talking about a day of the week, that the Lord's Day is the Sabbath or Saturday.

But the apostle John was not talking in Revelation 1:10 about a day of the week. He was talking prophetically of the Day of the Lord (another term for "Lord's Day," meaning the same thing). The Day of the Lord is what a large part of prophecy, including much of the book of Revelation, is all about. It is the day of God's wrath, when He finally intervenes in the affairs of this world to humble the world and bring human beings to repentance.

From Revelation 6:17 to the end of the book we read about events during the Day of the Lord. It was that time period that John saw in vision. Therefore the Lord's Day is not Sunday!

Why not remember?

From all of these texts about the Sabbath, the first day of the week and the Lord's Day, one thing should be evident: The Sabbath was not a major issue during this time. There was no Sabbath question! The apostles and New Testament Church observed the

Sabbath instead of Sunday as a day of rest and worship. There was no change in the day of worship for the true Church during this time.

Obviously, a change has taken place during the last 1,900 years, but not in God's Church! The change took place later and was brought about by a different church only calling itself Christian and described in Revelation 17 and 18 as a "great harlot"!

We have seen that Christ kept the Sabbath. The early apostles kept the Sabbath, and taught both Jewish and gentile converts to keep the Sabbath. Elsewhere the Bible shows that the faithful kept the Sabbath from the time of Genesis 2:2-3 onward. We could also read in the prophecies that the Sabbath will be kept during the Millennium.

Since Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8) and God says "I do not change" (Mal. 3:6), why not keep God's Sabbath holy today? Why not "remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Ex. 20:8), even though the world, including a lot of religious people, has *forgotten*? □

Prevent Sin

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attract its attention with some new object — get it interested in playing with that object (I have often used my fountain pen with excellent results) — and before you know it the child will forget all about its crying.

Try using this same method on yourself. But instead of material or worldly things, a mature person should use self-discipline and set his mind on spiritual things. Open your Bible. Put the study of some *spiritual* subject in your mind.

Next time you are tempted, try it. Pray over it. Ask God to help you. See how rapidly you begin to win the victory over temptation and sin, and how marvelous will be your spiritual and CHARACTER growth. □

MATE

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and the Revised Authorized Version perpetuates this translation.

But God is not ashamed of this beautiful act of love. Neither were Adam and Eve, before Satan got to them in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:25).

You have a God-given responsibility to give sexual love and satisfaction to your mate. God commands husbands and wives to satisfy one another's sexual needs: "Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband" (I Cor. 7:3, NASB).

Your body actually belongs to your mate, and your mate's body is yours (verse 4). With that authority comes the responsibility to take care of your mate's body as if it were your own (Eph. 5:28). Never abuse your mate's body. Handle it with tender, loving care. You should never refuse to give sexual love to your mate or use it as a weapon or for leverage (I Cor. 7:5).

On their wedding night, as Solomon and his bride were in the very act of sexual love, God said to them — and He says to you and your mate tonight—"Eat, friends, and drink, until you are drunk with love" (S. of Sol. 5:1, New English Bible).

For more detailed information on this important area, write for Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong's free book, *The Missing Dimension in Sex*.

Increase your love quotient

What is your LQ? After studying these five ways to love your mate, your love quotient should be five points higher. If you give these loves, your marriage will become more contented and pleasurable.

Finally, listen to God's admonishment: "Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun... for that is your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun" (Eccl. 9:9). □