



Seven Bad Sins

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We are in a continuing study of Proverbs on how to live wisely in almost every area of life. Please turn in your Bibles to Proverbs 6:16-19. Today my sermon is entitled, "Seven Bad Sins." One of my staff wanted to know if next week's sermon would be on seven good sins. I don't think so. Please follow along as I read the text.

A movie came out a few years ago called "Seven". I didn't see it. From what I have been told, it's a movie not worth seeing. But the subject of the movie was seven sins from Proverbs. I doubt that the movie and I will take the same track on the subject.

When we talk about sin, we're talking about attitudes, words, and behaviors that are incompatible with the nature and ways of a holy God. God told us what those issues are and He put them in writing in the Bible. So sin is the violation of the laws of God either by not doing what His law requires or by doing what it forbids. Nobody is free from involvement in sin, even after conversion.

All sin is bad. Some sins don't look as bad as others. Not only with us, but with God. Before I talk about sins that are worse than others, I want you to know that one tiny sin is enough to condemn us to hell because nothing unholy can enter heaven. One little sin is a violation of God's righteousness and justice and

demands satisfaction. One small sin was enough to put Jesus on the cross.

But in verse 16, we are told that there are seven sins that God really hates. There is no intent here to say that God feels okay or good about some other sins. He hates all sin (Hebrews 1:9). He knows that all sin damages people and eventually leads them to death. But some sins really disgust Him, are especially repugnant, and cause intense feelings of animosity. These kinds of sins are called abominations.

The word "abomination" is from an original Hebrew word meaning "untouchability." Interestingly, it has a close connection with "that which is holy"—so holy you don't touch, and the very vile—so bad you don't touch. There is a sin continuum in God's mind. On one side of the scale are bad sins. On the other side of the scale are really bad sins. Those really bad sins are abominations. Many of them are identified in the Bible. Some of them are idolatry, sexual sins that go beyond the realm of natural male/female relationships, witchcraft and the occult, child sacrifice, and reckless worship.

In today's passage, we come to seven sins that are abominations to God. As Christians, we need to take God's viewpoint very seriously. So let's look at them.

First Bad Sin—Pride (Proverbs 6:17a)

Pride is pictured here as “haughty eyes.” The word “haughty” means “to be high or lofty, to be exalted.” The eyes portray a look that people give when they feel superior or better than others. The eyes are great reflectors of arrogance and pride. Rolling the eyes is an expression that demeans someone else.

Proverbs 16:5 says that everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord.

Pride is the first of all sins. Pride is a turning away from dependence upon God to an elevated opinion of one’s self, significance, and power. Pride is an inordinate fascination with one’s self. It is the source of all rebellion and disobedience. It is the sin that got Lucifer banished from heaven. Pride pulls us from God and steals the glory due only to Him. God hates rivalry. As Satan was cast from heaven because of pride, so God will not let the proud near Him right now (1 Peter 5:5). We cannot be filled with pride and at the same time be intimate with God.

The Bible says that God’s eyes are on the eyes of the haughty to bring them low (II Samuel 22:28; Psalm 18:27). Let’s not make God have to do this in our own lives. And let’s not try to do God’s job for Him concerning other people.

What is the opposite of this abomination?—Humility. Humility has two major parts. First, it is recognition that we are totally inadequate in ourselves and totally dependent upon God. We have nothing to boast about except God and what He has given us. And second, it is elevating others above ourselves, especially God. We step out of the spotlight. The Bible tells us to humble ourselves before God and to clothe ourselves with humility

(1 Peter 5:5), taking on the role of a servant. God loves that! Pride is easy. Humility is difficult. Never forget that God hates the proud look.

Second Bad Sin—Lying (Proverbs 6:17b)

A lie is a statement or act designed to deceive another person. It is an attempt to keep someone from knowing the truth. People lie for three basic reasons. They lie for personal advantage. They lie because they are afraid of something (fear). Or they lie to hurt someone. Regardless of the motivation, Proverbs 12:22 says that lying lips are an abomination to the Lord.

God traffics in truth. There is no falsehood in Him. The devil traffics in lies. The Bible calls him “the father of lies” (John 8:44). The first thing the devil did on this earth was to lie to Adam and Eve about God. People who lie are acting like the devil and not God. The ways of the devil are abhorrent and lying is at the top of the list.

Truth and trust are the two building blocks of any relationship. Lying destroys them. When someone finds out that we haven’t been truthful, there is a breach of trust. When there is repeated lying, trust is shattered. If you can’t tell if someone is telling the truth, you can’t believe them. And if you can’t believe them, there is no solid platform for the relationship. Broken trust is very hard to restore.

The Bible tells us that our lies will eventually be found out. We will get caught in our lies. The person who lies has to have a good memory to keep the lies going. Lying is a good indication that a person’s heart is separated from Christ. The tragedy is that habitual liars will end up in hell (Revelation 21:8).

What is the opposite of this abomination? Truth telling. Jesus told us that our speech is a reflection of what's in our hearts (Matthew 12:34-37). If there is truth in our hearts, that's what we speak. Our lips were created to speak the truth in love and to praise the God of all truth constantly. There is so much lying and deception in this world. Don't be part of it. Tell the truth. You will grow closer to God and your relationships will be secure.

Third bad sin—Murder (Proverbs 6:17c)

This one's pretty bad. Murder is the unlawful taking of human life often due to premeditated malice. There is a lawful taking of life in the Bible. I know this is controversial. But the Bible allows for capital punishment, police enforcement, and war. But that's not the issue here. The issue is selfishness, anger, and hatred that lead to the death of another person. God is extremely upset about murder.

Our tendency is to pass by this abomination rather quickly because we aren't killing each other. But hold the phone a minute. Jesus put a new spin on this sin. He said that if we have malice in our hearts towards someone, that is a form of murder (Matthew 5:21; 15:19; Mark 7:21). When malice turns towards harming a person in some premeditated fashion, we commit murder in our hearts. And the murder that is committed, although not physical, is often an attempt to rid ourselves of a person in some fashion.

Sometimes people do things that provoke hate. But this verse also talks about innocent blood, when someone has done nothing wrong. It happens in robberies of strangers. It also happens in abortions. I was saddened to see that there were 181 abortions in Erie since

the abortion clinic opened on Peach Street last September. There is no way around it. What is going on there is an abomination to the Lord. Every kind of murder is wrong including killing the unborn.

What is the opposite of this abomination?—Love. Jesus told us that at the root of murder is some kind of hate, the flip side of which is indifference. In order to overcome the spirit of murder, there must be a spirit of love that would neither injure nor kill another human being. It is a spirit that blesses even our enemies and wishes for them whatever is best. And if the best for them is judgment and vengeance, then let it be God's. The greatest thing a person can do who is struggling with loving someone else is to ward off any root of bitterness (Hebrews 12:15). Progressive bitterness always leads to hate. Is there anyone you can't stand?—Resort to love.

Fourth bad sin—Plotting evil (Proverbs 6:18a)

In my work, I am continually thinking about how to do ministry and how to do it better. When I'm driving down the road, my mind is hard at work. At night when I'm ready to go to bed, I'm thinking about some possibilities or problem solving. There are people who do the same kind of thing—except they are thinking about how to do something wrong, un-lawful, or evil. They are thinking how to commit a crime or how they might hurt someone who has hurt them. Our suspense movies love this abomination. They love to tell stories of espionage, plotting of crimes, and calculated revenge.

When bitterness and evil desires take over people their minds become workshops of wicked plans. Their

plotting spills over into their sleep. Psalm 36:4 says that they lie awake at night planning wickedness. Proverbs 4:16 says that they cannot sleep unless they hurt someone.

Why do they do this?—Two major reasons. They have been hurt and want to settle the score. Bitterness has invaded their heart and they want some kind of revenge. Or they want something that is not rightfully theirs and they plan how they can get it. It amazes me how incredibly clever devious plans can be especially in scams like identity thefts. My favorite commercials are the CITI Bank identity theft commercials on TV. They are there because of this sin.

Plotting evil is a trait of the evil one. He is full of schemes. He plans 24 hours a day how he can hurt and destroy marriages, children, and churches. Devising wicked plans is to imitate the devil.

What is the opposite of this abomination?—Planning to meet needs. When the Good Samaritan saw the man lying in the road who had been beaten and robbed, he made plans to meet the need (Luke 10:33-35). When needs arose in the early church, the first seven deacons were selected to figure out how to meet needs (Acts 6:3). The Bible tells us to be on the lookout for needs around us. And when we see them, to figure out how we can best meet those needs.

We need to keep our eyes open for needs that our spouses have—our children—fellow believers in this church—our neighbors—our coworkers—our friends. Then we need to pray about what we should do. We should spend some time on our beds planning out our strategy. There is such joy in figuring out how to meet somebody else's need. And if someone has hurt us, the Bible says that we are

to overcome the inclination to do evil with good (Romans 12:20-21). Spend some time figuring out how to meet the needs you see around you.

Fifth bad sin—Immediate Evil Action (Proverbs 6:18b)

This is no longer planning; this is execution. Not only does someone do evil and wrong, there is no hesitation. It is natural for them. It is a lifestyle. They have no conscience. There is no accountability. When they think of something wrong, they do it. There is the impulse. The deed follows. It is as natural and swift as eating something when you feel hungry. A life has been taken over by an evil heart in a person who has no control. The Bible tells us that the outcome of this kind of evil is always injury to other people, sometimes at the cost of their lives (Proverbs 1:16; Isaiah 59:6).

If you tend to hurt people because you impulsively do sinful things or because you are reactive about things and what you do is usually wrong, let me tell you what you need to get as soon as possible—a pause button. You need to find a way to interrupt the thought from the action. You need to break the impulse/response cycle. Maybe it's a friend you call immediately. Maybe you take a ten-minute ride. But you have to stop the train and say, "What's happening to me? How can I stop it right here?"

What is the opposite of this abomination?—rapid positive action. When you are tempted to do the wrong thing or to react in a sinful way, push the pause button and force yourself to quickly do the opposite thing. That's usually the right thing to do. When you see a need, meet it quickly. In Proverbs 3:27-28 and in James 2:15-16

we are told that if we see a need, we are not to say, “Good luck. Maybe I can help you tomorrow.” We are to give them what they need immediately if we have it.

We are never next to someone else by accident. We intersect other people’s lives for some good purpose. Whenever anyone crosses our path, we need to say, “I wonder whether God put me here because I can bless them.” In many cases, you will discern a way to bless them with an encouraging word, a listening ear, a helping hand. Be quick to respond. Let’s not be people who miss our opportunities.

Sixth bad sin—Slander (Proverbs 6:19a)

This is a form of the second bad sin. The difference is this. In the second bad sin, someone tries to deceive someone else. In this sin, someone tries to ruin someone else. They say things about someone that are untrue or half true. They attempt to leave damaging impressions. Sometimes people will even tell the truth about someone that does not need to be said in an attempt to injure them. In many cases, the person being injured is not present. They cannot defend themselves. And that person is brought down in someone else’s eyes. In a court of law, when someone lies about someone under oath, it’s called perjury. False reports that are maliciously uttered in an attempt to injure another person is a violation of the ninth commandment (Exodus 20:16) and an abomination to the Lord.

What is the opposite of this abomination? Speak well of people. There were two brothers who lived in the same small town and they committed every sin in the book. One of them died. The other brother went to

the pastor and said, “If you can say anything good about my brother at his funeral, I’ll give your church \$10,000.” When the pastor got up to speak, he said, “You all know the kind of man the deceased was. He was a drunk, a cheat, a run-around, a liar, and a lazy bum. But next to his brother, he was a saint.”

I know that for many of us, it is easy to speak ill of a person and often it feels better. But we must resist that. We must live by the principle of speaking well of another person. If we can’t speak well of a person, then we need to remain silent. Or we need to go to the person and tell him what we would have told someone else and deal with the issues.

We have got to watch our mouths. They do so much damage. Speak well of someone or speak directly to them. Do not damage their reputation.

Seventh Bad Sin—Dissension (Proverbs 6:19b)

There is a school of thought that says that God hates this sin the most. When things are arranged like this in the Old Testament—“There are six things, yes, seven”—it may be a literary device in Hebrew to emphasize the last one. God hates strife between people. He hates strife in families and in churches. Hasn’t that been the history of the world?

Conflict is unavoidable. We are going to offend and be offended. But what is in view here is when someone intentionally says and does things to divide people who have blood or spiritual connections—brothers. They instigate conflict, causing people to withdraw from each other. When there is disputing, quarreling, hostility, fighting, the raising of suspicions about people, gossip, spreading rumors, trying to win

people to one's side—all of this is damaging behavior to relationships (Proverbs 17:1; 18:6; 20:3; 22:10; 23:29; 26:21; 30:33). It is an abomination for people to set people who have a relationship together at variance.

God hates strife and division. Yet God's people have been rather good at dissension, especially Baptists. Baptist business meetings are notorious for causing strife. We are not to have any part in spreading strife, even if we think we are right in what we are about. Unless there is a doctrinal or a moral issue in which a stand must be taken, to ever cause division in a church is wrong. I think God is angry about what the worship wars have done to churches.

Let me tell you three key ways to spot someone who spreads strife. First, they try to forward an agenda with a negative attitude. They want their way about something and it hasn't happened. They have gotten out of joint about it and they are irresponsible in their behavior.

Second, they are unhappy about someone or something and they want to gain sympathizers. If they are unsure where you stand they will test you with a statement like, "What did you think about ...?" and they will fill in the blank. If you respond with the kind of statement they are looking for, they start spreading their stuff. If you don't take the bait, they will likely change the subject.

Third, they want other people to take up their wounds. Someone hurt them and they tell another person. That person is drawn in and begins to take the side of the hurt person and to withdraw from the person who allegedly did the hurting. These are some of the ways dissension is spread. Don't have any part of it.

What is the opposite of this abomination?—Unity. Think about this.

Unity of His church was Christ's major prayer on the eve of His crucifixion (John 17:20-23). Would that have been our prayer facing the cross?! I don't think so. The whole mission of the church depends on the love and unity of brothers and sisters in the church. Our major message is unity and love. Christians who cause strife and division destroy that witness.

The great commandment (love) must always come before the great commission (witness)! I appeal to you. Do all you can to preserve the unity of relationships (I Peter 3:8). Refuse to cooperate with anyone who stirs up strife. Let's try to make our families and our church models of Christian love and unity!

Conclusion

Well, those are seven bad sins that God calls abominations. God hates these sins so much because they strike at the very heart of His image. Man is made in the image of God. Each one of these sins defaces the image of God, His highest creation.

I am currently reading the controversial novel, *The Da Vinci Code*. In one of the episodes in the book, a character by the name of Sophie Neveu is trying to escape the museum but is being held at gunpoint by a guard. She picks up a Leonardo da Vinci masterpiece and begins to put pressure on the canvas with her knee. She threatens to destroy the painting if he does not surrender the gun. The guard can't stand to see the painting destroyed so he lets her go.

These seven abominations are like knees piercing God's greatest masterpiece. He can't stand to see the damage that is done to His image. He hates what these seven sins do to

human beings. He wants us to know how much He loathes them. Now some direction about these seven sins.

Hate what God hates. Don't take lightly what He disdains. Learn the heart of God. If we don't hate these sins, we need to ask ourselves, "What's wrong with us?" By the way, find out what God loves and follow after those things.

Flee these seven sins. They violate the commandments of God. Don't coddle them in any way. They do heavy damage to people and relationships. They display a heart against God. Satan is behind each one of them. Don't let any of them get a grip on you.

Choose friends who are not into these seven sins. Your choice of friends has an incredible effect on what you do. You can't afford the luxury of having friends who do what God hates. Choose to hang around with people who do the seven positive things we talked about today.

Ask Jesus for help. It's not just that we don't behave in ways that God hates. It's that we have a change of heart and get power to live a life that pleases God through our relationship with Jesus. If we aren't changed from the inside out, then it's more a matter of legalism or self-righteousness than anything else if we don't do the seven sins we looked at today.

The reality is—we've all committed some form of these seven sins and we've all been hurt by them. Some of us need to repent if we are involved in any of them. And some of us need to be healed from the wounds that have been inflicted by them. Take a few moments for some soul searching. Make some changes. Do some forgiving. Receive some healing. God can actually bring some good

out of seven things He hates!

Scripture References

- Exodus 10:16
- II Samuel 22:28
- Psalms 18:27, 36:4
- Proverbs 1:16, 3:27-28, 4:6, 6:16-19, 12:22, 17:1, 18:6, 20:3, 22:10, 23:19, 26:21, 30:33
- Isaiah 59:6
- Matthew 5:21, 12:34-37, 15:19
- Mark 7:21
- Luke 10:33-35
- John 8:44, 17:20-23
- Acts 6:3
- Romans 12:20-21
- James 2:15-16
- I Peter 3:8, 5:5
- Revelation 21:8

Notes: