

One of Two Ways

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The Bible makes a clear distinction between God and us. God is the Creator. We are the creation. God is superior. We are inferior. The prophet Isaiah wrote, “Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:6-9).

The differences between God and us can especially be noticed in our approach to dealing with sin. Ultimately, sin is the unavoidable problem we confront in life. We will deal with our sins in one of two ways: our way or God’s way. Let’s consider these two different approaches to dealing with sin.

Our Way

We do not need to look any further than the third chapter of the Bible to notice how we vainly try to solve the problem of sin. In Genesis chapter three, Eve and Adam sinned. Despite being given everything needed to live a meaningful life in harmony with God and one another, they disobeyed God.

When the two ate from the forbidden tree, they knew they sinned. They were completely aware of their transgression. They felt shame. Immediately, they recognized the need to respond to their sin. They took three actions in an attempt to deal with their sin. These three actions are the primary ways we vainly attempt to deal with our sins.

1. Hide. In a state of shame, Adam and Eve hid from God. This is a common response to sin. We often try to evade God in our lives. But, how? Consider what Paul wrote: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them” (Rom. 1:18-19).

We attempt to hide from God’s reach by suppressing Him and His will. We may use our philosophy, money, and technology to accomplish this. As we try to suppress God, though, He pushes against us. No matter what we do, He is always showing up in our lives. His truth breaks through our barriers. The more we try to live without Him, the emptier and more dissatisfied we become. Our need for God is plainly known to us; yet, we try to deal with our need without Him.

Hiding from God does nothing to solve the problem of our sins. When God called out to Adam, Adam could not remain silent. He could not stay hidden. He answered and was held accountable to His Maker. Likewise, there is coming a time when God will call us and we will answer (2 Cor. 5:10; Phil. 2:9-11). All of our vain efforts to hide our sin will be exposed.

2. Blame. When God confronted Adam and Eve, both blamed others for their sins. Adam blamed Eve and God. Eve blamed the serpent. God was not satisfied with their explanations. Instead, God held each accountable for sin.

We have a habit of blaming others for our sins. We blame our families and upbringings for our behavior. Parents blame the schools and colleges for the unfaithfulness of their children. We blame the government for the problems within society. We blame the local church for dissatisfaction.

Blame may be a common response to our sin; however, God does not accept this approach to dealing with sin. God rebuked Israel in the days of the prophet Ezekiel and said, "What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'? As I live, declares the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die" (Ezek. 18:2-4).

3. Try to cover ourselves. When Adam and Eve experienced shame, they tried to make clothing adequate to cover their nakedness. Their effort and product were inadequate.

When we sin, we often try to cover ourselves. We may do this by rationalizing our sins. We may try to cover our sins with good works. We attempt to compensate for our sins. If we try to cover ourselves, one of two things will result. One, we will be crushed and defeated knowing we will never be able to compensate for our sins. Or, two, we will become self-righteous. Either way, we cannot cover ourselves to deal with our sins.

God's Way

Adam and Eve did all they knew to do to deal with their sins. Nothing they did worked. They demonstrate that we need a better, superior, divine way to deal with our sins. We need God's grace.

God deals with our sins by grace. While the word is not used in Genesis chapter three, this is precisely what God did. He rescued Adam and Eve from the penalty for their sins. God showed Adam and Eve what He would do for the future human family. He would save the human family through the seed of woman; namely, Jesus.

Grace exposes our sins. Grace forgives our sins. Grace instructs us in a new life. Grace humbles self-righteousness. Grace relieves fear and guilt. Grace does for our sins what we cannot do ourselves. But, here is the key. We must believe. We must have faith in the grace of God.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

Conclusion

How are you dealing with your sin? Are you hiding, blaming, and trying to cover yourself? If so, your efforts are worthless. Instead of vainly trying to fix your problems, you could appeal to the good grace of God. Faith in God's grace will save us. Faith in God's grace will change us. Faith in God's grace will lead us home.