

Construction in Progress

BUILDING WALLS

Introduction:

- How bad is Hell?
 - Read Matthew 5:29-30.
 - To what measures does Jesus say we should be willing to go to in order to avoid Hell?
 - *“If your right eye causes you to sin, _____ it out and cast it from you....”*
 - This passage isn’t a call to harm ourselves to avoid Hell, but instead shows how desperately we should want to avoid it.
 - As Christians we must build walls to protect ourselves from the sins of the world and the danger of falling into them.

Where we Start:

- If a smoker doesn’t want lung cancer, they should stop smoking. If an alcoholic doesn’t want liver damage, they should stop drinking. If a Christian doesn’t want to experience Hell, they should stop sinning. Unfortunately, none of these things are ever that simple.
 - Much like smoking and drinking, sin isn’t an easy habit to kick. Sin doesn’t always show itself in the open, but sometimes can strike us where we least expect it.
 - *“Beware false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are _____.”* (Matthew 7:15)
 - Situations in life are fluid (constantly changing), and not static. What may be a safe situation or place today may not be tomorrow.
 - In Ephesians 5:15-16 Paul tells the church to be careful how they walk. What reason does he give for this in the passage? _____
 - The more aware we are of the sin that’s on the horizon, the better we can prepare to ward it off when it comes.
- Having the ability to be aware of sin that is coming is vital, because sin invariably leads to more sin. Satan doesn’t simply want a foothold in our lives, he wants to attempt to take control of us.
 - Look at the story of David and Bathsheba. (2 Samuel 11)
 - How did David get caught in sin initially? _____
 - What happened afterwards? _____
 - What was the end result of David’s initial sin? _____
 - Just like David slowly compromised his decisions the deeper his initial sin took him, so we can become entrenched in sin by rationalizing and compromising what we know is wrong.
 - The easiest way for us to stay out of this snowball effect of sin is to make decisions ahead of time to keep ourselves out of those situations.
 - What does the action of doing this look like in our everyday lives? _____
 - We cannot compromise but instead must draw firm lines that we will not cross, and then be prepared to defend them.

How we Grow:

- The gospel is a seed that Jesus plants into our hearts. It is our choice of what sort of growth environment we want to put it in. The more clutter we allow into that landscape; the more opportunity Satan has to inhibit the work God is trying to grow for us.
 - Look at the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-9)
 - Which seed is actually successful at growing? _____
 - What happens to all the others? _____
 - Our hearts are unable to grow in Christ when the weeds of sin are choking us out at the same time, so we must put up barriers to protect ourselves from sin in the first place.
- Where do these efforts to protect start? Firstly, by the word of God.
 - God is the one who defines sin, and the Bible is what he uses to communicate that with us. If Scripture says it is sin, then what is it? _____
 - Any interpretation outside of what the Bible says is not gospel but is the commandments of men. (Matthew 15:9)
 - Some of the circumstances we encounter today are covered in the Bible. How are we to handle these?
 - Read Philippians 4:8-9. What things are we called to pursue?

 - If the circumstance we are in don't line up with these things, what should we do?

 - We tend to give ourselves PLENTY of flexibility when it comes to right and wrong, but we can avoid this but taking that control out of our own hands.
 - *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own _____;"* (Proverbs 3:5)
 - Even if we can argue whether something is right or wrong, there is no case where we can argue if something brings us closer to or farther from God.
 - By first understanding what draws us closer to or farther from God, we are then able to determine what is truly good or bad. With this knowledge we can study God's word to know how to handle situations and protect ourselves from allowing sin to sneak in the first place.

The "finished" Product:

- It's difficult to accept the idea that other Christians put up walls to protect themselves in different places, some more lenient or some more stringent than ourselves.
 - Some people will have different views on what is too vulgar, what is too strict, what is too permissive, and what is too intrusive.
 - What is most important to remember is the difference between the walls we build for ourselves, and the walls that God builds for us.
 - We cannot bind other people to our walls, and we cannot allow our walls to separate us from our other brothers and sisters in Christ.
 - What we can affirm is that we will all have to give account of our actions to God (Romans 14:12), and we must be diligent that we set our walls to protect us from sin.