

## e-concepts

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### Take a Stand Against Unrepentant Sinning Believers

By David DeWitt

Peter wrote:

*Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God (1 Peter 4:1-2).*

- Peter tells us that one way to cease from sin is to suffer in the flesh, and the context of that suffering is not being sick or getting caught for a crime, but suffering *no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God*. We should ask, “Am I suffering because I am a human or because I am a Christian? Atheists can get sick, sued, or thrown into prison for a crime. So how might we suffer for the will of God? Many Christians suffer but not because of their faith. If you would like to change that and suffer for your faith, and have a taste of what the apostles suffered, here is an easy way to do that. **Take a stand against the sin around you, especially in those believers close to you.**
- For example, suppose you take a stand against a Christian son or daughter or close relative who is living with a girlfriend or boyfriend, practicing homosexuality, having an affair, or getting divorced and remarried, lying to their customers, gossiping, or following other gods like astrology or some pantheistic meditation. If we take a stand against unrepentant sinful actions of those who call themselves Christians, we are on a path of suffering *for the will of God*. That suffering greatly aids the process of ceasing from sin because it takes a public stand for godly living.
- Usually, people will say something like, “You are just a hypocrite, pointing the finger at someone else,” or “Instead of pointing a finger at the sins of others, you should look at the fingers pointing back at yourself.” It’s true. That’s the point. We should be constantly examining ourselves. But what causes us to do that? Let’s look at Galatians 6:1 and focus on the last phrase of the verse: *Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.*
- We have been involved in several situations over the years where separation of fellowship was carried out. Without exception, the biggest impact was upon those making the decision to carry out the separation. The decision to separate fellowship jerks your own moral chain faster than anything we know. It is far more effective at conviction of sin and self-examination than an accountability group. Nothing against accountability groups, they can be very helpful. But it will not usually provide the self-examination that happens when we personally take a stand against the sinning Christians around us.
- The tendency of everyone involved in the process of evaluating and confronting the unrepentant sinner is to think, “There, but for the grace of God, go I.” Actually, one of the main reasons people do not want to take a stand against unrepentant sin is because they do not want to examine themselves, or be examined by others. But Paul said, **test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!** *Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you (2 Corinthians 13:5). Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it” (Matthew 16:24-25).*
- The question is, are you going to *deny yourself* or gratify yourself? Are you going to take up your cross, which includes all your temptations to sin, *and follow Christ* or are you going to follow your temptations? Either you will deny yourself or you won’t. It’s up to you. Oh, and by the way, you will be judged accordingly.

Some verses to consider:

1. Genesis 4:6-7 —... *sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.*
2. Genesis 39:12 — *She caught him by his garment, saying, “Lie with me!” And he left his garment in her hand and fled...*
3. Job 1:1 — *There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil.*
4. Romans 6:11-13 — *Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness.*
5. Romans 13:12-14 —... **make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.**
6. 1 Corinthians 6:18 — **Flee immorality.**