

## Four Classes of Church Persons (Introduction)

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March 28, 2017

*"Hold yourself responsible for a higher standard than anybody expects of you. Never excuse yourself."*<sup>1</sup>

The process of church growth happens through the elimination of wickedness.

Acts of sin do not cause a believer to lose his salvation. A habitually sinful lifestyle in open rebellion to God will bring death to the spirit of a believer (James 1:13-15).

Being saved does mean a changed life. However it does not mean a sinless life. Every believer is capable of committing acts of sin (as opposed to practicing sin); that does not cancel his salvation. So does that give us a license to sin? Does that mean we could sin and get away with it? First of all we must ask what it means to get away with it. Is that the same as having their sins forgiven and forgotten? If it is, then all Christians believe you could sin and get away with it. For some sins though, even though God may have forgiven you, you may still have to face the consequences (as opposed to judgment) e.g. David (2 Sam 12:14).

Paul said in Romans 6:1, 2 that we are dead to sin. Ideally we should not sin (1 John 2:1). But this condition is positional. It is still possible for believers to commit acts of sin – and still be forgiven. Jesus told us to forgive our brother 70x7 times in one day. Surely he didn't set a higher standard for us than he did for himself. Then he would even forgive us of habitual sin. So what is the difference between an unbeliever who lives in open rebellion to God and a believer who falls into sin, occasionally or regularly? Answer: the believer is saved and preserved by grace.

*Phil. 1:10. that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,*

*Phil. 2:15. that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world*

In verse 1:9 Paul prays that believers' love may abound more and more. This implies continual growth. The reason for this is that they may be sincere and without offence. This simply means that their practical love may grow to such an extent that they don't become a stumbling block to others. That is what offence means. The rest of Philipians

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is written to teach them how to not live for themselves but to serve others. This is clear in 2:15 that being blameless is equivalent to being without rebuke in the midst of a crooked generation. We are the lights of the world and should live up to that.

In Philippians 3:6 Paul claimed that he was blameless concerning the law. But Paul did have a problem with lust/covetousness (Romans 7:7-25), in violation of one of the 10 commandments. So blameless concerning the law could not possibly mean sinless. It means no man could point an accusing finger. Of course no one except Paul and God would have known about the lust problem.

2 Cor 13:5, 1 Cor 9:27; Colossians 3:1-6; Matthew 15:1-20

Do not rationalize your sins and failures. Be honest with God. Grace enables all men to look honestly at their needs.

1. Separate what is of flesh verse what is of the devil.
2. Most of our enemies are the reflection of ourselves.
3. Many of our battles are merely the consequences of our own actions.

The key question for ourselves....are the things oppressing us today the harvest of what we planted yesterday?

*Colossians 1:22, 23. In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel,*

It is Jesus' death that reconciled us to God and presents us holy and blameless.

Unproveable as well. This means no charge can be laid against us. The condition is that we continue in the faith (vs. 23) and not forsake it.