

LINKS PLAYERS

DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR MARCH 23, 2012

THE UNDERCURRENT OF SIN

Everything that does not come from faith is sin. (Romans 14:23, NIV)

IDIDN'T TRUST THE LINE." "I didn't trust the yardage." "I didn't trust my swing." More than we realize, the undercurrent of missed shots is a lack of faith. We don't trust what's right in front of us.

When an unstudied believer considers the matter of sin, his or her mind is most likely to go in this direction: those many little things that the Bible tells us we're not supposed to do (lying, for instance), yet we do them anyway. Or here: those many grand instructions that the Bible tells us we should do (giving to the poor, say), yet we shy away from the commands.

The Bible does allow for this assessment of sin. But our first mistake may be that we fall into the mantra of "the Bible says," as if some "good book" (ever heard that before?) were the source of all excellent morality. It is *God* who says—through the revelatory words of the Bible—what we should and should not do. The undercurrent of the Bible's recorded commands is that they come from God himself.

With that in mind, the broader picture of sin in the Bible is this: the condition of our heart and the tendency of our flesh to depart from the words of God, preferring ourselves over him. But if we really want to understand the undercurrent of sin, we must see it as Paul saw it when he wrote to the Romans. Sin is the absence of faith.

Now an immature believer might argue that there is one rationale that goes like this: I may knowingly sin, but I have *faith* that I will be forgiven of my sin by the blood of Jesus. That is akin to saying, "I don't have much confidence in my ability to make this breaking putt. But that's OK, because if I miss it, the game will still be here for me tomorrow." The golfer who thinks like that rarely enjoys the game.

Conversely, the faith we demonstrate when we trust that God's commands are for our best life now and we obey those commands in such faith—this is the kind of faith that brings reward. This is the faith that honors God and leads to the righteousness he honors in return (Romans 1:17).

Faith and righteousness

Read Romans 3:21-24. Where does true righteousness come from?

Why is Jesus critical to the application of our faith? (See also 1 Corinthians 15:12-19)

Read Romans 4:3. What counted as righteousness in Abraham's life?

Rewards of faith

Read Romans 5:1-5. What are some of rewards of faith, both listed here and not?

Fresh revelation

How does the recognition of sin's undercurrent tweak our common categorizing of "big sins" and "little sins?"

Where have you missed the mark in your own life through a lack of faith?
