



THE FLESH IS A "0"

Basic principles for making consistent godly choices.

by Donald Webb

Editor's Note: It has been pointed out many times in this newsletter that crimes related to drug and alcohol addictions are the primary reason for incarceration in our nation. An unfortunate reality is that many people who are imprisoned because of their addictions end up returning to the same sinful patterns of behavior after release. I asked Pastor Don Webb of Lafayette, Indiana, to describe some principles that he has found valuable in helping people understand that through sound biblical instruction they can be free from the destructive cycle of sinful choices. It is our prayer that the readers of **PMA Outreach** will be able to share these principles with others that may be struggling with breaking the cycle of sin in their lives.

The purpose of this article is to help the child of God know the Bible's teaching on the subject of sinful choices so he (or she), can do what is right and be blessed every time, to deny the sinful choice and walk to please God! While this is impossible through the flesh, in Christ—in the Spiritual power that indwells every true believer—it is both possible and true!

To have a consistent godly walk (life) which is not dominated or controlled by any sin we must realize that we are dead to sin and placed into the resurrection life of Christ and that we are actually members of His Body—alive in Him forever! Some basic scriptural principles demonstrate that the believer can have a life free from the dominion of sin.

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Once an individual trusts Christ as savior he must realize this: In the flesh we are a "0" (zero), and that is true before we were saved and it is true after we are saved. That's right; it is true after we are saved too! Listen to what the apostle Paul says: "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing..." (Romans 7:18).

But thank God for this: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" (Romans 8:9)!

True victory over sin comes from a biblical view of who we are *now* in Christ; we are believers seeking to please our heavenly Father by walking in the Spirit—by faith—and counting the flesh to be dead because we have been crucified with Christ: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

Now let's talk about what we call *the cycle of sin*. Our discussion has to do with the two possibilities regarding sinful choices and how to have lasting victory in all situations of anger, lust, discouragement, alcohol, and drug abuse.

First you must see that all sin is our choice; "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:16).

A Note from the Director

With great joy and excitement I write this note of introduction for this edition of **PMA Outreach**. There is a lot that has been going on in the ministry of Prison Mission Association since the last edition of this newsletter and I am thankful for the opportunity to share the news of God's blessing on the ministry with our readers.

It has been six months since I took the responsibilities as the pastor of Grace Church in Indianapolis. I could never have anticipated how much I would have enjoyed pastoral ministry. I have been abundantly blessed by the opportunities for weekly and systematic preaching of God's word. Likewise, having opportunity to minister to the needs of a body of believers on a regular basis has proven to be a source of joy.

Despite the added responsibilities of the pastorate I have continued with my work as the

director of Prison Mission Association, though with a somewhat reduced workload and travel schedule. I still enjoy the opportunities to teach regular Bible studies in county jails, to visit and encourage inmates, to follow up on those that have been released and to correspond with men in various parts of the country, answering their questions and challenging them to live according to God's principles.

This edition of the **PMA Outreach** contains an important article from Pastor Don Webb about the importance of recognizing our position in Christ in order to break the cycle of sinful behavior which so often ensnares those incarcerated due to drug or alcohol addictions. It is our hope that

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Reaching Out by Reaching In

Editor's Note: The following challenge for involvement comes from John Willson of Neosho, MO. Brother Willson has had a very active jail and prison ministry for more than 40 years. He ministers weekly in a county jail near his home and in addition he corrects nearly 300 correspondence Bible lessons each month which he mails at his own expense to inmates throughout the United States. John has had a longtime relationship with Prison Mission Association, having been a close friend of PMA founder Joe Mason.

Romans 12:16 says, "Mind not high things but condescend to men of low estate." The local county or city jail may be a good place to reach younger men and women with the gospel of grace. Reach them before they continue in the wrong paths, and eventually become hardened to spiritual truth. If you will visit these people you will find that most are respectful and will listen. You will find some backslidden believers there who need to get serious about the Christian life. Others know very little, not having a spiritual upbringing or ever attending church. But it is our responsibility to present the message of the Cross to all that will listen.

Will they listen? Because God has arrested them, they are in serious trouble and they have time to think about getting their lives straightened out. Many will take Bible lessons and a New Testament.

While there are many groups and churches that visit the jails, not all of them understand the gospel of grace well enough themselves to be able to present it clearly to inmates. There are also some county jails where there are no services at all. As ambassadors for Christ are we going to take advantage of this opportunity?

Shelton Revival 2009 Report



Members of the 2009 Shelton Revival Team that led Chapel Services for the facility's inmates on July 19

Prison Mission Association has sponsored and coordinated annual large scale evangelistic meetings at the Washington Correction Center in Shelton for more than 11 years. This year's event was held July 17-19 and turned out to be one of the most successful in recent memory. Each of the 8 units in the prison was given opportunity to attend the various programs that were presented by the teams that participated.

A talented group of seasoned musicians called Plumbline set the tone for three large group gatherings by performing both thought provoking and meaningful secular music and challenging Christian songs that directed the listeners' thoughts toward God and His work. After the musical presentations, PMA Director Don Sommer delivered messages to the groups that compared their suffering in prison to that of Job, but reminded them that Job only gave praise to God and never cursed Him.

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many people can be benefitted by the basic spiritual guidelines that are presented in the article.

We also give a report on the successful revival meetings held at the Washington Correction Center in Shelton. This seemed to be the most successful revival that I have participated in. Cal Bodeutsch shares some of his thoughts as he encountered direct one-on-one ministry behind bars for the first time. Along with this we have a report and challenge from John Willson, a longtime veteran of prison ministry from Missouri.

This newsletter also contains a regular contribution from our office manager, Karen Bodeutsch. We hope you find this edition of **PMA Outreach** a blessing and an inspiration for you to push ahead in whatever areas the Lord has called you to service.

A Day in Prison Changed Me

By Cal Bodeutsch

I'd never been in prison before. I'd never heard the cold, steel doors slam shut behind me removing all normal sense of contact with the familiar outside world. I'd never had my most casual movements cautiously watched by solemn guards standing near me or from towering perches above strands of razor-sharp barbed wire. But all of that changed for me on August 19, 2009.

What constrained me to go to prison? I was a small part of the PMA revival at the Shelton Prison in Washington. I didn't know what to expect. Was some crazed inmate ready to stick me with his homemade "shank"? Would I be cursed at by agnostic and hardened criminals? Would someone of similar size and looks force me into a side room where I would have to change clothes with him so he could walk free in my place at the end of the day, while I served his time? Okay, I have a vivid imagination, but those were some of my thoughts walking into prison that day.

What I hadn't asked myself was, "What would I feel as I looked into the faces of the many inmates that day?" So, I must admit, I was taken back by an overwhelming sense of sadness that day. At first, my sadness was brought on by looking into the innocent faces of some of the younger men, boys really. Boys, who are not that much older than my grandson, showed up for chapel in their distinctive prison garb. They all looked out of place in an adult

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Second, we are now free from the dominion of sin; "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Romans 6:12). Also: "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14). God has not left us under a performance based system where we are dependent on the flesh to help us but He has delivered us from the flesh and placed us into Christ and under His grace for all eternity.

Third, we are given the motivation and tools from the Lord to allow us to be victorious every time.

"For the love of Christ constraints us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again (2 Corinthians 5:14,15).

Every child of God (every true Christian) has two natures! We received our new nature when we died with Christ and were raised with Him. "Even when we were dead in sins, hath

quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:5,6).

Let's take another look at the way sinful thoughts work. Sinful thoughts always originate from either distress or desire. How does this relate to anger for

stop the pattern (when the flesh is in control).

We can think of sinful choices like a clock. We start at 12:00 noon. The hands are straight up at the 12. When that disappointment or lustful or negative thought comes into our mind we are on our way to 1:00 o'clock.

Here are the usual steps that follow after a bad or negative

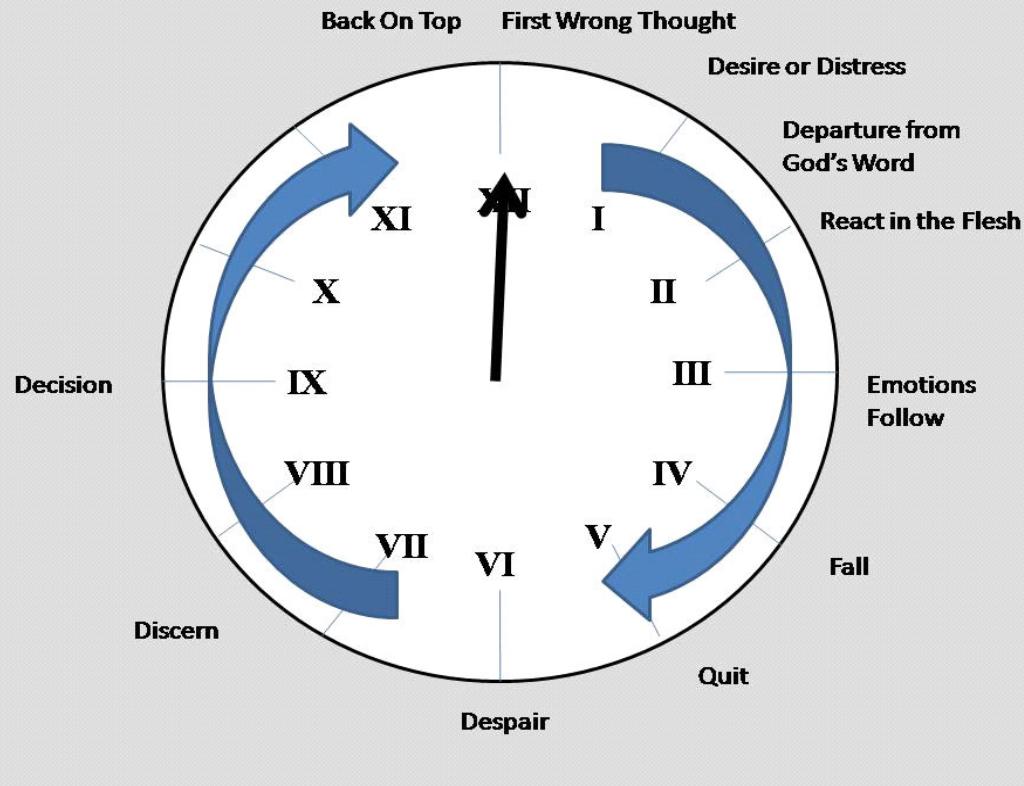
thought that is not captured for the Lord and put to death: Departure from God (reaction in the flesh). Sinful survival patterns of the flesh (what we have always done to cope). Then emotions take over and carry us along; then we fall (this fall can often be described by

momentary pleasure). Disappointment is next, then distress and despair. Finally we are down and out (5:00 o'clock or quit'n time).

This is when depression sets in and we drop out of our circle of friends and family. The rest of the cycle generally takes you back around toward the top (12:00 o'clock), beginning with discovery, that is, you see that you are helpless in the flesh and turn back to the Holy Spirit's power.

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The Cycle of Sin and Restoration



example? Anger stems from distress. Lust stems from a desire. Alcohol abuse also stems from a sinful choice rooted in desire. Step one in the cycle of sin is facing distress or desire. Step two is always a departure from the Word of God, *a departure from positive Biblical thinking* by turning to negative unbiblical thinking. Soon after this our emotions will take the ball and run with it and it will be harder and harder to

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prison. They should be carrying big, fat textbooks on their way to a classroom. But, instead, they are dejectedly wasting their lives, doing time in prison. It is depressing to see so many young men languishing behind bars.

What I expected to see was the pitiful dregs of society, much like I've seen many times at rescue missions. So, I was also saddened to see bright, alert and sharp men of various ages gathering for chapel. One man showed me his *Englishman's Greek Concordance* and talked about his recent study of the Greek New Testament. He smiled easily and offered to help us in anyway he could. I could tell he really loved the Lord. I wanted to ask, "Why are you in prison!? You should be pastoring a church somewhere." My heart was heavy for some of the bright and outgoing men who made a mistake and now must serve the Lord in prison.

Finally, and perhaps in contrast to seeing so many young men in prison, I was saddened to see older men, with graying beards, walking into chapel. These men should be bouncing their grandchildren on their arthritic knees, not spending their last years isolated from their loving families. Perhaps I identified with them because this is the stage of life that consumes me now. How sad to not be around their grown children. What a loss to not witness the proud accomplishments and achievements of their grandchildren. Some will doubtless end their days in a prison. They will not end well.

So much sadness witnessed in a short day in prison. Then, as we were leaving, we walked past the "visitation room." I looked through a window at a young man being visited by what must have been his wife. He was holding her one hand while her other hand covered her face trying to hide the warm tears streaming down her face. My feelings of sadness weren't just for the men behind the bars, it was for the families that each inmate affected.

Will I ever go back to prison again? Unequivocally, yes! It took me a few days to shake off the deluge of sadness that overtook me that day, but my heart was touched and challenged to bring hope and real life to those who have forfeited so much of their own.

(Pastor Cal Bodeutsch, is Karen's husband and is a lesson corrector)

KAREN'S KORNER

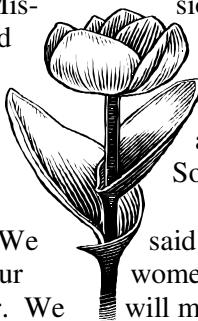
I'm upstairs, sitting in my comfortable recliner chair and I'm reading in the Old Testament, the book of Judges. I'm intrigued by Deborah. She was a prophetess who judged Israel and people would go to her for judgment.

Deborah called Barak to do a job for God. Now note, Barak was a bit insecure in doing the task God wanted him to do, so he told Deborah that he would only do the job if she went with him. She replied, "Very well. But you will receive no honor in this venture, for the Lord's victory over Sisera will be at the hands of a woman" (Judges 4:9).

Then Deborah and Barak, as a team, sang a song. The song tells the story of Israel's downfall and God's solution. Another woman was introduced. She was considered "the most blessed among women" (Judges 5:24). Her name was Jael. She was the woman who would be credited with the victory over Sisera.

As I read this passage I could-

n't help think what a privilege it is to be a woman today and I want to give kudos to all the women who work at Prison Mission (with respect and two correctors, Don Sommer, of course).



We said farewell to two of our women correctors this year. We will miss them both very much. However, our Introduction corrector, Louise Hunsaker, is still correcting from a distance. She is more homebound these days so correcting lessons brings her joy in serving the Lord. She is still doing the work of the ministry. Praise the Lord!

Helen Loverin is moving to be close to her son and family. We will all miss her very much also. She offered to continue correcting lessons but since she is not homebound and she will be able to do ministry in her new church we opted to find someone else to correct her lessons. Right now we

have two people praying about taking over her spot.

When we focus on the goodness of God as revealed in His promises, we find joy. In other words, hope and security come when we, like the Israelites, acknowledge God's love for us. I really have a great bunch of volunteer workers. What makes our mission so successful is the drive that seems to be common with all of them. God has a plan for all of us. Part of that plan includes serving Him. As the office manager of PMA for 14 years, I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve God. Sometimes my personal circumstances in life are a bit overwhelming but the fulfillments of God's promises are exquisite.

I love that my God's plan will end in good. I can rest secure in truth and relax in Him despite the ups and downs, the twists and turns of the path that will eventually get me to where God is leading me. What a great God I serve at Prison Mission Association! by God's grace,
Karen



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KAREN’S CORNER
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Finally there is a decision to seek the Lord and His path and then one can again approach high noon, 12:00 o'clock.

The solution is to apply 2 Corinthians 10:5 and “bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” before we reach 1:00. Put those thoughts to death by the power of the Spirit that you know is in you.

Then think about Romans 6:7, “he that is dead is freed from sin” and say, ‘I no longer have to obey this sin, I am free in Christ to live for Him.’

1. Remember the truth about sin; sin always kills, it always brings harm.
2. Choose to honor Him, let your life be a constant ‘thank-you’ to Him.

3. Remember the 4 factors or motivators in dealing with sin:

- Have a thankful heart
- Remember who you are in Christ
- Have a fear of sin,
- Have a fear (respect) of God

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For three other units, the New Life Prison Ministry from Everett, Washington gave a musical presentation, testimonies and challenging messages from God's Word. All told there were well over 1000 inmates in attendance at the Friday and Saturday programs.

On Sunday, the PMA team continued a tradition of having chapel services for each of the cell block units in which we lead the groups in praise and worship, had a testimony and then taught through an abbrevi-

ated version of the PMA Introductory Bible lesson.

This is one of the most exciting parts of the revival because it provides an opportunity for all the volunteers to spend quality personal time with the inmates and to learn of their specific needs and struggles. Ron Wilkinson, a regular volunteer at the prison from Port Orchard, WA, shared his testimony of how God delivered him from a life of despair and alcoholism after having been wounded in Vietnam in the 1960's. His story of victory and restoration was a tremendous inspiration to the inmates.

One of the greatest blessings of this year's Revival was the unprecedented cooperation we received from the administration of the facility. This made both the preparation and the actual event much easier and contributed to its overall success.