

Nature, Nurture and New Birth

“For I recognize my shameful deeds – they haunt me day and night. Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say, and your judgement against me is just. For I was born a sinner – yes, from the moment my mother conceived me. But you desire honesty from the heart, so you can teach me to be wise in my inmost being.” (Ps. 51:3-6)

Sin is an uncomfortable topic. We don't like our flaws. We don't like to talk about our mistakes, but they often rattle around in our hearts and minds. They “haunt” our thoughts, and infiltrate our subconscious, creating doubt, shame, and insecurity. Our original nature is innocent but still sinful. It comes in through the genetic lineage of Adam and Eve. We ALL sin. King Saul and King David both sinned. King Saul's sins didn't seem that bad. He rushed ahead of God's timing, made a rash oath, and obeyed God's instructions only 90% instead of the full 100, yet he had the kingship stripped away and his family perished. King David committed adultery, possibly worse, and commissioned murder yet he was called 'a man after God's own heart' and was promised a part in the lineage of the coming Messiah. What was the difference? Humility and repentance.

David understood his insignificance compared with God and it gave him confidence. Confidence in the God he knew was good and fair. He didn't fear God's consequence because he submitted to God's justice. Saul was too insecure to admit his mistakes before God. He focused on himself when he should have focused on God. Hiding our sins in the dark allows them to breed and grow. They get stronger and begin to torment us until we see no way out. This defeated thinking nurtures our old nature. Transformation comes from God, but He doesn't force it on us, it's our choice. Being honest with God gives Him permission to nurture the new nature given to us when we first submit to Him as our Lord and Saviour. God is the key to true inner change. Confession takes power away from the sin. It holds it to the light of Christ and burns it into dust.

The only way to purify sin from our hearts is to be honest with God that the sin exists. We need to acknowledge that we need His help - then let Him help. God is perfect. As we choose to put Him first, He can begin the perfection process in us. When we let Him in to our whole selves, when we fully trust Him, He can teach us things deep within our hearts. His wisdom works from the inside out.

If we practice humility and repentance, we will begin to experience a rhythm of purification with God. The Holy Spirit will show us our sin right away, but it won't hold the same power. Instead of shame and guilt we'll be glad to reveal it because we can confess, repent, and give it to God. We begin to trust that He will replace it with something better. Things like the peace that doesn't make sense; the joy that lasts; the hope that doesn't disappoint; the wisdom that stops you before you sin the next time and shows you a way out; and the love that fills our cup to overflowing.

Elizabeth Roth, Trulls Road FMC, Oshawa