

We Should Be Weeping

By Jared Mulvihill

A sharp response. A pattern to indulge. A failure to give thanks. A lustful glance. An ill-judgment passed. A tendency to spend. A bent toward impatience. A cowering to speak.

Sin is pervasive ([James 4:8](#)). And deadly ([James 1:15](#); [5:20](#)). Sinning is believing a false promise from the world above a true promise from God. All our sins find their origin in the desires rooted inside our hearts ([James 1:14–15](#)). In our lives today, some sins are blatantly discouraged, some are deceptively praised and others are acceptably common.

We are far too hospitable with our sin. When was the last time we looked our sin in the mirror and came away broken? When was the last time we felt the gravity of our sin as betrayal against a holy God?

Rarely do we weep.

Our hearts are callously numb. Though justified by the blood of Christ, we are still infiltrated with sin ([Romans 8:13](#)), and most of the time we appear OK with it. We need help. We need reminders.

A Reminder From James

The book of James was written to encourage believers back to faithful living instead of sinful wandering ([James 1:21](#); [4:8–10](#); [5:19–20](#)). At the height of his letter, James cries out for the believers to see their sin rightly and act accordingly.

Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. ([James 4:8–9](#))

James wants his readers to feel the weight and heinousness of their sin, and to mourn over it. But why as believers should we? Why should we weep over our sin?

Seeing Our Sin

James writes this way because he knows the gospel becomes glorious when the depth and power of our sin is understood as grievous. When we see a clearer glimpse of our sin, we behold a clearer glimpse of the cross. The horror of our sin magnifies the beauty of Christ's sacrifice.

The reality is that the gospel is good news of great joy ([Luke 2:10](#)) because it invades dreadful news of great sorrow. It steps in and changes things, bringing us to God as his own ([1 Peter 3:18](#)). The result is that God gets the glory and we receive the joy.

But instead of killing our sin, we are feeding it. Instead of loathing our sin, we are loving it. Instead of destroying our sin, we are desiring it. The result: We belittle the cross and deceive ourselves. Our need becomes less and the enormity of Jesus' sacrifice fades. The quickest way to lose the wonder of the gospel is to lose sight of the depth of our sin.

Yes, we should be weeping. We should be appalled, disgusted, shocked and grieved in the depths of our hearts over our sin. All our sin is treason against God. Not just the prideful, lying, stealing and lusting sins but sins of the tongue, sins of anxiousness, sins of bitterness, sins of partiality, sins of complacency, sins of jealousy, sins of impatience and sins of arrogance. We should grieve over them all.

Weeping Gives Way to Remembering

We mourn over our wicked sin by seeing it rightly before a holy God. True grief over sin comes from contemplating our Savior, not comparing our character to those around us.

The quickest and most consistent way to grieve over our sin is by seeing Jesus for who he is and the worthy life he calls us to live. God has a standard for the redeemed to live by and we fail ... often ([Philippians 1:27](#)). But godly grief must give way to repentance, which glories in God, the giver of grace, as we live under the gospel of salvation ([2 Corinthians 7:10](#)). As we fight to see Jesus, we do so in hopes that our heart will be transformed, and by that, we put sin to death ([2 Corinthians 3:18](#)).

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