

Accessory to Sin

by Kevin Cauley

Within the legal code of the various states within the U.S.A., one may be found guilty of being an accessory to a particular crime. If one supplies a murderer with a weapon knowing what the intent of the murderer is, then one will be found guilty of being an accessory to murder. If a person drives the get away car for a bank robbery, then he will be found guilty of being an accessory to the crime of robbery. There is also the crime of aiding and abetting a known felon that in essence is a crime of accessory. The law clearly makes provision to punish those who may have not committed the actual crime itself, but are involved to such a degree that the crime could not happen without their influence. Such a person is called an accessory to the crime and is held accountable and often punished for helping another do something that is wrong.

As Christians, the crimes that we are concerned about avoiding are not merely against men, but against God. Such crimes against God are referred to in the Bible as sin. Isaiah states that sin separates man from God (Isaiah 59:2). James writes that sin when it is full-grown brings death (James 1:15). And Paul states that the wages of sin is death (Romans

6:23). The Holy Spirit makes it clear through these inspired men that sin leads to eternal separation from God and that sin is, therefore, serious and deadly business. Just as being an accessory to a crime is in itself a crime, so also being an accessory to sin is in itself a sin.

How does the Bible say that we can be an accessory to sin? One of the first passages that comes to mind is 2 John 10 and 11. In this passage, John writes to a Christian woman telling her not to receive false teachers into her house. There was nothing wrong with receiving strangers into one's house to care for them as they were traveling through town. In fact, Hebrews 13:2 states that when Christian's practice such they are acting in a way approved by the Holy Spirit. However, when receiving a false teacher into one's home, the situation is different. John states in verse 11 that when one does this, one is partaking of that false teacher's evil deeds. There is a difference between doing something that is right to support that which is right and doing something that would otherwise be right to support that which is wrong. The Holy Spirit says that the latter is sin. When we give aid and comfort to false teachers, that is being an accessory to sin.

A Christian can also be an accessory to sin by approving that which is wrong. We read in 1 Corinthians 5:1 that there was fornication among the church at Corinth. The response of the members of the church at Corinth was not to condemn that which was wrong, but to be proud about it (1 Corinthians 5:2). In other words, the church at Corinth was, through their attitude of pride concerning the fornicator, approving his action of fornication. Paul wrote in verse 6 that their “glorying” was not good. It was evil and they should not have been doing this. No doubt, many of the Corinthian Christians who were “glorying” in this man’s sin were not committing that sin themselves. Yet, because they were “glorying” in it, they were committing sin themselves: the sin of approving of something that is evil. Paul states in Romans 1:32 that not only are those who practice evil worthy of death due to their sin, but those who approve of such things are equally worthy of death due to their sin of approval.

Finally, a Christian can also be an accessory to sin by providing service to that which is sinful. John writes in 1 John 2:10 “He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.” The one who loves will not provide an occasion of stumbling in another. The opposite is also true, the one who sets forth an occasion of stumbling before another does not love him. And, when one does not love his neighbor, he violates what Jesus calls the second command, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Matthew 22:39).

Providing service to that which is sinful is of itself a sin. It would be a sin to give an idol to the idolater though you yourself may not worship it. It would be a sin to provide a fornicator a prostitute, though you yourself may not commit fornication. It would be a sin to give drugs to an addict, though you yourself may not do drugs. It would be a sin to serve alcohol to a drunkard, though you yourself may not drink at all. It would be a sin to take a gambler to a slot machine, though you yourself may not gamble. At the least, a person who acted in such a way would be a hypocrite. Paul writes in Romans 12:9, “Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.” When we act out of a non-hypocritical love toward our fellow man, we will not encourage him to engage in sinfulness by providing the means of his sin. Instead, we will abhor what is evil. Abhorring something means

that we put it as far away from us as possible. If we serve evil, we fail to abhor evil.

At the most, the person who serves those who sin, while not actually performing the evil act himself, is participating in the evil act through his influence. In the first part of the book of Revelation, Jesus speaks directly to the seven churches of Asia through John. To the church at Pergamos Jesus said, “But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication” (Revelation 2:14). Jesus had something “against” this church. They were guilty of the doctrine of Balaam. What was that doctrine? The verse says that he “taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel.” Balaam’s sin was not that he worshipped idols or committed fornication, but that encouraged others to do this through his influence. The incident to which this verse is referring is found in Numbers 25:1-7. An interesting fact in this regard is that Balaam had already left the proverbial “scene of the crime.” In Numbers 24:25 we read, “Then Balaam rose and departed and returned to his place:.” Yet, although Balaam was not present during the activities of Numbers 25, we see later that he was killed with the sword because of his transgression (Numbers 31:8) and that Moses held him personally responsible for the evil that had come upon the children of Israel (Numbers 31:16). Jesus stated to the church at Pergamos that Balaam was guilty of sin purely because he used his influence for evil and that the church at Pergamos was guilty as well because they taught his doctrine. How can we say that we are pure when we use our influence for evil? Jesus directly condemns such thinking.

Let us resolve not to be an accessory to sin whether we are supporting a false teacher, approving that which is wrong, or providing service to that which is sinful. Our end will be no different than those who practice the sin itself.

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Mission Works

Westhill Works

Benevolence Program

Local Works

Cherokee Children's Home - www.chc4kids.org

House to House, Heart to Heart

In Search of the Lord's Way

Preaching Students - Southwest School of Bible Studies

The Truth in Love - www.ttil.tv

WVBS Online School - school.wvbs.org

Prison Works

La Poynor Prison Ministry - Steve & Carrie Handley

Foreign Works

Four Seas Bible College, Singapore - Peter & Pooi Fun Chin

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Cory Myers - 512.627.6672 (Youth & Family)

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Prayer List

Wanda Horner had a stroke Thursday while here at the building. She was rushed to ICU at Baylor Hospital. She will remain there indefinitely.

Carolyn Milton's brother, Bill Brown, passed on Wednesday in Teague, Tx. His service was held Saturday in Teague.

Paul Loosier has been placed on hospice.

Colton Stewart broke his arm last Sunday evening.

Cooper Webster has been ill lately, which has pushed back his mouth surgery until Dec. 2.

Beverly Heim is scheduled for skin surgery on Nov. 10 at Methodist Medical Center.

Tim and Beverly Cooke have both been ill, and their family is also coping with health issues.

Bobby Robert's friend, Adolph Reamy, needs prayers for his grandson, Harrison Gutierrez. He was just born around Oct 19th, and is in ICU with some health issues.

Sabrina Zamzow's dad, Jackie Coker, fell off a deer stand and was rushed to Baylor. He has broken some bones and body scans did reveal a couple of masses.

Continue to Remember: Malinda Zalace, Julie Dilbeck, Meagan Gould, Jim Welch, Vera White, Ruth Moore, Gayle Garner, and Nick Tooley

Service Men: Clay Bayes, Jason Book, Alston Compton, Robert Johnson, Ryan Payne, Douglas Ramsey, Ryan Stewart

Announcements

Trunk of Treat will be TOMORROW, Monday, Oct. 31 from 6:30-8:30pm. Please come and enjoy fun and fellowship!

Please join family and friends in celebrating the life of a very special lady. **Helen Simpson** will be turning 90 and a **birthday celebration** is planned for her on Sat. Nov. 5 from 2-4pm in the Outreach Center.

Lads 2 Leaders practice for Speech and Oral Bible Reading will be Nov. 6 @ 4.30pm.

Baby Shower for April Myers on Nov. 13 following evening worship service. Please mark that date and join us to help prepare for the arrival of Titus Ray!

Thank You **Westhill Church of Christ** for keeping us in your prayers and thoughts. We truly feel the love.
Robert and Tisha Huddleston

To all my brothers and sisters, thank you for your prayers and support. I love you very much. Finally, I have a true family.
Thank you, Nick Tooley

Birthdays This Week

October 30 - Ann Jackson

October 31 - Gerald Armstrong, Owen Blaylock,

Tim Cooke, and Don Corley

November 1 - Marjorie King,

November 2 - Laura Haden

November 3 - Erica Roughton

November 4 - Kenneth Southard

November 5 - Helen Simpson

Next Week's Adult Class

"The Life of the Apostle Paul"

Records for October 23, 2016

Bible Class	146
AM Worship.....	228
PM Worship	120
Wednesday	149
Contribution	\$6,629.52

Privileged to Serve

Song Leader	Zach Drain
Opening Prayer	George Schmidt
Communion Leader	Paul Ross
Communion Servers	
Caleb Jackson	David Mahoney
Darrell Olsen	Joshua Haden
Joe Glass	Phil Pillars
Jimmy Horn	Wayne Prater
Ken Green	Paul Stewart
Tyler Baumgartner	Seth Haden
Luke Baumgartner	
Closing Prayer	Brian Hand
Nursery	
PM Song Leader	Young Men
PM Opening Prayer	Young Men
PM Closing Prayer	Young Men
Wed. Song Leader	Justin Williams
Wed. Devotional	David Shastid
October Contact Elder	Percell Milton