

The Truth About Corruption



David Wilkerson December 1, 1984

We have developed a distorted view of what corruption really is. Not many Christians understand God's definition of corruption, and few believers would admit they are guilty of it.

We consider ungodly sinners as corrupt. According to our theology corruption is alcohol and drug abuse, adultery and fornication, cheating and gambling, promiscuity, homosexuality, murder, rape, incest and other such wicked deeds. We have narrowed down corruption to wild passions and life-controlling lusts.

We have failed to understand how God looks at corruption. His definition of corruption goes much deeper than the lusts and passions of the flesh. The truth is that Israel, a chosen people, was accused by God of corruption surpassing that of their godless enemies.

Israel woke up one morning to offer burnt offerings on an altar built to honor a golden calf. While they were eating, drinking and playing, the Lord said to Moses, "Go, get thee down; for thy people which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves" (Exodus 32:7).

What a serious charge from almighty God. "They have corrupted themselves." What had they done to deserve such a rebuke? Was it their drunkenness, their sexual lust, their nudity, their frivolity and playfulness during such solemn times? It was deeper, much deeper than all of that.

The corruption of Israel was so great in the eyes of the Lord, He threatened to consume them on the spot. "And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people: now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation" (Exodus 32:9,10).

They had just been delivered weeks prior from the clutches of Pharaoh and his armies. They had stood amazed on the wilderness side of the Red Sea singing the praises of the Lord. They sang this song, "He hath triumphed gloriously... the Lord is our strength, our salvation.... Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy" (Exodus 15).

Now they were corrupted and on the verge of being wiped out by an angry God. If what is written here is an example for our learning, a pattern or type for our admonition - we had better ask the Holy Spirit to teach us the lessons well. God's Word warns us, "Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any of you fall after the same example of unbelief" (Hebrews 4:11).

Let us learn from Israel's failure the truth about corruption. Let us try to see it from God's side and face the truth that we may be as guilty of corruption as was Israel while dancing around the golden calf.

Corruption is:

1. CASTING AWAY CONFIDENCE IN GOD BECAUSE OF DELAYS!

"And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him" (Exodus 32:1).

What incredible blindness and stupidity! On the mount, all heaven was in motion making wonderful plans for their future. A law was being given to set them apart from all others on earth. A tabernacle was being unveiled to Moses whereby God Himself could come down and dwell in their midst. God was about to give them a glorious inheritance and bring them into a place of peace, rest and fullness. Their enemies were going to be routed and destroyed. Strongholds were coming down. Giants would be slain; there would be silver trumpets and a cloud by day and fire by night, all for their perfect guidance. The very Godhead was focused on their present needs and their future blessings.

Yet, look at those silly, stiff-necked chosen people running about helter-skelter, complaining about delays! Listen to their foolish talk, "God has had enough time to make things happen. There is no evidence of His wrath or goodness - only silence. What kind of God would leave us in our loneliness and fear, without a word of direction? Enough of waiting! Enough of silence! Enough of delays! Let's take action."

They deliberately put out of mind all the miraculous things God had done for them in the past. It no longer mattered to them that God had manifested His glory before all Egypt by supernatural plagues. They so soon forgot the Red Sea miracles. They forgot the sweetened waters of Marah and the angels' food they gathered each morning. Not even the thundering voice of God at Sinai mattered. They were now under the spell of UNBELIEF! Nothing could shake them from their conviction that God was no longer interested in them; that He was delaying because He was not really who He claimed to be - the great I AM!

So they turned elsewhere. They turned to a fickle man who would do what they asked and tell them what they wanted to hear. They put God aside and struck out on their own. All fear of God was gone - and all that mattered now was to hurry up and produce something they could see and touch. Their human side cried out for evidence - something to satisfy inner craving for action.

We find it nearly impossible to believe that a people, who had so recently heard God's thundering voice and who ate supernatural food from heaven, could sacrifice to an inanimate golden calf. Were they that stupid to cry out, "This is the god that brought us out, of Egypt"?

Is it possible that such unbelievable blindness is the curse that befalls those who turn away from God to seek help and direction from human sources? Perhaps this explains the explosive growth of cults in this nation - it is the curse of blindness upon the masses who have cast away their confidence in God.

We become just as corrupt as Israel when we weary of delays and turn to other sources for strength and guidance. Just like the children of Israel, we forget all the past blessings and mercies God has poured upon us. We forget the many times He delivered us from the snare of the enemy. We forget the many times He spoke to us in a secret closet of prayer, and how He promised to guide us even until death.

When we hurt, when we are lonely, when we are afraid, when we are overwhelmed by circumstances beyond our control - we quickly turn aside from our true source of peace and victory and turn to human ways and resources.

Instead of fleeing to the secret closet of prayer to pour out our hearts to the Lord of glory, we rush to our telephone to seek help from a friend. We unburden our hearts to pastors, to counselors, to family, and even to strangers. We search everywhere for sympathetic advice or help. We will cry ourselves to sleep and languish in dreadful fits of loneliness. We will pout and accuse God of delaying or of not hearing and answering our cry. We will travel anywhere in an attempt to escape the inner despair.

How tragic! Because we know where the victory lies. We know God is still on the throne waiting for us to call on Him. We know the answer to all our needs is to be found alone with God, shut in with Him. We will even confess to our spiritual friends, "I know I need to pray! I know God has the answer! I know I need to cry it all out in His presence! I know He can give me new strength and courage. He can heal my lonely heart; He can satisfy every longing; He can bring to pass the desires of my heart!" And knowing all this - and even admitting to it - we seem to

be under a spell of doubt, restlessness and spiritual stupor. Something seems to hold us back. It becomes the hardest thing to do - to discipline ourselves to get alone with God and into His Word, and to approach His throne to find grace in our time of need.

It is corruption of the worst kind to give in to fear and despair while ignoring the majesty and faithfulness of a loving Father. Here is corruption! God said to Israel, "... I have talked with you from heaven... in all places where I put my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee" (Exodus 20:22,24). But Israel answered, "God hath forgotten to be merciful... wherein hast thou loved us?" (Psalm 10:11, Malachi 1:2). "But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me" (Isaiah 49:14).

Are you a corrupted Christian? You are if you ignore the Lord's majestic promises and doubt that He means what He says! He promised - "Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me" (Isaiah 49:15, 16).

You are corrupted if you go on carrying unnecessary burdens of guilt, fear, loneliness, anxiety, and turmoil - simply because you refuse to rest on the Lord's great and precious promises.

Is God mocking His children when He promises, "All things are working together for good to them that love Him, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom 8:28)?

Is God lying when He promises, "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry. The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles"(Psalm 34:15,17)?

When we get in trouble and cry out to God for mercy and help, all heaven goes in motion on our behalf. It would be an incredible sight for our human eyes, should the Lord let us see into the spiritual world to behold the good things He is preparing for those who call on Him and who trust Him. But because we do not have patience; because we live and act according to our feelings; because our flesh cannot endure delays; because we can't see visible evidence of the secret workings of God - we do like the Israelites and turn away from Him to make things happen to please our flesh.

We corrupt ourselves in the "eyes of God by falling apart emotionally, right before His holy throne and in spite of all His promised love and care. It is a slap in God's face to linger in the pits of despair and loneliness, when by faith we should be calling on Him and appropriating unspeakable joy and peace in the Holy Ghost. Our continual sadness, complaining and ignoring Him is a corrupt statement we make to heaven and all of mankind which says, "I am lonely, sad, defeated, and in despair because I do not believe God loves me and I do not accept His promises as truth. I can't wait for God to act, because my human side needs relief right now. I can't handle delays - God or no God!"

Corruption is:

2. STANDING NAKED BEFORE YOUR ENEMIES!

"And when Moses saw that the people were naked, (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:) then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me" (Exodus 32:25,26).

The Hebrew word used here for naked is PARA, meaning, to loosen, expose, dismiss. It also infers "a new beginning "

A modern beer commercial admonishes this generation to "turn it loose tonight." It simply means, throw off the past moral inhibitions, shake free of all law, begin pleasing yourself. Do your own thing - do whatever makes you happy.

Merely taking off their clothes was not corruption. It was the signal, the message they were sending to their

heathen on watchers. Can you see the Amalakites on the surrounding mountains, far off, looking on this peculiar scene? These enemies, who had trembled when they saw God at work among them, now laugh and mock - "Look at them, they are just like us! Their God has no power - they don't even trust in Him! They are throwing off their strict ways; they want to lust and party and play just like all the rest of us. Some holiness - what hypocrisy!"

In that one act of nakedness they belittled their God in the eyes of the ungodly! They made God seem heartless, cruel, uncaring and helpless. They besmirched the honor and majesty of an omnipotent God. They were no longer an example; they were no longer admired or feared or respected.

They had laid their armor down to play and party! They put in jeopardy God's plans for their salvation. They were saying to the world, "We do not want to fight any more enemies! We do not want to resist! We have had enough of rejection, of sacrifice, of future hopes and far-off blessings. We want to live now! We want to enjoy ourselves! We want the good times to roll now!"

The corruption was this - This was to be for them a new beginning. No more combat! If they were going to have to exist in a hard, cruel wilderness, then they would quit the struggle and make do the best they could, on their own.

There are multitudes of naked Christians in the church today! They are tired of the struggle, tired of the hardships, the long delays, the lonely times, the pain and sorrow. They have no more fear of God before their eyes. They talk as though God had forsaken them. They yearn for a good time, some fun, happiness, laughter, and a release from the battle.

They have laid down the whole armor of God. They have kicked off the shoes of the gospel of peace. They have made up their minds that they might as well make the best of their sad situation and live it up a bit. They turn away from the Lord's promises; they reject the secret closet of prayer and the power of God; they lay aside God's Word; they forsake the church; and they begin to drift off into a self-centered pursuit of happiness and fun.

Lately I have listened to the pitiful pleas of ministers, their wives and laymen from across the nation who call me for counseling. To hear them talk you would think God was a tyrant; that prayer doesn't work; that faith is useless; that Christians are just splinters of wood floating helplessly in a raging sea. They have lost their confidence in God! They are living in fear and doubt, thinking God has left them to work things out for themselves. They have forgotten that God has called them to represent Him before lost humanity.

That is the worst kind of corruption - to close eyes and ears and heart to all God's promises, and to live and act as though He were dead, or at least unconcerned. It comes to this - corruption is misrepresenting God's faithfulness to the world by our doubting words and acts of unbelief.

There is so much nakedness now among Christian high school and college students! I am alarmed by what I see and hear from Christian students when I speak at their campuses. Such spiritual nakedness - such rejection of old values such yearning for fun and pleasure.

Thank God for those students who are growing in the fear and knowledge of our blessed Lord. And, God has promised to keep a wall of fire about all who trust Him. But the backsliding - the unbelief is causing spiritual havoc to many. The vibrant faith in God, the youthful zeal, the hungering and thirsting after righteousness - it is fading from them.

There is a terrible lack of direction. There is a forboding fear of the future of a magnitude not known in the past. Few can say, "God talks to me." Even fewer can say, "I talk to God!" Their very lives often misrepresent God.

Prayer and seeking God is almost unknown to many students. Since so many are living on emotions, they have not known or experienced the rest in God. They are becoming corrupt - not just because of eroding morals, but because they have not discovered or cultivated a deep confidence in the Lord. There is not a bedrock of loyalty. There is instead a sense that they must live for the moment, doing the best they can with what they have.

So they turn from the Spirit of God to the music of the world; to its manners; to its dress; to its parties and frivolity and little by little they have thrown off what spiritual armor they have left.

I believe Satan's main thrust in the last days is to corrupt the entire Christian student population. He is bent on crushing their trust in God's concern for them. He is trying to convince them that faith and prayer are no longer

effective in this age of science. I do not fear drugs, sex or alcohol - much as I fear the corruption of faith and trust in God's leading and presence.

The church needs to fall on its knees and cry out to God for an awakening of faith and confidence toward the Lord among students. If we do not, and if the trend continues, some of our Christian colleges may become the most corrupt places on earth. I speak now of the kind of corruption God hates - the casting aside of childlike faith and the substituting of human resources. Let us intercede with God for the clothing of our students with the Lord's robe of righteousness - lest they stand naked before their modern enemies of apostasy, humanism and libertarianism. May once again we hear the clanging of armor as the Spirit of God awakens our youth to get back into combat with the forces of hell and do battle against all unbelief and Gnosticism.

I believe God has promised to do just that! He is going to raise up an army in full battle dress, full of faith - confident and dependent upon Him - victorious over all the demons and wicked powers in high places. Glory!

3. DURING TIMES OF CORRUPTION THE WEAKEST OFTEN BECOME THE STRONGEST!

"Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him" (Exodus 32:26).

How will God crush the corruption in Israel? Who will He choose to be His instruments in a time of unparalleled evil? Will angels come down and execute righteous judgment? Aaron and his sons had already corrupted themselves - who will God raise up now to shine forth as His soldiers of holiness?

Of all people! The sons of Levi! Sons of that murderer who, with his brother Simeon, had made Jacob's family to stink before the heathen. Simeon and Levi each took a sword and slew Shechem for raping their sister Dinah. They also killed his father Hamor, took their sheep, oxen, donkeys, and their wealth, their little ones, and their wives.

Oh, the matchless grace of God - to choose the most unworthy, the weakest of them all - to be His instruments.

"And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And the children of Levi did according to the word Of Moses" (Exodus 32:26,28).

Perhaps there was something deep within them that said, "We will not fail God as did our father! We will not bring reproach on the name of our God! We will step out and take our stand with the Lord!"

Moses had promised them, "God will reward you if you consecrate yourself and take a stand among your family, friends and brothers," And He did reward them with a semi-priestly order called the LEVITES who were given to the service of God's house.

Being on the Lord's side is taking in hand His sword and using it to combat the forces of unbelief. Those Levites, with sword in hand (who slew even beloved friends and family) are a type of believers who stand upon God's Word, who use it as a sword to put down all doubts, fears and unbelief.

It means standing true to God and His Word no matter what the crowd does; no matter how faithless our friends become; no matter how worldly our dearest loved ones are. We must step out and declare, "I am on the Lord's side! I come against all attacks against the majesty and faithfulness of our God! I will put down and cast out all fears and doubts about the Lord's faithfulness! I will deal utterly and finally with all leanings toward worldly pleasure and idolatry! I care not whether my parents or friends have failed. As for me, I'm going to cast my lot with the Lord"

The talk in the camp of Israel the next day was about those sons of Levi. Can you imagine the talk? "What came on them? Who would have known what was in them? What zeal for God! What fire, what faith! They didn't seem the type to become so strong for the Lord!"

God still chooses the weak to show forth His strength. Have you been grieving over weakness? Have you felt so insignificant, so frail and useless to God? Have you looked upon others who seem so strong, so perfect and thought of yourself in comparison as too sinful, too dull to be used of God in these last days? God is not looking for

spiritual giants, but rather for ordinary saints of childlike faith who have lost all confidence in the flesh.

God will again confound the strong and wise by anointing as His instruments those who were considered weak and foolish. The Lord will bypass those who lean on the arm of flesh - who trust in their talents, their knowledge, their background, their family reputation. He will instead raise up the broken-hearted, the weak and the weary. He will pour upon them a spirit of praise and a baptism of love. He will show them His greatness, His faithfulness, His covenants and they will become strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Is there a spirit in you that urges you on to new and higher places in the Lord? Is there a fire for God ignited within? Do you feel a drawing to a renewed faith and trust in God? Be thankful! That is the call of your Moses, Jesus Christ the Lord, calling you to come over and take a stand in this evil day.

Conclusion:

God rewarded their return to the fear of the Lord. He promised -

"Behold, I make a covenant [agreement]: before all the people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in the nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the Lord: for it is a terrible [impressive] thing that I will do with thee" (Exodus 34:10).

His promises to us are even greater and more precious -"Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues" (Psalm 31:19,20).

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor2: 9,10).

Will you believe and appropriate it - or corrupt yourself by ignoring the truth and going on in fear and unbelief?

Salvation in that Name is found,
Cure for my grief and care;
A healing balm for every wound;
All, all I want is there.

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