

HEBREWS -12:1-3
Lay Aside Entangling Sin

EX: Uncle T and cousin – “tangly hair” (Susan)

“If you come to the table again with your hair all tangled and in your face, I’ll cut it”
SHE DID and HE DID – not his daughter!!

That episode lives in the lore of our family.

Ex: the magic Brush – another current family legend

Our oldest granddaughter didn’t like to have her hair brushed after she washed it because it was so tangly. We have a great brush that Linda would use, and it didn’t hurt, so Leah referred to it as the “magic brush”. 8 years later we still call it that. If I live long enough and still have that brush my plan is to give her that magic brush to use when she gets ready for her wedding. Don’t tell anyone, not even Linda.

Oh if only it were so easy to get rid of the tangled web of sin that we so easily weave in our own lives.

Hebrews 12 tells us how we should respond to the great cloud of witnesses that surround us...

Heb 12:1-3

1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

LET US RUN the race.

Grammatically the main verb is “run” or “should run / let us run” So, the author is encouraging the reader to “let us run the race” by “immediately laying aside the weight/burden/encumbrance and the easily entangling sin”.....start and complete this part of the command

Run like Forrest Gump – don’t give up. Don’t lose heart. Lean into God and lean on one another.

LET US LAY ASIDE- . the weight and the sin that so easily entangles us.

SHREK THE SHEEP –



<http://www.franthony.com/blog/the-story-of-shrek-the-sheep>

Shrek was hiding or hemmed in a cave for six years and ended up with 60 lbs of wool – normally it would be about 10 lbs. Shrek carried about the burden of this weight because he was away from the Shepherd. When we stay away from the Good Shepherd we too end up carrying the burden of own sin. The shepherd is there to relieve us, but we stay away from him.

This passage reminds us to lay aside the weight and the entangling sins that keep us hemmed in.

NOTE: the word “sin” is singular so it could mean that this is talking specifically about the sin of ignoring the Messiah and continuing in Judaism.- Trundle

If we look at this in the context of our day, then ignoring Jesus as Messiah is not the focal point of our sin. Ignoring him as Savior is really a symptom of the deeper reality of sin – Our addiction to our own righteousness that blinds us to our real need for a savior. This does lead to some type of self-salvation strategy, which is the default mode of our hearts.

This addiction to our own righteousness is presented in the whole of scripture and we see that sin is a condition or a power that infects and affects our hearts.

EX: sin is like the strand of little Christmas lights you got out and were all tangled up.

Dr. Richard Lovelace's definition of sin:

“In it’s biblical definition, sin cannot be limited to isolated incidents or patterns of wrong-doing; it is something much more akin to the psychological term ‘complex:’ ‘an organic network of compulsive attitudes, beliefs and behavior deeply rooted in our alienation from God.’

Lay aside the weight and every sin that so easily entangles us. Lovelace’s definition shows why it so easily entangles us – it is a web or a network of attitudes, beliefs and behaviors.

If sin were merely a simple single stand-alone act then it would be easier to deal with it.

– it is SOOO EASY TO SIN, is it not? And it is easy to get distracted and hemmed in by sin.

“O what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive.” Walter Scott, not Shakespeare

To lay it aside we must first Recognize sin and the sins that easily entangle us – a good place to start is the 7 Deadly Sins **KILL JOYS**

<https://www.reformation21.org/blogs/a-censorious-spirit.php>

In the history of the church we have seen a list of 7 sins that have become quite notable. The reasoning behind that is that these 7 are incubators for other sins that flow from them. They are root level sins from which other sins will sprout.

The names of the 7 Deadly Sins are **Pride, Envy, Anger, Sloth, Greed, Gluttony, and Lust**. They are the false lovers we give our hearts to as we betray the True Lover of our Souls, Jesus.

These sins are familiar to us because we all face them, but they are unfamiliar because we have a hard time recognizing them when we are walking in their paths. We can see them in others, but we are often blind to them up close. Sin itself is deceitful, so these “deadly sins” disguise themselves and seek to appear harmless as they find their way into our minds, conversations and actions. They are seductively sweet and alluring.

Briefly, what do these sins look like: (this could be an entire series itself)

PRIDE puts itself above God; it seeks autonomy – James 4:6 “God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble.” (22 verses) Pride is self-law; the right to define oneself, to be the captain of one’s fate.

Pride shows itself in the context of comparison. Typically, we aren’t proud in a relational vacuum; we are proud as we compare ourselves to others.

ENVY (Love is not jealous) is the condition of being unhappy at the blessing and good fortune of others. Envy seethes as others succeed and gives a secret smile when they fail – schadenfreude – rejoicing over the misfortune of another. **1 Pet 2:1 So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.**

UNRIGHTEOUS ANGER seeks to protect a perceived right. Such anger explodes over petty, selfish, irrelevant things and overlooks the thing that offend and dishonor God. **Col 3:8 But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth**

SLOTH –(pursue righteousness; seek ye first the kingdom of God) seeks to control life in order to preserve comforts; it dreads being interrupted by the needs of others or even one's own needs. **Proverbs 26:16 The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes** than seven men who can answer sensibly.

Greed is animated by a love of money and an inordinate desire for wealth and stuff Greed covets what it shouldn't have or is too intent and impatient toward what one should have. (soul keeping p.96 – greed leads to lying. (beware of every form of greed;

1 Tim 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Col 3:4) Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry

GLUTTONY looks to food to satisfy some deeper craving, be it emotional, relational, or even spiritual.

Prov 23:20 Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, 21 for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags.

LUST (flee youthful lusts) is a sexual desire that dishonors its object and disregards God. It is sex for selfish gain thinking that pleasure will fill an inner emptiness.

16 For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.

There is another sin that is not listed among the 7 but it does flow from pride and it deserves special mention because I believe it is one of the most entangling and pervasive sins of our cultural moment. It is called by the name of a **Censorious spirit**. It is also seen in the act of imputing negative motives to those with whom you may disagree.

Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things

What is a censorious spirit? It comes from the word censor our English word comes from the Latin censor and censo = "to appraise, value, or judge".

The background meaning is an officer in Rome whose business was to draw up a register of the citizens to keep watch over their morals. He is the man with the critical eye. Also an officer who has the power to examine all manuscripts, pamphlets, newspapers and books before they are published so there is nothing harmful to the readers, he is the fault finder. However when it comes to Christian love within the body, Christian love is opposed to a censorious spirit.

In what is arguably one of the most important books ever written, Charity and Its Fruits, Jonathan Edwards sounded the theological alarm about a censorious spirit being contrary to Christian love. In the course of his sermon on this subject, Edwards set out three ways "wherein a censorious spirit or a disposition uncharitably to judge others consists:

Edwards...

1. **A censorious spirit appears in a quickness to judge ill of others' states. When we are not walking in love we are quick to judge the spiritual condition of another person based on our OWN faulty assumptions, observations or presuppositions about them.**

2. A censorious spirit appears in a disposition to judge ill of others' qualities; to overlook their good qualities, and to think them destitute of them when they are not, or to make very little of them, or to magnify their ill qualities and make more of them than they are, or to charge them with those ill qualities of which they are free.
3. A censorious spirit appears in a disposition to judge ill of others' actions. This will typically manifest itself by imputing negative motives to the other person. We are quick to assume the worst about their words and actions without any reason or evidence to think evil of them. We are quick to listen to and pass along a bad report about another person.

I don't know about you, but I find this rather convicting and challenging. It is so easy for me to become entangled in a censorious spirit. The call of scripture, the call of love (1Cor 13) is to lay aside such a judging spirit and pursue love i.e. seek to believe the best. That does not mean that we deny obvious evil or harmful behavior, but when we have no proof, then we are to give the benefit of the doubt.

We are to first consider our own failings and sin – Gal 6.

The more we examine our own hearts and need for a Savior, the more we will extend grace to others. It is hard to live in and reflect the love we know from Christ if we are animated by a censorious spirit.

<http://www.westminsterconfession.org/godly-living/letter-to-one-of-a-censorious-spirit.php>

There was a time when believers would actually address such issues with one another.

Letter to one of a censorious spirit

From an anonymous work, published in 1855 by the Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia, under the title, *Monitory Letters to Church Members*.

What is a **Monitory Letter**?

A Communication of warning and admonition sent from a church court body, upon information of scandal and abuses within the cognizance of that court.

"I have noticed in you, for a considerable time, a growing disposition, which I fear is becoming a settled habit, to deal in undue severity with the characters of your fellow men. It is a rare thing that I hear you speak well of anybody. Whenever an individual is mentioned, and especially when anything praiseworthy is said of him, it seems as if your mind was immediately on the search for something of an opposite character; and if nothing of this kind readily occurs to you as a matter of fact, you do not hesitate to indulge in unworthy and injurious conjectures (assuming or imputing negative motives).

If a person has performed a highly meritorious action, you attribute it to some dishonorable and selfish motive; if he has done something of an uncertain character, you seem to delight in putting the worst construction upon it.

You Do NOT seem to breathe freely except amidst the errors and foibles of your fellow men.

Now, the most obvious thing to be said of this characteristic is, that it is exceedingly unamiable. And while this is not an amiable trait, neither is it in accordance with the precepts and genius of Christianity.

The leading element of the gospel is love – its origin is love – its spirit is love – its end is love.

No one wishes to have his actions misrepresented, or his motives arraigned, by ungracious insinuations. No one wishes, after he has done the best that he is capable of doing, to be looked coldly upon, as if he were at least worthy of suspicion, if not an acknowledged malefactor. In indulging in this conduct towards another, then, you not only violate a principle which your own conscience must recognize as a rule of right, but you come in conflict with the fundamental principle of practical Christianity. You thus far disown the authority of the Master whom you profess to serve."

Letter to Censorious Spirit...

You must bring yourself under the influence of all these considerations of Christ, drawn from a sense of your own evident imperfections and infirmities, from the precepts and example of Christ. Above all, you are to habitually ask of God that he will increase your power of resistance to this spiritual foe; and you are never to relax in the conflict, until you can feel that it is finally and forever dislodged.

SEVEN , no Eight SINS, ONE HOPE

CONSIDER HIM (Jesus is the magic brush- as we fix our eyes on Him, we are slowly freed from the entanglements of sin)

Laying aside sin is Someone we meet before it is Something we do

Jesus said no to temptation and sin and the same Spirit that dwelt in Him dwells in us who know Him by FAITH.

Christianity is not merely or even mainly about correcting your bad habits, but about satisfying and fulfilling you in the deepest way possible, and therefore making God look as great as he is. Our hearts were designed to enjoy a full and forever happiness, not the pitiful temporary pleasures for which we're too prone to settle.

Pride, envy, anger, sloth, greed, gluttony, and lust are all woefully inadequate substitutes for the wonder, beauty, and affection of God. Kill Joys 1311

From Piper – Future Grace EX: 1997 read this...”Sin is what we do when our hearts aren’t satisfied with all that God is for us in Christ.”

The 7 “deadly sins” and a censorious spirit find their place in a heart that is seeking satisfaction in something other than Christ.

Jesus’s victory at the cross wasn’t meant to make us relax and put down our weapons. No, he died and rose to arm us with the invincible hope and power of his Spirit and promises. He went to Calvary so that we could kill our sin (Rom. 8:13). Kill Joys

Let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him He endured the cross, despising the shame.

--	--