

## “Bundling” Sin

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**T**he new marketing tool in the telecommunications industry is “bundling”; i.e., selling a package of services for one price. One might contract with a company for cell phone service, satellite TV and high speed internet for one “low” price. The consumer has the convenience of one bill and the company benefits from three utility commitments (and the lower cost of providing triple service to a single residence rather than one here, one there).

But the telecommunications folks aren’t the first ones to think of bundling. No sireee, the devil thought of it first. You see, while it is possible to slip and fall into an isolated sin here and there, sin often comes in bundles. Take David for example. The sin with Bathsheba (adultery) brought some unseemly friends along: lying and deceit, encouragement to drunkenness, murder of a loyal bodyguard (along with the associated deaths of other innocents, 2 Sam 11:17). The more sin Satan can bundle together, the more powerful his hold on us.

A single transgression might be like the cough, sore throat, fever or lethargy that is merely the manifestation of a deeper infection within.

In the case of David the initial sin created other issues that had to be resolved sinfully if, that is, he was unwilling to own up to the initial sin. And he wasn’t willing. And often times, neither are we. Lying and deceit are the natural by-products of covering our illicit behavior. If someone gets close to exposing us, the protective instinct may make us attack that person as a diversionary tactic or to make them back off. So, sin often begets sin.

Another consideration is that sin springs from a character flaw that can be manipulated to produce sin in other ways. For example, greed and covetousness can be turned into evil speech toward others more successful than ourselves. It can become debt that burdens the soul and creates marital conflict. It can drive a man to work overtime and take him away from the family, or it can make Mom compromise her most important responsibility at home. It can short-change the Lord; defraud taxes; excite anxieties about the future; promote gambling, even kill.

Too, sin is progressive. Like Lay’s potato chips, it’s hard to eat just one. Satan often has to break down so many barriers to get us to sin that once we are weakened, other sins pour in before we can stop the flood. I have known young Christians who have worked so hard to change their lives, fight against well entrenched sins, resist their conditioning toward pleasure ... only to see them “fall off the wagon” and be overtaken. The process then has to be repeated all over again just to regain lost ground. If this happens several times, it is easy to become demoralized and give up altogether.

Let us not be fooled by the wonderful grace that God has given to us. *“What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!”* (Rom 6:15). We cannot take a casual approach toward sin thinking that if we do commit it, grace is there to bail us out. Having a realization of the corrosive and explosive nature of sin, we should do our best to hold it at bay, keep it out of our lives: *“resist the devil and he will flee from you”* (Jas 4:7). Sin is an affront to God, a violation of His law, a threat to our fellowship and spiritual well-being. It is not just an “oops” that we can casually dismiss by a generic “forgive us of our sins.”

And as painful as it may be, let us nip sin in the bud by admission/confession and a conscious confrontation of its presence in our lives. David’s delay in taking responsibility for his sin weakened his spirit further (Ps 32:3-5) and made him susceptible to greater offences.

Repentance is often more than a quick fix. So powerful is sin that we often must stop, take stock, and significantly reorder our thinking on how we got into the mess we’re in – and how to avoid it in the future.