

those who see themselves as sinners, those who recognise the problem in their own hearts and turn to Him. We must recognise our problem, want to change and then come to Jesus Christ. That's the only way out.

We all need God to clean us, to renew us, to break us free from the addictive domination of sin in our lives. Only if we come to God through Jesus Christ, we can be free indeed.

John 8:36

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

Free from bondage to our selfish natures. Don't you want that? Or do you want to destroy yourself by giving in to your sin, your self-centredness? We're our own worst enemies. We need to be saved from ourselves more than anything else.

If you just want to carry on being self-centred, selfish, living for self, doing absolutely nothing useful in your life, you can do. Go ahead. But then don't ever complain about the mess the world is in, or about your lot in life. Saying, "I don't believe in God, because He's done this to me, or that to me, or He's made me like this. It's His fault not mine."

God has provided a solution to every situation we may find ourselves in. Jesus Christ can set you free now, today. If only you call on Him, cry to Him. Ask Him to forgive your sins and change you for ever. Nobody else can help. Call on Jesus Christ in prayer today, and if you are genuine, I guarantee you will not be disappointed.

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Dirty Washing

A few years ago I looked after my aunt's house while she went into hospital. She was telling me about the neighbours, and mentioned that the lady next door was very nice, but her husband had a nasty temper. Everybody around knew about his temper. They must have heard him shouting. But nobody ever talked about it. It's as though they tried to shut it off in their minds. They didn't want their otherwise comfortable lives upset by anything unpleasant, so they just tried as best they could to pretend it wasn't there.

Some years ago, I was walking down a street and passed by a family argument outside a house. Someone got so worked up they threw a brick through the window. As soon as the brick had been thrown, everything suddenly went deadly quiet, and the whole family quickly disappeared together inside the house and shut the door. That gave me the impression that this happened quite regularly, and the family were embarrassed by it and wished it didn't exist. But it did.

And what about pornography? It's very popular. But everyone who engages in it, likes to keep it quiet. Their "literature" lands on the doormat in discreet, plain brown envelopes. They think to themselves, everybody else is (supposedly) doing it, so it must be harmless, it's just a bit of fun. But they'd never talk about it in polite company.

We've all got dirty washing. Something we don't want others to know about. Something we find embarrassing. Something that exists, but we never talk about it. We might even try to "normalise" it, saying to ourselves, lots of people are like this, so it must be all right. But it's there, and it's not all right.

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Just because everybody else is doing something or accepts something as “normal,” doesn't mean it's right at all. Even if it's just a natural reaction, a natural instinct we do without thinking, that still doesn't necessarily make it right.

So why do we all have this dirty washing that we don't like to talk about? It's because we don't want to face up to ourselves.

The Bible teaches us about human nature:

Jeremiah 17:9

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”

That's why these things go on, and we find them embarrassing. The problem is within the human heart. But we don't like that idea. It's uncomfortable. We don't want to acknowledge that there's a problem with ourselves. But it doesn't matter how uncomfortable it is, we have to deal with it. We can't live our lives pretending it doesn't exist. We can hide it from everybody around us, but it's God we have to deal with, not men, not the majority, not our natural instincts, but the one true living God, Lord of heaven and earth.

And we'll find these things impossible to get rid of from our lives by our own efforts. In fact, in a lot of cases, we won't actually want to get rid of them at all. We quite like them. We want to hang on to them. But they're still, in God's eyes, sin.

That's why we need God.

But why are these things sin? Why should we get rid of them? Well, God doesn't like them. That should be incentive enough

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Sin is addictive. We can't control it, like being on drugs, or dependent on alcohol. It ends up taking us where we don't want to go. I would suggest that most drug addicts do genuinely want to give up, but they just can't.

Sin is selfish. It's only there for our own selfish ends. It has no useful function whatsoever. The cub scouts have a motto that they should do one good deed a day. Of course we should be doing far more than that, but let's start there. How many of us do one good deed to a stranger every day? We can't even do that, let alone live our entire lives being useful to others.

Sin hurts everyone around us. Think of the longsuffering wife of someone addicted to pornography. Think of the family of someone with a temper. They have to cope with it every day. Look how sin affects everybody around you. You might enjoy it, you might think it's “normal,” you might try to pretend it doesn't exist, but what about them? Don't just try to sweep it under the carpet, and say it's harmless. Face it. It hurts everybody around you. Are you really happy with that?

It's not “normal” at all. God hates it, it hurts others and it's of no use whatsoever. We need to acknowledge it as sin, not shy away from it. We're addicted to it. We can't get out of it ourselves. But that doesn't make it right.

Every one of us needs to be changed. And we can't change ourselves. But there is a solution. God came into the world to do exactly that. To save us from our sinful nature, our deceitful hearts. He sent Jesus Christ into the world to save all

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