

How To Live With Sin

by Bill Crews

Through the years I have talked to many Christians who were negligent and unfaithful and freely confessed their negligence and unfaithfulness. They were sinners; they were lost; they knew it; they acknowledged it. But almost without exception, those Christians I have known who have completely forsaken the Lord, who have abandoned their faith and good conscience and made shipwreck of the faith (**1 Timothy 1:19**) were of an entirely different mind and spoke in an entirely different vein.

They had rationalized their situation (as human wisdom is prone to do) to the extent that they thought they could justify their past conduct and present circumstances. At the beginning of their road to apostasy they **knew** they were sinning, but along the way they convinced themselves that they weren't. They became so hardened in sin that it wasn't sin any more – in their own eyes.

To accomplish this at least two things were necessary: (1) they had to still, if not silence, the voice of their own conscience, and (2) they had to stop being reminded of their ungodly lives by their contact with and contemplation of the godly people around them. It took awhile, a lot of effort, and a lot of practice, but finally the conscience was so seared, so repeatedly ignored and violated, that it finally stopped tormenting them.

The second feat was accomplished by making hypocrites of all the godly people around them – if all of the people whose lives ever served to denounce the lives they are living can be imagined to be hypocrites, then who is going to feel guilty when compared to a hypocrite? After all, isn't a completely frank sinner better, much better, than a hypocritical saint? So they attack parents, spouses, brethren, friends and angrily denounce them as hypocrites. If contact with godly people only serves to remind them that they are not the hypocrites they are making them out to be, then the next step is to avoid them – just retire from them with the firm determination that they **are** hypocrites unworthy of your association – and then try not to ever think of them. At the same time, you view your worldly friends, your fellow-sinners, as frank and honest.

If, perchance, some precious soul gone astray reads this piece, I sincerely hope you will consider what you have done to yourself. God cares; Christ cares; faithful Christians care. People are praying and have prayed for you. Your conscience can live again, and feel free. As we sing in a song, "Feelings lie buried that grace can restore." Most (I did say "most") of the people you insist upon labeling hypocrites would rejoice at you return to the Lord, not to mention the angels of heaven.

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