

It's Just...

In our recent messages, we've looked at what sin is – how it defiles us, separates us from God, and affects our hearts, our worship, and our world. But sin doesn't always storm in like a wrecking ball. Sometimes, it sneaks in unnoticed. Today, I want to talk about the most dangerous kind of sin. It's not because it's the biggest or the boldest, but because it's the easiest to excuse.

We don't usually fall into ruin in one day. It starts with "just a little." Just a little compromise. Just a little distraction. Just a little indulgence. Just a party, just a joke, just a glance, just a thought. But the devil doesn't need you to crash your life overnight. He is very patient. He just needs you to start drifting.

The enemy knows that if he can't get you to openly rebel against God, he can still get you to slowly forget Him, to start loving what's worldly, tolerating what's evil, and thinking it's no big deal. That's how sin works. Like a crack in a dam, it seems harmless at first...until the flood comes.

So today, we'll look at a tragic Biblical example. We'll examine how sin creeps in under the banner of "not so bad," and we'll be challenged to wake up, cast off the works of darkness, and put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Satan's insidious attack -

King Balak of Moab saw what the Israelites did to the Amorites as they approached the Promised Land under Moses. He called on Balaam, who was a popular pagan prophet, to curse the Israelites.

Num 22:5-6 He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Beor to Pethor, which *is* by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me:

6 Come now therefore, I pray

thee, curse me this people; for they *are* too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, *that* we may smite them, and *that* I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest *is* blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed.

Balaam kept resisting King Balak for a while because even he could not resist God's direct intervention. God spoke to Balaam and warned him should he get to speak at all, he was to only say what God directed him to say.

Num 22:37-41 And Balak said unto Balaam, Did I not earnestly send unto thee to call thee? wherefore camest thou not unto me? am I not able indeed to promote thee to honour?

38 And Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.

39 And Balaam went with Balak, and they came unto Kirjathhuzoth.

40 And Balak offered oxen and sheep, and sent to Balaam, and to the princes that *were* with him.

41 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Balak took Balaam, and brought him up into the high places of Baal, that thence he might see the utmost *part* of the people.

Balaam could only bless Israel. He kept doing this, each time King Balak moved him further away from the Israelites, as if that would weaken God's influence on him. But each time, Balaam could only do as God had said.

Num 24:10 And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together: and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed *them* these three times.

Balaam was held back from cursing Israel, but he knew that if he put a temptation in front of them, they would end up cursing themselves by *yielding* to that temptation. Balaam counseled Balak the king of the Moabites to invite the children of Israel to a party.

Num 25:1-3 And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.

2 And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.

3 And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.

The way we know this was done by the counsel of Balaam was because a battle ensued over this and Moses identified Balaam as the genius behind it all. More than that, it is confirmed in the New Testament.

Num 31:16 Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD.

What Satan couldn't do directly, he got the Israelites to do to themselves. There are times when we are certainly attacked by Satan, but more often, Satan gets us to do his work to ourselves. We might be able to withstand an obvious direct attack from Satan, but he often puts out something...not *so* bad, and we take the bait and are hooked. In this case, you can imagine the Israelite men saying, "It's just a party. It's not *so* bad. We'll have a little fun with the neighbors and make some new friends."

2. It's just...

Spiritual ruin doesn't come in by

careful planning. No one wakes up one day and say to themselves, "I think I will destroy my family," or "I think I will become a wasted alcoholic," or "I think I will put up a billboard on the turnpike to publish my sin before the world and ruin my reputation." Sin creeps into our lives little by little.

Prov 24:30-34 I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;

31 And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, *and* nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.

32 Then I saw, *and* considered *it* well: I looked upon *it*, *and* received instruction.

33 *Yet* a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

34 So shall thy poverty come *as* one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.

I think one of the most damning words in English has got to be *just*.

- The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would not kill Eve, it would *just* make her wise.
- An alcoholic starts off with *just* a little drink.
- An addict starts off with *just* a little.
- It's *just* a little innocent flirting.
- Halloween is *just* a little fun with the things of Satan.
- You *just* read the horoscopes or play with the ouija board for fun.
- Marriage is *just* about people who love each other.
- It's *just* catchy music.

Charles Spurgeon said: "Discernment is not knowing the difference between right and wrong; it is knowing the difference between right and almost right." This quote

highlights the importance of discernment in distinguishing subtle differences that can lead to significant consequences.

At random I googled one of the top 100 songs for 2016, *Blank Space* sung by Taylor Swift.

Nice to meet you, where you been?
I could show you incredible things
Magic, madness, heaven, sin
Saw you there and I thought
Oh my God, look at that face
You look like my next mistake
Love's a game, want to play?
New money, suit and tie
I can read you like a magazine
Ain't it funny, rumors fly
And I know you heard about me
So hey, let's be friends
I'm dying to see how this one ends
Grab your passport and my hand
I can make the bad guys good for a weekend

The next thing you know you'll see someone posting their kid doing this with karaoke.

Pokemon Go was not supposed to be dangerous because of people lurking to attack, but there is a different kind of danger when people think it is *just* a game.

Is *Pokemon* dangerous? Potentially, yes it is. It conditions the child who plays the game into accepting occult and evolutionary principles. Haunter can hypnotize, eat a person's dreams, and drain their energy. Abra reads minds. Kadabra emits negative energy that harms others. Gastly induces sleep. Gengar laughs at peoples' fright. Nidoran uses poison. The Psychic type of *Pokemon* are among the strongest in the game. Charmander, Haunter, Ivysaur, Kadabra, and many more

evolve...children are taught to use these creatures to do their will by invoking colored energy cards, fights, and commands. Much of it is reminiscent of occult and eastern mysticism.

I do not see how allowing children to play with games that encourage fighting, reading of minds, use of poison, mimicry, taunting, teleportation, hypnosis, and evolution can be a good thing. This is...accepting the occult and secular evolution. Is this what we, as Christians, want our children to meditate on? Of course not.

If children are conditioned to accept these things in youth, then they will be more likely to accept these ideas in adulthood. This leads people *away* from God's word and truth, not *toward* it.

– <https://carm.org/what-is-pokemon>

You don't *drift* toward holiness. You must diligently *seek* it.

People end up chasing the world for *just* a little fun.

Gal 5:7-9 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

8 This persuasion *cometh* not of him that calleth you.

9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

3. Our defense -

Rom 13:11-14 And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time **to awake out of sleep:** for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*.

Prov 6:10,11 *Yet* a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

11 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

Don't make provision for the flesh: don't allow opportunities for sin. Don't create opportunities for the devil to take advantage. Get rid of the things that you know will trigger you to sin.

1Thess 5:21-23 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When we want to give in to temptation, we tend to minimize the negative and maximize the pleasure in our minds. Take time to prove out in your mind what is really going on. Look into the future, look around and see what you are setting yourself up for. Abstain from something if it even has the *appearance* of evil to it.

We might get stuck in bad situations sometimes, but that should not become our excuse for sin for ourselves. Set yourself up by surrounding yourself with godliness.

Phil 4:8-9 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.

9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

At the very foundation of all this, of course, is making sure that you belong to God...

You may not think of yourself as a rebellious sinner. You're not out to curse God or commit scandalous crimes. But sin doesn't need to be loud to be deadly. Just as a small crack in a foundation can bring down a house, so "little sins"—little lies, little lusts, little compromises—can bring eternal ruin.

The Bible says, "He that believeth not is condemned already" (John 3:18). You don't need to do anything to become lost – you already are. But God, in His mercy, sent His Son not to condemn you, but to save you. Jesus took your punishment. He paid for all your sin, big and small, with His blood on the cross.

Don't wait until your life crashes down. Don't excuse sin as "not so bad." The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life. If you've never trusted Christ alone to save you, call on Him today. Ask Him to forgive you, and He will. He's not waiting for you to clean yourself up. He's waiting for you to surrender.

Christian, you may not be off in open rebellion, but have you let "just a little" creep in? Just a little compromise in your music, your entertainment, your integrity, your prayer life? Just a little skipping of church services. Just a little skipping of giving to church to heap up more of the world. Just a little neglect in what you allow into your home, your heart, or your thoughts?

You're still God's child, but are you walking closely with your Father? Or has a little leaven started to corrupt the whole lump? Sin defiles, even in small doses. God knows you won't be free from temptation on this side of heaven, but He's looking for surrendered ones. He's calling you back to holiness, not to shame you, but to cleanse you.

Maybe it's time to do some spiritual

housekeeping. Confess what you've been tolerating. Pull up the weeds you've been planting. Return to the joy of fellowship with God. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh." Take the little foxes before they spoil the vine.

Come back to the light—and walk in peace, purity, and power again.

1. Satan's insidious attack - Num 22:5-6, 37-41, 24:10, 25:1-3, 31:16
2. It's just... Prov 24:30-34, Gal 5:7-9
3. Our defense - Rom 13:11-14, Prov 6:10,11 , 1Thess 5:21-23, Phil 4:8-9