

“GOD HAS GROWN SOFTER ON SIN”

Prayer Requests

Focus

Some people have a caricature of God in their minds. They see him as all law and fury in the Old Testament but all gospel and fuzzies in the New Testament. People believe that God has grown softer on sin. If this lie stands, it could destroy souls. This lesson will seek to debunk this lie and give us an answer to those who believe it.

Introductory Activity

- ❖ You've been asked to write for the “Question and Answer” section of your church's website. You receive the question below. How would you answer? Try to come up Bible lessons or passages that support your answer.

The God of the Old Testament wiped out the world with a flood, sent plagues on the Egyptians, and commanded his people to kill the Canaanites. He created a world full of people but only revealed himself to one group and condemned the rest because they were born in the wrong place. In the New Testament, we are told that God is a God of love, that his followers were to go into all the world and tell of his love and that we are to follow Jesus' example of turning the other cheek. How can anyone believe that the God of the Old Testament is the same as the God of the New Testament?

Consistently Consistent!

- ❖ What do the following Bible passages tell us about God?

“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows” (James 1:17).

“It is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy’ ” (1 Peter 1:16, quoting Leviticus 19:2).

God _____

- ❖ What are some reasons people believe or want to believe the lie that God has grown softer on sin?

“Because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God’s wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed” (Romans 2:5).

Then the LORD said, “My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years...So God said to Noah, “I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. (Genesis 6:3,13)

The silence of God is not _____.

- ❖ Believing that God is soft on sin is soul-destroying! God does not mince words here. What would you say to a friend who is worried about these words because she keeps falling into her pet sin?

- ❖ God is not soft on sin; he is serious about salvation. How do the following passages help us see that?

If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left,²⁷ but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.²⁸ Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.²⁹ How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?³⁰ For we know him who said, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” and again, “The Lord will judge his people.”³¹ It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Hebrews 10:26-31)

“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

- ❖ Your niece is living with her boyfriend, and you try to correct her with God’s truth. However, she says, “I know it’s wrong, but God will forgive me anyway—I know what Jesus did for me!” What major misunderstandings does she have? What truths does she need to hear?

Discussion

- ❖ Some have likened the way God dealt with people differently in the Old and New Testaments to parenting. If your child stole something at age 5, 15, and 25, punishment would be different for each age but your attitude toward the sin remains the same. Is this a good analogy? Why or why not?
- ❖ Think of the sermons we hear in church: the pastor will preach the law and show us how we fall short, then he will preach the gospel and show us we are forgiven in Jesus. We know the message we will hear—and that’s good! However, is there a danger that we might start to believe the lie that God has grown softer on sin?

Group Discussion

- ❖ Exodus 34:6,7 is God's explanation of who he is. After reading the passage, pick out three attributes of God. Then come up with at least one example of each from the Old and New Testaments where God demonstrated that particular attribute.

And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation."

1.

2.

3.

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, the central message of the Bible is namely this: how your love for sinners moved you to sacrifice yourself on a cross to pay for the sins of the world. Remind us that our own personal sins made your bitter sufferings and death necessary. That is how much you hate sin, have hated sin, and how much you will always hate sin. Yet, fill us with the peace in knowing that because of your selfless sacrifice our every sin is fully forgiven and your righteous anger is removed. That is how much you love us, have loved us, and how much you will always love us. Help us to take the truths of sin and grace as seriously as you do. Amen.