

A Different Perspective
Living Life to the Full By Knowing Who I Am0
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The Perennial Pollution Problem

I don't know if you have ever noticed this, but living an average, normal everyday life creates dirt. I mean, just eating and drinking and living, just the basic things create waste. Carbon dioxide that we all breath out with every breath – if we didn't get rid of that it would poison us. Perspiration of course and we excrete waste. If we kept all of those things inside they would kill us in a pretty short time.

And then there's our home. If you don't tidy up on the way it becomes a mess. If you don't clean it each week it gets dirty and for no other reason than we've been living life in it. All good, all normal but life creates mess and dirt. It's inexorable. You have to wash out the shower or the soap scum builds. Even cleaning ourselves makes a mess.

On a global scale we call it pollution. It's a perennial problem. It's just the way it is. Now just living life creates a whole bunch of dirt and waste and if it's true physically then it's also true emotionally and spiritually. And that emotional and spiritual dirt and waste that we produce is just as toxic as the physical waste. It can poison us, it can rob us of life unless we do something about it.

For so many years I have to tell you, I used to hear Christians talk about sin, thinking "Go on, get a life. I mean, I don't need this guilt trip. I don't need to go to confession or to be absolved of anything or any sort of stuff like that. I mean I am basically okay. I haven't killed anyone, I haven't robbed a bank. Leave me alone". The notion of sin had no place whatsoever in my reckoning. It was a dog eat dog kind of world. There was plenty of dog to go around. "I'll tread on whoever I want to, I'll do whatever I want to as long as I don't break the law. I'm right Jack."

That was the kind of attitude I had. That's okay while life's going along basically okay, but you don't build many relationships and friendships that way. And you know as I was sharing this program the other day I found that there was no joy or satisfaction or contentment in that sort of life.

Now today's psyche is basically this: "Anything goes". But in the "anything goes" psyche not everything works. There's an article in my local newspaper recently on pornography. The pornography industry was trying to make pornographic videos more widely available to reduce their level of restriction and classification. In the "anything goes" philosophy well, what people do in their own bedrooms is their own problem. But there are consequences. There is very clear research out there that pornography leads to less intimacy in marriage and as a result more marriages are breaking down.

When I spend on me, me, me. That's great. But real satisfaction comes when we give of ourselves, of who we are, and what we have. It's not until we give

sacrificially to someone, to someone in need, that we really get satisfaction in life. And that's where we really discover who we are and what life's all about.

For many, many years I just kidded myself I was okay but it actually didn't work. Just living my life created waste and mess and dirt and pollution. And here's the rub, when we live the "I am the centre of the universe – me, me, me," model we want everything to flow in. And that stuff includes the waste and the mess and the dirt. And it stays inside with everything flowing in and it poisons our systems. It ruins our lives. Do you get it?

Maybe you've heard me talk on the program about sin, and you think "Why does he keep labouring this point?" I tell you why, because it poisons our lives. It robs us. It means instead of being the me I was meant to be, instead of living my life to the full, I let cancer creep into my soul and rob me of being the person living the life that God planned for me. And the same is true of you.

Here is the plan from the beginning:

"God said, "Let us make man in our image and our likeness and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over all the stock and over all the earth and over all the creatures that move on the ground". So God created us in His own image, male and female He created us. And God blessed us, and said "Be fruitful, increase in number, fill the earth, subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground".

0Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the earth. Every tree that has fruit on it will be yours for food. Then all of the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground, everything that's got a breath of life in it I give every green plant for food". And it was so. And God saw everything that He had made and it was really good. And there were the evening and the morning and that was the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

Now this is the initial plan. He made us in His image to be like Him, to have dominion over everything. He gave. Have you noticed He gave everything to us. But then we rebelled. We all have. Adam and Eve did, you and I have. *We've all sinned, we have all fallen short of the glory of God.*

Now just think over the last 24 hours, things that you and I have done in our heart of hearts that we know are wrong. We keep doing those things. We keep holding onto them. The poison is septic. It just ruins our lives. Have you seen an infected wound. It can kill you. Well that's what an infected soul does. It's ugly and at the end of the day it kills you.

The word for "sin" appears 421 times throughout the Bible. That means a big deal to God. And I've said this many times before and I'll say it again, I was astounded when I learned the true meaning of the word "sin". The Greek word that's used in the New Testament that we translate as "sin", it means literally

“to miss the mark” or we might say “to miss the point”. To live a life of sin means to live a life that misses the whole point.

You know, we have this sense of destiny. We want to be the person we were meant to be. We want to live life to the full. Well the one way to miss out on that, the one way is to turn our back on God and say I'll do it my way. I'm just going to do what I want to do, I'm going to live the “anything goes” model. And then when it falls in a screaming heap we get surprised. We're surprised when we don't have any satisfaction. We're surprised when our life is a mess. I'm sorry, but it's time to get in your face about this. I'm needing this just as much as you are needing this.

When I talk about “sin” I'm naming something for what it is. I was talking to a couple of smokers a while back. I used to smoke heavily and you know, as I talked to them about their smoking you know what their response was? “Oh we know it's wrong, we know we're stupid, we just can't stop.”

We get addicted to this stuff. We get addicted to the poison in our systems. We know it's wrong but we can't stop. We rationalize. We say it doesn't matter. We look at people that say it's wrong and we say, “Come on, stop moralising. Get off the grass. None of your business what I do with my life.” I guess it's not! But if you want to live the life that God intended you to live, if you want to live it to the full in all it's abundance, we need to deal with this. We need to deal with the sin.

When we come face to face with Jesus Christ we know in our heart of hearts the things that we've done wrong. You know there was that woman, you can read about it in John's gospel chapter 9 if you have a Bible. She was caught in adultery and they dragged her out to stone her in front of Jesus. And they were just about to trap Jesus. And Jesus said, “If any one of you is without sin, let Him be the first one to cast a stone”. And you know what happened? Those who heard Him began to go away, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left with the woman.

When we look Jesus in the face we know the stuff that's wrong in our lives. The question is, how do we fix that? How do we deal with that? Well, we'll look at that next week on the program.