

Why we sin when we know so much: Part 1

By: John Coe

Announcer:

John really freed me up last week, I have been trying so hard to cover and hide my shame and my guilt and he just said "Doug, you're just full of sin and you just need to admit it." So here I am, full of sin and I'm not covering in hiding anymore. My behavior hopefully won't change too much with that admission. But John, it really is freeing to know that the Spirit wants, wants us to be honest with who we are before Him and before each other so that He can do a work and we're not denying and suppressing what's really going on in our hearts. The problem is I looked at the subject for tonight and I, you know, I'm standing up here and admitting that I'm full of sin and John is looking at me he said, "You have no idea how full you are of sin." And so let's welcome up our lecturer John Coe; give him a warm welcome here.

[Applause]

An individual who is. Carl Camp is our church chairman and is one of the people who are helping us venture into this area of spiritual formation of this experiencing little transformation in his own life. So I just ask Carl to pray for John and ask that the Holy Spirit could really have a full reign to be a master teacher here this evening.

Carl Camp:

Thanks Doug, let's pray.

Father, thank you. Thank you for tonight. Thank you that you're here. And that all that's being done is to bring glory to you. We pray for John. We pray that you would put your words into his mouth. And then that you would make us really good listeners. And we'd listen and know how to let you work in our lives through the words that John says. So thank you for being with us and we just pray you would guide the whole evening. In Jesus' name, amen.

John Coe:

Thank you. Well I am glad to be back. I, I take it being back means that I didn't say anything too wrong or Doug wouldn't've invited me again. You know what I would like you to do is, I'd like you to take your hymnal for a moment. And, just as a reminder of what we did last week, turn to page, or hymn, 493.

I was, I was just, when I was taking a shower tonight, I was thinking of this in light of what I spoke about. And I thought I would read this. It's the hymn it is well with my soul, and I want to read stanza 3. And then I think we'll, we'll sing it. I'll actually lead - I'm not a good singer but I'll lead anyways. But he says, "My sin" and, and then a parenthetical thought, "My sin, oh the bliss of this glorious thought! My sin. Not in part, but the whole, is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more. Praise The Lord. Praise The Lord, oh my soul."

If you, as I've read those words, those words warmed your heart, that's what's wonderful. As I read those words, if your heart wasn't warm, if you were just, you know, wandering whatever. You know something? And this will be especially next week, that's cool too. Because

that means that the Spirit's inviting you into a deep conversation about, well, let's actually sing this together - the third verse, and the chorus.

[Singing]

My sin, oh the bliss of this glorious thought. My sin, not in part, but the whole. Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more. Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, oh my soul. It is well. With my soul. It is well, it is well, with my soul.

[Speaking resumes]

I want to read two statements that were sent actually to Doug this last week and then he forwarded to me. One is from, this was a quote from Dietrich Bonhoeffer - the book called Spiritual Care. He was a pastor during Germany, World War 2 in Germany. And he said that this, "Spiritual care does not want to bring about competence, build character, or produce certain types of persons. Instead, spiritual care uncovers sin and creates heroes of the Gospel." That, that really does kind of get at the heart. Now there's a hyperbole there; there's almost an overstatement. But last week there was almost an overstatement in what I was saying as well. But that really gets at the heart of what we were talking about last week. That the Christianity most fundamentally, not only in evangelism, but once we go on in the faith, it is about the capacity to open to the truth of our self in neediness and open to what Christ has done. And then this person sent a quote from Eugene Peterson he's a contemporary writer and he says, "In the Christian life our primary task," now this is interesting, "Our primary task isn't avoid sin, which

is impossible anyway, but it's to recognize sin." And I'm going to be talking about that tonight. I, I want us to, to ponder. Not to waste our life trying to say, "Self don't sin. [Thud] Self don't sin. Self don't sin!", but rather to be open to what God wants to show us in the truth of ourself.

And so last week, what talked about, and that'll be a kind of foundation for tonight, it was the Christ that taken away our guilt. That Christ has pardoned us and that now I'm totally acceptable to Him. And so if that's the case, then I just wanted to declare with my lips, even though my heart might be different at times, but I want at least declare with my lips. I don't want to do for myself what Christ has done for me. I don't want to do what He's done. He has taken away my shame. He's taken away my guilt.

And so as I said last time, I don't want to be a good boy in the power myself. I don't want to spend my whole life trying to generate being acceptable to you or to others. He already accepts me and the beloved. I'm already covered with His righteousness. And so as we said the last time I don't want to spend my life trying to cover myself or hide. I want to come out in the open. But having said that I also, I remember reading the little children's book The Velveteen Rabbit. I also want to become real. I want to become a real person. And for a believer to become real is to become, actually in my life, in my experience, what I already am in Christ.

And so everything I said last week doesn't conflict with all the commands of God that we see. The Scriptures are loaded with commands and what those are - those are my Father's desires. When I see a command, it doesn't come with condemnation. The command is, "My son, this is what I desire for you. I desire you now, my child, on the basis of what my Son did. I desire you to come into the open and enter, begin to enter, experientially into all that all that I am. All that I have become in Christ and my son, I do, I want you to become like my son Jesus. But you're

going to have to become like Jesus kind of from the inside out. And I want more deeply to abide with you and you with me."

Now, but there's something that gets in the way and this is what we'll talk about tonight. There's something that is a little messy in your heart. The truth is, God has now made His home in your heart, and that is going to be where all the action is. But there's a little mess inside. We call it sin. Last time, right, I called it crap. [Laughter] Now this, this week I met with Pastor Dale, and we had a good time together and, and [laughter] now why are you laughing at that? And as I was coming to the, you know I was sitting in the waiting room, and when he comes to the door the first thing he said, "Hey John! Come on let's get together and talk about our crap!" And I like, "Yeah! Yeah! That's where I'm at!" And then somebody raised an eyebrow in the waiting room, whaa-what? And he said "Oh yeah yeah. This is, these is are new Greek terms we're going to use." [Inaudible comment from crowd] Yes crap-ology, right? And we're going to make a Greek word out of this. [Inaudible comment from crowd] That's right. Yeah something like (inaudible) there's a Greek in there. It's (inaudible), right? That's so, I'm, this is cool. I'm with it, man.

This is, what we're going to see tonight is, is the flesh residue. I'm in Christ, but there's this flesh residue. There's this, this stuff. That's the psychologists' word stuff. And it gets in the way, it's in fact what is to be transformed. And I want to look at that stuff tonight. I'd like you to turn for a moment, this is just kind of by way of introduction turned to Ephesians Chapter 4. Ephesians 4. And we'll read at verse 22. As you're turning there, I want you to bow with me and I want us to talk to the Lord about something.

Father, as we are to hear your word. We open our heart to you.

What I'd like you to do while you're bowing your head. I'd like you to ask the Lord to show you two sin habits of your life. Just two. I don't want you to confess them or do anything with them. Just ask Lord, "Lord show me two sins that seem to be playing around in my heart and just let me talk with you about them to see how large they are. See what they do in my life." I want you just to take a minute, and ask the Lord to raise that. He accepts you, He already knows this.

[Pause for individual prayer]

Father, open our hearts as we hear your word. In name the Son, amen.

Let's start reading in Ephesians 4, verse 22. We'll just kind of pick it up right in the conversation. He says this, "That in reference to your former manner of life. You lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts," and the word the Greek literally is desires, "With the desires of deceit and that you being renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which is in the likeness of God, has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." According to Paul, we are now a new creature in Christ Jesus. There is not, in our theology, there is not two men or two kinds of persons inside of you -the old man and the new man and they're wrestling. We don't have time to kind of go through this, but we are now a new creature in Christ. Something happened at the core in our life. At the very core, the Spirit has now joined Himself and I am a new creature. And what Paul's saying in this text is, what I want you to do is on that basis, on the basis of what Christ has done for you, I once you've now put on Christ.

Now that's what I'm going to talk about the fourth or fifth time. What, what is it to put on Christ and to do it in such a way that I'm not trying to be a good girl? I'm not trying to cover myself or hide. What would that look like? But he also says here, that there is this what we might call the old man residue. Is this old man - it's the flesh. Paul still calls it the flesh and the flesh is it's the weakness of humanness apart from the Spirit of God. It's, it's your former manner of life. It's your virtues, it's your vices. And Paul wants to say this, and this is central for tonight, that no amount of putting on the new man, no amount of trying to imitate Christ, develop good virtues as a Christian, is going to do all the work of transformation. Because the truth is as, he says here, he wants us to put off the old self, that in reference to the former manner of life, in the former manner of life, I don't care whether you're converted at six or thirty six, your former manner of life is all those vices and the life that you lived apart from depends on the Spirit. So whatever that whole ball is, Paul wants to say, that you must put off because that, right now, is being corrupted in accordance with the desires of deceit.

So I think of a diagram here; let's say this is the heart and here at the very core. Is that on? OK, there you go. At the very core, I am a new creature now. At the very core of myself. And, and what has happened, and this is true of all of us, I've been a Christian 31 years, and this has happened I'm sure to you as well, that you have now developed many new virtues in the Christian life. These are, these are positive places in our life that have been, that have been growing. However Paul wants to say this: Yes, I want you to put on Christ. I want you to develop these new places in the heart; places of love and kindness and showing mercy. But then he says also, there are other pockets in our heart. Some big, some not so big. These are the former manner of life the f.m.l.. These are the sin habits structures. For some these might be worry. They might be excess fear, excess anger, envy, jealousy. These are, these are little pockets. In

fact, if I was to follow you or each of you around for about a week and a half, I would discover, in fact all you got to do is ask, if you're married, just ask your spouse they'll let you know no problem. But if I was to follow you around we would discover these little pockets and Paul will call this the former manner of life for the flesh. In this context he also calls it the old man.

The old man, this is not, again, the whole self in there fighting with another self, but this is residue from the former manner of life. And Paul wants to say this: No amount of putting on the new will deal with those pockets of the former manor of life. That unless I join myself with the Holy Spirit, they're not, get this, they are not going to go away. They do not go away on their own. In fact, Paul tells us that we have to intentionally put them off because right now, right while you're sitting there, they are still being corrupted in accordance to the desires of deceit. And so no matter how much I begin to do in my life and to put on, these things are going to continue to hound my life. And don't we find this exactly true.

I've been married to my wife, we're actually, next Wednesday, we'll have been married 31 years. Now, Greta has seen John change a fair amount over these 31 years. But all you have to do is ask Greta, "Uh, Greta, can you tell me a little bit about John's sin life?" She is an expert on my sin life. And of course I can return the favor. I'm an expert on her sin life. I have seen the same sins. And you might have found in your own life that although, change has occurred since I came to the Lord at 19, I have seen for these 33 years, I have seen some of the same old sins with different little faces continuing to pop up, continuing to pop up. And I at some times in my life, I say, "God, what? Why didn't that go away? What is going on?" And then we might even find yourself sometimes hiding from it.

You maybe have a person at work that you're jealous of or you're envious of. And how many of us like to say, "Oh there's envy. Good! Let's think about envy all day!" We just, we see

the person walking by, envy comes out, [groaning in discomfort] stuff it back. Then we talk to somebody else, then the person walks by again, [groaning in discomfort again] - back in. It's not going anywhere. In fact, here's what sin does Paul says, in the Christian life, sin has to do with these desires of deceit. Our tendency is to deceive ourselves and others about the sin. And Paul wants to say unless you're going to do something rather aggressively and rather intentionally, it's not going away, it's going to get bigger. It's going to get bigger because right now, he says, these old sins in the lives are still being corrupted in the desires of deceit.

So I want to talk about what does this process look like. This putting off. The last weeks I'll talk about putting on, the what does this putting off looked like and why isn't it easy? So now I'm in the notes. So if you want to, you can you can look at your notes, and see I'll just read. Why is spiritual change sometimes so difficult and so slow? How is it that a believer can know so much truth and desire the good, and yet so deeply struggle with sin? With being loving? With being obedient? Why doesn't the former manner of life just go away? Why don't we change more quickly? You know wouldn't it be cool, those of you who, especially work in counseling or teaching, somebody comes to you and says, "You know Pastor Doug, I, I'm just really struggling with my prayer life. I just, I don't know what's wrong." Wouldn't be cool if you could just you know get out, ya know, (inaudible), you say, "Well, brother, this Scripture says pray without ceasing." [Gasp] "OH MY GOD. WOAHH. I want to pray without ceasing now- that's I'm changed!"

Or wouldn't it be cool if you're sitting a counseling session? The person across from you says, "Ya know, I just don't, I'm really having struggles loving my wife as Christ loved the Church." And I say, "Well you know, gosh the Scriptures say, you know, you're supposed to love

your wife as Christ loved the Church." "Oh wow. That's it. WOAH! I'm, I'm changed!" That would be amazing.

You know what I find interesting, about my own life and the people I'm around, is that most people that I am around do not intend to sin. I should think about that. Now I'm not talking about someone who's just walked away from the Lord, I'm talking about people right here, dedicated folk- people that work at Talbot, Biola. Most of them do not walk around saying "You know something?" They don't get up in the morning saying, "I'm going to sin today. I'm gonna in big. You know last night, my wife, she bugged me to no end. I'm going to have a quiet time today of how I can return that favor with anger." Most of you don't wake up in the morning saying, "You know today, I'm, I'm going to be jealous all day. Today, I, I want to be envious. Today I want to have excess anger." I, I don't know of any; now if you do, the Biola Counseling Center, that's a, that's a real, there there's something there. But what I'm interested, is that most of your sin, are not ones that you have premeditated thought to do. You do not intend to do them and yet we sin.

Well the ancient theologians and even philosophers, pagans, thought about this question. They thought about how could it be that somebody knows what is the good thing to do and then can't do it. And so from Aristotle, Plato these pagans, to Augustine, Calvin, Luther, they all thought of this issue because they thought it plagued the Christian life. And so they developed. It started with Aristotle even a pagan, he said there were three kinds of ways that he saw generally good people relate to what they know to be good. Now he's not referring to someone who's just pursuing what is bad- you know like a Hell's Angel guy. You know Hell's Angels, you know the good for him is bashing heads, you know, and so he's, he's sad when he can't bash heads in

tonight. Well, I'm not thinking about that person. I'm thinking about those of us who know that good.

And this is first the incontinent person, I actually listed it there for you, this is just kind of introduction to open up. Now the incontinent person is not somebody who has bladder problems. [Laughter] That's not what it is. This was actually a moral term used before the, a, you know, a medical term. Here's what an incontinent person is, and tell me if you relate to this at all. An incontinent person or, or incontinence in a certain area, kind of moral bladder problems here, is somebody who knows the good, desires the good, chooses the good, "I'm going to do [thud] the good!", and then fails to do it. Alright, this is a person I think of, well this lets read the (inaudible) and then we'll talk about this. This is the person who's got a little more moral bladder control. They know the good, they desire the good, they're going [thud], to they choose to do the good, "Yes, I'm going to do it!" And they do the good with no joy.

Now I was in a context where I really came to see this, when I was in Talbot's seminary, it was back in '79. I worked at a place called the Schick Center. I don't know if any of you remember the Schick Center it was for the control of weight and smoking. Anybody? Anybody ever go there? [Laughter] Anyways, I worked in Encino for about six years. I became a supervisor actually of about 20 weight therapists and smoking therapists and I remember sitting across individuals in weight therapy and I saw this incontinence really play. I mean someone would say, and they would say with tears, "John, I am not going to eat the cake." And when they said cake, they meant the cake. They did not mean a slice. And now my wife says I need to go back to Schick. I'm getting a little robust here. But this was a very expensive program and it cost for about 4...800 dollars actually to go through. And the person in tears, "John. I'm not! I don't want [thud] to eat the cake! It's not good [thud] for me! I'm not going [thud] to! I desire not to.

"I'm NOT going!" And sure enough, next week, I mean in tears, "John! I ate the cake." And they would say to me, "John, I don't even remember doing it. When I looked in the mirror I saw the crumbs on my face. There is no cake in there!" [Laughter] That was quite an experience.

You know the Schick Center and you know we used to do, is we used to take food, and our task as therapists, not just put them on a diet, but it was to make the eating as distasteful as possible. So they would bring in doughnuts, or whatever, and we'd cook them in the microwave and they'd squeeze, you know the grease down there, and then the stuff it a mouth and then we had electrodes on their arms and they'd be, you know I'd be pressing the electrodes and they'd be getting shock therapy. And then I had fish emulsion and I'd be squeeze, ever had fish emulsion? Oooh bad stuff. Don't smell it. Fish emulsion and I'd be squirting it in their nose. And they're, you know they're ready to lose. And they're not allowed to swallow the food and then they spit it out on the plate. And there was, there was one story. This was before I became the supervisor, a therapist came in and shared with a supervisor and then my supervisor took me aside and said, "You know John, some really strange happened. One of our persons was in therapy with a client and after they were spitting the food out she turns because you're not going to make me not eat a split up are you?!" And the, well of course not! "Well John makes me do it!" Oh yeah! That was the coup de grâce that was. Yeah, eating spit up food, there you go.

But I saw, I saw many who felt really overwhelmed and depressed because of the incontinence in their life or the continence. Because even in the continence, you know, "I'm not gonna eat the cake. I'm not gonna eat the cake, I'm not gonna eat the cake, I'm not gonna eat the cake, (inaudible)" They're really having fun doing this. But then I just go to our own life. I mean how many of us have been convicted at times of, you know "I, I should pray more. That's it.

God, I want to pray more. This is a good. I, I choose [thud] to pray more. I'm going!" And then the next morning, [snoring, laughter.] We just don't get up, or we get up and it's dry.

You know Aristotle said, and again, he was a pagan. He said that generally if there is no pleasure reinforcement with the behavior, you will typically move from incontinence back I mean from continence back to incontinence because there's no payoff. And I saw that with my dieters over and over again. Or I think of a Christian who, a father who's really trying to work on patience. And so he's memorizing text, he might even be going to counseling with it. And he's, he's thinking through this in his life and I can just imagine him. He's focused on being patient. And so I can imagine him coming home from work, you know, he's been thinking about text and he puts in Christian music and OK we're cool. This is good, I'm patient. Everything's fine, we're good. Comes home, opens a door, the wife says "Honey, take the kids there's about to be a homicide in the house!" And so the father, or the mother is, ya know, just goes into the bedroom. Now it's taking care of the kids running around all of a sudden the dad, "STOP IT" and you know what he's going to feel right there. Gah.

You know what the emotion that is the sign of incontinence? It's regret. It's regret and frustration because we did what Luther called, the way he entitled this, he called this weakness of the will or acting against the will, acting against our better intentions. Wow. What's wrong?

And so from Aristotle to Plato to Augustine to Aquinas to Calvin, they thought hard about this problem. What is it? Because most of our struggles seem to be on the level of continence and incontinence because virtue, as it says here, and they all accepted this definition, is someone who knows the good, desires the good, chooses a good, man, you know I say in my will I'm going to do it and then I do the good with joy. Wow, wouldn't it be cool? If all the good things you knew took with joy? Well that will for sure be the kingdom, but I'm going to be

interested in this life. And so they began to ask what is going on in this? And what they kind of began to come to was, and this is where we're going to go, there must be something else going on in the heart of a person than what's going on on the surface that is there must be, up here some desire to do the good. That's what I want to do, that's my intention, that's the thing that I'm focused on. But there must be something else lurking in here and these things, whatever that stuff is, it must at times usurp my better intentions. There must be an internal warfare going on. And so that's where I want to talk about I want to talk tonight about the heart. And so I titled this Why We Sin When We Know So Much. I know an awful lot and I sin an awful lot. Why We Sin When We Know So Much; Healing the Hidden Heart by the Spirit.

So I'm going to give you now, what I normally do and tonight this would normally take about oh five or six weeks, probably about 15 17 hours in a class. I'm just going to kind of distill something here to give a taste about this problem and what, what it is we can maybe start doing to open up to the putting off. So parts of it I'm going to go faster, and others I'll slow down. So let's just start with the beginning with B. And you all know this, I don't need to reiterate this much, the Christian faith is foremost about the heart. You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart. Trust in the LORD with all your heart. In the New Covenant, Jeremiah 31:31, we talked about that the last time, all the action is going on in the heart. God says "I'm going to put my spirit in your heart and I'm going to write my law, my will right on your heart, I'm going to begin to work." He's going to begin to do stuff. Now I'm going to be asking next week how does He kind of do that? How does He write (inaudible) on the heart? But all the action is going on in the heart. This is what the Pharisees missed. And so just number one, the heart in the Scriptures is used for the real or the core person. The heart in the Scripture is the core of a person it's where their will and their affect and their intellect come together - it's the core of us. Proverbs

27:19, "As in water, face reflects face." The word reflexes and even there in the Hebrew it's just as in water face face same thing, "So the heart of man, man." You want to know what you are? It's your heart. That's who you are the core.

The Pharisees look good on the outside, but God knows the heart that's the core person. Remember Proverbs 23? This is about the flatterer. Remember it says, that the person flatters you with his words but his heart is not with you for as a man thinks in his heart. See he's acting one way on the outside, but you know, the flatterer, his hearts not with you for as a man thinks in his heart, so he is. Now in the Scripture, this is the most used psychological term of all the terms like of soul, of spirit, heart is the most used and it's used for everything we do. It's not just the emotions. With the heart we think, we feel, we remember, we obey, we love, we hate. The heart is everything we do. If you want to know what your heart is, it's what really drives you. It's what are your core concerns. What, what, where really are you at? When I think about my daughters, it's very easy to get at their heart. Ya know, when it comes sorry, I don't think her Sunday school teacher was here today, but, because we've been going here. But when my daughter, I say "OK it's time to go to church!" Here's my daughters: [coughing, talking softly and slowly] "Ok Dad". And they move so slow. Their heart is barely beating below. [Laughter] [buum] Their pulse, it's just I think maybe they're, they're dying. All I'd have to do is say this, "Hey! I tell you what, forget church. Tell ya what, let's go to Disneyland!" [Happy yelling] They'd be running around. Woo! Right on [inaudible]. They are in the back there. Why? Because Disneyland is in their heart. That's their heart. Jesus says, "Where your treasure is, that's your heart." So it's a one way to kind of know your heart is what you do. It's what you do.

That's why with the incontinent person, "I want to do the good, I want to do the good, I'm going to do it!" And they don't do it. You know there are some other core concern in the heart.

You know, every time you sin, you know there is something else going on in the heart. But now number two, and in this where I'm a little more concerned with, the heart directs our life. The heart directs the whole of our life. What is in the heart determines the whole of our life. This is Proverbs 4:23, "Guard over your heart with all diligence. Guard over your heart with all due diligence, for from it flow all the springs of life." Everything that's going to come out of your life, it's coming out of your heart. Now this is in. This is a piece of wisdom literature in the Old Testament and the Old Testament writer. The Old Testament sage. This is really the parenting literature of the old testament and the sage wants to tell parents this, that whatever you do with your children whatever you teach them reading, writing, whatever you do that's great, but the most important thing you can teach your children is, to guard over their heart. That is the most important skill in life because for your children and of course even for yourself, everything that is going to ever usher out of your life. It's all coming from the heart. And so how do we guard over it. So I just kind of want to put forth just a brief thing, two ways to guard over the heart externally and internally.

The first one's a little easier. We guard over the heart externally where we treat the heart a bit like a fortress. This is what I do with my heart, this is what I do with my children's heart. I treat it like a fortress and I don't want the bad to come in. I want the good to come in. And so as like a fortress, I kind of open and close the gate according to the good and the bad. Now my daughters, they don't always believe that their heart is that delicate a thing.

In fact I remember my daughters when they were like three, two and a half, I can't remember, they were just, they were little midgets down here. And they kept trying to talk me into watching a movie called Snow White. [Mimicking a child's voice] "Oh Daddy can't we watch Snow White?" And I said, "You know daughters, I think for right now Winnie the Pooh is

good. You know, there's a lady in Snow White she's not very nice. I don't think you'll like her."

[Mimicking a child's voice] "Oh Daddy, can't we watch it? Can't we watch?" OK. So I

succumbed to their wisdom, their sagacity. And sure enough, at midnight, I'm laying in my bed, two little munchkins climb in and one had her nose right next to mine. And the other said, "You speak (inaudible)". And she said, "Daddy, why did you let us watch that movie? [Laughter] That bad lady is in the closet." [Laughter]

You know what we don't know growing up because we're fools? Is we don't know how delicate the heart is. We, we think a little bit like our culture thinks; we think the heart or the person is like a billiard ball and we can take in anything and let it bang around on us and we can kind of mess around with it and throw out the bad and keep the good. You know, the heart doesn't work that way. The heart is more like a soft receptacle and whatever comes into the heart it leaves its imprint. It doesn't. You just can't push it out. I mean I thank God for a mind, but it's already made its impact. And so I'm really interested now in my life, at 50. You know I just don't want to take certain stuff in anymore. I just don't want that. I really want to open to the good and same with my daughters.

Now generally I think we do pretty well with this. Even in the evangelical church, and a lot of non-Christian parents, although this is a problem. But it's the next one that's the real issue, it's internally. How to guard the heart internally. This is Proverbs 22:15. I'll just give you the text Proverbs 22:15 is the Proverbs equivalent to original sin. It's the Proverbs equivalent to original sin and it says this, "That folly is bound up in the heart of a child. Folly is bound up in the heart of the child." If anyone has children, you know exactly what that means. Children are little folly machines. Their folly generators. I don't care if they were raised by Jesus and the Spirit.

[Laughter] Folly is already bound up here. Its, I mean my kids are they're, they're, they're, I mean

I love them to death, but can't they drive you crazy. They're in the back seat, "Don't be on my half. No don't touch my half. No that's your half, no that's my half. No don't (inaudible)." STOP IT. And then, "No, that's my half! No, no. (Inaudible) [Groan of exasperation]." They are folly machines.

They, the point here is, no matter how much external guarding of their heart you do, you will never guard their heart thoroughly by just doing that. Because they're generating folly. There's all kinds of stuff going on in the child. There's all kinds of issues and as they get older, as I see my 11 year olds get older, they're thinking of more stuff and its questions, "Well, I know Dad says that, but I, but I don't know what I want to do." Some of your children when they hit 15, they're the, "I know I shouldn't engage in fornication, I, but what do I want to do. I wonder what it's like. I heard people talking about it. I know I shouldn't take drugs, but, gah, what's it like? I don't know. What's going on?" All this stuff is going on in the heart of the child. I often think of what is going on in Sunday school. I can just imagine a little boy you know, Jimmy, standing in line and, you know, getting some water and some big guy moves in, [grumbling]. And little Jimmy just, mh-hm, BOOM! "Yeah, that felt good!" [Yell] And now he comes back to Sunday school the teacher says, "Now children. Jesus says that we are to love one another and be kind to one another." And this little guy, "Yeah, but what happens when that guy butts in line and hitting him felt so good, [groan]." There's stuff going on in the hearts of our children. And we are going to have to parent them internally. The point here is, somebody is going to have to go inside the heart because so much more is going on inside the heart than possibly couldn't even come in.

And so, as I'm around people in, in my Christian community, I think we do a pretty good job parenting externally. Making sure good doesn't come. Good goes in, making sure not too

much bad goes in and we parent their body. We seek to control them. We seek to guide them into good behavior and this is all good. And yet, if that's all that goes on, I guarantee this, in that community you have little time bombs going on. I remember, I used to lead a Bible study at a very conservative church. And these parents were doing, in many ways, a very good job with the children. But I was always concerned. Who is going into the heart of the children? Who is helping penetrate what's going on inside? And so, we would pray for the children before we'd send them off. We had a Bible study of about 50. This went on for about 14 years. I saw them being raised. And I'd always joke with the parents, we didn't have children at the time. I'd always joke afterwards, I say, "You know what I was hearing while we were praying for them? [Timer ticking noise]" Little potential time bombs. Because as we're parenting the body, and we're parenting so that no bad comes, in only the good. There's all kinds of stuff being generated inside, all kinds of questions, all kinds of thoughts, all kinds of desires, and it's just like a, it's like a pressure cooker it's building, building, building. And sure enough, we saw one of the 16 year old-BOOM! Explode. Left the faith. Left her daughter. Left her, left her parents. Just felt the rigidity.

Now, it can be on the other side too. I'm around a lot of psychologists and I bless them. Psychologists are weird, weird crew. I've been around them for 17 years. I've learned so much. But if there's one thing I've seen on the psychologist side to err on, if we evangelicals err on parenting the body, they are on parenting only the heart. And they don't constrain the body enough. And I remember, I remember one of these psychologists had come over for dinner. And they were, he was sitting across, he is fellow faculty at another Christian University, and his child sitting on his lap. And the child, same age as my daughters, they were about four then. The child, the child sitting on the lap, went BAM, in the dad's face. I mean, knocked it. I was like,

"Woah, this will be interesting." And he said, because he, I know, I knew his form of parenting, and so I knew that he would not inhibit this within either corporal discipline or any kind of restraint. And I said, "No Sally don't-" BAM! "Now Sally you know-" BAM! Now this is interesting, and I wanted to see my daughters so I looked down the table and here are my girls. [Laughter] And then they looked at me. [Laughter] Because my daughters know there'd be a homicide in the home. If that ever happened.

We need to, as I think of parenting, somebody is going to have to go into the heart of the child to deal with the mess or we have little time bombs going off. How many of you were parented that way? I, I bless my parents. My dad died again a few years ago, in his 90's. My mom is still live and I blessed them. We became very close. But until my conversion at 19, you know the truth of it was, I don't think I ever had a paragraph conversation with my dad. And you know the paragraph? It's a string of completed ideas, right? It, it was more, "John, clean your room!" And then it could even be more an elliptic statement, "Clean the room." I knew what that meant. And then it could even be just "Room!" And I knew what that meant. You know, my parents never asked me, "John, what is going in your heart? What is going on in your heart? What's, what's taking place?" And that was just not a question for them. And again I bless them. And I think the truth is, it's because they didn't know, and they didn't want to know what was going on in their heart. That's just the way it was. As long as the kids, you know three brothers, we acted OK everything went fine. It- we just did not do that kind of heart exploration and so stuff was just building and carrying on in my little heart.

You know the way that we handled emotions, we, I lived in a Norwegian family and so we didn't really talk about any of that stuff. I hardly ever saw my parents fight. I remember one time we

were driving somewhere. It was on New Year's Day and I saw them fighting, hardly ever saw them fighting, and they were really going at it. And then we pulled up to the house my mom turned around, and in kind of divine fiat said, "There is no problem going on between your dad and I!" [Laughter] And the brothers looked at one another and [laughter], "This is great. This is incredible!" Now I guess I'm glad I had parents, because you know I had some people who bring their stuff right into the house, you know? And that's it gets a little messy. But you know, it would have been good, had, could my parent's truth talk about that, "You know John, Bob, and Norm, there's stuff going on and Dad and I are going to have to deal with this. And you don't need to worry." And then later on, "You know, when we dealt with this." But that just wasn't the stuff, this internal world. And the principle here is that no amount of being good. No amount of building virtues in Christ, are going to put off the stuff that has already started to develop in your heart.

Now this is going to be for true of parenting. As a parent, I cannot just parent the body of my child. I have to parent their heart. I have to now begin to engage inside with my daughters. To begin to let them experience what's really going on, but it's going to be the same in the Christian life. The Christian life is not about living from the body and keeping the bad out and bringing the good in. Something is going to have to enter into my heart. Something is going to have to go into these places, to begin to deal with this hard or it won't be dealt with. You know, you know what the reformers called this? This is aside. This is what they called the double knowledge.

Calvin. He starts his Institutes for the Christian Religion. He says, "There's two pieces of wisdom." In fact, I think I said that on the very front. Yeah. If you look at the top of the first page this is, this is the first lines of the Institutes on the Christian Religion, "Nearly all the

wisdom we possess, that is to say true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and ourselves." Augustine writes in Soliloquies, "I desire to know God in the soul. Nothing more. Nothing so whatsoever." The reform- the reformers said this, "In our preaching and in our teaching and in our lives the knowledge of self and the knowledge of God have got to wed and kiss. They must come together." If they don't come together something one is going to happen to our life and here's what they said, "If you have just the knowledge of God without the knowledge of self, it will usually result in theological arrogance. You will usually measure yourself by what you know of the Scriptures and it will also result in superficiality of growth because you won't know what's going on inside here. But on the other hand the knowledge of the soul without the knowledge of God results in kind of a self-absorption and narcissism."

And now I've been at the School of Psychology and I've been at the Divinity School and I've seen the extremes of both. At the Divinity School, the focus is the knowledge of God, not much of the self. And so the preacher who stands up who has that training alone, he knows the text, but he doesn't know what's going on back here. And he can't help others articulate that. It's so cool I, I was with Pastor Dale and he was telling me what Howard Hendryx, one of his mentors, said. That Hendrix had said something like this, "None of you here," talking to preachers, "are called to teach the Bible." Then he waited, and then he said, "In fact, no one in the history of the Church has ever been called to teach the Bible." And then he was waiting for a crucifixion to occur at Dallas Seminary, and then he said, "The only call I know is that we're called to teach people the Bible." That's so cool. That is so cool.

The preacher, the teacher, ourself if we're going to grow, you know we're going to have to be students of? We're going to be students of the text. But then we're going to have to be students of the heart. We're going to have to be students of what is going on in the heart? What is

driving this heart? And especially if we're going to do anything about putting off this stuff in the heart. And again at the School of Psychology, if they are on any side, it's the self-absorption with the self. Apart from a deep understanding of the scriptures or apart from a deep understanding of the Ministry of the Spirit in the heart. So I say here in general principles, "In general what comes out of one's life is not by accident, but it's already in the heart and the degree to which one is surprised by what comes out of one is the degree to which one does not know his heart." Have you ever been surprised or shocked of what comes out? Or have you ever had great regrets and frustration because of stuff coming out? Excess anger? Impatience? You know why? Because you don't know what's in your heart. [Gasp] How shocking, how shocking. I was not parented from the inside out.

By the time I became a Christian at 19, I didn't have a dispensa- I, I didn't have a disposition to know what was going on. In fact, my motives were quite opaque. We'll now see, and this is the most important part, why is the heart so impregnable? Why is the heart like a fortress so slow to change? Why can't we just speak good right into the heart? Why, why can't I just, if I have a problem with impatience, why can't I say, "Impatience-BE GONE!" Wouldn't that be cool? Anger, excess anger, BE GONE! Exercise you from me! It doesn't work that way. What is going on here? This is what we call the biblical doctrine of the hidden heart. This is the closest to what psychologists call the unconscious. But what we mean by hidden heart is, the material that is in the recesses of the heart. So here are some texts. You all know this text, Jeremiah 17: 9 and 10, "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick." The heart, the core of me. The thing that really drives me, that is more deceitful than anything else, is desperately sick. Who can understand this thing? I, the Lord, I'm in the business of searching the

heart. You know, that is the business of God. And as we're going to see later, He's asking us to participate with Him in this, to search the heart.

Proverbs 16:2, we think we're clean God, God knows and weighs the inner person. And then interestingly Proverbs 14, "Even in laughter," Let's think about this one, "Even in laughter, the heart may be in pain and the end of joy may be grief. Even in laughter, the heart may be in pain and the end of joy may be grief." What he's saying there in that principle is this that you may be experiencing something here on the surface, you may be experiencing laughter, you may be experiencing joy, but he says even in laughter, the heart may be in pain and the end of joy be grief. And you know has the picture there, the picture is that you're experiencing joy at one moment and then something happens and boom, all of a sudden, grief. You see, the truth is, as we start now thinking about this hidden heart there's always more going on in your heart than what's on the surface.

I think of all a little boy, I can imagine a little boy, named Timmy. And this boy was around 9, didn't know his mother ever. His dad was a drug dealer. Never knew the dad. And this little boy, you know what he does not want to think about? Dad. He doesn't want to think about mom because just to think about those things [throaty sound effect] all kinds of static going on in the head. And I talk to this little one. And you say the word dad in his eyes went glaze. Well I can imagine this little guy, swinging on the playground, having a great old time (inaudible) [ahh] "This is great!" Swinging. And then on his phone his friend says, "Hey Timmy! Why don't you and your dad go to the Dodger game with us tonight? My dad and I are going!" What's going to happen to little Timmy in just [snap] one second? In one second. And so we think of this, here's, here's his little heart. And he's having joy. The last thing he wants to think about is anything that will bring him pain. But you know something? You can bet, you can bet that inside, where little

Timmy's eye is, somewhere in that heart, he's got a whole set of beliefs and desires about dad. As I would talk to him, he'd say, "You know, I don't know why the social workers won't let me see my dad. I don't know but when I did it was painful. I don't like it. I, I, I, but I want to see him, but yet I know he's angry at me. I hate the social wo-," it's just a mess!

And what little 9 year old can sit there and say, "You know, it's good for me to experience this mess and pain because like Paul the Apostle says, when I'm weak then I'm strong. So, I, so this is good. I just want to think about this." That's not what he's going to do. And so what he's going to do is, he has a little roadblock up here that says "Don't go in don't go in." Because inside there, there are going to be what Dr. Sosi at the seminary, we call deep beliefs about Dad and deep desires about Dad. And that's painful stuff that's a mess and all that has to happen in the environment, is we just need a little stimulus. All someone has to do is say Dad and all of a sudden you know what happens in a moment. He thought he had the hatches buttoned down on that stuff. By the way this is the crack. He thought he had the hatches buttoned down, all someone has to do is say Dad. [Dropping sound effect] It's out. He is consciously aware of it. And you know what he's going to do? He's going to try to stuff it right back in. This is called, in psychology, we call these defenses. You know what a defense is? Here's what a defense is, just so if you, if you're interested. A defense is anything that you do to avoid painful self-awareness. It's very simple, very simple a defense in life is anything you do to avoid painful self-awareness. You know one defense is? [Soft laugh] Defending yourself against criticism. Right? My wife comes and tells me something rather interesting about myself. Oh I don't think so. There it is! A defense. I will do anything I can to avoid painful self-awareness. Well this defense is a very, one that we've used so much in our life as children. It's called repression.

Repression. Just stuff it back in. You know what, I thank God for that in the fall. Can you imagine what it would be like if you had to think and dwell on everything that everyone has ever said or done to you? I mean just go to a grammar school, right that is the playground of all pathology and sin in the world. Remember, remember grammar school? "Hey fatty! Hey four eyes! Hey stupid! Hey you can't play with us. You're dumb you can't be with us." Incredible. It's incredible anyone survives. Well it's amazing we have this ability in the fall. We can stuff all that; but here's the thing about defenses, with every defense there's a price tag. With every defeat, every, every defense has a price tag because what's in the heart, what's in the heart, if it's not dealt with it, can control us at any moment. Can control us at any moment.

So here I want you to know some things about the hidden heart. So I have, I think I have a list there. I'm going to go through this list. These are things that I think you and I need to know about the hidden heart if we're ever going to put all the stuff in the hidden heart. The first is this. There is always more going on in the hidden heart than is on the surface. There is always more going on in the heart. In, in little Timmy's heart, there's all kinds of stuff about Dad; there's all kinds of stuff about Mom. All kinds of stuff and what psychologists tell us, is that it's usually the negative things we don't want to be aware of. And so you know what that stuff is also, it's not just the stuff of pain, this is, this is stuff of pain, but this is also going to be our vices, our sins. The stuff in the heart, this is going to be worry, this is going to be envy, this is going to be jealousy, this is going to be excess anger. This is going to be the stuff that I don't necessarily want to walk around.

When I was 15, 16, 17 I didn't want to walk around saying, "Ya know, let me look at my bad stuff!" And now I find even as a believer, I don't want to walk around looking at that stuff all day. And this stuff becomes part of the hidden heart. There's, there's a lot of stuff going on in

here. And there may be little signs that we said, "Don't go in." Because when you go in there you feel guilty, you feel ashamed, you feel frustrated. So don't ponder the bad. Don't meditate upon your bad. But here's, and again I thank God I guess I don't have to think about it all the time. It's not always in my face. But here's the second point. This is the rub. The degree to which you have a hidden heart, a degree to which there is stuff in that heart, whether pains or vices, sins of the heart, the degree to which you have a hidden heart of negative beliefs and feelings around these things that we have not dealt with is the degree to which we are not in control of that material and it can control you. It control you at a moment.

Now back to Timmy. Timmy, I don't know now I have not seen Timmy a long time. I don't know what's going on here. But I do know this, back then if he hasn't dealt with this, every time he hears the word Dad, stuffs coming out, stuffs coming out. He's not in control of it. Do you know when, when kids who have these kind of experiences, when they go to movies and they see movies about a dad or a mom, you can imagine what a purgative experience this is for them, all kinds of stuff. But now here's the point for us, I want to say it's going to be the same thing with all of what we might call the sins of the heart. It's going to be the same thing with all the sins that we commit that have become now habits of our heart.

Notice. Here's a picture. And here's now, I am this new creature with the Holy Spirit. But I can imagine a sin I might have and this is called worry. Not that I have that sin, of course. But it could be for you, excess anger, envy, jealousy, depression. You know depression is? Depression is anger turned inward. Now you're just beating yourself up, rather than somebody else. Whatever these vices are, I can imagine, I might be teaching class and all of a sudden I'm at the end of the class. I'm feeling fine, I'm singing songs to myself [sings softly] "Trust and obey, (inaudible)" Everything's fine- everything is FINE! Jesus is good, it's good, it has been a great

day! I go home and Ja-, and Greta meets me at the door and Greta says, "John, something terrible has happened. You need to sit down." Woah, OK something's going on in my heart now there's rumblings taking place. Now when Greta was a little crazier than she is now, [laughter] here's what she might have said to me, "John, you need to sit down and we need to pray." And then she would start praying, "Oh Lord help John be patient with me right now. This is going to be hard on him. Oh boy, oh God just help John slow down and not be too angry. This is bad." I'm ready to come out of my seat.