

Train Our Hands For Truth
InterChange: Youth 2014

Young people being raised in the church tend to have a strong, good desire to strive to please leaders and parents. The enemy uses this desire to first condemn us for our failings, convince us that the appearance of righteousness is just as good as the real thing, separate us from truth and each other, and then encourage us in hidden sin; but God's plan of escape for us is to run toward the truth and live in the light.

How many of you have heard these scriptures before?

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."
(Ephesians 6:1-3 ESV)

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. (Proverbs 22:6
ESV)

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. (Colossians 3:20 ESV)

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Hebrews 13:17 ESV)

Being a young person in the church usually means you want to do the right things.

- you like pleasing your parents and leaders
- you like feeling clean before God
- you like the results of living right
 - you're given freedom
 - you're trusted
 - you're complimented
 - you're set up as an example

Good minions

Have you heard these?

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:23 ESV)

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way;(Isaiah 53:6 ESV)

The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one. (Psalm 14:2, 3 ESV)

Purple minions

We know these are true but a lot of times don't really believe them. We think because we got saved - especially if it was as a young child - that we should NEVER sin anymore. But guess what - we all do.

THE PLAN OF THE ENEMY

"Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." (1 Peter 5:8 ESV)

Eph 6 - why do we need armor to fight if he's not coming after us?

Phase One: Condemnation

-I should've been able to do better

-I shouldn't have fallen for that

-I've messed up everyone's opinion of me

-all the rights I've enjoyed bc of my good behavior will be taken away now

-I've ruined my life and altered the plan of God for my destiny

The devil knows we will fail, but somehow we forget that part. Examine these:

-"I should've been able to do better" = my ability

-"I shouldn't have fallen for that" = my discernment

-"I've messed up everyone's opinion of me" = people's love for me is conditional and based on my behavior

-"all the rights I've enjoyed bc of my good behavior will be taken away now" = the reason I enjoyed privilege was not because of sonship, or someone else's goodness or foresight; it was a reward for fitting the mold

-"I've ruined my life and altered the plan of God for my destiny" = I, not God, am ultimately in control of my destiny

None of these point to faith in Christ or the power of the cross working in our lives.

So we've already fallen for Phase One of his plan. We are relying on ourselves instead of Jesus. Sets us up for...

Phase Two: Fake It (i.e. Lie)

We messed up, and now life is over. UNLESS! Unless no one finds out! So we hide. Even though

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. (James 5:16 ESV)

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9 ESV)

If we confess, people will know. And that will clearly ruin our life. So we pretend everything is the same as it always was in order to MAINTAIN APPEARANCES. We lie. According to the Bible, this means we cannot be healed, forgiven, or cleansed.

Phase Three: Separate

Now that we're trying to keep people from knowing the truth about our situation, we have walls up.

- friends can't get as close
- we fear leadership bc we fear exposure (they used to be our friends but now we fear them)
- we compound our guilt
- we find ourselves in the company of others who share our same struggles
 - this is a big one, devil loves this one
 - gives us validation for our condition
 - dulls the need for righteous relationships bc the emptiness is being filled
 - brings us into a place of judgement of the values and people we've left behind
 - if you find yourself here, be concerned, be awakened, be fearful before God - it means you've left the company of the righteous and are in danger - 2 Cor 11:14 says "Satan disguises himself as an angel of light"

Phase Four: Continue

You've sinned, you've hidden it, you've pulled away from those who could help, and it worked! Life is still good! No one found out! People look at you the same! God hasn't struck you with lightning or had the earth open up and swallow you! Therefore...

It must not be that bad, and I can probably keep this up. Dualism. Two lives that are polar opposite and will never meet and don't affect each other.

Two problems with this:

1. Yes, it is that bad, and probably worse than you realize, and
2. No, there's no way you can keep this up.

1. Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin? (Romans 2:4 NLT)

The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment. Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live, looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along. On that day, he will set the heavens on fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames. (2 Peter 3:9-12 NLT)

2. Behold, you have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out. (Numbers 32:23 ESV)
 For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light. (Luke 8:17 ESV)

Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops. (Luke 12:2, 3 ESV)

For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil. (Ecclesiastes 12:14 ESV)

Yet this is how our culture lives - segmented lives, compartmentalizing. I have my school friends and my

church friends and my Instagram friends and my neighborhood friends, my movie friends and my old best friends from where I used to live, mother/father figure friends, actual blood relatives, service organization friends - and we think we can be a different person to each one of those groups! In fact, we pride ourselves on being able to fit in so well to so many places. Didn't Paul say he was all things to all men?

Uh, yeah. This is actually the context for that:

For though I am free from all, I have made myself a SERVANT to all, that I MIGHT WIN more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might SAVE SOME. I do it all for the SAKE OF THE GOSPEL, that I may share with them in its blessings. (1 Corinthians 9:19-23 ESV)

Sorry. Paul wasn't dualistic.

SO WHAT DO WE DO?

How do we stop this cycle and avoid falling prey to the enemy's plan?

Simple. Live in the light.

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (1 John 1:5-10 ESV)

First, do not be deceived - EVERYONE has sinned. Sometimes we feel like nobody has ever been this bad before and we are somehow the worst person on the planet. This is already condemnation.

My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous. He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world. (1 John 2:1-2 NLT)

Second, confess!

-to the appropriate person(s)

-often

Third, run TO your parents and leaders.

Rom 13:1-5

Fourth, stop it in your head - BEFORE you give in. Become accountable to someone.

Ro 13:11-14

Fifth, BE WHO YOU ARE IN CHRIST. ALL THE TIME.

Eph 5:6-15

Our desire to obey God and love our leaders and parents is such a good thing! It is sick and twisted that this is the very thing the devil uses to trap us; that by accusing us because we aren't perfect we then start to pull away from holy things - first out of embarrassment and shame, later out of a desire to stay hidden in the darkness. But God has provided a way of escape, and it is that he called us out of that darkness and into His marvelous light. If we will run TO people instead of AWAY from them when we find ourselves struggling, we will give into sin and temptation far less. The house of God is a place of safety, and it is especially that for His young ones. Run TO the people of God. Speak and confess to the people of God. Seek friendships with the people of God. The church is designed to help us live in marvelous light.