



Cape Coral Church of Christ

1010 S.W. 20th Avenue

Cape Coral, Florida 33991

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<http://www.thelordsway.com/capecoralfl>

Schedule of Services

Sunday: Bible Study: 9:30 A.M.

Worship: 10:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday: Bible Study: 6:00 P.M.

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Sin Wears a Mask

The writer of Hebrews warns, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God, but exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:12-13).

This is both a warning and an exhortation to God's children. To become "hardened" is to become morally and religiously obstinate and stubborn, with the resulting unwillingness to be submissive to the will of God.

Sin is deceitful; it gives a wrong impression. It wears a mask. By means of this mask, sin is able to lead some to become hardened against the grace and love of God. Below, a few of the "masks" which sin "wears" will be listed and briefly explained.

1. Sin Wears the Mask of "Beauty." In anticipation (that is, prior to the act), sin appears to be beautiful. In retrospect, it is seen to be ugly. Each of us should regard sin as a hideous monster who wears the mask of beauty.

2. It Wears the Mask of Being a "Servant." In prospect or anticipation, sin appears to be something that will be one's servant.

However, in retrospect sin is seen to be a master (consider the power to enslave in such matters as tobacco, alcohol, drugs).

3. Sin Wears the Mask of Being "Advantageous." Sin promises what it cannot give. In the Garden of Eden, the serpent said, "Ye shall be as gods" But, as every Bible student knows, the eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil did not bring advantage to their lives; it brought destruction. The serpent promised that only good would result from their disobeying God. But sin wears a mask; it is a monster who wears a mask of "advantage" and "beauty." In effect, he said, "Do not be afraid, the things which God has told you about sin are mere fairy tales. Nothing of any significant consequence will happen to you because of sin."

4. Sin Wears the Mask of Being "Right." But, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 16:25). Men must believe and obey the gospel (Mark 16:15-16). Accepting or teaching any other religious message will cause one to rest under the anathema of God (Galatians 1:6-9).

5. Sin Wears the Mask of "Reaping What It Does Not Sow." The Bible plainly teaches that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7-9). Satan wants men to believe that they can sow to the flesh but reap eternal life. But such cannot be done (Galatians 6:7-9; Romans 6:23). Sin will result in a harvest (during earthly life) of degradation, fear, misery, frustration, agony, sorrow, unhappiness, worry, and many other such things. In the life to come, those who have lived and died in sin will reap the harvest of eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46).

So, let us exhort one another daily, while we have the opportunity, lest we be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. God loves us and wants us (and all other people) to be saved by the blood of Christ. Let us not lose the blessing of eternal life by the deceitfulness of sin.

How to Handle the Gospel

Paul told Timothy to "handle aright the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). This passage also tells us that God's approval depends upon our handling the gospel properly. What does this involve?

Don't be ashamed of it. Paul suffered continually for the gospel's sake because he wasn't ashamed of it (Romans 1:16). Many people try to be "closet Christians," ashamed for others to know that they are

Christians. We must be willing to suffer hardship with the gospel (2 Timothy 1:8).

Don't pervert it. Paul denounced those in Galatia who perverted (change to a wrong purpose) the gospel (Galatians 1:7). Some wrest (twist or torture) scripture to their own destruction (2 Peter 3:16). Those who tamper with the truth commit spiritual suicide!

Obey it. The gospel is not for us to read and forget but to hear and obey (James 1:22-25). The Lord will condemn the disobedient at his coming (2 Thessalonians 1:8).

Defend it. Paul defended it (Philippians 1:7, 16,17). In spite of the rich heritage of able defenders of the gospel (inspired and uninspired), misguided men are now saying it needs no defending, only proclaiming. But if it will defend itself, why will it not also proclaim itself? We must contend earnestly (Jude 3).

Hold fast to it. Once we have embraced the gospel, we must cling to it (1 Corinthians 15:1,2). If we drift away in neglect (Hebrews 2:1-3) or make "shipwreck of faith" (1 Timothy 1:19), we are doomed! How awful to stand at the judgment with but a memory of faithfulness, long ago abandoned!

Live it. "Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Philippians 1:27). It isn't enough to be good professors; we must be good practitioners of the gospel. Do our neighbors, kinfolk, friends, and work associates think highly of the church or poorly of it because of our conduct? Give no one cause to call you "hypocrite." Let your life habits adorn the gospel (Titus 2:10).

Preach it. Jesus commanded that we preach the gospel everywhere because no one can be saved without it (Mark 16:15,16; Romans 1:16). Like Paul, we need to be "ready to preach the gospel," believing that "woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel" (Romans 1:15; 1 Corinthians 9:16). The gospel wasn't given to be hoarded, but to be preached!

There is nothing in all the world comparable to the gospel. It is that unique message from heaven that reveals God's plan to redeem man from sin through his own Son. With what infinite and loving care God has given it to us and preserved it for us to this very hour! With what incomparable cost – the very blood of Jesus – was it certified and energized! It is so important and precious to God that our attitude toward it gauges our attitude toward Christ himself (John 12:48).

I Missed Church ... But God Understands!

Quite often, when people are encouraged to put aside whatever is preventing them from attending services regularly, they will say, "Well, I really should be there, but I think God understands!"

God has gone on record in Hebrews 10:25 as saying, "Not forsaking the assembling" He does not understand why some of His people willfully hold to habits of forsaking the assembly! God does understand that we need to meet to praise Him and study His word. God understands that others need the encouragement of your presence; we are a family that He put together. He does understand group fellowship, the power of people meeting together for mutual strengthening.

But do we understand those things? Many times we do not – and that is why so many allow Satan to bring one little excuse after another into their lives until they are separated from our God and His assembly.

Let us pray that God will help us to understand the need, the purpose, and the power of attendance to Bible classes and worship services whenever the doors are open. And let us pray for the courage to do our part in making the gathering of the saints a time of love, praise, and spiritual growth! It is a matter of spiritual life and death, really, not only for us, but also for others whom we are influencing. Think about it!

I Am the Way

A man wishing to travel across a certain desert, hired a local guide to take him. When the two men arrived at the edge of the desert, looking ahead, the traveler saw only trackless sands without a trace of a footprint, not a path, and certainly no road. Turning to his guide he asked, "Where is the road?" The guide said, "I am the road."

When Thomas asked the Lord, "How can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man comes unto the Father except by me" (John 14:5-6).

Indeed, Christ is the only way to salvation. Many people are following a path of their own choosing which can only lead to destruction. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 16:25). It will be the word of the Lord, not man, which will judge us (John 12:48).

Let's be sure we are traveling HIS path!