

Ladies Bible Study
All Things for Good
Lesson 3: Chapter Two Pt. 2, Pages 36-50

Chapter 2 pages 36-50

- The **worst** things work for good to the godly
 1. ***The evil of affliction works for good to the godly***
 2. ***The evil of temptations is overruled for good to the godly***
 3. ***The evil of desertion works for good to the godly***
 - a. Who deserts who?
 - i. “God is just in all his dealings. We desert Him before He deserts us... We usually desert God first; therefore we have none to blame but ourselves” (36-37).
 - b. How do we desert God?
 - i. “When we leave off close communion with Him... When we leave the guidance and conduct of His Word...” (36-37).
 - c. How does desertion feel?
 - i. As when the sun goes down all is dark so when God withdraws Himself the soul is **dark**.
 - ii. Agony of conscience
 - iii. You dispute against yourself and think God has cast you off.
 - d. Four tools for facing spiritual desertion:
 1. ***None but the godly are capable of desertion.***
 - a. How can being deserted evidence you to be a child of God?
 - b. “The Christian is known as much by his inner peace as by his inner war” (Ryle).

2. *There may be the seed of grace, where there is not the flower of joy.*

- a. Does every believer always personally sense the joy of salvation?
- b. Where the seed of saving grace is present, the flower of joy is sometimes absent.

- i. Ps. 51:12

3. *These desertions are but for a time.*

- a. Ruth 1:1-6

- i. Who deserted who?

- ii. For how long?

- iii. Did God cast off forever?

- iv. “The tender mother sets down her child in anger, but she will take it up again into her arms, and kiss it. God may put away the soul in anger, but he will take it up again into his dear embraces, and display the banner of love over it” (38).

4. *These desertions work for good to the godly.*

- a. Desertion helps you see the **misery** of the world. If you have all the stuff of the world and you are miserable, it is because you weren’t made for this world. This world cannot satisfy your soul.
- b. Desertion helps you see the **majesty** of God. When you realize the world can’t satisfy your soul, you are driven to the one who can.
- c. Desertion helps you appreciate God’s love more.
 - i. Absence makes the heart grow fonder.
- d. Desertion makes you increasingly long for God.

- e. Desertion sends the Christian on inquiry.
 - i. Do I have a particular sin in my life that is leading me to feel deserted?
- f. Desertion gives us sight of what Christ suffered for us.
 - i. You may feel deserted, but you will never be deserted. Christ was deserted for you. He bore your hell that you might receive His heaven.
- g. Desertion makes heaven sweeter.
 - i. "Our comforts are like the moon, sometimes they are in the full, sometimes in the wane" (41)
 - ii. "The Lord brings us into the deep of desertion, that He may not bring us into the deep of damnation. He puts us into a seeming hell, that He may keep us from a real hell" (41).

4. ***The evil of sin works for good for the godly***

a. *The sins of others are overruled for the godly (pages 36-46):*

- i. The sins of others produce holy sorrow.
 - 1. We must not rejoice over the sin of our neighbors, but weep. We weep when God's glory suffers.
- ii. The sins of others produce prayer against sin.
 - 1. You see the wickedness around you and you pray for God to put an end to it.
- iii. The sins of others make us the more in love with holiness (also viii)
 - 1. When you see the ugliness of pride in another it makes you long for humility in your own life.
 - 2. "The black face of sin sets off the beauty of holiness all the more" (43).

3. "The more unholy others are, the more holy you should be" (46).

iv. The sins of others produce opposition to sin.

1. When others violently oppose the truth, we more valiantly contend for the truth.

v. The sins of others make us more earnest in working out our salvation

1. When you see the wicked giving their blood, sweat, and tears to sin themselves to hell it makes you want to give your all to serve Christ on the path to heaven. You want "holy sweat."

2. "Shall impure sinners do the devil more service than we do Christ? Shall they make more haste to a prison, than we do to a kingdom?" (44).

vi. The sins of others enable us to see the sin in our own hearts.

1. "What is in other men's practice is in our nature... Christian, though you do not break forth into a flame of scandal, yet you have no cause to boast, for there is much sin raked up in the embers of your nature. You have the root of bitterness in you, and would bear as hellish fruit as any, if God did not either curb you by His power, or change you by His grace" (Watson, 45).

vii. The sins of others make us thankful for God's grace toward us.

1. You have absolutely no reason to boast about ANYTHING God in His sovereign mercy has prevented you from doing. You and I are NOT better than anyone who has ever lived. The extent to which we have not committed more heinous sins is the extent to which God has restrained us in grace. Abhor your sins and thank God for any grace He has granted you to resist sin.

viii. The sins of others provide occasion for doing good

1. We are surrounded by unbelievers; therefore, we have occasion to do good to many around us through our godly doctrine, life, and proclamation of the gospel.

b. *Our own sinfulness will be overruled for the godly (pages 46-50):*

- i. Sin makes us weary of this life.
 - 1. “That sin is in the godly is sad, but that it is a burden is good” (46).
 - 2. Better to suffer than to sin.
- ii. Sin makes us prize Christ more.
 - 1. How great must Christ be to save such a greater sinner?
 - 2. Sin lays us on our backs that we might look to heaven (Watson, elsewhere)
- iii. Our sense of sin is good in that it sends our soul to do **six duties**:
 - 1. Sin puts the soul upon self-searching.
 - a. We can confidently go looking for our sins because we know that Jesus’ blood will be sufficient for any wickedness we discover.
 - 2. Sin puts the soul upon self-abasing.
 - a. You sense your sin so you will not be proud. “Better is that sin which humbles me, than that duty which makes me proud” (48).
 - 3. Sin puts the soul upon self-judging.
 - a. You see your sin. You name your sin. God forgives you of your sins and Satan can do nothing about it.
 - 4. Sin puts the soul upon self-conflicting.
 - a. One difference between the believer and the unbeliever is NOT that the unbeliever sins and the believer doesn’t sin. The difference is that the believer is at war with his sin and the unbeliever is at peace with his sin. If you are at war with your sin it is a sign that you are at peace with your God.
 - 5. Sin puts the soul upon self-observing

- a. Sin is subtle so we need to carefully watch ourselves lest we fall into sin.
6. Sin puts the soul upon self-reforming
- a. “A child of God not only finds out sin, but drives out sin” (49).
 - b. “Be killing sin or sin will be killing you” (Owen).

Conclusion:

We must never forget in our fight against sin that faith is extrospective NOT introspective. Looking in yourself and identifying your sin is of no value if you are not driven outside of yourself to Jesus Christ. You must see your sin, but you must also see the Savior of sinners. Think upon these words, “Let us also lay aside every weight, and **sin** which clings so closely... **Looking to Jesus** (Heb. 12:1-2). The author of Hebrews says that as you see your sin you must also see the Savior of Sinners, the Lord Jesus Christ. Shorter Catechism Question and Answer 87 is helpful at this point. It is worth memorizing if you ever have the opportunity.