



Lie #4: “God Has Grown Soft On Sin”

Opening Prayer

Introduction

Some people have a caricature of God in their minds. They see him as all law and fury in the Old Testament but all gospel and fuzzies in the New Testament. People believe that God has grown softer on sin. If this lie stands, it could destroy souls. This lesson will seek to debunk this lie and give us an answer to those who believe it.

Activity: Are the following quotations from the Old or New Testament?

- “I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”
- They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horses’ bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia.
- As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.
- “If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, where ‘their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.’”
- Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.
- “I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist.”

What general observations can we make from these passages?

Consistently Consistent!

1.) What truths are taught by the following verses?

Numbers 23:19 “God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?”

Malachi 3:6 “I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.”

Psalms 119:89-90 Your word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. Your faithfulness continues through all generations; you established the earth, and it endures.

James 1:17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”

Matthew 5:18 “I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.”

a.)

1 Peter 1:16 (quoting Leviticus 19:2) It is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’

Matthew 5:48 “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

James 2:10 Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

b.)

John 1:17 The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:20-24 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. ²¹ But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 6:9, 11 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? [...] And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Romans 3:8 Why not say—as we are being slanderously reported as saying and as some claim that we say—“Let us do evil that good may result”? Their condemnation is deserved.

c.)

2.) What are some reasons people believe or want to believe the lie that God has grown softer on sin?

3.) What tragic miscalculation do people often make about God’s silence and (apparent) inaction?

Isiah 42:14-17 “For a long time I have kept silent, I have been quiet and held myself back. But now, like a woman in childbirth, I cry out, I gasp and pant. ¹⁵ I will lay waste the mountains and hills and dry up all their vegetation; I will turn rivers into islands and dry up the pools. ¹⁶ I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake

them. ¹⁷ But those who trust in idols, who say to images, 'You are our gods,' will be turned back in utter shame."

2 Peter 3:8-13 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. ¹¹ Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹² as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. ¹³ But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

Romans 2:5 Because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

- 4.) Give some examples of God's patience/long-suffering in Scripture. What always happened in the end?

- 5.) Believing that God is soft on sin is soul-destroying! God does not mince words. What would you say to a friend who is worried about these words because she keeps falling into her pet sin?

- 6.) God is not soft on sin; he is serious about salvation. How do the following passages help us see that?

John 3:16-21 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. ¹⁹ This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."

- 7.) Your niece is living with her boyfriend, and you try to correct her with God's truth. However, she says, "I know it's wrong, but God will forgive me anyway—I know what Jesus did for me!" What major misunderstandings does she have? What truths does she need to hear?

Group Discussion

- Some have likened the way God dealt with people differently in the Old and New Testaments to parenting. If your child stole something at age 5, 15, and 25, your punishment would be different for each age but your attitude toward the sin remains the same. Is this a good analogy? Why or why not?

- Think of the sermons we hear in church: the pastor will show us how we fall short, then he will show us we are forgiven in Jesus. We know in advance that this is the message we will hear. However, is there a danger that we might start to believe the lie that God has grown softer on sin?