

Deterring Sin

The wise man said, "Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecc. 8:11). This is true in all areas of life: society, family and the church.

Christians generally agree there is a problem in our nation with a lack of enforcement of laws. Criminals are allowed to escape punishment when they are obviously guilty. It may be some technicality that gets them off. Others receive a light sentence for their crime or are allowed to make appeal after appeal--often delaying punishment indefinitely. This only encourages and emboldens others to violate the law. The government should recognize its duty to appropriately punish criminals in a timely manner (Rom. 13:1-7). Hence, we the people must let our voices be heard.

We can also see this principle at work in the home. When one person rebels, others are watching. If it goes uncorrected, it is not long before someone else is going down the same path. Fathers need to raise their children properly (Eph. 6:4). This includes punishing his children promptly. Mothers need to support the fathers in this, rebuking and disciplining her children as well. Such actions will allow for a happy, healthy home.

Further, sin must be addressed in a timely manner within the church. Some may turn around when their sin is pointed out to them (Acts 8:18-24). Others need rebuke, while still others need to be disfellowshipped (2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Cor. 5:1-6; 2 Cor. 2:6-11). If sin is allowed to linger, it sends the wrong signal. When sin is unchecked, it tells others their actions will not bring consequences, which results in lost souls. Thus, sin needs to be addressed quickly.

In all areas of life, we need to recognize the tendency of evil to spread when its punishment is put off. This is true for society, the home and God's house. If we wish to have order and decency in these areas, let us promptly confront wrong.

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