

Perhaps I shouldn't lead off so early in the conversation with this uncomfortable side of the Spirit's character—his surgical ability to expose our sins.

But I'm afraid that of all his attributes, I'm probably more familiar with this one than with any of the others. Heaven knows that he and I have been round and round on this subject many, many times often not making it till lunchtime without sensing his familiar tapping on my shoulder.

But that's not the only good reason for placing this topic here in the first few pages. The Spirit's ability to diagnose and drain us of our sin almost always marks a beginning point in our lives. Repentance inevitably comes before revival. When the Spirit has dogged us the hardest, our best days in Christ are usually right around the corner.

So if peace and freedom can only be sprung from wells of brokenness, then I say we should quit complaining about the Spirit's hard line and embrace his rebuke like "the wounds of a friend" (Proverbs 27:6). For that's what they are. That's who he is.

Read Galatians 5:16-26

People are often fond of saying that God is more interested in making us holy than in making us happy. And, yeah, they're probably right—unless you take it to mean that he prefers it when we're *unhappy*, as if a good laugh should always be seen as suspect.

I mean, the Bible seems to teach that holiness and happiness are sort of hand in glove, like both ends of the same equation, joined at the equal's sign. "How happy is the one whose transgressions is forgiven. . . the man the Lord does not charge with sin, and in whose spirit is no deceit" (Psalm 32:1-2). Not only, therefore, are we able to be happy from a *salvation* perspective—happy that God has declared us "not guilty" in Christ—but also happy when sin *continues* to keep its distance from our hearts, when righteousness actually shows up in its place. . . like on a Thursday evening or something.

We tend to forget this a lot. We don't always put it together that when God said we could be happy by being holy, he meant that we could only be happy by being holy.

But the Spirit never forgets it. And as a result, all of us who bear Christ's name will routinely experience seasons of self-exposure when (as David said), "Day and night Your hand was heavy on me; my strength was drained as in the summer's heat" (Psalm 32:4).

There's nothing fun about this. His reprimand can make you feel worse than you've ever felt in your life. But David recognized the value of this, enough to beg God never to take his "Holy Spirit from me" (Psalm 51:11).

Because if God were ever to leave us soaking in our own sins, without showing us we'd jumped in the wrong stew pot, we and happiness would never be seen together on the same day.

Living Under One Roof

We share a living room with the Spirit of God. He's right here. He never leaves. Wherever we haul these bodies of ours, whatever we pop in our mouths or let rattle around in our heads, God sees it from the inside out. When sin is still just a twinkle in our eye, before it's had a chance to work its way to the outside, the Holy Spirit has sensed it and felt it.

And it's not going to stay here. In fact, when sin plops into our lives, when we let it lounge around and use the shower and drink our coffee, the Spirit makes sure we find out real quick that this is not a good roommate material. The chemical reaction that occurs when evil tries sharing space with pure holiness is explosive indeed.

And that's the collision we're feeling when the Spirit throws our sin out on the doorstep. He hovers it right in from of our eyes where we can't miss it, can't work around it, can't enjoy a single thing without dealing with this clutter that's fogging up our spiritual windshield.

A New Spin On Sin

So this complementary Holy Spirit roter service that comes standard with salvation—itchy and agitating though it may be—is one of those cleverly disguised blessings God just gives us because we need it. It's like virus protection, like a termite contract. You wish you didn't need to have it, but you'd better be glad you do.

Besides, it's not like the Sirit considers his job done once he's completed his sweep and drawn red circles around our warning signs. His goal in our lives is not merely to convict us of sin but to lead us into righteousness, to help us see what we waste by keeping pride and bad attitudes on our payroll.

Sin is an opportunity cost. It steals from us the strength that comes from living in purity, the joy that flows from putting others before ourselves, the confidence that builds in us when Christ is not just relied on for rescue but enjoyed like a friend invited to dinner.

Only then can happiness occur.

Galatians 5:17 "The Spirit desires what is against the flesh"

Our flesh—the person we naturally are—is a scoundrel first-class. How well has life brought this truth home to you?

Galatians 5:21 "Those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom."

Saved sinners aren't kicked out of heaven, but what aspect of the kingdom do we lose by not loving it?

Galatians 5:25 "If we live by the Spirit, we must also follow the Spirit."

This makes such good sense, our only conclusion is to ask, "How can sin deceive us into believing otherwise?"

The Spirit exposes and convicts us of sin. Sometimes the result of this purging makes us feel like we can't do anything right, as if we've messed up so bad that we'll never dig out from under the piles of regret stacked high on top of us. But the one who **exposes** is also the one who **disposes**. And if you'll give the Spirit room to clean house, you'll soon find your own body a lot better place to live in.

Holy Spirit, I could never cry enough tears to express my guilt and dismay. Thank you for mingling yours with mine.