

A Face with the Sin

Peter told them, “You know it is against our laws for a Jewish man to enter a Gentile home like this or to associate with you. But God has shown me that I should no longer think of anyone as impure or unclean.” – Acts 10:28

It is very easy to scold someone who is caught up in a certain sin until you personally know them. It is easy to say that certain things are a sin until you know someone who is trapped by that sin. Maybe you have a close friend, even a family member, who is gay or who struggles with alcohol or drug abuse. Maybe you know someone with a child who has gone astray. Maybe your own child has gone astray. Suddenly when it is on your doorstep, it is not the same, because now there is a face with the sin.

Now I am not suggesting that sin is any less a sin. But I am saying that when it is someone you know, you see it a little bit differently all of a sudden. There is a little more compassion for that person. You want to help rather than simply condemn.

That is what happened with the apostle Peter, who was Jew. Jews were taught from youth to have nothing to do with Gentiles. They were never to eat food prepared by Gentile hands. A strict Jew never would be a guest in a Gentile’s home or invite a Gentile into his home. It was part of the Jewish culture, and Peter felt this way. He didn’t want to leave his comfort zone and go to non-Jews with the message of the gospel. Yet God softened his heart, and Peter began to see things differently.

As believers, we too can write off large groups of people with whom we don’t agree. Sometimes Christians will maintain a philosophy of “us four and no more.” Some will divide over anything, and as a result, they are missing out on what God can do. They are missing out on opportunities to lead others to Christ by not allowing Christ to work through them.

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