

THE MAXIMUM RESPONSE

⁷*The Lord said to Moses "Go down because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. ⁸ They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, 'These are your gods who brought you up out of Egypt'." (Exodus 32:7-8)*

What is sin or so called wrongdoing? Sin is anything whether in thinking, in behaviour, in attitude or action that is against the will of God. Sin is any action or doing that is against God's word like stealing, killing, lust, adultery, worshipping idols, fraud, etc. Sin is an emotion that includes any evil desire in the mind and heart like anger, plotting harm, envy, jealousy, greed, grumbling, etc. Sin is also indicated by certain style of living like cheating, lying, doing corruption, or living enslave to immorality, prostitution, homosexuality, drunkenness, etc.

It is written, ***"There is no one righteous, not even one."*** (Romans 3:10) But among sinners there are people who become righteous, not by their own strength or by their good deeds, but they become righteous and are justified by the blood of Jesus who died on the cross -the atoning sacrifice for every sinner who believe. ***"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."*** (Romans 3:23-24) People who believe that Jesus died for them on the cross are continuously under the process of God's purification and sanctification. God is dealing with the sin they are doing. Everyday He brings them more and more to the way of holiness until they reach eternity in heaven. Everyday God is helping them to get rid of certain sins in their lives. But those who do not believe in Jesus, they walk away from God. They live in darkness, captured by sin and as they remain on evil ways their destiny is eternal death.

The punishment of sin is death. So, what do you do if you face a situation that you found people doing wrong thing, whether they sin against you, against other person, or against God? Here are the utmost responses of most people towards them who do wrong things.

1. ***Insensitive:*** They are cold, indifferent and they show no concern. They are careless and tactless in their words. They show no response because either they know the facts or they themselves live the same way. They themselves do not actually believe in Jesus. Therefore, what they see as sinful acts may seem very normal for them. Or they are insensitive inspite that they are believers in Jesus because they are just concern about themselves and have no love or concern to share to others the blessing they receive from God.

2. ***Downhearted:*** Their hearts are grieved because they cannot accept the sinful behaviour of others against the word of God or against ethical and moral values. They know that sin has always its consequences. To those who do not believe in Jesus their sins bring curses and God's wrath. To those who believe in Jesus, sin may bring suffering and discipline from God because God will not allow His children whom He adopted through the blood of Jesus to continue to live a life of sin. ***"Endures hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?"*** (Hebrews 12:7)

3. ***Furious:*** Certain people are easily angered by sin because they sustained damage and losses from the sin of other people. Their anger may motivate them to do an action like to revenge or retaliate against those people who sin or harm them. And this may lead to conflict, fight, expulsion and division.

4. ***Corrective:*** This is the response of some people to sin. They intervene to correct, which is good to some extent. They teach and instruct about the consequences of their sin or certain wrongdoing. But they try to correct things by themselves using human power, ***"eye to eye or tooth for tooth."*** They endorse new rules or regulations to combat sin, like what the governments do to keep a system.

In the chosen passage today, after God had brought his people out of Egypt and delivered them from the hand of Pharaoh, they sin against God. They made for themselves an idol –a golden calf and worshipped it. So God's anger burned against them. ***"I have seen these people," the Lord said to Moses, " and they are a stiff-necked people. Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation."*** (Exodus 32: 9-10)

Moses was confronted for the sin of the people who made and worshipped an idol. God confirmed to Moses that the people are sinning. And significantly, this is how Moses responded:

1- ***"But Moses sought the favour of the LORD his God. "O Lord," he said, "why should your anger burn against your people whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand?"*** (Exodus 32:11) Moses asked God to preserve the people. He pleaded to spare them from His wrath. Moses even went further beyond and reminded God about His promises to this people.

2- ***"Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to wipe them off the face of the earth?' Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people. Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to whom you swore by your own self: "I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever."*** (Exodus 32:12-13) Moses acted in such a way because he was full of love toward God and toward the people. He was also quickened by the responsibility that God gave to him to lead the people. Moses became angry as well and made an action in facing the sin of the people and to correct them. But before anything else, he prayed for them to be forgiven. He appealed to God in their behalf to refrain from punishing them. ***"Then the Lord relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened."*** (Exodus 32:14)

My dear and beloved: What you have read may seem well known to you, but it is difficult to apply. The human power that we bear may push us to take an action before we go to God and pray for those whom we see sinning. But if we have experienced the love of Christ, we are responsible enough to pray for others especially those living in sin.

My Prayer: "Father God in heaven, I came to You in the name of Jesus who died for me on the cross. I ask you to fill me with love and compassion. Change my attitude to be more loving to other people, especially Lord to those who sin against You; to those who hurt me, to those who harm others and even harm themselves. Remove from me any anger toward them and help me to bring them to You in my prayer. This I pray in Jesus' name, Amen."