

The Rape of God's Mercy

A Warning About Presumptuous Sin

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Have you ever sinned *on purpose*? Have you ever known that something was sinful, had every opportunity to avoid the sin, yet decided to do it anyway? If so, were you comforted in your decision by thoughts of God's forgiving mercy? Perhaps you said to yourself (as I once heard a man say, just before telling a blatant lie to keep himself out of trouble), "It's easier to get forgiveness than permission." This type of premeditated, intentional sin is called "presumptuous sin."

Presumptuous sin is knowingly doing what God forbids while presuming that you will be covered by His mercy. It is an attempt to force God to apply mercy instead of justice. It is no wonder that John Bunyan (author of *Pilgrim's Progress*) once referred to sin as "the dare of God's justice, the rape of His mercy, the jeer of His patience, the slight of His power, and the contempt of His love."

Consider four sobering truths about presumptuous sins and presumptuous sinners:

1. God hates presumptuous sin.

A purposeful, planned approach to sin reveals one of the things God hates the most. In Proverbs 6:16 we read, "There are six things which the Lord hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him." The list that follows includes pride, lying, and murder. Among these we find that God hates "a heart that devises wicked plans" (v. 18). God hates all sin, to be sure, but when you sin *on purpose*, your premeditated act is particularly abhorrent to Him.

2. Presumptuous sin is feared and hated by godly persons.

David pleaded with the Lord to keep him back from presumptuous sins (Ps. 19:13). He concluded his thought by saying, "Then will I be blameless, and I shall be acquitted of great transgression." People who sin presumptuously should have no confident expectation that they will be considered "blameless," or even that they will be acquitted by God.

3. True Christians are repentant sinners, not presumptuous sinners.

Regardless of the type of sin involved, those who are repentant sinners are said to be "washed," "sanctified," and "justified," while those who carelessly continue in sin are warned not to be deceived. People of that sort, Paul tells us, "will not inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9-11). Presumptuous sinners are acting like they are on their way to hell, not heaven. *They may be.*

4. Presumptuous sin often leads to disastrous consequences.

King David knew that what he was tempted to do with Bathsheba was a sin against God, but he did it anyway. In this case, his presumptuous sin brought a series of painful and tragic consequences:

- It led David into further sin—plotting the murder of Bathsheba's husband. (2 Sam. 11:14-15)
- It brought on a lengthy period of painful conviction. (Ps. 32:9-10; 38:1-8; 51:3, 8, 12)
- It brought a stinging rebuke from the prophet Nathan. (2 Sam. 12:1-14)
- It led to the death of the child of that union. (2 Sam. 12:14-18)
- It gave occasion for the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme God. (2 Sam. 12:14)
- It moved the Lord to plague David's posterity with violence, and even to raise evil against him from within his own family. (2 Sam. 12:9-11)

People who presume upon God's mercy should not be surprised when they experience similar consequences. In fact, they should expect them. Perhaps it was this very experience that led David to pray this prayer:

Also keep back your servant from presumptuous sins;
Let them not rule over me;
Then I will be blameless,
And I shall be acquitted of great transgression. (Ps. 19:13)