

Hagiozo

By Pastor Greg
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1 Corinthians 7:12-24

Bunkertown COB

When my wife and I were first married, money was a little tight, which would explain the old lawn mower I pushed around the yard. When it ran, it did a fairly good job. Getting it to run, that was a whole different issue.

One hot August afternoon the thing just would not start. After about half an hour of futility my blood began to rush to my head and just stay there. Words that I had not heard in a long time danced around in my mind. Something was about to happen. Well, as I yanked that cord with enough force to pull the motor off the deck, it broke. The cord, that is. I stared in disbelief at the frayed ends severed from the other half that was . . . Ah yes, the rest of the cord. Do I need to remind you about the rest of the cord? It recoiled back inside the mower. I stood there for a moment, beaten and defeated and wondering how this monster from the abyss had won the battle. It was at that moment I understood why they called it a Snapper.

Why is it that our rational mind doesn't kick in until after we've done something stupid? Why not before? Oh sure, it was only AFTER my fit of rage that it occurred to me that not only do I have a mower that will not start, I've got to take apart the recoil starter, fish out the cord, and reattach the handle, which I had just launched across the road into a field of thistle. By the way, never ask God to grant you more patients, He'll give you a lawn mower from hell, just like He did with me. At that moment, my friend, I had a fit of carnality.

Carnality is not a word you hear used very often, but it basically means acting according to human passions, desires, selfishness, and lust. So my carnal moment was a manifestation of my lower earthly self. John reminds us that *"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world."*¹ (1 John 2:16). If I had never claimed to be Christian, acting this way would not be a problem. But because I say that I am in Christ, I am to live according to a higher standard. I should no longer permit my human nature to overrule my heavenly nature. Paul says, *"Let the Holy Spirit guide*

¹*New American Standard Bible : 1995 update.* 1995 (1 Jn 2:16). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves."² (Galatians 5:16). But from time to time I do. Every now and then my human nature takes over, and I have a fit of carnality. I no longer behave as if I am a follower of Christ, as someone who has been separated from profane things and dedicated to God. The Greek call this *Hagiazo* (Hag-ee-ad-zo). We call this sanctification.

I suspect most of you know what I'm talking about here. Every one of us experiences moments that remind us of our humanity; where we no longer act sanctified (*Hagiazo*). We all seem to lose the battle from time to time; the battle between our Spirit and our flesh. Even the Apostle Paul struggled with this. He confessed, *"I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate."*³ (Romans 7:15).

I'm curious; what happens to our sanctification during those carnal moments? Although during that moment we acted according to the flesh, are we able to find forgiveness for that moment? Can a Christian find forgiveness for the times when we behave like a person of this world instead of a person who has been sanctified? John the Apostle assures us. *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*⁴ (1 John 1:9) Jesus proclaims, *"I tell you the truth, all sin and blasphemy can be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven. This is a sin with eternal consequences."*⁵ (Mark 3:28). Jesus says that when we are convicted by the Holy Spirit to seek forgiveness after those carnal moments, we will be forgiven, period. I hope we believe this is true. But apparently some Corinthian Christians did not.

Read **1 Corinthians 7:12-24**. Can you hear the tension that must have been present in this church surrounding sin? It seems that some have asked Paul to pronounce judgment upon those who are not married, against those who are married, against those who are single, against those who have been divorced, and against those married to a non-believer. In this church there were people divided

²Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

³Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

⁴*New American Standard Bible : 1995 update*. 1995 (1 Jn 1:9). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

⁵Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

over who is the more sanctified, or *Hagiazo*. But Paul refuses to pronounce a judgment and instead speaks more of the big picture.

What has caught the attention of most people today is what Paul has said here about divorce and about being married to a non believer. In verse 15 he does concede that divorce is permissible in certain cases. So too does our Lord during the Sermon on the Mount. *“But I say that a man who divorces his wife, unless she has been unfaithful, causes her to commit adultery. And anyone who marries a divorced woman also commits adultery.”*⁶ (Matthew 5:32). But is that where it stops? Can a person who commits this sin never find forgiveness? Are they beyond sanctification? This is what appears to be happening in Corinth. Some Christians felt that a divorced person, whether they were innocent or not, were no longer sanctified (*Hagiazo*), and no longer capable of becoming sanctified ever again. In other words, they would bear the mark of their carnal moment for the rest of their lives, as if the blood of Jesus was not capable of covering this sin.

Truthfully, this mindset still exists today. I find that even the innocent party in a divorce must bear that label for the rest of their lives. They are continually identified by an incident. And sadly this happens with all sorts of sins a person may commit. We say “He is a thief”, or “She is a liar”, or that “He is a murderer”, never taking in to consideration that if that person has turned to Christ and begged His forgiveness, the Blood of Jesus is sufficient to cover that sin. Their carnal moment has been washed away, and they have become sanctified (*Hagiazo*) once again.

The Lord Himself has said that a confessed sin is a forgiven sin. And a forgiven sin is a sin God chooses to no longer remember. He no longer holds it against us, and we become sanctified once again. I need this to be true, and so do you. For if the Blood of Jesus does not cover the sin of one person, why should we expect it to cover our own sin. The truth is we all sin, but the Holy Spirit convicts us of that sin, so we then confess that sin, and God covers that sin with the Blood of Jesus. The Christians in Corinth apparently did not know this. But if you and I will keep the big picture in mind, we will never forget this. Sanctification awaits all who will confess their sin.

⁶Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.