

The Unpardonable Sin? Has God Forsaken Me?

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"Dear Larry Wilson:

In June, 2007, I had a spiritual awakening. At the time, I was living with my girlfriend and we enjoyed "the good life." Both of us had good jobs and no obligations. For us, the good life revolved around frequent parties and social drinking (sometimes with heavy drinking). We lived for the weekends, we took cruises and vacationed in nice places every chance we got.

We had a number of friends who lived fast and loose as we did and there was little thought about God or the future. We zipped through a lot of money buying stuff and having a good time. One day, while driving to work, I became depressed. I suddenly felt condemned. I don't know what caused this, but a strong impression came to me that God was angry with me and that I was going to hell if I continued living as I was. This impression came out of the clear blue sky because I had not had a religious thought for several years.

I had been raised with church-going parents, but I displaced church with friends and social activities while in college. I didn't feel that I needed to continue with the religious traditions of my parents. Besides, my understanding of God was as good as theirs. But during that morning drive, I was overcome with a very strong sense of condemnation – that God was angry with me. The intensity of this personal revelation both surprised and scared me.

That night, I told my girlfriend about this and she asked if I was getting religious. I said, "No, but I do believe in God." She said, "Well, I believe in God, too," and that was all she said. For the next three months I tried to go on living as usual, but I became increasingly uneasy and edgy about doing things that I knew were wrong in God's sight.

Finally, I knew in my heart that I had to stop being a hypocrite. I had to align my behavior with my conscience. So, I gathered up my courage and told my girlfriend that some changes were necessary. She said that she had noticed a change in me and that we really needed "to clear the air." I was totally honest.

I told her that I could not continue going to the bars and participate in the drinking parties. I also told her that our sexual relationship would have to end until we were married. She exploded. She screamed, "You have become a religious fanatic!" She shredded me with ridicule. I tried to explain my feelings, but she didn't want to hear them.

She said she was hurt and felt abandoned. She told me that if I was going to be a priest she didn't want to have anything to do with me. To top it off, she told me if I was going to be a religious fanatic, there was nothing left of "us." I wasn't prepared for her rejection. There was no reasoning. After a couple more weeks of living together as strangers and trying to get around her anger, I told her that I thought it best that I move out. She agreed.

Two months have passed and I am still heartsick. We're farther apart than ever. I have called

her several times, but we are not on the same page. She has told our friends that I have become a religious fanatic. This is not true for I do not even attend church. (I don't know which church to attend. I was searching the internet for some religious information and this is how I found your website.)

She knows that I still love her and I want to marry her, but she will not stop ridiculing me. She said she has no intention of staying away from bars and she continues to party with our old friends.

The "straw that broke the camel's back" happened the other day. I learned that she is now living with a guy we used to party with. This crushed me because I had hoped that she would appreciate my efforts to do what is right. I have lost the love of my life. I have also lost most of my friends.

I am very lonely and I don't know what to do about this. Losing her has broken my heart. Has God forsaken me? Have I committed the unpardonable sin? It would be horrible to lose my girlfriend and still end up in hell. In fact, it feels as though I am already in hell. Can you help?

Thanks,
Raymond "

Dear Raymond,

Thank you for your open and honest e-mail. Before I respond to your questions, I want to say that I sincerely admire your willingness to do what is right - no matter what. At the moment, your faith in God is being challenged and He is purifying your faith with a refiner's fire (Rev 3:18) because I believe He has a special calling for you. You are *momentarily* facing three powerful challenges and if you stand firm in your resolve to do what is right, you will overcome the present adversity and you will be richly blessed. In short, God is putting you through this set of challenges because He wants to give you a richly rewarding life of service. Please let me explain:

1. Isolation:

When a person chooses to honor God by doing what he believes is right, sooner or later he experiences isolation. Jesus said, **"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."** (Matthew 7:13,14)

In your case, the isolation is severe because you have lost your network of friends, including your best friend, your girlfriend. Currently, you have not developed Christian friends who can replace your hedonistic friends. Worst of all, in losing your girlfriend, you have lost an intimate, best friend who was your confidant. Therefore, you are highly vulnerable to returning to your old lifestyle to have a social life. But, hang on. Stand firm. There is a way out of this situation.

2. Ridicule:

People following the Holy Spirit are never on the same page with people who are not. Paul wrote, **"Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so."** (Romans 8:5-7)

In other words, your girlfriend's hostility – manifested as ridicule and rejection – is consistent with Paul's remarks. Here's the problem: **"The man [or woman] without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."** (1 Corinthians 2:14)

Your friends cannot understand your spiritual awakening because it is spiritually discerned. To them, you look like a religious fanatic. They ask themselves, "Who in his right mind would give up a sexy girlfriend, stop going to parties and having a good time, except a religious fanatic?" Since you are the only person within your old network of friends who is doing what you are doing, you will be tempted to return to your old ways to avoid ridicule. But, hang on. Stand firm. There is a way out of this situation.

3. Emptiness:

Right now you are particularly vulnerable to isolation and ridicule, but you are faced with one more challenge that you need to understand. At this point in time, you have not received your mission and purpose from God. You have shown a great deal of resolve to do what is right in God's sight (Hallelujah!), but doing right for the sake of doing right does not maintain a high level of satisfaction.

Even more, doing right for the purpose of avoiding hell is not very satisfying, either. In other words, at this point in time you appear to be an empty vessel awaiting further direction from God. When you were living without God in your life, you filled your life with the things the carnal nature desires.

Notice what Paul wrote, **"The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God."** (Galatians 5:19-21) Now that you are living for God, you have to wait on God! Soon, God will give you a "purpose-driven life."

So, right now your emptiness is severe and you are highly vulnerable to returning to your old ways to enjoy the gratification that came with the "good life." But hang on, Raymond! Stand firm. God has called you to a far better life than you can imagine. He has a special mission for you.

Putting the Pieces Together

You asked if God has abandoned you. No. No. No! Your old friends have abandoned you. The awakening you experienced is from God. The Holy Spirit profoundly troubled you with a realization of where you were headed. God knows your honesty and He is thrilled that you have responded to His call.

I believe that God has focused on you for a specific reason, just like God focused on Samuel, David, Jeremiah, and Paul for specific reasons. I do not know what this reason is, but it will become clear "as day" as God unfolds His plan for your life. Raymond, you are closer to God than you have ever been.

Choosing to live in harmony with what you know of God's will is not easy because the ways of God stand in opposition to the ways of this world. John wrote, **"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**

For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever." (1 John 2:15-17)

Here are four strategies that will help you overcome isolation, ridicule, and emptiness. (Please modify these as necessary since I do not know your whole story.)

1. Ask God to heal your broken heart over your girlfriend, and if you allow Him, He will. Look closely at the facts: She has rejected you because of your change in behavior. She has made it clear that she does not want to stop going to bars and parties and she has demonstrated her contempt for you by living with another male.

Obviously, she has moved on with her life and so should you. Ask God each day for emotional healing and the strength to let her go. For what it's worth, statistics indicate that live-in relationships do not endure. Having a party animal for a spouse does not bode well for an enduring marriage.

2. Seek out a church to attend because you will not last long in your resolve to live right without having some Christian fellowship. "No man is an island." I suggest that you start church-hunting. If you do not find meaningful Christian fellowship in one church, then widen the circle until you do.

Remember this: Salvation is not church specific. Salvation comes through faith in Christ alone. Therefore, you should feel free to worship and fellowship with any number of Christian groups for a while and this will help immensely to lessen your isolation and ridicule. You need Christian friends, Raymond. I will say it again, "You need Christian friends."

3. Perhaps the most important thing I can offer is this: Determine in your heart to study and

understand God's Word. There is nothing on Earth like the Bible. I used the phrase "determine in your heart" because the worst mistake you can make is to think that reading the Bible is the same thing as studying the Bible.

Millions of Christians read their Bibles thinking this will bring them closer to God. It does not work. If you really want to walk with God and know Him, then you must study the Bible until you clearly understand what God is saying to you through each passage. This quest for Bible truth will bring you close to God.

Studying the Bible takes periods of quiet time and a lot of determination. If you will put forth the requisite effort, God will bless you with an understanding of Truth that will never stop inspiring you! **"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."** (Hebrews 11:6)

4. It seems evident to me that the Holy Spirit has awakened you for a specific purpose. You were headed in a wrong direction, but there is much more to salvation than avoiding hell. You have responded, at considerable cost, to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. This proves that you have not committed the unpardonable sin. On the contrary, you are following the Spirit! God has not forsaken you, rather God is preparing you for an exciting ministry of some kind. I do not know about your education, talents, abilities or interests, but God does.

If you remain faithful to God and continue to grow in grace and in an understanding of His truth, God will direct you into a situation where *all* of your education, talents, abilities and interests will combine into joyful service. A ministry received is far more valuable than a ministry achieved. It may take the Lord a few years to get you prepared for "His calling," but He will put you where He wants you when He knows that you are ready for Prime Time!

In closing, be encouraged! You are experiencing what Abraham experienced. You were called. You left your friends and girlfriend behind to follow this calling. You are in a social desert, having no friends; but you will learn that out in the desert, a soft-spoken God becomes your dearest friend.

I am praying the Lord will give you wisdom and strength to stand firm and overcome these challenges. Believe it or not, God knows the number of hairs on your head, Raymond, and He knows the plan He has for you. Please keep me informed on your progress. The world has yet to see what God and you, working together in perfect harmony, can do!

Best wishes,
Larry Wilson