

# Teachers Must Not Lead Sinful Lives

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus established an important principle about the type of life we must be living if we want to correct other people:

**Matthew 7:5:** “Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.”

What Jesus said in this verse is very important, but it's easy to overlook. Before you correct someone else you must make sure your own life is in order. If your life is *not* in order, and you have unrepentant sin, then you must repent and seek forgiveness before you correct others. You *must not* teach other people while you're living a life of sin!

Jesus gave two reasons for this. First of all, if you're living a life of sin then it's hypocritical to criticize other people for their sins. It's wrong to tell people “Do as I say, not as I do”. If you're guilty of sin and you try to correct other people who are sinning, you're condemning yourself as well.

Second, if you're living a life of sin then that impairs your ability to help others. Jesus said that *after* you deal with your own sin you'll be able to see clearly enough to help others. If you're still living a life of sin then you're blind and are in no position to help others. It may seem to you that you're fine but you're not.

For example, the Pharisees were religious teachers. They outwardly appeared righteous but inwardly were wicked. Jesus told His disciples that their sin made them blind, and no one should follow them:

**Matthew 15:14:** “Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the

blind, both shall fall into the ditch."

If your sin has blinded you and you can't see then you're in no position to help others. Now, other people may not realize you're living a life of sin. You may outwardly appear righteous (as the Pharisees did) but you still have a problem. If you are living in sin then that impacts your ability to see clearly, even if other people don't realize you're living in sin. You *must* deal with the sin in your life before you try to correct other people!

The apostle Paul taught this as well:

**Romans 2:21-23:** "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?"

If you're a thief then it's hypocritical to teach other people not to steal. Instead you should *stop stealing* and then you'll be in a position to correct others.

Now, this passage isn't saying that it's fine to teach other people as long as you don't address the sins you're guilty of. Paul isn't teaching that it's fine for a thief to correct others for their sin as long as he doesn't mention anything about stealing. Instead he is telling us that people who condemn others for sin are condemning themselves as well:

**Romans 2:1:** "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things."

James put it this way:

**James 2:10:** “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”

It's a very simple principle. If you want to correct other people then you must first put your own life in order. If you want to tell others not to sin then *you must not be guilty of sin yourself*. That's what God requires! If you teach other people while leading a sinful life then you're hypocritical, you're blind, and you're condemning yourself when you speak.

It's true this is a high standard. However, it's what Jesus commands. The Lord doesn't tolerate sin. He repeatedly told people to stop sinning:

**John 5:14:** “Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.”

**John 8:11:** “She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.”

God has commanded us to repent of our sin *and turn from it*. When we find sin in our life we *must* repent and change. We don't have the option of continuing to live in sin on the grounds that our life is “pretty good” and “no one is perfect”. God requires church leaders to be blameless and above reproach:

**1 Timothy 3:2:** “A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;”

**1 Timothy 3:10:** “And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.”

**Titus 1:6-7:** “If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;”

God requires all Christians to likewise be blameless as well:

**Matthew 5:48:** “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

**2 Peter 3:14:** “Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”

If you still have sin in your life then you're not blameless! Instead you're a sinner. God never said that it's fine to listen to sinners as long as they have something good to say. Instead He commanded people to reject the counsel of ungodly people:

**Psalms 1:1:** “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.”

The reason for this is because *those who are living in sin are blind*. This is true even if they don't realize it. Since they're blind they're unable to help others. Their sin prevents them from

seeing clearly. If a sinner listens to the advice of another sinner then you have one blind person who's leading another blind person. That's not going to go well, even if both people think everything is fine. You *must* put your own life in order before seeking to help others!

This applies to churches as well. Jesus condemned the church of Laodicea for this very thing:

**Revelation 3:15-19:** “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”

The church of Laodicea was a wicked church. They were wretched, but they didn't realize it. They were blind, but they couldn't tell. Jesus commanded them to repent so they would be able to see clearly. As long as they were in their sin they would continue to be blind.

Those who teach while leading sinful lives are blind and *must not be listened to*. Likewise, churches who teach while being full of sin and heresy are blind and must be rejected. The solution is *repentance*. Once a person repents he will be able to see clearly enough to help others. Once a church repents it will be on solid ground and can be a light to the world.

It's an error to say “That person may have some problems,

but I'll just take the good and leave the bad.” That's not the Biblical standard! We're commanded to reject those who are teaching things which are contrary to the Scriptures, not take the good and reject the bad:

**Titus 3:10-11:** “A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.”

People often say there's no perfect church. However, Christians must have nothing to do with sin! If a church is proclaiming sin, or living in sin, or teaching heresy, we *must* have nothing to do with it. The same is true for teachers. What does it say about a person if they insist on correcting other people for their sin but refuse to address the sin in their own life? A tree that brings forth corrupt fruit is corrupt:

**Matthew 7:17-18:** “Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.”

If a person or a church has unrepentant sin then they're corrupt. It's wrong to listen to someone who's corrupt for advice on how to live your life! We *must* seek out those who are blameless, not those who are unwilling to repent of their own sins and yet insist on correcting others for their sin.