

Grace Bible Church
2018 Biblical Counseling Conference
Track Two



Session #15

When Should “Love Cover” Sin

Introduction

Our Prayer: 1 Cor.4:6 – “*..not to exceed what is written.*”
Acts 17:11 – “*...they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so.*”

A. The Present Day Views of the “Love Covering” Principle

1. Love covers everything or almost everything (thick-skinned and always taking the “high-road”).
2. Love covers some sins (personal offenses and some non-personal offenses) but not other sins (the “big ones,” ones you cannot cover).
3. Love doesn’t cover clear sins at all until the sin is first dealt with.

B. The Perplexities of the “Love Covering” Principle

1. How do you define various terms (i.e., sin vs. mistakes, immaturity, love, confess, repent, forgiveness)?
2. Who determines what sins to cover and what ones you don’t?
3. Who determines when you cover sins?
4. If you dealt with every sin – wouldn’t you do this all day long? (sort of a spiritual Gestapo)
5. How does the “love covering” principle fit into forgiveness?

C. The Passages of Scripture Dealing with the “Love Covering” Principle

1. Psalm 32:1 – “*How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!*” (cf. :5; Ps.51)
2. Proverbs 10:12 – “*Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all transgressions.*”
3. Proverbs 17:9 – “*He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends.*”

4. Proverbs 19:11 – ***“A man’s discretion makes him slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook a transgression.”***

5. Proverbs 28:13 – ***“He who conceals his transgression will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.”***

6. 1 Corinthians 13:5 – ***“...does not take into an account a wrong suffered,”***

7. James 5:19-20 – ***“My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death, and will cover a multitude of sins.”***

8. 1 Peter 4:8 – ***“Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.”***

D. The Presuppositions in Dealing with the “Love Covering” Principle

1. God deals with all clear sin.
2. The nature of sin is to separate.
3. It’s God’s love to deal with them first and then to cover them.
4. The Bible doesn’t give a complete detailed list of sins to cover and sins not to cover.
5. There is an apparent conditional aspect to dealing with sin (faith and repentance) throughout Scripture.
6. The heart is to always reflect love, humility, mercy, kindness and compassion to everyone – free from anger, bitterness, and revenge.

E. The Pondering of the “Love Covering” Principle

1. How God deals with sin and instructs us to deal with it (God covers sins when they are confessed and forsaken — never an occurrence where faith and repentance are not necessary for forgiveness/covering)

2. Are there examples of sin that was seemingly covered before dealing with it?
 - Joseph with brothers – Gen.42-50

- David with Shimei – 2 Sam.16:5-8; 19:16-23
- Stephen with Saul – Acts 7:60
- Jesus on the Cross – Luke 23:34
- Mark 11:25-26

3. Dealing with our own heart

- a. The purpose of dealing with sin – God’s Glory
 1. For the believer’s own good as well as for their brother’s good (edification – Heb.10:24-25)
 2. For a light to the unsaved (evangelization –Mt.5:16)
- b. One’s attitude towards others
 1. Humility (Phil.2:1-11; Eph.4:1-3)
 2. Consider oneself first (Mt.7:3-5)
 3. Seeking peace (Rom.12:18; Eph. 4:3)
 4. Patience with all men (1 Thess.5:14)
 5. After full inquiry (2 Cor.13:1)
 6. Gentleness (2 Tim.2:24-26)
- c. Dealing with the rationalizations of our heart
 - “It’s no big deal”
 - “Compared to others –not that serious”
 - “It’s not my responsibility to confront”
 - “My skin is thick –I can handle it”
 - “Take the high road”
 - “I’d be doing this all day”
 - “I’d be some sort of Gestapo”
 - “Graciousness is letting sin go”
 - “No one is perfect, I’m only human”
 - “It’s too late, the past is the past, it’s water under the bridge”
 - “This would be an unforgiving spirit”
 - “My goal is ‘peace’ and this might lead to conflict.”
 - “I don’t think what they are doing is sinful.”
 - “If I deal with their sin in this area, then I’ll have to deal with it in my life as well.”
 - “This would be so time-consuming — I hate the hassle.”
- d. Dealing with the actions of another’s sin(s)
 1. It must be dealt with graciously.
 2. It must be dealt with reasonably.
 3. It must be dealt with righteously.
 4. It must be dealt with consistently.

F. The Practical Application of the “Love Covering” Principle (Both with the Unsaved and Saved)

1. Dealing with the offenses of the Unsaved

- a. Loving them with the Saving Gospel of Jesus Christ
 - Their greatest need is God’s judicial forgiveness
 - You can point out what they are doing wrong, but only for evangelism.
- b. Definitely confront when the offense is criminal (Rom.13).
- c. If sinned against, always be willing to:
 - Suffer for Christ – Mt.5
 - Pray – Rom.12:14-21
 - Put off vengeance – Prv.19; Rom.12; Mt.5
 - Turn away from anger and bitterness – Mt.5
 - Love – Rom.12
- d. But this is not forgiveness – it is a “heart ready to forgive” (Ps.86:5)

G. Dealing with the sins of the Saved¹

- a. **Only clear sins are to be dealt with** (violation of or omission of God’s commands), not matters of conscience (Rm. 14), not preference issues (Phil.2), not motives of the heart (1 Cor.4), not physical maturity issues, not wisdom issues, “halo” data issues, personhood (personality) issues (eg. irritations, rubs, insensitive, personal differences) –unless they greatly affect one’s ministry or witness.
- b. Must be done in love
- c. Realize we are members of one another (Eph.4:25).
- d. There is a heart always ready to forgive (Ps.86:5).
 - Eph.4:31-32
 - Mk.11
- e. There is the confrontation (timing?)
 - Lk.17
 - Mt.18
 - Mt.7
 - Mt.5:23
 - Prv.27:5-6

¹ When a believer sins against you: 1. Pray for and examine yourself (Mt 7:3-5) and pray for them; 2. After some time, go ask questions (Prv 18:13); 3. After some time, bring the Scriptures to bear on the sin; 4. After some time, ask another believer or two to go with you (Mt 18:15-20; Rom 12:18); 5. If it becomes this serious, then it could be a whole church matter (but not because of the first sin issue but their entire life is troubling as over time their heart is hardened about sin in their life and they refuse to humble themselves or submit to God’s Word).

- f. There ought to be acknowledgment/confession (repentance).
 - 1 Jn.1:9 (to God)
 - 2 Cor.7
 - Lk.17
 - Mt.18
 - Prv.28:13

- g. Then there is forgiveness (“release” from the heart outward, immediate and unlimited).
 - Mk 11:25-26
 - Lk.17
 - Mt.18

- h. Coupled with forgiveness is “covering the sins” (bury, keep no record, blot it out).
 - passages on covering

Conclusion

- Take all sin seriously!!! (Rm.12:9; 1 Pt.1:13-16). “It might be a small act, but it is a great sin.” Alexander Maclaren.
- The process seems to be (among Christians) to have the right heart – always loving, confront in love (Prov.27:5-6), upon confession/repentance - forgive/cover.
- The result of taking all sin seriously:
 - If none is dealt with = no purity, no love, no fellowship, no glory to God
 - If only some is dealt with = some purity, some love, skewed relationships and glorifying God is hindered

If all is dealt with = purity, love, genuineness manifested, spiritual growth, God’s truth is honored, godly relationships and God’s glory is on display = namely, Christlikeness.