



LifeSpot ... Four respectable sins

Indignation

“By what authority are you doing these things? ... Who gave you this authority?” Matthew 21:23 (NIRV). The question is reasonable, expected, logical, protective. And sinful. Jesus challenges his accusers with a question of his own—one that exposes the leaders’ motives as unspiritual and political. When we feel ourselves becoming indignant in the church or elsewhere, we had better get on our knees and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal our motives. “Righteous indignation” often isn’t. Instead, it can be a camouflage for pride or a mask for insecurity. But here’s good news: The Lord is compassionate and gracious, full of love, forgiving all of our wickedness and rebellion and sin. Exodus 34:6–7.

Accumulation

Ancient sailors, handling overloaded boats in a storm, would throw stuff overboard. Once, they even threw out a passenger. See Jonah 1. In your journey through life, are you overloaded? “Travel light,” said Jesus. Luke 10:4 (MSG). We’re fascinated with the accumulation of belongings, even obsessed. But in the New Testament, God calls us relentlessly into self-denial and generosity—not only for the advance of truth, but also for the relief of suffering. Others don’t have courage to speak honestly with us about this, so we must deal honestly with it ourselves. There’s encouragement. God can turn our grasping into giving. And in a lifestyle of giving, we receive a 10,000 per cent return in blessings! All in the context of God’s priceless gift of eternal life. Matthew 19:23–29.

Consternation

“They are filled with terror even when there is nothing to be afraid of!” Psalm 53:5 (NIRV). It’s one of the most poignant observations in the Bible. Consternation, anxiety, dread—over nothing. It’s an astonishing exercise to look back and realize that 90 per cent of the things we worried about, never happened. Even when bad things do happen, we have this: “The LORD watches over you. . . . The LORD will keep you from all every kind of harm. . . . The LORD will watch over your life no matter where you go, both now and forever.” Psalm 121:5–8 (NIRV). It’s natural to react with fear—and not sinful in itself. But in view of God’s commitment to us, let’s confess our anxiety, and live in trust.

Imagination

Imagination drives technology, art, mission, and success. But when wrongly directed, it devastates. God and the devil fight for control over my imagination, because out of my imagination comes my life. The Old Testament describes distorted lives, troubled souls, and misguided prophets who destroyed themselves and others because of what they allowed to take place in their imaginations. Even when I hide words and actions, I can cultivate anger or jealousy in my imagination. Even without the internet, I can practice pornography in my mind. Jesus said such thinking is sin. Matthew 5:27–28; 15:18–20. But here’s good news. The blood of Jesus purifies us from all sin! If we confess our sins, Christ forgives us our sins, and makes us thoroughly clean from everything evil. 1 John 1:7–9.