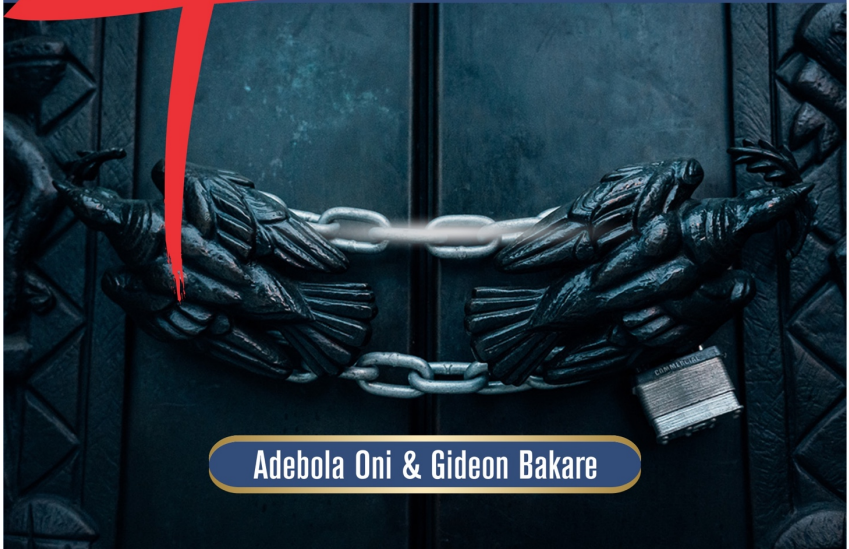


////

The Dangers and Consequences of Secret Sin



Adebola Oni & Gideon Bakare

The Dangers and Consequences of Secret Sin

Adebola Oni & Gideon Bakare

Unless otherwise specified, all Bible quotations in English are from the New King James Version (NKJV 2000).

Copyright © 2020 by Adebola Oni & Gideon Bakare

First published in 2020 by Divine Solution Publications

ISBN: 978-0-9932745-0-3

This is a free e-book from Evangelical Global Outreach Church (EGOC)

All rights reserved.

Apart from very brief quotations from critical materials or reviews, no part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means, mechanical, electronic, photocopying or otherwise, without prior permission of the authors.

Do you have any questions? Would you like to make a prayer request? Would you like to share with us about how this book has blessed your spiritual life? We respect your privacy. If you do share such feedback with us, we will keep any reference to it anonymous. E-mail: pastor@egoc.org.uk

Printed by Divine Solution Publications

United Kingdom + 447533599030

Dedication

We dedicate this book to the triune God - the Rock and source of support for Evangelical Global Outreach Church (EGOC). We also dedicate it to the members and supporters of this great ministry. We consider serving and working with you a great blessing.

Acknowledgement

Every time we think about our story and journey at Evangelical Global Outreach Church (EGOC), we cannot but confess that indeed our God is faithful. We thank God for the vision and situation that gave birth to this ministry. We thank God for the great leaders of this ministry. We thank God for all the members and supporters of this ministry across the globe. May the grace of God be sufficient in your lives in Jesus name (Amen).

We want to thank Brother Edwin Ojemen for finding time out of his tight schedule to help proofread this book. May the Lord bless and keep you in Jesus name. We are grateful and appreciative of the viewers/listeners/followers of our television and radio programmes for your regular feedback.

Finally, we want to thank in advance those who will faithfully read through this book and apply the godly wisdom in it to their lives. We pray that this book will profit you in Jesus name.

Adebola Oni & Gideon Bakare.
April 2020

Foreword

This book offers the opportunity to use the stories of some Bible characters to assess your spiritual life.

I would like to thank Rev. Dr. Gideon Bakare and Rev. Adebola Oni for creatively using narratives about six characters to warn us about secret sin. Their thorough expositions of the relevant passages of the scriptures are impressive. The solid points raised about secret sin from these passages have really blessed me.

Moreover, the length and simplicity of this book offers prospective readers another advantage to complete the reading on time and begin to apply its wisdom to their personal lives. I also suggest that you have your Bible beside you in order to follow and understand the points in each chapter.

EGOC has generously made this book available free, but readers should please take the content seriously.

Pastor Mrs. Faith Bakare.

Associate Pastor

Evangelical Global Outreach Church, London.

Contents

Dedication.....	4
Acknowledgments.....	5
Foreword.....	6
Contents.....	7
Introduction.....	8
Chapter 1.....	11
The Secret Sin of Adam and Eve	
Chapter 2.....	20
The Secret Sin of Achan	
Chapter 3.....	26
The Secret Sin of David	
Chapter 4.....	33
The Secret Sin of Ananias and Sapphira	
Summary.....	41
Solution Prayer Points.....	43

Introduction

A secret sin is defined as a sin that is ‘not known or seen by others’ or a transgression ‘not meant to be known or seen by others.’ Alternatively, ‘A sin that is committed in the solitary, secluded or private place.’ It can also mean the sin that is committed in the heart with the hope that God does not know.

There are many instances of secret sins in the Bible. Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s instruction in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-24). Cain murdered Abel his brother (Gen. 4:1-11). Judah slept with ‘a prostitute’ without realising that it was Tamar, his abandoned daughter-in-law (Gen. 38:11-30). Achan stole part of the dedicated items from Jericho (Joshua 7:1-26). David committed adultery with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11:1-12:22). Absalom secretly plotted against his father so that he could become king over Israel (2 Sam. 15:1-6). Gehazi took gifts from Naaman the Aramean thinking that Elisha would not know (2 Kings 5:20-27). The nation of Israel committed hidden sins of idolatry and adultery thinking that Yahweh did not know (2 Kings 17:9-18). Nebuchadnezzar pridefully boasted in his heart,

ascribing the wealth of Babylon, his royal residence and authority, as evidence of his mighty power and the glory of his majesty (Daniel 4:28-37).

Moreover, Prophet Jonah disobeyed God by going to Tarshish instead of Nineveh (Jonah 1:1-16). Judas Iscariot went behind the other disciples to negotiate some money with the Jewish authorities in order to betray Jesus (Matt. 26:14-16). Ananias and Sapphira kept back part of the money of the sale of their property (Acts 5:1-11). However, for the purpose of this book, we want to focus our attention on four Bible characters as representatives of others who committed secret sins. The main reason for this is that the dangers and consequences of the secret sins identified in their lives also applies to the lives of other Bible characters that we have not analysed in this book.

We have divided this book into four chapters. Chapter 1 summarises the dangers and consequences of the secret sin of Adam and Eve. Chapter 2 addresses the dangers and consequences of the secret sin of Achan. Chapter 3 draws our attention to the dangers and consequences of the secret sin of David. Chapter 4

highlights the dangers and consequences of the secret sin of Ananias and Sapphira.

We encourage you set aside some time to assimilate the prayer points, mediate on them and prayerfully let them bless your heart.

We pray that the supernatural hand of God will uphold you afresh as you read through this book in Jesus name.

Chapter 1

The Secret Sin of Adam and Eve

Introduction

The secret sin of Adam and Eve is mentioned in Genesis 3:1-24. This reminds us that secret sin began with the disobedience of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. They thought they could hide it from God only to realise that everything was visible in his presence. This chapter highlights seven dangers and consequences of secret sin in the lives of Adam and Eve.

1. A secret sin usually begins with a lie from the devil (Gen. 3:1-5)

The woman was out on her own routine business on that day before the serpent appeared on the scene to tempt her. She never knew that what started as a mere conversation would turn out to become a secret sin and a disaster at the end. The serpent asked, ‘Did God really say that you must not eat from any tree in the garden?’ She replied that God gave them the freedom

to eat fruit from the trees in the garden except from the one that is in the middle of the garden. She repeated God's instruction that they must not touch it or else they would die. Then, the serpent convinced the woman that she 'will not certainly die.' The serpent went further stating that God knows that their eyes will be opened and they will be like God knowing good and evil when they eat from that tree.

Here, we can see that the devil was the initiator of the secret sin of Adam and Eve. He is always willing to sow a seed of deceit that would kickstart the process of a secret sin. One of the lies of the devil is that you need freedom from God, your parents, spouse and church leaders. Another lie of the devil is that God, your parents, spouse and church leaders are not fair in their expectations from you. Yet, another one is that you are smart and will never get caught. All these are lies from the pit of hell. Please do not believe them.

2. A secret sin is a product of the misuse of your freewill (Gen. 3:6a & b)

This text is very powerful. The Bible states, 'when the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food

and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it.' Eve decided to wilfully disobey God's instruction. She gave the fruit a second and third look before she acted. She concluded that the forbidden fruit was better than the ones that God recommended for eating and it would make her wiser than before. She dared God and the consequences by eating the forbidden fruit. Eve misused her freewill and this led her to commit a secret sin.

God gave you freewill so that you can use it wisely and meaningfully to walk in righteousness and glorify him. Any moment you decide to misuse your freewill, you are on your way to sinning against God. The devil cannot force you to do what you do not want to do. The devil cannot force you to eat or drink what you do not like. His strategy is to continue to tempt and persuade you until you agree to misuse your freewill through 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life' (1 John 2:16). On the other hand, God expects you to use your freewill wisely and follow his instructions as recorded in the Bible.

3. A secret sin can induce others into the same sin (Gen. 3:6c)

The Bible confirmed that she gave her husband the fruit and he ate it too. Eve was the first to wilfully disobey God. She successfully led her husband into it. Ultimately, they fostered the entire human race into the consequences of their disobedience. The Bible says, ‘through one man’s disobedience, many became sinners’ (Rom. 5:19).

In the same vein, your secret sin can cause others to stumble in your attempt to cover it up; either by yourself or when you ask help to do so. Your secret sin may also cause others to stumble when it becomes publicly exposed. Please, check your life’s journey. Have you caused others to stumble through your secret sin or have you inducted others into becoming a partaker in your secret sin?

4. A secret sin leads to shame (Gen. 3:7-10)

There was a dramatic change between the serpent’s promise in the earlier text and what later happened to Adam and Eve in this passage. There was no improvement in their knowledge and status. They did not become like God. In fact, their situation

deteriorated. Conscious that their eyes were opened, they realised that they were naked for the first time after probably living in the garden for so many years. They perceived their cover with shame because the glory of God had departed. They sewed fig leaves together and made a makeshift covering for themselves. Adam and Eve were so ashamed of themselves that they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden when God visited them for fellowship during the cool of the day. Adam eventually confessed that he was afraid when he heard the voice of the LORD in the garden because he felt naked and ashamed.

The Cambridge Dictionary defines shame as ‘a painful feeling of humiliation or distress caused by the consciousness of wrong or foolish behaviour.’ Hear this: Engaging in a secret sin brings shame and self-pity. It can make you to feel ashamed and uncomfortable (like Adam and Eve) to appear before God. It can make you to withdraw from church activities and the people that can support or facilitate your spiritual recovery.

5. A secret sin leads to excuses and shifting of blames (Gen. 3:11-13)

God challenged the statement of Adam about his state of nakedness in verse 11. ‘Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?’ Then, the blame game began. Adam blamed God for giving him the woman who caused him to eat the forbidden fruit. Eve also blamed it on the serpent for causing her to disobey God’s instruction through false information. Using our sense of imagination, the serpent too may have argued or reasoned that nobody forced them to eat the fruit. It was a wilful disobedience on their part.

In the same vein, your secret sin may lead to wanting to shift the mistake on God, parent, spouse, children, career pressures, pastor, friends, the economic situation or the government. The only one that would not want to take responsibility for your action will be you. Any attempt to want to shift the blame of your secret sin on others is an evidence that you have not repented. The implication is that you will never learn from your mistake in this kind of situation.

6. A secret sin leads to God's judgement (Gen. 3: 14-19)

God is holy and he does not behold iniquity (Hab. 1:13). Everyone that was involved in the secret sin received adequate judgement from God. The tempter (serpent) that initiated the secret sin received his judgement. In subsequent verses, the serpent was cursed above all livestock and all wild animals! The serpent was condemned to crawl on its belly and eat dust all the days of its life. God also promised to put enmity between the woman and the serpent and between their offspring. Above all, the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent in the future.

Moreover, the woman that committed the secret sin received her judgement in the passage. God promised to make her pains in childbearing very severe with painful labour. In addition, her desire would be for her husband and he would rule over her. Adam, who was the collaborator in the secret sin, also received his judgement in ensuing verses. God cursed the ground because of the sin of Adam. He would eat food through his painful toil of the ground all the days of his life. Moreover, the ground would produce

thorns and thistles and he would eat the plants of the field. He would also eat his food in sweat throughout his lifetime. Above all, he was dust and he would eventually return to the ground.

In our contemporary world, God has his own way of judging secret sinners through sickness, lack of breakthrough, stagnancy, defeat from the enemies, lack of favour, apprehension by government agencies and persistent negative family patterns over many generations. The only way to avoid God's judgement is to avoid secret sin.

7. A secret sin leads to loss of privilege (Gen. 3: 20-24)

Adam and Eve suffered losses in two areas. First, the regular fellowship they enjoyed with God in the Garden of Eden ceased on the day that they fell and this led to their spiritual death. Adam and Eve died spiritually when they sinned against God. There was a sudden change that made them different from the way they were created originally. In addition, they began to die physically from that day onward. They lost the most precious thing that they had (their relationship with God).

Second, Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden. God also ‘placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden a Cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.’ Imagine all the rights and privileges that Adam and Eve had during their time in the Garden of Eden! Imagine all the benefits that Adam and Eve enjoyed in the Garden of Eden! They lost everything because of secret sin.

In the same vein, a secret sin can affect your relationship with God. It can hinder your prayers and spiritual growth. It can become a barrier preventing you from true intimacy with God. A secret sin can also cause you to lose what you consider precious to you at any moment.

Conclusion

We must learn from the failures of Adam and Eve. Of course, their secret sin affected the entire human race, but blessed be the name of the Lord for sending His son Jesus Christ (the second Adam) to clear the mess of human sins on the cross of Calvary.

Chapter 2

The Secret Sin of Achan

Introduction

Some biblical scholars have suggested that the name Achan emerged from 'akhar, the Hebrew root word עָכַר which means 'trouble' or 'one who troubles.' In the book of Proverbs 11:17, 29; 15:6, 27, the word was used to intentionally describe the results of cruelty, disloyalty, greed and wickedness. It is interesting how the impact of this name manifested in the life of Achan in this passage. We shall now look at the story of Achan in Joshua 7:1-26 and identify five dangers and consequences of secret sin.

1. Secret sin makes God angry (verses 1-2)

God instructed the Israelites (through Joshua) that everything in Jericho was a booty to Him. The Bible says, 'the Israelites were unfaithful in regard to the devoted things. Achan, son of Karmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So, the LORD's anger burned against Israel.'

The secret sin of Achan made God angry. God is a person and he possesses intellect, will and emotion. God can be happy, and God can be angry. If you check through the Bible on instances when God was angry, the outcome was terrible. It is a terrible thing to fall under God's anger. Check your life today! What is that hidden sin in your life that can make God angry?

2. Secret sin leads to defeat (verses 3-5; 13b)

The Israelites won the battle against the city of Jericho but they could not defeat Ai. Ai was so insignificant because few people lived there. The Israelites even reduced the number of their armies, but they met the greatest shock of their lives. According to the Scriptures, the Israelites were defeated by their enemies. They chased the Israelites from the city gate of Ai and killed many of them. The hearts of those who survived melted in fear and became like water. Joshua went back to God to find out what happened. The Lord told him in verse 13b, 'there are devoted things among you, Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove them.'

You cannot win any meaningful spiritual battle with secret sins in your life. You cannot experience incredible victories with secret sins in your life.

3. Secret sin affects the sinner and others negatively (verses 6-9)

The Bible mentioned that Joshua tore his clothes and fell facedown to the ground before the ark of the Lord from morning until evening because of sorrow. The elders of Israel also did the same and they sprinkled dust on their heads.

The secret sin of Achan affected Joshua, the leaders of Israel, the families who lost their fathers and friends in battle, Achan and his household and the entire nation of Israel. Hidden sin does not only affect the perpetrator, it usually affects other people around. Therefore, your hidden sin can affect your spouse, children, parents, siblings, community, church and the nation. Can you think about the devastating effects of your secret sin in your life, family and the community?

4. Secret sin cannot remain hidden forever (verses 10-13a, 14, 16-23)

The LORD eventually revealed to Joshua the perpetrator of that evil. On the next day, Joshua consecrated himself and the people. He requested that the people should appear before the Lord tribe by tribe. The tribe that the LORD chose came forward clan by clan; the clan the LORD chose came forward family by family and the family that the LORD chose shall come forward man by man.

Achan, son of Karmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was chosen. What Achan initially thought was hidden was exposed in public before the nation of Israel. In verse 21, Achan said, 'When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath.' Joshua eventually sent messengers to go and dig out the item. Joshua and all the Israelites spread out the items before the LORD.

There is an expiry date for every hidden sin. Hidden sins cannot remain hidden forever. What you are doing in the secret will eventually become known. Jesus said, 'for nothing is secret that will not be

revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light' (Luke 8:17). May the Lord open our eyes to always remember that nothing is hidden before the Lord in Jesus name.

5. Secret sin leads to total destruction (verses 15, 24-26)

There are two aspects of destruction here. First, the secret sin of Achan destroyed his name and that of his family. Personal and family names were very important in Ancient Near East and Israel. Hence, everyone made the necessary effort to maintain the sanctity of his or her name to avoid public shame. Second, the secret sin of Achan brought total destruction on him and his entire household. Joshua and all of Israel took Achan, son of Zerah, together with all the items that he stole, his sons and daughters, cattle, donkeys and sheep, his tent and all that he had, to the Valley of Achor. They stoned them and burnt their remains to ashes.

The description of what Achan had here suggests that he was not poor in Israel at that time but he was greedy. At last, Achan's hidden sin led to his destruction. Unfortunately, he did not go down alone.

The judgement affected his entire household and all his belongings. Therefore, your hidden sin can destroy your marriage, career, health, children and all that you have in one day.

Conclusion

We must reflect on the story of Achan and the devastating effects of secret sin in his life. We must learn to draw powerful applications for our contemporary spirituality. What is that secret sin attracting physical and spiritual defeat to your life? What are those things that the devil can capitalise on in order to erect a stronghold in your life? May the Lord deliver us from hidden sins before they destroy our lives in Jesus name.

Chapter 3

The Secret Sin of David

Introduction

In this chapter, we want to reflect on the story of another Bible character. God himself called David ‘a man after his own heart.’ He had a humble background and God eventually made him king over the nation of Israel. Unfortunately, David got himself involved in a secret sin. The record of David’s hidden sin can be found in 2 Samuel 11:1-4. He was supposed to be on the battlefield but he waited at home. As he stood on his balcony, he saw Bathsheba bathing in her house. He sent for the woman and abused his position of authority by sleeping with her. We want to examine six more dangers and consequences of secret sin in 2 Samuel 11:1-12:22.

1. Secret sin produces a negative outcome (2 Samuel 11:5)

The Bible says, ‘the woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, “I am pregnant.”’ This was a devastating news for David. It should not be heard

that that the king impregnated the wife of one of his poor soldiers. What David thought was a quick play to satisfy his sexual exploration, turned out to be a baby boy. Everything we do in life has its own outcome. Positive actions will produce positive results and negative actions will produce negative outcomes.

A sin is a sin no matter what name we use to describe it. A sin is a sin no matter what excuse we try to give to get ourselves off the hook. A secret sin promises immediate pleasure but its outcome is always devastating. Can you take a moment and critically examine your life? Can you identify some of the negative outcomes of secret sins in your life?

2. Secret sin encourages cover-up (2 Samuel 11:6-13)

David instructed Joab (his army general) to recall Uriah the Hittite (the husband of Bathsheba) from battle. David made Uriah to believe that he deserved to take a break and rest with his family after working so hard. He also packaged some unusual gifts for the poor soldier. The game plan was that Uriah would go home and sleep with his wife. Unfortunately, Uriah refused to go home. He slept at the entrance to the

palace with the servants of David. When David discovered that the idea did not work, he invited him for a special banquet with the king on the next day. David made him drunk but he did not go home to his wife.

We can see from this passage that hidden sin enhances more temptations. It can stimulate the sinner to engage in more schemes and calculations to cover up the previous sin. David made many attempts to cover up his secret sin but he failed. You also need to come clean before the Lord and avoid cover up. You should address the sin in your life and desist from any game plan to sweep it under the carpet.

3. Secret sin leads to more serious sins (2 Samuel 11:14-25)

David accepted the reality that his plan did not work. Therefore, he devised another plan. David wrote a letter to Joab (and sent it through Uriah) that he should put Uriah out there where the fighting was fierce so that he would die. Uriah received his death warrant in that letter but he did not know. Joab carried out the instruction and Uriah the Hittite died.

In this passage, David moved from an adulterer to a murderer. He did not only murder Uriah, some innocent Israelite soldiers also died. David moved from an adulterer to a liar. He moved from an adulterer to a confiscator of another man's wife. The hidden sin of adultery that David committed led to sin that was more serious (the death of Uriah). It made Bathsheba to become a widow prematurely. A secret sin can multiply very quickly. A secret sin can cause you to sink deeper and deeper in sin without a way out. A hidden sin in your life can lead to sins that are more serious. Please be careful.

4. Secret sin displeases God (2 Samuel 11:26-27)

The Bible says, 'When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house and she became his wife and bore him a son. The situation in this passage was very sad; Uriah died a gruesome death, Bathsheba became a widow and cried day and night for the loss of her husband, the children of Uriah (if any) became orphans, the family and friends of Uriah cried for their beloved brother and friend because of the secret sin of David. We can imagine that David sent many gifts to pacify

Bathsheba during the period of her mourning. He eventually brought Bathsheba to the palace to become his wife after the time of her mourning. The Bible says, ‘the thing David had done displeased the LORD.’

God is not happy every time you engage in hidden sins. Your hidden sin breaks the heart of your heavenly Father. We pray that you will always be a child that makes your heavenly Father happy in Jesus name. You will not take a step that will displease God in Jesus name.

5. Secret sin attracts God’s judgement (2 Samuel 12:1-14)

God sent Prophet Nathan to David. Nathan delivered God’s message by telling David a story of a rich and poor man in a certain town. The rich man had a very large flock of sheep and cattle. The poor man, on the other hand, had nothing except one little lamb that he had nurtured for a long time. The rich man went into the house of the poor man, took his one and only lamb in order to entertain his visitor. David became so angry and insisted that the rich man must die and pay four times for that lamb. Then Nathan explained the meaning of the story that David was the man because

he committed adultery with Bathsheba and killed Uriah the Hittite. Nathan also delivered God's judgement that a calamity will befall the house of David, someone closer to him in broad daylight would defile his wives and the boy that Bathsheba conceived for David would die.

The judgement of God affected David, Bathsheba, the unborn baby, the wives and children of David, as well as the nation of Israel. We can see here that a secret sin always attracts God's judgement. Proverbs 11:21 says, 'Be sure of this: The wicked will not go unpunished, but those who are righteous will go free.' Are you going through God's judgement now? God will show you his mercy in Jesus name.

6. Secret sin usually ends in tears (2 Samuel 12:15-22)

The child that Bathsheba had for David eventually became ill. David prayed and fasted lying in sackcloth on the ground for the recovery of the child. The elders of his household also joined him in intercessory prayers but the child eventually died. It was a long journey of pain for David. The initial

pleasure of secret sin with Bathsheba eventually ended in tears for David when the child died.

The same situation is happening in our world today. Secret sinners usually end up with disappointments, loses, regrets and other unpleasant outcomes. We pray that the journey of your life and personal walk with God will not end in tears in Jesus name.

Conclusion

We are not immune from situations that can easily lead to secret sin as long as we are still alive in the flesh. However, we must learn from the pains and agonies that David went through because of hidden sin. The Lord who delivered David will give you total deliverance from secret sin in Jesus name. God will give you the grace and power to let it go in Jesus name.

Chapter 4

The Secret Sin of Ananias and Sapphira

Introduction

Acts 5:1-11 summarises the story of Ananias and his wife Sapphira during the early apostolic era in the New Testament. Let us carefully examine the dangers and consequences of the secret sin of Ananias and Sapphira in this passage.

1. An accomplice of a secret sinner is also a sinner (verses 1-2a)

Many families and individuals in the early church decided to sell their properties and brought in the money for the propagation of the gospel. Ananias and Sapphira also sold their property. The Scriptures confirmed that ‘with his wife’s full knowledge, he kept back part of the money for himself.’ This was a sophisticated collaboration between Ananias and Sapphira to deceive Peter and other church leaders at that time.

In law, an accomplice is a person who actively participates in committing a crime by aiding and abetting a criminal to do something wrong. The accomplice may not take full part in the criminal offence but he or she is also guilty. The same principle applies in God's law. A collaborator with a secret sinner is guilty of the same offence. A supporter of a secret sinner is also a sinner. In what way are you collaborating with a secret sinner? The Lord will give you the boldness to condemn hidden sin and not be a partaker of evil in Jesus name.

2. A secret sin leads to lies and hypocrisy (verses 2b, 8)

After keeping back part of the proceeds of the land for himself, Ananias dropped the rest at the apostles' feet pretending that was all the money. They wanted the recognition and applause of the people without donating generously and sacrificially. In the latter part of the narrative, Peter asked Sapphira to be honest about the price of the land but she lied by mentioning the false amount that she agreed with her husband. Ananias lied in the initial record and Sapphira consolidated the deceit in latter account.

Hidden sin can lead to lies and hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is the ‘practice of claiming to have higher standards or more noble beliefs than is the case.’ It is about giving a false impression about yourself before others. Secret sinners are like the pharisees who pretend to be holier than others are but they struggle with so many personal sins. They are quick to justify their own actions but very critical and intolerant of the mistakes of others. Are you hypocritical about certain things in your life? This may be happening because of secret sin.

3. A secret sinner is under satanic attack (verse 3)

Peter challenged Ananias that he had allowed Satan to fill his heart with deceit and that he lied to the Holy Spirit by keeping for himself some of the money that he received for the land. The Bible confirms that ‘Satan is the father of liars’ (John 8:44). He tempted Ananias and Sapphira with his lies and they yielded to it.

It is an error to think that Satan cannot attack a believer in Christ. If Jesus and other great characters in the New Testament were not immune from the temptation and attacks of the devil, then we are not.

Therefore, we should not be ignorant of the devices of this enemy (2 Cor. 2:11). His constant strategy is to attack Christians whenever he thinks he has the advantage to do so. This may include the time after a great spiritual experience or accomplishment, shortly before you begin a new spiritual adventure, when you are physically, mentally or emotionally weak, when you have a good intention to serve or give to the work of God and when you are alone, etc. On this occasion, the devil struck when Ananias and Sapphira wanted to contribute to the work of the church. You must be on guard. Always remember that you are opening yourself to satanic attack every time you commit a secret sin.

4. A secret sin is against the triune God (verses 4, 9a)

Peter asked Ananias and Sapphira four rhetorical questions in this apostolic report. First, ‘didn’t it belong to you before it was sold?’ Second, ‘after it was sold, was not the money at your disposal?’ Third, ‘what made you think of doing such a thing?’ Fourth, ‘how could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord?’ He concluded that they had lied to both human beings and the triune God.

The point that Apostle Peter is trying to make here is that we are rebelling against God when we try to hide or deny our sins. Unfortunately, many Christians have done worse things than Ananias and Sapphira by making a pledge before the Lord and not fulfilling it. The misuse of talents and gifts God bestows on believers and the unfaithful stewardships of earthly possessions in tithes and offerings. The pretence to be serving God wholeheartedly in the church when they are not. Why are you repeatedly sinning against the triune God? What would you do when the mercy of God runs out?

5. A secret sin leads to lack of peace (verse 7)

The Bible confirmed that Sapphira waited for her husband for about three hours and she did not know what happened to him. Her conscience may have troubled her throughout the time her husband was with Peter. She may have been afraid that things would go terribly wrong and the entire church would eventually know about their atrocity. The Holy Spirit may also have convicted her of that secret sin.

You cannot engage in secret sin and expect to have peace and rest of mind. When you search through the Scriptures, you will discover that fear is always associated with a secret sin. There is usually the fear that God is fully aware of what you are doing through the witness of your conscience and the Holy Spirit in you. There is also the fear that things could go wrong and you might get caught. The Bible says, ‘the wicked flee though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion’ (Prov. 28:1). There is always lack of peace every time you walk outside the will of God. Are you lacking divine peace and rest of mind in your life now? Check your life; there may be an unconfessed hidden sin. Elsewhere, the Bible confirmed that the sin of a sinner would find him or her out (Num. 32:23).

6. A secret sin leads to premature death (verses 5-6, 9b-11)

Ananias was shocked when Peter confronted him with the truth. He fell down and died. In my view, he could not withstand the guilt and shame associated with what he did. The young men in the church came forward and buried him. Similarly, Sapphira fell down instantly and died after Peter challenged and notified

her about the demise of her husband. This instant judgement brought fear to the church and all the people around who heard about what happened.

This shows that a secret sinner is always a loser. Unfortunately, Ananias and Sapphira were unable to spend the money that they secretly withheld. This is a great lesson for us today. A secret sin is a dangerous adventure; it can lead to loss of unjust profit and premature death. Ananias and Sapphira surely died before their time because of their secret sin.

Conclusion

The six dangers and consequences of secret sin that we have identified in the story of Ananias and Sapphira in this chapter are also relevant for us in our contemporary world. We need courage to address the secret sin in our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit. We should not wait until things get out of hand when the situation is beyond repair because of death. It is possible for Ananias and Sapphira to have escaped their premature deaths if they had confessed their secret sin to God and Peter. Are you battling with unconfessed sin now? Jesus can set you free if

you confess it. The Bible says, 'if the son sets you free, you are free indeed' (John 8:36).

Summary

We have been able to demonstrate that a secret sin refers to the individual transgression that we commit and we think that no one else knows about it. God indeed knows all things and our sins are not hidden away from Him. The main point of this book is for you to beware of hidden sins. This is a divine warning. The examples of the biblical characters that we have explored shows that God is no respecter of anyone (whether rich, poor, young or old) when it comes to the dangers and consequences of secret sin.

A secret sin is a barrier preventing us from true intimacy with God. The Bible says, 'if we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make Him out to be a liar and His word is not in us (1 John 1:8-10). Since we are now 'hidden in Christ' after accepting Him as our Lord and personal saviour, hiding our sins is no longer necessary. We should lay

everything before Jesus Christ and allow Him to cover our nakedness.

Solution Prayer Points

- Oh Lord, give me a discerning spirit to recognise the lies of the devil in Jesus name.
- I shall not fall for the lies of the devil to commit secret sin in Jesus name.
- I will not misuse my freewill to commit secret sins in Jesus name.
- I shall not fall into the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life in Jesus name.
- I shall not induce other innocent people into secret sin in Jesus name.
- My life will be a blessing and not a curse to the people around me in Jesus name.
- I shall not do anything that will make me to be ashamed before God in Jesus name.
- I refuse to do anything that will make me to run away from God's people who can help to facilitate my spiritual recovery in Jesus name.
- Oh Lord, give me the grace to take responsibility for my actions in Jesus name.
- I shall not shift the blame of my mistake on others in Jesus name.

- Oh Lord, show me mercy in the midst of your current judgement over my life in Jesus name.
- I shall not lose my relationship with God in Jesus name.
- I shall not lose my place in the kingdom of God in Jesus name.
- I shall not do anything that will make God angry with me in Jesus name.
- This year, the anger of the Lord will neither kindle against me nor against my household in Jesus name.
- I will no more be overcome by secret sins in Jesus name.
- The defeat that I suffered in the past will turn into victory right now in Jesus name.
- Today, God will save me from secret sins in Jesus name.
- I declare and decree that hidden sins will not destroy my life in Jesus name.
- I reverse every negative outcome of secret sins in my life in Jesus name.
- I declare and decree that one sin in my life will not lead to another sin in Jesus name.
- The mercy of God will cover all my past mistakes in Jesus name.

- The resurrection power of Jesus Christ will rescue me from secret sin in Jesus name.
- I refuse to open myself to satanic attack in Jesus name.
- Every door or link that the enemies are capitalising on to attack me is hereby shut in Jesus name.
- I declare the total restoration of my peace in Jesus name.
- Henceforth, secret sin will lose its hold over my life in Jesus name.

Special Invitation

We expect that you cannot read this book and remain the same again. Would you like to give your life to Jesus (if you have not done that before)?

Please pray this short prayer with us:

Lord Jesus, I have read this book and it has challenged me. I acknowledge that I am a sinner and I need your supernatural help. I renounce the devil and his works in my life. I confess all my sins and iniquities. I wholeheartedly accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and personal saviour.

Henceforth, write my name in the book of life and give me the grace, to faithfully walk with you to the end of my life. In Jesus mighty name. Amen!

We want to say congratulations and welcome into the family of God. God bless you.

How Can We Help You in Your Spiritual Journey?

Do you want to be born again? Are you tired and weary in your Christian life? Do you have some unanswered questions in the Bible? Are you in need of prayers or counselling? Our team of leaders at EGOE are willing to support you in every way possible.

Please contact us on +447958083479 or e-mail pastor@egoc.org.uk. We also encourage you to benefit from our spiritual resources by visiting our website (www.egoc.org.uk). You can also download our EGOE App on Play Store for Android or Apple Store for iOS. Be nourished spiritually through our television programme on Faith TV at Sky channel 589 every Monday at 5:30pm, our radio programme on Naija FM 101.1 every Thursday at 8:15pm and PRZ FM radio 109.2. Alternatively, you can follow the ministry of EGOE on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Instagram for many inspiring teachings and words of encouragement.

Consider Supporting the Ministry of EGOC

One of the principles for a great harvest is to find a good seed and sow it on a good ground. We can assure you that Evangelical Global Outreach Church is a good ground for end-time kingdom harvest.

Would you like to become an Evangelical partner? Evangelical partners are those who generously give monthly donations to support the vision of EGOC to preach the total counsel of God to the world on the television, radio and other social media platforms.

Please consider becoming a consistent giver, if you can. You can give your donation now if you download our EGOC App or through EGOC website. Alternatively, you can contact us on +447958083479 or e-mail pastor@egoc.org.uk. All Evangelical partners are entitled to receive regular updates from EGOC, free Family Magazines and books as our own way of saying thank you. Blessings to you and your family.

About the Book

This book admonishes us as Christians and individuals not to hide our sins but to acknowledge and confess our sins to obtain the mercy of God.

The easy to follow selections from the Bible indicate that secret sins displease God and have huge repercussions for all to see. The story of Ananias and Sapphira especially cautions about a good intention turned into a tragedy because they yielded to Satan's temptation. We must be careful so that this does not happen to us.

I recommend this book and the use of the prayer points in the book to Church leaders, Christians and individuals who diligently aspire to live exemplary lives that will glorify God.

Pastor Ore Oni (EGOC)

No hidden sin goes on forever as it shall be exposed in a matter of time. However, what is most important is one's personal confession that leads to liberty in Christ which shuns shame, self-pity, judgment and eternal damnation.

Secret sin, when unchecked and unconfessed, leads to collective destruction and defeat for the sinner and those around the person. Praise the Lord as we have a Saviour who has made provision of liberty for us from secret sins by His Blood.

Nike Ojemen (EGOC)

Divine Solution Publication