

Denying Man's Sin Makes the only Remedy Unnecessary

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HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Denying man's sin makes the only remedy unnecessary. That is the topic we'll discuss today right here on the Christian Worldview Radio Program, where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host. The Christian Worldview is a non-profit, listener-supported radio ministry. You can connect with us by visiting our website TheChristianWorldview.org and the rest of our contact information will be given throughout today's program. As always, thank you for your notes of encouragement, financial support in lifting us up in prayer.

The Bible says that in the time of the judges in Israel, this is before the king started, "Every man did what was right in his own eyes" Judges 17:6. That is another way of saying the people were flagrantly breaking God's laws and rationalizing their sin. Now, scripture is clear that all men and women are sinners by nature and by choice.

For example, Romans 3 says, "For we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin. As it is written, there is none righteous, not even one. There is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God. All have turned aside. Together they have become useless. There is none who does good. There is not even one." Well that's certainly all-encompassing. Now considering all the hate, murder, lying, lust, stealing, coveting, envying, immorality, blasphemy, oppression, and much more that marks our world. It may seem surprising to you that Americans don't see themselves as sinners, but as basically good and thus do what is right in their own eyes.

In a recent survey released by George Barna, the director of research at the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University, "Only half of all American adults, 52% believe that everyone has sinned and even among theologically defined, born-again Christians, one in four, 25% denies personal guilt of sin." What's more, among self-identified Christians? The broader category beyond born-again Christians, 72% of Christians believe that people are 'basically good at heart'. This is a troubling and egregious error, especially by those who profess to be part of the church.

So today in the program, George Barna joins us to discuss the changing view of sin by Americans and Christians and what has led to that. We will also discuss why conviction over one's sin is so important because it shows us our need for the only remedy. Let's get to the interview with George Barna.

George, it's so good to have you back on the Christian Worldview Radio Program as we talk about the issue of sin today, and I want to start our conversation with some context from scripture, from a passage in first

John, chapter one starting in verse eight, where John says, "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us."

Verse nine, "If we confess our sins, He God is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Verse 10, again, He says the same thing. "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him, God a liar and His word is not in us." As we discuss two of your recent surveys you've done as a part of the American Worldview inventory for 2025, two recent reports, you say in this report that "Sin is not a difficult concept to understand or identify. Inserting sin, the idea of sin back into the national consciousness would be an invaluable investment into who we are as a nation and as the church."

So George, let's start out with asking you, how was sin defined in this particular survey you did and why is doing a survey on the issue of sin such an important subject?

GUEST: GEORGE BARNA:

Well, number one question, how is it defined? We didn't define it for people. Part of the objective of the survey was to have people tell us what their definition of it was. That was kind of an eye-opener. Your second question, I think why does it matter? Why should we focus on this? All throughout scripture, you have reference to the fact that we are fallen, we are undermined by our own sinful choices, and of course the entire New Testament revolves around the fact that God Himself, in the form of Jesus Christ had to come to earth and then ultimately wind up being falsely accused, suffering a painful, unjust death, going through the entire resurrection process to overcome sin on our behalf.

I mean, my goodness, the Bible is focused on relatively speaking a handful of issues and one of the most important ones that emerges very clearly is that of sin. So for Americans and even American Christians to be so blase about what sin is, about the commission of sin, about the implications of sin, the consequences it has in our lives, the steps that we can and must take to eliminate those eternal effects of sin on our souls, it's just mind-boggling to me.

But I think it's incredibly important that we take a look at it and one of the reasons is because churches in America are not addressing sin. We've got all kinds of self-help sermons and series that we're offering, but a very important study that I guess not surprisingly seemed very overlooked a few years ago that Pew Research did found that only three percent of the sermons that had been preached that year in Christian churches across the country even mentioned sin. Not that they were entire sermons about sin and all the things that I've just alluded to that are important related to sin, but even mentioning sin, three percent of our sermons.

So here we are with the, I would say probably the biggest issue that humankind has dealing with its own sin, churches being entities that exist to help us get closer to God and knowing that we cannot get close to God when we stay in that state of sin because of his perfection and holiness. The fact that churches aren't even addressing it to me just is mind-blowing, and so that's one of the reasons why we found it was important to do this research. We've been trying to dive into why do only four percent of American adults currently have a

biblical worldview and our views of sin are errant views of sin and God and self and holiness and truth and all of these matters are part of it. So this was an attempt to dig a little bit deeper into one of those elements.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Well, I'm so glad you did this study, this survey because it's really ultra important. As you mentioned, it goes right to the heart of undermining the gospel. If people don't understand their sinners that the good news of the gospel is not going to be seen as good news or even needed. Dr. George Barna is our guest today, the director of research at the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University. George, you say in this report, tens of millions of American adults resist the idea that everyone is guilty of sin, only half of all American adults, 52% to be specific, believe that everyone has sinned.

And then you go into a subcategory of Americans, even among theologically defined born-again Christians, and you define that as those who profess reliance on Christ's forgiveness for their sins for salvation, one in four. So 25% of professing born-again Christians denies personal guilt of sin, revealing a sharp disconnect between professed faith and personal acknowledgement of sin.

Okay, another two-part question here for you, George. If 52% of American adults believe that everyone has sinned, does that mean that 48% of American adults believe that some people actually never sin? And then the second part of the question is how can one consider themselves to be a, 'born-again, Christian' in other words, saved from God's judgment over our sin with a full 25% of them denying that they have personal sin.

GUEST: GEORGE BARNA:

Let's deal with the first part there. There I think needs to be an understanding of the fact that yeah, 48% are saying that not everyone is a sinner, but that gets divided into those who say that not everyone is a sinner and a second group in there who say, "Well, but that's because there's no such thing as sin." And so you've got people coming at it from these two different angles.

Then when you look at the born-again Christians, it's a really interesting group to study. These are not the people who simply call themselves that because I've done a lot of research on this and found that a lot of the people who call themselves born-again also admit that they have no kind of personal relationship with Christ or that they've never confessed their sins or they confessed their sins once a long time ago and haven't thought about it since.

I mean, there are all these quirks to how people think about being born-again, and that's one of the reasons why when I do my research, I don't simply ask people, "Do you consider yourself to be a born-again Christian?" That's what Gallup, Harris, NORC, all Ugov, all the big survey firms, that's how they approach it because they don't understand faith, they don't want to dig into it, and so they just take the easy way out. We ask people, "Well, what do you think is going to happen to you after you die?" And we give them, I think it's seven or eight different options about life after death, and one of those is after I die, I know that I'm going to

go to heaven or live eternally with God only because I've confessed my sins and accepted Christ as my Savior. That's the group that we put in there.

Now, is that a perfect measure? No, only God really knows what's going on in a person's mind, heart, and soul. This is just our best attempt to get at that. And then we have some questions that we ask after that, that dig deeper and we've got all kinds of other categories, but even with that theologically identified, born-again group, what we find is that a lot of them go to a church or have relationships with people who lead them to believe that if you simply say the magic prayer, "God, I've sinned. Please forgive me, I want Jesus to be my savior." Some variation on that, okay, we're good to go. Let's get on with life. They don't understand repentance.

And so we've got subsequent questions that in some surveys we'll ask about that repentance part of the equation, and you find that there's an enormous number of people who think they're good for eternity simply because they said that prayer and nothing in their life changed other than the fact that now they think of themselves as being eternally secure, as being spiritually pure, as being children of God whom God can buddy up to because they said that prayer one time back when.

Well, I know theologically, I'm probably stepping on some toes already, but my reading of scripture says, no, no, no, no, no. This goes to your state of mind, your state of being. Do you understand the sin to be something that breaks God's heart and that He cannot abide by, He cannot let go of just as we shouldn't let go of it. We need to deal with it. That repentance literally means that you're turning around, you're going in a different direction. In other words, whatever broke God's heart, you've made a commitment that you're not going to do that again. And if you do it again, you're going to confess it again and you're going to continue on that trail of repentance where you're going to keep imploring the Holy Spirit to empower you to live differently in regard to that behavior or that thought or whatever it is.

There is a lot of confusion and ignorance on the part of literally most Americans when it comes to the issue of sin and sadly with a large minority of the people that our churches count upon according to what pastors tell us in the research as being the backbone of the church, as being the people that are going to go out and disciple the culture, which is a whole other discussion. But to me it's really scary because when it comes to discipleship, you reproduce who you are.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

That's right.

GUEST: GEORGE BARNA:

And I think part of the problem that the American church has and why it's not the church that Christ died on the cross for is that what our churches are doing because they're lazy, they're simply saying, rather than truly equipping people biblically to be genuine, biblical disciples of Jesus, they're teaching a bunch of stuff, they're pleased when people take notes and they say, "Okay, go out and tell other people what you learned and get

them to know these things as well," as if knowledge is what makes somebody a disciple. It's not even close. It's part of it, but it's not the full bag.

So we've got this problem of we're sending out non-disciples to reproduce themselves and feeling good about our local churches because we've sent these people out into the marketplace with good intentions on both parts, the churches and the individuals, but that's not what we need and that's certainly not what the scriptures are exhorting us to do.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Wow. I think that is just so well said. Dr. George Barna with us today here on the Christian Worldview from the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University. Jesus said very clearly repent and believe in the gospel. This isn't two separate things. Belief has the implied element of you're repenting of your sin, and that's why you're believing in the gospel. And I think you're very right, George, about so many professing Christians who are trusting in a prayer they've made and never understood the concept of sin and how egregious how that separates us from God and how we need to repent and turn from that and with God's help go in a whole new direction. The Christian life is one of repentance once you believe.

So thank you for emphasizing that and how the church is falling short in this category and we're going to get more into that, what the church is doing to foster this lack of understanding of sin as we talk about your survey here on American's misunderstanding of their sinfulness.

Our topic today is denying man's sin makes the only remedy unnecessary. And our guest is George Barna, director of research at the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University. George, the converse to thinking you haven't sinned or you're not much of a sinner as we've been discussing is the fact that people think the opposite, that they're actually good. And you say that 70% of American adults believe people are 'basically good at heart, unquote'. That's a very common belief despite many of those people acknowledging the existence of sin and the widespread commission of sin, in fact, among self-identified Christians, and this is not the category of born-again Christians.

This is a broader category of just self-identified Christians. 72% of them believe that people are 'basically good at heart' and a full 70%, so only two percentage points lower of theologically identified, born-again Christians again, those who believe they will eternally be in heaven because they have confessed their sins and trusted in Christ as savior. They also hold this belief that people are basically good at heart and the Bible refutes this everywhere in scripture. There is none good, no, not one. The heart of man is deceitful and desperately wicked. Who can know it? Verse after verse emphasizes the opposite of what is being professed here as a belief. What is influencing people to think this way in this country that people are basically 'good at heart'?

GUEST: GEORGE BARNA:

Well, I think there are two things, David. One is when we asked people how do you develop your ideas and your beliefs and consequently your lifestyle related to these things like sin? And what we discovered is, well, essentially it comes down to feelings. It doesn't really matter that much what the Bible says. It's all about my

feelings. I feel that people are good. Now, why would we feel that way when people are constantly doing things that hurt us or harm us or undermine us much less what they do to God or His church? Well, that I think comes back to the ultimate problem that's underlying this whole discussion of sin is our selfishness. If we start saying, "Well, people are not good at heart," that's almost like we're beginning to point the finger at ourselves and say, "Wait a minute, there's something wrong with me. There's something in me that needs to radically change."

Frankly, most Americans don't want to address that. It's much more comfortable, much more secure to simply say, "Oh, we mean well, we do our best. More times than not, we get it right. And doesn't that make us basically good?" I think that seems to be what's emerging out of all this research we've been doing about the mentality of Americans. It's like I try hard. I mean well, I'm better than the next guy. What else does God want from me? Ultimately, you wind up backing into this. Part of what we discover in all the research is the absolute intellectual, moral, spiritual turbulence that Americans live with every single day when it comes to their spiritual beliefs.

And sin is one of those things where, yeah, let's give credit where credit's due. Satan has done a great job of putting our brains in a mix master and throwing it all in there and saying, "Okay, you know what? Just take out what makes sense to you, what feels good to you, what you can work with most effectively." Rather than trying to say, "Let's try to live in accordance with truth." There's only one truth, it's God's truth. And of course, Satan doesn't want us working with that.

And so we wind up with this bizarre set of beliefs. We found that only one out of every seven self-identified Christians in America has a biblically consistent theology related to the basics about sin. And the more questions you add onto that, the lower that proportion gets, the church in America is doing a miserable job at helping people understand sin, what it is, what it looks like, what to do about it, how to positively impact culture in relation to sin.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

When I saw this survey come out on sin and American's perception and Christian's perception of sin, I just knew I really wanted to talk to you about it because this is one of the big four meta-narratives you could say of scripture. Number one, that God is the creator. He is holy and just and perfect. He created the perfect world. And you get to the second one. Here's the big thing what we're talking about today. That man is not righteous, man is sinful, in need of redemption, will be under God's judgment. And then the third thing about scripture is that God sent his son Christ the Redeemer to redeem some from sin and judgment and then four, that God will restore all things someday.

So there's hardly a bigger topic than this issue of sin, but maybe this one is that I'm going to ask you next, George, because another survey that I came across in preparing for our conversation that you have done has to do with what Americans believe in a, quote, supreme power, that they believe in a supreme power but not the God of the Bible.

And you define that in that survey as there is only one supreme spiritual meaning. He created and rules everything in existence. Only 46% of Americans believe that definition of God. Only 60% of Christians and really only 77% of born-again Christians believe that definition of God, that there's only one supreme spiritual being and He created and rules everything in existence. So my question is how much is a misunderstanding of God and the word He inspired driving this? And so when we're talking to people about God, they're not having the same definition of God in their mind as we're thinking in our own minds.

GUEST: GEORGE BARNA:

You know David, all of this goes back to the worldview research we've been doing for six or seven years now at the Cultural Research Center. And of course I've been doing it for a much longer time than that, but a couple of years ago I found something that we've been calling the seven cornerstones of the biblical worldview because we found that these, in spite of being kind of Sunday school, 101 teachings or beliefs, were things that most Americans get wrong. They still don't get it.

And yet when we looked at people who have a biblical worldview and those who don't have one, we discovered that if you don't just believe, but I mean you really own these seven cornerstones, scriptural cornerstones, you've got an 88% probability of developing a full biblical worldview. But if you reject even one of those seven cornerstones, the probability of you developing a full biblical worldview drops to two percent.

What are we talking about? We're talking about this orthodox biblical view of the God of the Bible. Well, I've got so many journalists now that are upset with me because I keep expanding the language that I use for all the things that I talk about. I no longer just talk about born-again Christians. Now I have to talk about theologically identified, born-again Christians. I no longer talk about God. Now I have to describe Him as the God of the Bible because in prior surveys I would either describe Him as God and we got a lot of noise in that measurement that we had to untangle. And then I said, "Okay, well, He's the God of Israel. I mean, let's talk about Him as the God of Israel." And we found the proportion of people who said they believe in the God of Israel was much smaller. I forget what the number was, but I think it was down in the 20 to 30% range.

I thought, "Whoa, that can't be." So then we tried, okay, God of the Bible and that put us at the numbers you were alluding to, the upper forties, but there is so much confusion and noise in people's minds about all of these basic concepts. God, sinful man, Jesus as Savior, the Bible as God's truth, truth therefore being absolute because God is unchanging. He's the embodiment of truth and so His truth is unchanging. The fact that everybody has the same general purpose for their life, go love and serve God with all their heart, mind, strength, and soul, and that success is best identified or defined as consistent obedience to God. You put those seven things together and you're down to fewer than one out of 10 adults in America who own all of those.

And because of that, people just think errantly about faith, about God, about sin, about their lives, about purpose, about success, about the Bible, about truth, about relationships, about creation, you name it. And

people are all over the board because they don't have a solid foundation. And so what we're trying to do and get as many people on board with the idea as possible is can we at least start with these seven basics? I've rarely seen statistical correlations as strong as this one where if you get these seven, okay, you're on the right track. You've got a track, it's the right track, and if you keep following that track, you're really going to figure it out. Your life is going to be something that brings honor and glory to God.

And yes, we can send you out into the marketplace to reproduce yourself because now you're thinking like Jesus, which because we do what we believe, enables you to act like Jesus. And if you're thinking and acting like Jesus, i.e. living like Christ, that's what we want to reproduce. That's what a genuine disciple is, and that's what a genuine disciple reproduces. But you can't do it unless you think like Jesus, which is why that biblical worldview is so critical. And that's why to me, these seven cornerstones are the starting point of this lifelong race to become the person that God made you to be.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

George, hearing this about Christians and Americans not embracing these seven basic cornerstones of the faith reminds me of what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew chapter seven, He said, "Enter through the narrow gate for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction and there are many who enter through it for the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life. And there are few who find it."

So maybe we shouldn't be so surprised at what people's worldview really is that it's not biblically aligned and we should address it as it is that there's a big mission field out there even within the professing church, which is a good segue into my next question because you've referenced the church a couple times today already, and you say in this report that we're discussing today, such views on a low view of sin that people are basically good, reflect a failure of churches and Christian leaders to teach a biblical understanding of sin.

And this points back you say to a 2019 study from Pew Research showing that only three percent, you mentioned this, of sermons in America even mentioned sin. So my question for you, George, is how and why did the church go from more of a fire and brimstone or at least more of a weighty sermon content substance to softer feel-good messages? In other words, you look back over the last 30, 40 years and you've seen some of the movements that have taken place within the professing evangelical church. There was the seeker sensitive movement, which I think is still very influential today. You've already been discussing it where the sermons are much less about sin and much more about motivational self-help topics.

People like Rick Warren was very well known for this. Bill Hybels' Willow Creek Church in Chicago, and they were maybe the forerunners of this and this popularity has expanded and multiplied everywhere. You also have more of the prosperity movement. Someone like Joel Osteen doesn't talk about personal sin at all. So talk about the trajectory of where the church has gone, George, and why this has taken place.

GUEST: GEORGE BARNA:

I think so much of it has to do with the fact that most of our pastors we know based on our research at least do not have a biblical worldview. 37% of all pastors, 41% of senior pastors. Staff pastors, the numbers are much lower. So where are people going to get a biblical worldview? Their pastors don't have it. They're not getting it from their families, they're not getting it from their seminaries. You look at the average American, typical American, only two percent of the parents of children under the age of 13 today have a biblical worldview. You can't give what you don't have. So the upcoming generations have been less and less likely to be exposed to a biblical worldview.

So what is it that churches think they exist to do? Well, they've kind of taken a page from American culture. They want to be successful. The problem then is that our research finds that a large majority of pastors tend to measure five things to determine whether or not their ministry is successful or growing and effective as they would say. And those five things are, how many people show up, how much money is raised, how many programs are offered, how many staff people have been hired for those programs, and how much square footage has been built out on the campus? I'm glad they're measuring stuff, but as a measurement guy, I know if you measure the wrong stuff, you get the wrong outcomes.

And that's what's happening in our churches. Jesus didn't die for any of those five things, so we've got to get back to a biblical understanding of what discipleship is and focus on that. All of this kind of explains why the current studies that I'm working on, we doing a new book on discipleship in America and what we're finding is that only three percent of adults in America meet the six criteria that Jesus give us for a biblical disciple. And three percent, can we transform the culture with three percent? Interestingly enough, yes, because we're serving an all-powerful, all-knowing God, but can we do better than three percent? Absolutely.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

George, just two final questions for you to wrap up our conversation is that the survey about sin was not better in the younger generation. The younger one is the less likely they are to say that everyone sins. We've been told or even seen a real uprising through let's say Charlie Kirk and TPUSA and their events and we saw his just sadly get assassinated and the memorial service afterwards. But we've been told there's a real uprising of younger Americans now that are much more conservative and Christian.

Do you think that is the case even though your survey seems to indicate otherwise that the younger adults do not have a biblical worldview when it comes to sin and other issues as well? What moment are we in here in this country just considering the popularity of Charlie Kirk and what's happened in the aftermath of his death?

GUEST: GEORGE BARNA:

I think a lot of people are going to be disappointed a month or two after the whole assassination because the organized church is not the least bit prepared to do anything significant in the lives of all these new visitors, many of whom are young. They are intrigued, they're interested, they're searching, they're curious, but churches have done nothing to prepare the existing group of attenders to actually disciple those people to effectively share the gospel and then to help them live the gospel life.

We saw the very same thing happen years ago after the September 11 attacks on America where churches were busting at the seams with people who suddenly were interested in what does Christianity have to offer? Does Jesus speak to this moment in history? Is there something of value I can get to feel secure and comfortable? What do I need to know and do? And after roughly six weeks or so, the people who suddenly showed up at church were no longer showing up at church. Why? Because they came. The church at that time was not in the least bit prepared to interact with and form discipling relationships with those people.

And so we're just seeing the same movie played over again. In the intervening 20 or 25 years the American Church really didn't change what it was doing discipleship wise. We changed the nature of the show that we put on. But what's going to happen here is that after a number of weeks, these young people in particular live in a very sophisticated world. And so if we think we're going to impress them with the show, the music, the shaking hands, the teaching and taking notes and the coffee and donuts, they can get a better show elsewhere, frankly. And so this isn't going to work. That's not what the church is about.

But honestly, I would say, and I don't mean this just to be mean or cruel or nasty, but most people in churches, including the pastoral staff, do not know what the church is supposed to be. When God gives us an opportunity like this, what an amazing opportunity that a great young man paid the ultimate price for. Are we going to be able to exploit in a positive manner that sacrifice that he made? I really don't see that happening.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Dr. George Barna is our guest today here on the Christian Worldview. As we talk about denying man's sin makes the only remedy of the gospel unnecessary. One final quote from your recent survey on sin, you say, "Parents, pastors, and religious influencers have a vital responsibility to keep basic biblical truths before the Christian body, including the reality of sin and its repercussions. Without such clarity," you say, "Christians will lack the foundation to flourish in their faith, to stand firm against cultural pressures and to influence the world around them with the hope of the gospel."

So to the audience listening to this radio program today, there's for sure Christians, there's non-Christians, I'm sure there are some church leaders, pastors as well. What is your final personal exhortation to people listening today about what they should do with what we've been discussing with regard to the issue of sin within our own lives and proclaiming the truth about it to themselves and other people?

GUEST: GEORGE BARN:

Well recognize that the Bible couldn't be much more clearer about the fact that we are sinners. We are sinners whose sins have consequences. Those consequences are going to destroy us unless we recognize that God loves us so much that that's why Jesus came to earth and died, that horrible, illegal, unjust, embarrassing death on the cross and then proved His deity and His power to overcome sin through the resurrection. And that He's inviting us into an ongoing relationship with Him where we recognize our powerlessness, our sinfulness, our dirtiness, our unholiness, but He can raise us up out of that as well through that relationship with Him.

And if we're willing to invest in that relationship and let Him transform who we are, transform our mind, transform our heart, transform our soul, transform our body, our lifestyle, transform everything that we would naturally do so that the Holy Spirit can supernaturally take us to places we can't get to otherwise in our lives. That's going to be the ultimate life for you.

But part of that is knowing what you believe, why you believe it, and recognizing that this life isn't about you. It's about God, and He created you for His purposes and a major purpose for why He created you is so that once you figure out what you believe and why you believe it and how to implement that in your life, that you are then called to replicate that in the lives of other people, which means you've got to build those relationships with people who haven't figured it out yet. And you've got to share your story and you've got to share of course before yours, maybe even Jesus's story of why He went through all of this, not only for you but for them as well.

And tell the stories and read God's word and pray that God will continue to refine both of you, you and the person that you get to disciple and go through that lifelong process with them of seeing them transformed as well. That's success in life. Your car, your house, your salary, your reputation. None of that matters. God won't even care about that when you get judged. It's what you do with the life He gave you, His truth that He's giving to you, and the opportunities He gives you to affect other lives. That's what's going to determine your success in life, how you dealt with Jesus, how you dealt with holy, all of these things. And so get your priorities right, basically. Live life for the purpose that God gave it to you.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

George, that is such a tremendous and truthful way to end our conversation today. So just appreciate you and all you've done to be dedicated to understanding the worldview of Americans and Christians and the church, the hard work you've put in. We're always appreciative to have you come on the Christian Worldview Radio program. We tell listeners how they can connect with you and the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University. We just wish all of God's best and grace to you. Thank you again for coming on the program.

GUEST: GEORGE BARNA:

Thank you, David, I appreciate it.

HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Again, George Barna has been our guest today. We have links to his research studies at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. You can also hear a replay of the program there anytime. It's a good exhortation, what he closed by saying about discipleship being the priority of the Christian life. In other words, a believer being discipled and also discipling someone else. And as I look back at my life in my mid to late teens and early twenties, I wasn't interested in being discipled, but rather doing what was right in my own eyes, unfortunately. In other words, practicing sin. And I look back at that time with regret and shame.

But there's one thing that I'm immensely thankful for during that time. That God put a heavy weight of conviction on my conscience about my sin. I would sin. But soon after, I would feel the conviction of the wrongness of what I had done. And although I tried to rationalize my sin and didn't truly repent of it and turn from it, God made sure it remained a heavy burden that I couldn't get rid of. And by the time I reached 24 years old, that conviction became so heavy that I couldn't bear it any longer. And I knew God would never bless me in my rebellion. And I sensed the consequences and judgment that awaited me if I continued to practice sin.

So this compelled me to read the Bible daily for the first time in my life. And I began to understand that God created me to worship and serve Him, and that my sin was separating me from walking with God. I understood that Christ paid the penalty for my sin and I was called to repent of my sin, turn from it with His help and trust in Christ as my Savior and my Lord. The weight of sin that I had been feeling for many years was gone because I knew Jesus had atoned or covered or paid for all my past, present and even my future sin.

So this topic today on understanding our own sinfulness is so important because it leads to yearning for the only remedy for our sin, the gospel. I like how Evangelist Ray Comfort will use the example of a man who goes to the doctor and gets a heart scan and the doctor comes into the room and tells the man he needs open heart surgery. Well, the man feels fine, so he doesn't want to have his chest cut open, naturally so. But then when the doctor shows him the heart scan and that he has three arteries nearly blocked and he's going to have a heart attack and die, well then the man has a strong desire for the remedy, which is bypass surgery.

This is why we must talk about God's righteous laws and our breaking of His laws, our sin when sharing the gospel so a person can see, like it says in Romans three, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." In Romans 6:23, "The wages of that sin is death, both physical and spiritual death, separation from God." You don't need to be judgmental about this. Just hold up the mirror of God's law. Galatians 3:24 says, "Therefore, the law has become our tutor or schoolmaster to lead us to Christ so that we may be justified by faith."

You see that. You have to see the law and that you're breaking it and you've sinned against God so that we may then be justified or declared righteous by God through faith. Next time when you talk to someone who says they are a Christian, ask them how and why they became a Christian. If they say nothing about their sin and the need of God's forgiveness as the reason why they needed to become a follower of Christ, it's really highly doubtful they're actually born again.

Yes, becoming a Christian results in knowing the truth and having peace and purpose, the assurance of heaven and many other blessings and benefits. But at the core, sin is the reason we need to be saved from God's judgment. Let's close with how Paul describes every believer's story before they come to saving faith, which is marked by sin. And that what God does by his grace to save the repentant sinner. Where Paul writes to Titus in chapter three of that letter, "For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived,

enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another." In other words, a life marked by sin.

And here's the transition point, verse four, "But when the kindness of God, our Savior and His love for mankind appeared." He saved us, not we saved ourselves, not in the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to God's mercy by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior. So that being justified by His grace on merited favor from God toward us, we will be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

We are out of time for today, but thank you for joining us on the Christian Worldview and for your support of this non-profit radio ministry. Until next time, think biblically, live accordingly, and stand firm.

The mission of the Christian Worldview is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. We hope today's broadcast encouraged you toward that end.

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