

DON'T BE SURPRISED

John 8:2-12 | Dr. Stephen G. Tan

DISCUSS

We face a sad reality: Christians, even those in a leadership position, commit sin. They succumb to moral failings, have uncontrolled anger issues, are involved in financial mismanagement, have character and toxic personality issues, or fall into various temptations and sin. This should not surprise us, but it is important for followers of Jesus to be aware of five things as it relates to sinful acts in a Christian's life. Read John 8:2-12.

Don't be surprised when people with a sin nature fall into sin (v. 2-4)

- Why were the Jewish religious leaders sure that the woman they brought to Jesus was guilty of adultery?
- What behavior or activities would you consider immoral?
- Why do you think faithfulness to a spouse is a big challenge in marriages today?
- If you are married, how would you assess the health of your marriage? What boundaries do you surround your married relationship with so that you will not fall into the temptation of unfaithfulness whether in your mind/heart or in your action?
- If you are single, what boundaries do you put around yourself so that you can keep yourself pure and away from entertaining and falling into sin?
- Since even Christians fall into sin, are you open to set up layers of accountability where people are able to freely rebuke and criticize you as needed and you can humbly take and accept it? Why is this important?

Don't be surprised when you are angry with sin and the devastation it causes (v. 5)

- What does the Mosaic Law stipulate to those caught in adultery? Why is it so severe?

- How do you feel when you hear someone you know fall into sin of unfaithfulness, financial issues, mismanagement, anger, character issues, etc.?
- How do you feel about the sin committed? Do you realize the ugliness of sin and how it destroys families, friendships, relationships, and even the individual themselves? Is your emotion of anger toward these sins justified?
- How should you deal with your emotion as you grieve for someone you know and respect fall into sin?

Don't be surprised when people fairly or unfairly judge (v. 6-9)

- What was the real intention of the religious leaders in bringing the adulterous woman before Jesus?
- How does the nature of being judgmental show in a person's life, whether he or she is a Christian or not?
- How could even the best judgments be unfair?
- Discuss how gossip (spreading misinformation) is a toxic way of judging.
- If you don't know all the information about something that you were just made aware of, would you trust spiritual leadership to make the judgment call and submit to their spiritual authority? Why or why not?

Don't be surprised when God forgives and restores because of Jesus (v. 10-11)

- Why did Jesus not condemn the woman who was caught in the act of adultery? Did Jesus see her repentant heart and know her sorrowful mind?
- How did Jesus balance justice and grace in this story? What was His last word to the woman?
- Why should you not define a person by his/her sin if he/she is truly repentant or changed?
- If Jesus could show grace to a sinful person like you (Ephesians 2:4-5), how would you show grace to someone who has fallen into sin but repents and desires to be restored?

Don't be surprised when the world is attracted to a message of hope and grace (v. 12)

- How is Jesus the light of your world? How does His being your light affect the way you walk with Him?
- How would you react to the fact that Jesus can really forgive the worst of sins and restore His erring child into good standing because of the redemption He provides?
- How do you think the dark and broken world would respond if they realized that Jesus graciously takes a person's sins and brokenness and puts it upon Himself, so that he/she can have hope, joy and peace?

REFLECT

The Church is made up of broken people—sinners, saved by grace and called to do the work of God. People sinning or even spiritual leaders caught in sin will not derail the work of the church, as it is from God. God is still victorious; Satan cannot and will not win! Use this time to renew your focus upon Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith, and pray that you may continue to faithfully do the work of the Great Commission without being distracted by the failings of other believers.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, it is indeed sobering to be reminded that Christians, even Christian leaders, could still fall into sin. It is because we are still living in this sinful world with our sin nature that we fall into sin. Lord, help me to hate sin and the devastation it causes. Help me to be not judgmental of those I know who fall into sin, but help me to see both Your justice and grace as You deal with Your children. Thank You that You forgive and restore because of Jesus Christ who died for our sins. I am assured and comforted that fair and final justice is in Your hands, not mine. Thank You that I can trust You in what You are doing. In Jesus' name. Amen.