

# 9. Gospel Shaped Lifestyle

## *Guilty of the Gospel*

1. Intro:
  - a. Brother Steven White → obnoxious, vicious, mean, claimed to be sinless
    - i. Behind closed doors... what was inside eventually spilled out
  - b. This week: Duggars → knowing this existed, trying to hide it
  - c. Why is Christianity a joke? Because we've known lots of public Christians
  - d. Our attitude toward sin privately and publicly should be identical or we pave the way for hypocrisy → we must be shaped by the Gospel
  - e. **A Gospel Shaped Lifestyle is prescribed for all, but it must describe our leadership.**
  - f. Weeks to come... Today, above reproach
2. *[1] The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. [2] Therefore an overseer must be above reproach... [7] Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.*
  - a. Noble task → Elder sermon, reflect the Good (Chief) Shepherd
  - b. What does it mean to be above reproach?
    - i. Summary statement for all the qualifications that follow (bookend w/ v.7)
    - ii. Deals intrinsically w/ a person's REPUTATION
    - iii. Observable conduct → There's some truth to the fact that you can't judge a person's heart, but you can learn a lot by their actions
      1. e.g. Nobody can level a serious charge against him
      2. e.g. Vetting a candidate for political office
  - c. **Being above reproach is about Gospel overflow, not good politics.**
    - i. As such, having a good reputation is about living above reproach, NOT about being putting on a good front...
    - ii. Nor is it about being liked by everyone...
    - iii. It's about what's inside because what's inside inevitably spills out
  - d. Another word for this: **Integrity** → your character, ethics that shape actions
    - i. Who you are when nobody's around eventually is made known
    - ii. What comes out when you are under pressure, scrutinized?
      1. What would your wife, kids, friends, co-workers say
      2. E.g. Running into church people on vacation in Mexico
      3. Terrifying, isn't it?
  - e. At the same time, **Being above reproach doesn't mean being perfect, but it does mean that the Gospel is real in your life and in your actions**
    - i. You don't allow sin to take root
    - ii. You confess, repent when you are wrong (not just when you're caught)
    - iii. Pattern of victory over sin (1 Cor 10:13)
    - iv. Not perfect → everyone fails, but **what characterizes you?**

1. The Gospel? Not afraid to admit failures, walk in obedience, count the cost, repent, etc
2. Lies, veiled godliness? Guard self/reputation, hypocrisy, OR admit sin and wear it like a badge of honor
- f. **If you are to be guilty of anything, be guilty of following Christ.**
3. There needs to be more than just admitting our mistakes. There needs to be Gospel progress leading to victory over sin. Yes, we will fail, but being above reproach needs to be taken seriously. WHY? Two main reasons...
  - a. **As goes the leadership, so go the people**
    - i. *Hosea 4:9, "Like people, like priest..."*
    - ii. This is true positively...
    - iii. This is exponentially true negatively...
      1. **You can't have a healthy church w/ unhealthy leaders**
      2. E.g. Fall of great denominations
    - iv. Why? B/C Looking righteous when convenient isn't real change
  - b. **The Gospel's reputation is at stake.**
    - i. 1 Timothy & sound doctrine
    - ii. Paul is chiefly concerned w/ an accurate depiction of the Gospel
    - iii. *1 Timothy 2:3,4, "This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."*
    - iv. Rarely will someone choose to follow Christ b/c of the life that you live, but people are quick to point at Christians as the reason why they doubt the veracity of our faith
      1. Our poor reflection of Christ can undermine the Gospel
  - c. We need to strive to live above reproach, lives of integrity, b/c as goes the head so goes the body and the reputation of the Gospel is at stake
4. Paul as an example of this in action...
  - a. Acts 21:28; Acts 23:1-6; Acts 24:11-21
  - b. Paul was guilty of one thing: following Jesus at all costs
  - c. Was he liked by everyone? No
  - d. Did he call sin out and stir up problems from time to time? Yes
  - e. Did he strive for obedience, holiness, godliness? Yes
  - f. Was he always perfect? No (c.f. Romans 7)
  - g. This is the model for our lives w/ Paul as our example and Jesus as the goal
    - i. Jesus was sinless yet condemned → above reproach, yet guilty
    - ii. For our redemption, for our good
    - iii. The Gospel transforms us and our reputation
    - iv. We live in response.
  - h. **If you are to be guilty of anything, be guilty of following Christ.**
    - i. Because as goes the head so goes the body, and...
    - ii. The reputation of the gospel is at stake
5. Some practical action steps...

- a. **Be aware of your flaws**
  - i. **Everyone has a fatal flaw, which we are subtly aware of yet painfully ignorant to.**
  - ii. “Abstain from all thinking about other people’s faults, unless your duties as a teacher or parent make it necessary to think about them. Whenever the thoughts come unnecessarily into one’s mind, why not simply shove them away? And think of one’s own faults instead?” - CS Lewis
  - iii. *But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified. - 1 Corinthians 9:27*
- b. **Seek to please Christ, not man** → one leads to integrity, the other hypocrisy
  - i. *For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ. - Galatians 1:10*
- c. **Find accountability through authentic community**
  - i. *Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. - James 5:16a*
- d. **Stay close to Jesus in the word and in prayer**
  - i. *"Whenever a man or a woman fails to walk with God, he or she walks on the edge of an abyss." - Haddon Robinson*