Secret Sins

(Selected Scriptures)
1/21/07

Introduction: Ever since the fall of man, people have a tendency to sin in secret; to do "it" when no one is looking; to hide from accountability.

* Take warning from the examples of Scripture of the futility of living a secret life of sin

Notice 6 examples of people who tried to hide their sin:

I. **ADAM: tried to hide in shame and fear** (Genesis 3:8-10)
(Motive: Fear of the consequences of disobedience)

II. **ACHAN: tried to hide stolen goods in defiance of God's Law**
(Joshua 6:17-19; 7:1; 21)
(Motive: Fear of the consequences of loss of material wealth)

III. **DAVID: tried to hide his adulterous affair with a cover-up** (2 Sam 11; 12:12)
(Motive: Fear of the consequences of the loss of respected reputation)

IV. **MADAM FOLLY: tried to hide forbidden activity in the dark** (Prov. 9:17)
(Motive: Fear of the consequences of public shame and disgrace)

V. **ELDERS of ISRAEL: tried to hide their idolatry in a smoke filled Temple**
(Ezekiel 8)
(Motive: Fear of the consequences of violating the ministers code of worship)

VI. **JUDAS ISCARIOT: tried to hide his thievery from Jesus and the Disciples**
(John 12:6)
(Motive: Fear of the consequences of getting caught in financial mismanagement)

Conclusion: Be honest with God, yourself, and others.
It's a matter of faith, sincerity, and integrity

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Introduction: Ever since the fall of man, people have a tendency to sin in secret; to do "it" when no one is looking; to hide from accountability.

From the time we were children, we all enjoyed hearing or telling secrets. We relished in the mystery of a secret, the mystique of knowing something others did not. Perhaps we liked secrets because they stoked our pride. Or perhaps we enjoyed secrets because they gave us identity with a certain subject or a certain group of people.

Why do we hide? Why does mankind expend so much effort to live a life of secrecy?

We want to avoid shame and embarrassment, accountability, the consequences for our actions. Basically fear is why people hide their sin. Fear of losing the pet sin, fear of getting caught, fear of having to pay for the transgression. Fears of having to deal with the consequences of their actions (EX: abortion is one example of cover-up)

People rationalize and in their minds justify their secret life, thinking: "This is something I really want or need! I know it is considered socially or morally unacceptable, but I want it anyway."

* Take warning from the examples of Scripture of the futility of living a secret life of sin

Notice 6 examples of people who tried to hide their sin:

I. ADAM: tried to hide in shame and fear (Genesis 3:8-10)

(Motive: Fear of the consequences of disobedience)

Genesis 3:8-10
And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.
And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou?
And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I *was* naked; and I hid myself.

Adam did what all sinners are prone to do – hide from God.
He who had the closest fellowship with God of any mortal to ever live, would lose it the instant he sinned. He would feel a spiritual nakedness to match his physical nakedness and he would now hide in shame and fear.

Genesis 3:8
"They heard the voice" - i.e. they heard the sound; they perceived God's presence by the sound of the rustling leaves, etc., as God's Spirit moved through the Garden of Eden.
"In the cool of the day" - In the breezy part of the day ("cool" = *ruach* = wind). As the sun came up and the breezes started blowing, Adam and Eve were cognizant of the Lord's presence.
"Hid themselves from the presence of the LORD" - Filled with shame and guilt, Adam and Eve attempted to do that which is impossible to do. No one can hide from the all-knowing and all-seeing God (Ps. 139:7-12).

The reason people hide from God is singular: Sin.

John 3:19-20 - And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.
20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

We don't want the rebuke from God and we don't want the chastisement from God; therefore, we try to avoid the presence of God.

Although the evidence of God's existence abounds all around us, many suppress that evidence as they "hold [down] the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18).

Ways people hide from God today:

(1) The Unsaved:
--Avoid conversations about the Bible, Christ, the Gospel (like cockroaches flee when the lights are turned on, so people suddenly have to leave when conversation comes up about Christ and the Bible).
--Ignore tracts or other Gospel-related literature
--Don't pay attention to preaching
--Bury themselves in activities which preoccupy their time and attention (so that they don't have to concern themselves with God)
--Readily accept evolutionary teaching which denies God's existence

(2) The sinning Christian:
--Avoids Bible reading and prayer
--Avoids church attendance
- Stays away from Christian brothers and sisters
--Forfeits close fellowship with the Lord

"From the presence of the Lord" - Adam and Eve's hiding was not from each other, but from God, showing that their shame and guilt was primarily spiritual in nature.

v. 9
"Where art thou?" - It's not that God didn't know where Adam was hiding; it's that He wanted Adam to see his attempt to hide.

Everytime God asks a question, it's not because He doesn't know the answer; He asks questions so as to quicken the conscience of man and to get him to seriously think about his actions.

II. ACHAN: tried to hide stolen goods in defiance of God's Law

(Joshua 6:17-19; 7:1; 21)
(Motive: Fear of the consequences of loss of material wealth)

Joshua 6:17-19
And the city shall be accursed, *even* it, and all that *are* therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that *are* with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.
And ye, in any wise keep *yourselves* from the accursed thing, lest ye make *yourselves* accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.
But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, *are* consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.

Joshua 7:1
But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel.

Joshua 7:21
When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they *are* hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

Achan (and apparently his family) thought: "Nobody will find out; no one will ever know." But God knew. And the consequences of his secret life of disobedience resulted in the defeat of his people at the city of Ai and would result in the death of his family and himself.

You see, your sin not only affects you, but it affects everyone in contact with you –

--including your family

--including your church family

--including your relationships with friends and co-workers etc.

III. DAVID: tried to hide his adulterous affair with a cover-up (2 Sam 11; 12:12)

(Motive: Fear of the consequences of the loss of respected reputation)

2 Samuel 12:12
For thou didst *it* secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.

King David, who had a reputation of loving God and being "a man after God's own heart" was perhaps greatly desirous to keep the lid on what he had done.

Because David was silent in confession, he was loud in grief. He was tormented emotionally, affected physically, and was chastened by God.

Psalms 32:1-5
Blessed *is he whose* transgression *is* forgiven, *whose* sin *is* covered.
Blessed *is* the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit *there is* no guile.
When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.
For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.
I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

The harvest fruit of David's sin would come back to haunt him four-fold:

- the child conceived through the adulterous affair with Bathsheba would die
- his daughter (Tamar) would be raped by one of his sons (Amnon)
- Amnon would then be killed by his brother Absalom
- Then Absalom would rebel against his father David, driving him out of his kingdom. Absalom would engage in publicly-known fornication with David's concubines and eventually be killed.

The wages of secret sins are huge and eventually become public knowledge.

"Sin will always take you further than you ever thought you would stray…. It will keep you longer than you ever thought you would stay…… It will cost you more than you ever thought you would pay."

IV. MADAM FOLLY: tried to hide forbidden activity in the dark (Prov. 9:17)

(Motive: Fear of the consequences of public shame and disgrace)

Proverbs 9:17
Stolen waters are sweet, and bread *eaten* in secret is pleasant.

In Proverbs 9, God contrasts Lady Wisdom (virtue – v. 1-11) with Madam Folly (vice – v. 12-18).

Both wisdom and folly call out to the simpleton.

Wisdom offers steak and grape juice, whereas foolishness offers bread and water. The allurement is found in the fact that the break and water are stolen and can be consumed in secrecy (v. 17). NOTE: Sin really has nothing to offer!

V. ELDERS of ISRAEL: tried to hide their idolatry in a smoke filled Temple

(Ezekiel 8)

(Motive: Fear of the consequences of violating the ministers code of worship)

Ezekiel 8:8-12

Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door.
And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here.
So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about.
And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up.
Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth.

The prophet Ezekiel had a ministry of teaching (often through visual object lessons).

He taught the exiles in Babylon of the impending judgment to fall upon Jerusalem and its temple (chapters 1-24). Though hundreds of miles away, God would reveal to Ezekiel in a vision the wickedness that was going on in the house of God by the people who were supposed to be the elder-statesmen of Israel (READ Ezekiel 8).

Such secret idolatry had been going on in Israel for many years.

2 Kings 17:9

And the children of Israel did secretly *those* things that *were* not right against the LORD their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.

Not only was there secret idolatry taking place, but there was an entertainment of such idolatrous vanity taking place in the hearts and minds of the people of Israel.

Ezekiel speaks of the "idols of the heart."

Ezekiel 14:4

Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols;

Ezekiel 14:7

For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to enquire of him concerning me; I the LORD will answer him by myself:

VI. <u>JUDAS ISCARIOT:</u> tried to hide his thievery from Jesus and the Disciples
(John 12:6)
(Motive: Fear of the consequences of getting caught in <u>financial mismanagement</u>)

John 12:6
This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

Although Judas was the respected treasurer for Jesus and the disciples, he had a secret life of slipping his grimy fingers into their money bag and stealing from them.

This lust for money would pave the way for his betray of Christ for a mere 30 pieces of silver.

Matthew 26:15
And said *unto them*, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

(NOTE: His money would buy the field that would serve as Judas' burial ground (Mt. 27:4-10; Acts 1:18).

Conclusion:

Is there a secret sin in your life?

Illus:

--Watching TV you know is off limits

--Viewing pornography in magazines, DVD's and internet

--Reading books that you would never read in church or to your children

--Involvement in relationship(s) that tear apart the sanctity of the marriage bed (whether physically or emotionally)

--Secret illegal activity
(to gain money, etc.)

What disciplines should be incorporated into one's life to avoid such sexual sin?

1) **Turn off the sexual sewage drain**
(Avoid sexually explicit TV, video, magazines, music; Don't go to certain beaches; Avoid the stores which sell pornography)
In 1988 TV averaged "at least one sensual-arousing scene for every 40 minute segment" (Ronald E. Johnson, Fund. Journal).
Job 31:1 - "I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?"
Ps. 119:37 - "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way."

2) **Don't be idle; be busy serving Christ**
II Tim. 2:22 - "Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

3) **Realize that women are not sex objects but people with an eternal soul who need Christ**
It is vain to lust after external flesh. Ask God to help you to view people through God's eyes.

4) **Read God's Word every day to purify your mind**
Memorize Scripture which address the subject of sexual purity.
Ps 119:11 - "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

5) **When you do have a wrong thought, confess it to God as soon as you are convicted** (I John 1:9)
Don't let sin build up in your life.

6) **When tempted to take an indiscreet "look" counter the temptation by praying** for your family and friends to be pure (if married, thank God for your spouse.)

7) **If married, seek to satisfy your spouse's sexual desires so he/she will not be driven to "look" elsewhere** (I Cor. 7:3, 5; Prov. 5:18-19)

8) **Form an accountable friendship with someone who will challenge you toward purity.** You also can encourage that person in a mutually accountable relationship. (II Tim. 2:22b; Heb.10:24-25; I Cor.15:33; Prov.27:6)

9) **Don't put yourself in situations where you know temptation will be great.** "If you don't plan to eat, don't set the table"
Romans 13:14 – *"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."*

10) **When tempted to look at pornography, realize it's destructive, enslaving, and Anti-God nature.**

A Christian has no business reading material which…

1) uses vulgar language;

2) Ridicules God's standards for purity;

3) breeds on new sensations such as obscene violence, bestiality, incest etc.[note: Leviticus 20];

4) Dishonors the love relationship of marriage [Pornographers leave committed love out of sex; Love is deeper than a physical act];

5) breeds discontentment;

6) Leads to covetous lustful passion; masturbation etc.
Note: Masturbation is sin because it is selfish in nature; It is a manifestation of a covetous spirit. A lustful desire to have that which is not yours. Fornication or adultery is not merely committed by the act but by the thought.)

11) Don't settle for a cheap substitute for the real thing, which God will give in His way and in His timing.
(Beware: Pornography fills the mind with distortions about sex and unrealistic expectations)

In each example of people who had a secret life of sin, it must be noted that **their secret sin became their source of ruin.**

Their particular disobedience led to their problems and ultimate disaster.

All sin does is kill. EX: How an Eskimo kills a wolf.

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper…"

"And be sure, your sin will find you out…"

1. God knows the hearts of all people

God sees the unseen; He observes the unobservable.

I Sam. 16:7 - "The Lord looketh on the heart."

I Chron. 28:9 - "And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek Him, He will be found of thee; but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off for ever."

"No thought can be withholden from Thee."
(Job 42:2).

"He knoweth the secrets of the heart"
(Psalm 44:21).

"I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them" (Ezekiel 11:5).

God knoweth your hearts" (Lk. 16:15).

2. God knows the <u>actions</u> of all people

Job testified: "He knoweth the way that I take" (Job 23:10)

David said: "All my ways are before thee" (Ps. 119:168).

Solomon declared: For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings" (Prov. 5:21).

Prov. 15:3 - "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

God knows <u>about</u> evil (sin, etc.), but never has experienced it like Adam and Eve did when they were deceived by the serpent (Gen. 3:5).

Man is foolish to boast of his intelligence, because it is nothing in comparison to the infinite God's knowledge.

The reason God knows all is because He:

1. <u>Made</u> all - Ps. 94:9-11; 103;14; SEE Is. 29:15

2. <u>Sees</u> all - II Chron. 16:9 - "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars."

   Jer. 23:24. Job. 28:10, 24; 34:21, 22

   Sin abounds when men are deceived into thinking that God does not see.

3. <u>Hears</u> all - Num. 14:27

The omniscience of God is a reality that should cause all of us to take <u>CAUTION</u>!

Because God knows all, there is no one who can:

1. <u>Hide</u> from God (Ps. 139:11, 12)

2. <u>Lie</u> to God (Acts 5:1-11 - Ananias and Sapphira)

   Because God knows all, we should:

   a. Be <u>sincere</u>, not a hypocrite (I Th. 2:4)
   (God knows the real you)

   b. Be <u>honest</u>, not liar nor a thief
   --Tell the truth
   --Keep your word
   God remembers your wedding vows. . . do you?
   --Don't steal

The omniscience of God is a reality that should cause all believers to take <u>COMFORT</u>!

Because God knows all:

1. He knows what you <u>do</u> (good or bad) (Gal. 6:7)

2. He knows what you <u>need</u> (Mt. 6:8, 32)

3. He knows about your <u>problems</u>, <u>sorrows</u>, etc.
   (Ex. 3:7)

4. He hears everytime you <u>call</u> (Mt. 7:7)
   The only thing that keeps God from answering prayer is sin (Is. 59:1, 2).

5. He cares about the <u>details</u> of your life
   (Mt. 10:29, 30).
   He knows us completely.

It is futile to attempt to hide from an omniscient, omnipresent God.

Psalms 44:21
Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.

Psalms 90:8
Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret *sins* in the light of thy countenance.

Ecclesiastes 12:14
For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil.

Jeremiah 23:24
Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.

Luke 8:17
For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither *any thing* hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.

Romans 2:16
In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

Our prayer needs to be that of Psalm 19:12 –

Who can understand *his* errors? cleanse thou me from secret *faults*.

Be honest with God, yourself, and others.
It's a matter of faith, sincerity, and integrity.

There was once a great and noble King whose land was terrorized by a crafty dragon. Like a massive bird of prey, the scaly beast delighted in ravaging villages with his fiery breath. Hapless victims ran from their burning homes, only to be snatched into the dragon's jaws or talons. Those devoured instantly were deemed more fortunate than those carried back to the dragon's lair to be devoured at his leisure. The King led his sons and knights in many valiant battles against the serpent.

Riding alone in the forest, one of the King's sons heard his name purred low and soft. In the shadows of the ferns and trees, curled among the boulders, lay the dragon. The creature's heavy-lidded eyes fastened on the prince, and the reptilian mouth stretched into a friendly smile.

"Don't be alarmed," said the dragon, as gray wisps of smoke rose lazily from his nostrils. "I am not what your father thinks."

"What are you, then?" asked the prince, warily drawing his sword as he pulled in the reins to keep his fearful horse from bolting.

"I am pleasure," said the dragon. "Ride on my back and you will experience more than you ever imagined. Come now. I have no harmful intentions. I seek a friend, someone to share flights with me. Have you never dreamed of flying? Never longed to soar in the clouds?"

Visions of soaring high above the forested hills drew the prince hesitantly from his horse. The dragon unfurled one great webbed wing to serve as a ramp to his ridged back. Between the spiny projections, the prince found a secure seat. Then the creature snapped his powerful wings twice and launched them into the sky. The prince's apprehension melted into awe and exhilaration.

From then on, he met the dragon often, but secretly, for how could he tell his father, brothers or the knights that he had befriended the enemy? The prince felt separate from them all. Their concerns were no longer his concerns. Even when he wasn't with the dragon, he spent less time with those he loved and more time alone.

The skin on the prince's legs became calloused from gripping the ridged back of the dragon, and his hands grew rough and hardened. He began wearing gloves to hide the malady. After many nights of riding, he discovered scales growing on the backs of his hands as well. With dread he realized his fate were he to continue, and so he resolved to return no more to the dragon.

But, after a fortnight, he again sought out the dragon, having been tortured with desire. And so it transpired many times over. No matter what his determination, the prince eventually found himself pulled back, as if by the cords of an invisible web. Silently, patiently, the dragon always waited.

One cold, moonless night their excursion became a foray against a sleeping village. Torching the thatched roofs with fiery blasts from his nostrils, the dragon roared with delight when the terrified victims fled from their burning homes. Swooping in, the serpent belched again and flames engulfed a cluster of screaming villagers. The prince closed his eyes tightly in an attempt to shut out the carnage.

In the predawn hours, when the prince crept back from his dragon trysts, the road outside his father's castle usually remained empty. But not tonight. Terrified refugees streamed into the protective walls of the castle. The prince attempted to slip through the crowd to close himself in his chambers, but some of the survivors stared and pointed toward him.

"He was there," one woman cried out, "I saw him on the back of the dragon." Others nodded their heads in angry agreement. Horrified, the prince saw that his father, the King, was in the courtyard holding a bleeding child in his arms. The King's face mirrored the agony of his people as his eyes found the prince's. The son fled, hoping to escape into the night, but the guards apprehended him as if he were a common thief. They brought him to the great hall where his father sat solemnly on the throne. The people on every side railed against the prince.

"Banish him!" he heard one of his own brothers angrily cry out.

"Burn him alive!" other voices shouted.

As the King rose from his throne, bloodstains from the wounded shone darkly on his royal robes. The crowd fell silent in expectation of his decree. The prince, who could not bear to look into his father's face, stared at the flagstones of the floor.

"Take off your gloves and your tunic," the King commanded. The prince obeyed slowly, dreading to have his metamorphosis uncovered before the kingdom. Was his shame not already great enough? He hoped for a quick death without further humiliation. Sounds of revulsion rippled through the crowd at the sight of the prince's thick scaled skin and the ridge growing along his spine.

The King strode toward his son, and the prince steeled himself, fully expecting a back-handed blow even though he had never been struck so by his father.

Instead, his father embraced him and wept as he held him tightly. In shocked disbelief, the prince buried his face against his father's shoulder.

"Do you wish to be freed from the dragon, my son?"

The prince answered in despair, "I wished it many times, but there is no hope for me."

"Not alone," said the King. "You cannot win against the serpent alone."

"Father, I am no longer your son. I am half beast," sobbed the prince.

But his father replied, "My blood runs in your veins. My nobility has always been stamped deep within your soul."

With his face still hidden tearfully in his father's embrace, the prince heard the King instruct the crowd, "The dragon is crafty. Some fall victim to his wiles and some to his violence. There will be mercy for all who wish to be freed. Who else among you has ridden the dragon?"

The prince lifted his head to see someone emerge from the crowd. To his amazement, he recognized an older brother, one who had been lauded throughout the kingdom for his onslaughts against the dragon in battle and for his many good deeds. Others came, some weeping, others hanging their heads in shame.

The King embraced them all.

"This is our most powerful weapon against the dragon," he announced. "Truth. No more hidden flights. Alone we cannot resist him."

(Pure Desire, by Ted Roberts)