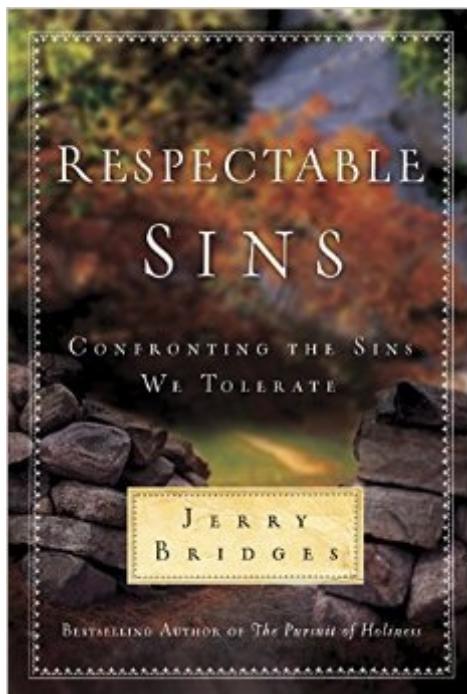


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Respectable Sins: Confronting The Sins We Tolerate



Synopsis

Have Christians become so preoccupied with the major sins that we have lost sight of our need to deal with more subtle sins? Navigator author Jerry Bridges addresses the unacceptable sins that we tend to tolerate in ourselves, including pride and anger. He goes to the heart of the matter, exploring our feelings of shame and grief and opening a new door to God's forgiveness and grace. Travel down the road of spiritual formation with Jerry and discover your true identity as a loved child of God. A discussion guide is available separately.

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Customer Reviews

A new book from the pen of Jerry Bridges is always a noteworthy event and this month we're blessed to see not one, but two new books bearing his name. The first of these, published by NavPress, is titled Respectable Sins. "The motivation for this book stems from a growing conviction that those of us whom I call conservative evangelicals may have become so preoccupied with some of the major sins of society around us that we have lost sight of the need to deal with our own more 'refined' or subtle sins." And in the book Bridges addresses these "respectable sins"--sins, that though they bring dishonor to God, are too often overlooked among Christians. We are apt to focus on the obvious ills of society and our attention to those seemingly great sins somehow convinces us that our small sins are acceptable. Bridges begins this book, as he usually does, by laying the foundation of the gospel. He addresses the Bible's continual exhortations that we are to "be what we are." We are called saints and are expected by God to act like those who have been set apart to be holy. We are to act like a people who have been separated unto God. While the Bible makes it

clear that any conduct unbecoming a saint is sin, and while all Christians acknowledge that we do sin, we are still prone to ignoring certain transgressions that simply do not seem that serious. "We can readily identify sin in the immoral or unethical conduct of people in society at large. But we often fail to see it in what I call the 'acceptable sins of the saints.' In effect, we, like society at large, live in denial of our sin." All sin, no matter how subtle it may seem to us, is malignant. It "wages war against our souls." Some subtle sins we commit without really thinking about them, either at the time or afterward. "We often live in unconscious denial of our 'acceptable sins.'" But even these sins are "an assault on the majesty and sovereign rule of God. It is indeed cosmic treason." But, in His sovereign good pleasure, God has graciously provided a remedy for sin in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. After discussing the ramifications of Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf, Bridges transitions to a word about the power of the Holy Spirit, teaching how He works in and with us to cleanse us from our sin. And here, after about fifty pages of important introductory material, Bridges begins to discuss individual sins he has identified in his own life and in the lives of other believers. Here is the list: * Ungodliness * Anxiety and Frustration * Discontentment * Unthankfulness * Pride * Selfishness * Lack of Self-Control * Impatience and Irritability * Anger * The Weeds of Anger * Judgmentalism * Envy, Jealousy, and Related Sins * Sins of the Tongue * Worldliness Each one of these is discussed in some detail: how the sin can be identified, how it dishonors God, how it affects a Christian's life, and what Scriptures we can use to overcome it. He encourages the reader to go slowly from chapter-to-chapter, pausing to meditate on the Scriptures he provides and seeking to allow them to challenge and, if necessary, to convict. The person who reads the book quickly will be rewarded, but the one who reads it slowly and meditatively will surely be rewarded more. Jerry Bridges has long served the church in the area of applying the gospel to personal holiness, using the Word to convict of sin and the gospel to restore hope. This book is a welcome addition to his already powerful list of books. The respectable sins he outlines I could often identify in my own life as ones that I have been willing to overlook. I suspect the same will be true of any Christian who takes the time to read it. This book is built upon a simple premise and Bridges executes it powerfully. I don't know of any Christian who would not benefit from reading it and from considering those subtle, dangerous, respectable sins.

I enjoy Jerry Bridges books. His classic book THE PURSUIT OF HOLINESS was one of the best books I have ever read on holiness and the Christian's call to live a holy life (1 Peter 1:15-16). This book by Jerry Bridges falls in line with THE PURSUIT OF HOLINESS in that it calls the believer to live a holy life but it also confronts our sins that we often gloss over in taking aim at the "larger"

sins. This book will two two things that I believe are key to the disciple. First, the book opens by showing us the gospel of Jesus Christ and what God has done for us to help us to be people of holiness. Bridges reminds us that holiness is not something we can obtain on our own since our flesh wars against the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-17). Bridges shows that the way to holiness is not in rules of religion but only by the grace of God given to us freely in Christ (Titus 2:11-14). The problem of holiness is not that we can't obtain it but that we are by nature children of sin who need to be born again by the Spirit (Ezekiel 36:25-27; John 3:3-7). Secondly, Bridges turns to showing us that sin is not just found in society at large but it can be in our thoughts, our words, and in our actions. It is easy to see sin in others, Bridges points out, but we need to first see sin in us (Matthew 7:1-3). Bridges then takes the light of God's Word and allows us to see that all sin grieves the heart of God (Ephesians 4:29-31). Sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4). The Law of God shows us our sins (Romans 7:7, 14; 1 Timothy 1:8-10; James 2:8-11). Overall, I was greatly encouraged after reading this book. While Bridges will cut you with the Word (Hebrews 4:12), he also shows us the awesome grace of God (2 Corinthians 5:21). While the Law convicts us, God's grace brings the joy of the Lord to help us overcome our sins.

This book did more to cause me to examine my own personal walk with the Lord and stop focusing so much on the sins of others (something I do frequently)---even the anti-Christian attitudes so prevalent in our culture today. The Ted Haggard catastrophe should have been a wake-up call to many Christians that the Christian life is a life of obedience that flows out of the faith that God gives to his Church (Romans 1:5), and that focusing more on the major sins of the culture, and not on our own personal sanctification, has the potential of leading to a tragic event such as what happened to Ted Haggard. Boycotting anti-Christian movies and picketing abortion clinics only serves to fuel the God-haters of this world and leads to even more God-hating. What the unbelieving world needs to see from the Church is a "peculiar people" who are not of this world, but are truly transformed by the Gospel. The modern-day Church has pretty much abandoned the Gospel and is turning the Church into a moralistic religion that is barely distinguishable from other religious systems i.e. Buddhism, Judaism, Roman Catholicism, etc., which all teach that salvation is merited by our own good works and not Christ's. As we recognize that it's Christ's righteousness, and not our own that merits our salvation, then the result is true humility, which is one of the godly characteristics for which Christ suffered and died to give to his people. "Respectable Sins" has been very valuable to me in that it exposed the huge log I have sticking out of my eye most of the time. This log is capable of blinding me to my own lack of godly character as I seek to magnify the sins of others. I cannot expect to be

used by God until I have attained some measure of godliness, and godliness marked by humility is contradicted by my pride which forgets that I am a sinner saved only by grace that comes by faith, which is a gift of God (Ephesians 2:8-10).

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