

5 WAYS TO RUIN YOUR LIFE

1 Peter 2:1

By Andy Manning

The title of this sermon is “5 Ways to Ruin Your Life.”

I live in a house with five women. And one of the benefits of that is that they love to bake. They bake all kinds of stuff. Last Friday evening Carter baked a pecan pie cheese cake. It was delicious. Now I’ve never baked anything in my life, but I know this. If you put the right ingredients in, it will taste good. If you put the wrong ingredients in, it will taste bad.

Making a life is like baking a cake.

If you put the right ingredients in, you get a great life.

But if you put in the wrong ingredients, you can ruin your life.

That means that if your life is miserable, then you’ve been putting in the wrong ingredients.

But the good news is that if you will simply stop putting in the wrong ingredients and start putting in the right ingredients, you can build a wonderful life for yourself.

How do we learn the ingredients for a good life? The Bible is our recipe book for life. It tells us the exact ingredients that we need to make a wonderful life for ourselves, and it also tells us the wrong ingredients to avoid so that we don’t ruin our lives.

Today we’re going to talk about the wrong ingredients. We’re going to talk about **five ingredients** that will ruin your life.

There’s a name for the wrong ingredients in life. Sin.

What is sin? **Sin is any failure to obey God's commands, either by commission or omission.**

Sins of commission are when you do what God said not to do.

Sins of omission are when you neglect to do what God said to do.

Sin is self-deification. It is self-worship, or setting yourself up as god. This is done by placing your will before God's will.

But there's much more to sin than that. Sin will ruin your life.

Why are some people miserable? Sin.

Why do some people not have a great and wonderful life? Sin.

As a parent, I often have to tell my children "Don't!"

"Don't run into the street without first looking both ways."

"Don't run in the Walmart parking lot."

"Don't ride your bike without shoes on."

"Don't put too much food in your mouth."

"Don't forget to brush your teeth."

"Don't play with fire."

"Don't run in the house."

"Don't put coins or small rubber balls in your mouth."

There's a good reason that I often tell them "Don't."

When I say “Don’t,” I mean “Don’t hurt yourself.” The reason I tell them not to do things is to protect them; it’s to keep them from getting hurt.

It’s the same with God.

When God says “Don’t,” He means “Don’t hurt yourself.”

Sin is not simply behavior that offends God; it’s not simply behavior that hurts God; sin is behavior that hurts you.

God’s commands are not set up to ruin your life; they are set up to protect you from ruining your life.

When God tells us “Don’t” it’s because the behavior will hurt us individually and it will hurt the community that we live in.

Sin is self-destructive.

When you sin, you are destroying yourself.

In the 1980s **Len Bias** was one of the top college basketball players in the country. He was a first-team All-American from the University of Maryland. In the 1986 NBA draft he was selected number two overall by the Boston Celtics. But two nights later he decided to party with his friends, and he chose to use cocaine, and he overdosed and died. He sinned and it destroyed his life.

That’s what sin does. Sin is self-destructive. When you sin, you are destroying your life.

The sin of drunkenness leads to alcoholism, and poverty, and broken relationships, and drunk driving, and manslaughter, and even death.

The sin of drug use leads to the same things – addiction, the loss of relationships, poverty, crime, overdose, death, prison.

The sin of sexual immorality leads to divorce, and unplanned pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases. Sin is self-destructive.

Sin is also self-limiting.

When you sin, you limit your potential, your happiness, your success.

One of my heroes in the ministry is Perry Noble.

In 2000 he started NewSpring Church in Anderson, SC, and it quickly became the second-fastest growing church in America. It was the fourth largest church in the Southern Baptist Convention. I think they were up to 30,000 in attendance. And then last year he developed a problem with alcohol, and he was fired. His goal was to reach 100,000 people, and he was well on his way. But because of his sin, we'll never know his full potential. That's what sin does. It prevents you from becoming all that God wants you to be.

Here's the bottom line. **When you choose to sin, you choose to suffer.**

Sin will ruin your life.

When you sin, you are adding the wrong ingredients to your life, and they will ruin your life.

So it's important to learn not only the right ingredients to life, but also the wrong ingredients; the ingredients (or sins) that we need to stay away from.

Today in **1 Peter 2:1** we're going to be warned about 5 sins to avoid. These are five ways to ruin your life. Let's start by reading the text.

“Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander.” (CSB 2017)

In this verse Peter highlights five vices, or sinful behaviors for us to avoid. These are five ways to ruin your life. Five ingredients that will ruin your life and make you miserable.

That’s why it says to “rid yourselves” of these things.

That’s a Greek word (Gk. *apotithomi*) that was often used to refer to taking off your clothes.

Imagine taking off dirty clothing. The idea is to have nothing to do with these things. Be done with them. Separate yourself from them. Depart from them. Cease, or stop doing these things. Let’s take a look at each one of them.

1. Malice.

The first way to ruin your life is with malice.

Malice is the desire or intent to harm someone.

Webster’s Dictionary says malice is the “desire to cause pain, injury, or distress to another and implies a deep-seated desire to see another suffer.”

Malice can take many forms, because there are many ways to hurt people.

Suing someone, hitting someone, killing someone, stealing something, cheating someone, destroying someone’s property, hurting someone’s reputation, saying mean things, refusing to help, giving someone the cold shoulder, or stonewalling, and it’s doing all these things to intentionally hurt someone.

There are many examples in the Bible of malice.

Cain intentionally killed his brother Abel. Esau wanted to kill Jacob after Jacob stole his birthright. Joseph's brothers wanted to kill him out of jealousy. Potiphar's wife wanted to get Joseph in trouble for rejecting her advances. David intentionally had Uriah killed. Absalom intentionally killed his brother, Amnon, for raping their sister, Tamar. Saul wanted to kill David and tried to do so on multiple occasions. Haman attempted to exterminate the Jews throughout the entire Persian Empire.

You might be thinking, "I don't struggle with malice. I don't desire or intend to harm anyone."

One of the ways that malice is revealed is when your enemy, or the person you don't like, struggles. Do you feel happy when someone else experiences trouble? If you do, that's a form of malice.

God never wants us to feel happy when others struggle, even our enemies, even the wicked. He wants us to have compassion on all people.

Proverbs 24:17-18 (CSB) says, "17 Don't gloat when your enemy falls, and don't let your heart rejoice when he stumbles, 18 or the Lord will see, be displeased, and turn his wrath away from him."

Why is malice dangerous? How can it ruin your life?

First of all, malice can get you in big trouble.

If it is revealed that you intentionally hurt or injured someone, you can be kicked out of school, get fired, get sued, or be put in jail.

But also, if you intentionally hurt someone, you will probably lose that relationship forever.

Let's talk about a solution to malice.

What causes malice? Malice is usually motivated by revenge. Someone hurts us and our instinct is to get them back.

So what's the antidote? Forgiveness.

Ephesians 4:32 (CSB) says, “And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.”

What does it mean to forgive? Don't seek revenge (Rom 12:19). Don't rejoice when your enemy stumbles (Prov 24:17-18). Love your enemy (Matt 5:44). Pray for your enemy (Matt 5:44). And look for ways to meet your enemy's needs (Rom 12:20).

2. Deceit.

The second way to ruin your life is with deceit.

Deceit is intentionally leading others to believe something that you know is not true.

It is different than lying.

Lying is intentionally saying something that is not true.

Deceit can be verbal, but it can involve other behaviors as well. It is purposefully misleading others.

Both lying and deceit are forms of dishonesty.

When I was a kid, my big brothers used to sneak out at night. In order to deceive our parents, they would make the bed so it seemed as if they were asleep, positioning their pillows in the form of a body.

I've seen people clock in to make it look like they are at work, and then leave for a few hours to run errands. That's a form of deceit.

I've seen delivery drivers who are ready to call it a day even though they still have several more packages to deliver. In order to deceive their boss, they will deliver the packages with their scanner so that it looks in the computer like they are delivered, but they won't actually deliver them until the next day.

Deceit takes on many different forms.

Cheating on your taxes; cheating on tests; lying about your age; lying on a resume, job interview, or job evaluation; making a promise that you have no intention of keeping; exaggerating about your accomplishments; flattery, or saying nice things to someone that you don't really mean in order to make a good impression on them.

The Bible is filled with examples of deceit.

Laban deceived Jacob by promising to him Rachel in marriage, but on their wedding night Leah secretly slipped in the bed and consummated the marriage, and so Jacob was forced to marry both of them. But Jacob shouldn't have been that upset because he did something similar to his brother Esau. He stole Esau's blessing by impersonating Esau and deceiving their father, Isaac. Delilah deceived Samson into revealing the secret of his strength.

Why is deceit dangerous? How does it ruin your life?

Deceit destroys relationships.

Relationships are built on trust. Intimacy is built on trust. The more someone trusts you, the more intimate they will want to be with you; the closer they will want to be with you.

But when it is revealed that you are deceitful and dishonest, then the relationship will come crumbling down.

It takes years to build trust, but only a moment of deceit to tear it down.

Tell a lie once, and all your truths become questionable.

Once you are caught in a lie, you may forever lose a relationship, and perhaps your reputation.

What's the antidote to deceit?

First of all, resolve to always tell the truth. **Ephesians 4:25 (CSB)** says, "Therefore, putting away lying, speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, because we are members of one another."

Second, think about the motivation for deceit.

We usually deceive others to gain a personal advantage. To get ahead in life. We believe that we can go farther and faster in life with deceit than with honesty.

And so the antidote is to trust God.

God says that if you trust Him, if you do life His way by being honest, then He will take care of you.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (CSB) says, "5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways know him, and he will make your paths straight."

3. Hypocrisy.

The third way to ruin your life is with hypocrisy.

Hypocrisy is pretending to have moral and spiritual standards that you know you don't have.

Hypocrisy is being a poser; a fake; a phony; it is being two-faced.

Hypocrisy is a big problem.

One pastor said, “Every Sunday is like Halloween for a lot of Christians; we get dressed up and pretend to be something we're not.”

Jesus often spoke out against hypocrisy.

It was the primary sin of the Jewish religious leaders.

Jesus called hypocrisy the “yeast of the Pharisees” (Lk 12:1).

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus gave **four examples** of hypocrisy.

1) In Matthew 6:1 Jesus said hypocrisy was drawing attention to yourself when you do a good deed so that others will see and praise you.

2) In Matthew 6:5 Jesus said hypocrisy was praying in public so that others can see you and praise you.

3) In Matthew 6:16 Jesus said it was making yourself look depleted when you fast so that others will notice and praise you. 4

) And in Matthew 7:4-5 Jesus said hypocrisy was condemning others when you do the same thing or even worse.

So hypocrisy can take on many forms.

Again, the idea is to pretend to be more moral, and more spiritual than you know you are.

For example, praying before your meal when you are in public when you don't in private.

Attending church so that others will think you are religious.

Attending church in order to make business contacts.

Doing good deeds in order to make a favorable impression on the community rather than to please God or help others.

Drawing attention to your good deeds by wearing matching T-shirts, taking pictures, calling the TV station, and posting your pictures and videos on Facebook.

Telling people that you read the Bible when you don't.

Being nice to people to their face, but talking bad about them behind their back.

Pretending like you don't curse in front of some people, but then cursing behind their back.

Perhaps the best example in the Bible of hypocrisy is the story of Ananias and his wife Sapphira, in Acts 5. They sold a piece of property and claimed to give all the money to the church when in reality they held back some. They didn't have to sell the property. They didn't have to give the money to the church. They didn't have to give all the money. But they pretended to, knowing that they were lying, in order to receive the praise of men.

Now what's the danger of hypocrisy?

On a human level, once you are exposed as a hypocrite, you will lose all credibility and respect. Nobody will listen to what you have to say anymore. You will lose your witness and your influence.

On a more spiritual level, if you are a hypocrite you will lose your heavenly reward.

The Bible says that when we do good deeds we are storing up eternal treasures in heaven that will be given to us when Christ comes back.

But if you do your good deeds for the wrong reason, for the praise of men, then that's all the reward you will get.

Let's look at Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6:2-4 (CSB). "2 So whenever you give to the poor, don't sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be applauded by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. 3 But when you give to the poor, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

So the danger of hypocrisy is that you will not get any blessing from God for your good deeds, because it's not real. The only reward you'll get is the praise of men.

But then Jesus goes on to teach us the antidote to hypocrisy. Live for an audience of one. Stop living for the praise of men, and live for the praise and pleasure of God.

And on a very practical level, the way to do that, is to do your good deeds in private. Don't let anyone know about your good deeds. Keep it a secret between you and God.

A second antidote to hypocrisy is to seek heart purity. That is, don't settle for outward purity, or outward obedience – obedience when people can see. Focus on being pure and obedient in private, when you are alone, and in your thoughts. Focus on being obedient no matter who is watching.

4. Envy.

A fourth way to ruin your life is with envy.

Envy is to be unhappy, angry, and unfriendly to someone who has something that you want.

Envy is the same as jealousy and covetousness.

Malice rejoices when others fail. Envy is disappointed and disturbed when others succeed.

Here are some examples of envy. You get sad, angry, and/or mean

when someone gets something that you want; when someone gets a new toy; when someone gets a new house/car; when someone gets a promotion; when someone gets in good shape or loses a lot of weight; when someone kicks a bad habit; when someone inherits a lot of money; when someone gets a lot of attention; when someone gets a lot of praise; when someone gets a good grade; when someone wins a competition.

There are many Biblical examples of envy.

Envy is the reason that Cain killed Abel; it was the reason that Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery; Sarah was envious of Hagar; Rachel was envious of Leah; Miriam and Aaron were envious of their brother Moses; Saul was envious of David.

Why is envy dangerous? How does it ruin your life.

First, envy makes you miserable. It makes you unhappy.

And envy is never satisfied. If you finally get the thing that you wanted, you might feel happy for a moment, but then you will notice somebody else who has something you want, and your envy will set in causing you to be unhappy again.

Second, envy destroys relationships. It causes you to be angry and unfriendly to the person that you are jealous of.

What is the antidote to envy?

Contentment.

Envy is caused by consumerism and materialism.

It is caused by the myth of more; that more stuff, new stuff, upgrades, new, better, shinier, will lead to more happiness.

But that's not true. The Bible says that happiness is not the result of riches, but of rich relationships with God and others. And so the antidote to envy is contentment.

What is contentment? It means **being satisfied with the simple life.**

It is the understanding that more money and more stuff does not lead to more happiness; that keeping up with the Joneses, and using stuff to impress others will not satisfy.

It is not loving money, and not longing to get rich.

It is prioritizing your relationship with God and others over money and stuff.

And it is focusing more on storing up heavenly treasures than storing up earthly treasures.

5. Slander.

The last way to ruin your life is slander.

Slander is talking bad about someone who is not present.

It doesn't matter if it is true or not true.

It is saying something behind someone's back that we would be afraid to say to their face, because we know it would start a fight.

Or it's saying something behind someone's back that we know they wouldn't want us talking about.

Usually we slander others when someone hurts us, frustrates us, or offends us. We share our negative feelings with others when the offender is not present.

What's the danger of slander?

First, it will ruin friendships. If someone finds out that you were talking bad about them behind their back, they will be deeply hurt; they will feel betrayed.

Second, slander makes you feel bad on the inside.

The reason we slander is to get sympathy; to get comfort. We like to say that we are just looking for advice, but the truth is that we just want to vent; we want comfort and sympathy. But the reality is that slander doesn't make you feel better. It is not therapeutic. It makes you feel worse.

What's the antidote for slander?

You only have two options when someone hurts you.

Number one, let it go. Don't talk about it to the offender or to anyone. Just let it go.

Second, confront the offender in love, in private, and in person.

When I say "in love," that means that the goal is to reveal to them that you are hurt, and to mend the relationship, not to chew them out and give them a piece of your mind.

CONCLUSION

5 ways to ruin your life.

Remember, life is like baking a cake.

You put the right ingredients in – salvation, obedience, holiness,
righteousness, love, wisdom – you get a wonderful life.

You put the wrong ingredients in – malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and
slander – you get a messed up life. You will be miserable.

So I encourage you to do as the word says, and **rid yourselves of these vices.**