Are Some Sins Worse Than Others?

This topic has long been debated in some circles. Let's answer the question from different perspectives. First, this fact is immanently clear: unforgiven sin, any sin, shall lead anyone to perdition (that's a slightly more genteel way to say "hell" - used once in the NASB and eight times in the KJV). In this regard, no, one sin is not worse than any other. And we have the rather severe reminder in James 2:10, "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one *point*, he has become **guilty of all**. Yikes!

On the other hand, there are some sins that God's word *emphasizes* by context, repetition and intensifying adjectives. For example, sins of the tongue are spoken of in harsh context in James 3:1-12. Examples of intensifying adjectives are seen in Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus. Although the sin of gossip is mentioned in several passages, in 1 Timothy 3:11; 2 Timothy 3:3 and Titus 2:3, God's word uses the phrase "*malicious* gossips." Additionally, two sins are intensified with the word, "especially," in 2 Peter 2:10, "and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority." We have many examples, but these will suffice for illustrating the point.

Repetition: We have several sins that are repeated in some major sin lists in the New Testament, such as the lists in Romans 1, 1 Corinthians 6; 2 Timothy 3, Revelation 21, etc. Those lists often include idolatry, sexual sins, and lying.

Consider the sin of lying. We find some form of the word "lie" 313 times in the NASB. God is definitely emphasizing that sin by His repeated warnings! We should not find that surprising, since it is only God's truth that can set us free from sin, so Satan uses lies to pervert God's truth. Obviously, lying is one of Satan's main tools to drive a wedge between us and God. Lying was the first tool Satan used on mankind, see Genesis 3.

Let's focus on Revelation 21 for a moment. In verse 8 we find a sin list that includes some particularly bad sins: idolatry, sorcery, immorality and murder. Yet in that sin list, only one sin is intensified with the word "all." The phrase, "all liars" gets our attention, especially since James 3:8 tells us, "… no man can tame the tongue." Then in verse 27, we find, "**…**nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life." Jesus mentions, "abomination" as sins in general, then mentions, "lying" as He did in verse 8.

Why the repetition in the same chapter? Why 313 uses of lying? Because lying is far worse than most realize. Jesus tells us about Satan in John 8:44, "He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the **father of lies**." Note that the two sins Jesus mentions here are lying and murder. *"Lying" shows up in tandem with some of the worst sins we can imagine, like idolatry and murder!*

Suffice it to say that truth is often harder to find in our modern world of electronic and social media, so, our search for truth must be likewise more diligent than ever! A popular saying is, “The truth is out there.” For the true Christian, we must remember, “The truth is in there.” As Jesus said in John 17:17, “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.” And His truth can set us free, John 8:32, “…and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

From an earthly perspective, and perhaps a heavenly one, some sins really are worse than others, because they attack the very foundations of our path to Jesus.

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