



What Is Sin?

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In 1 John 3:4 we read, "Whosoever commiteth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." Someone might ask, "What law was he talking about?" It is the law of grace, the New Testament law that teaches we must be born again and live free from sin.

Webster's dictionary defines sin as a "willful transgression of the divine law." It might be explained this way: Committing sin is knowing something is wrong, yet you go ahead and deliberately do it. Sin can also be committed in another way—when you know God's will but refuse to do it. This becomes the sin of omission. A good example of this would be the story of Jonah in the Old Testament. His sin was the sin of omission. He just left undone what God commanded him to do.

God speaks through the voice of conscience before we do wrong and warns us not to do it. After we commit sin, He brings condemnation upon us. So, we have a warning before we sin, and condemnation after we sin that tells us we have done wrong. The only exception to this rule would be when a person (through neglect) would slowly drift from God until, finally, he would drift past the line of division between being a saint and a sinner.

We have an example of this in the life of Samson. Samson neglected his soul to the point that he was not aware that he had backslidden when he laid his head in Delilah's lap, and she had his hair cut off. He did not know that he had broken his covenant with God for when Delilah awakened him, he said, "I will go out as at other times before." However, the Scriptures say that he "wist not that the LORD was departed from him." He soon, however, realized that his power to resist the enemy was gone. This is one good way to know when you have sinned—when you realize that your power to resist the devil is gone.

Another example of this is in the New Testament church at Laodicea. In Revelation 3:14-19 we read that this church thought they were rich, increased with goods, and had need of nothing. Yet, God said, "And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Here is a sad condition of a church that was backslidden and did not know it. They had, through deception, convinced themselves that they were rich and had need of nothing. In reality, they had become so lukewarm that they were not aware that they were actually backslidden. This type of backsliding does not come overnight, but through many days, weeks, and months of just kidding yourself into believing that everything is all right.

Sin is rated according to the amount of light one has received. Romans 4:15 tells us, ". . . for where no law is, there is no transgression." Also, we read in Romans 7:9, "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."

Paul thought he was coming along just fine in his old Pharisaical religion until he had an opportunity to hear the New Testament law, which says, "Ye must be born again." Then, his old religion was no good to him anymore. He had to embrace new truth or remain in a profession.

What is sin? Sin is a separation from God. Isaiah 59:1-2 states: "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." Sin causes God to turn a deaf ear to us. We read in Psalm 66:18, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." John 9:31 says, "Now we know that God heareth not sinners." Jesus spoke to the Pharisees in John 8:21, saying, "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come." Sin not only separates us from God now, but it will also separate us forevermore.

A man must turn from his sin and come to God repenting before God will hear him. Let us read Isaiah 55:7, which says, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Ezekiel 18:20 says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Romans 6:23 tells us, "For the wages of sin is death."

What is sin? Sin is a way that seemeth right. We read in Proverbs 14:12, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." It seems right for some people to join a church, but church

joining will never lead to life eternal. It will only lead to death.

The moral man's life also seems right to him. He says, "I live well. I don't have any bad habits. Why should I be born again?" Nicodemus, in John, Chapter 3, was this kind of man. He was a religious man with good morals, but Jesus said to him, "Ye must be born again." Many false religious ways may seem right to some people, but they need to keep checking them by the Word of God. John 5:39 says, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life." The Bible is our road map, and if we study it with an open heart, God will show us the way.

What is sin? Sin is yielding to temptation. To be tempted is not sin, but the sin is in yielding to the temptation. I might illustrate it in this way: The birds can fly over my head. I cannot keep them from doing that, but I can keep them from building nests in my hair. You cannot keep all the temptations away from your mind, but you can keep from yielding to them. Here again is where the devil is likely to trick you. He will put unclean things in your mind and then say to you, "You are not saved or you would not have such thoughts." Yet, all the time, he is the dirty old devil who put them there. As long as you do not desire that thing in your heart and keep resisting it, you are clear before God.

In the hour of sore temptation, it might be well for you to read 1 Corinthians 10:13. It says, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." First of all, I want you to notice that the temptation that is bothering you is just a common one. Second, God has made a way to escape. Do not be looking at the mountain of trials, despair, and difficulties, but look for the escape.

If you were to stay all night in a hotel on the twelfth floor and fire broke out during the night, you would not care how hot the fire looked or how black the smoke was, you would be looking for the fire escape. So, dear friend, quit looking at the mountains of fear, doubt, worry, and discouragement. Look for the escape. The escape is humbling yourself down in prayer and leaving your burden there. Be willing to obey God's Word. That is your escape.

What is sin? Sin is the devil's work. First John 3:8 states, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." He continued in verse 9, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

What is sin? Sin is more than just having bad habits or going to the wrong kinds of places. Sin is also wrong attitudes and wrong feelings. I will mention only a few, such as envy, strife, hate, jealousy, resentment, unforgiveness, rebellion, and lust. In Matthew 5:28 Jesus said, "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Here we find that sin can be committed without a word being said or a move being made. First John 3:15 states, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." Here again, we read that sin is having the wrong attitude or feeling.

What is sin? Sin is an insult to God. Sin is the highway to hell. It is the foolish man's choice. Acts 3:19 says, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out. . . ." Sinner friend, why not repent today and let Christ blot out your sins?

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