



God's Word exposes sin

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Understanding sin and its consequences

What's the problem with sin?

What kind of consequences does sin have?

- As a bare minimum it hampers our relationship with God and can damage relationships with other people.
- It can result in illness or injury.
- It can lead to financial loss.
- It will result in loss of eternal reward.

To avoid the consequences of sin, it is important to know what sin is...

1 John 3:4 - Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.

What is sin?

- Lawlessness
- Webster's: a transgression of the Law of God

How would most people you know define sin?

Doing something you know to be wrong.

What is the problem with this perspective?

If you drill deeper into what they mean, they define wrong as those things which are contrary to their personal values. This still sounds good so far but most people in today's society believe that personal values are relative, something to be determined using your own judgment. And this judgment changes with the situation and the influence of others. So right and wrong is fluid and people proclaim that universal truth does not exist. It is like the time of the judges in Israel's history...

Judges 17:6 - In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Do most people care about sin?

No, people who do not have a relationship with the Lord do not like to be reminded that they are attempting to defy God's Law.

They don't even like the term sin...

Teresa and I were sharing the gospel with an unsaved friend who had a problem with Teresa's testimony, seeing herself as a sinner at age 7. Our friend had no concept of children being anything other than innocent because this is what the world teaches that people are basically good, that those who are bad acquire this trait from others. My usual argument that children are not taught to be bad by their parents, it is a natural tendency did not resonate with our friend. She had a problem with thinking about her son's behavior as

being bad. Sinful behavior is so common that people have accepted it as the norm and no longer think of it as bad. (After all: "boys will be boys.") Our friend knew what we were talking about when we stopped using the terms sin or bad and started saying selfish instead.

How is selfishness sin?

- Putting anyone ahead of God, even yourself, is sin.
- Just as you can't have a good relationship with other people if you put yourself ahead of them, likewise, this attitude separates us from God.
- God already demonstrated His love toward us by sending Jesus to make the way for us to have a relationship with Him. The ball is now in our court to respond to His love in kind.
- The love of God is the highest form of love, it is sacrificial, it is giving to others without expecting anything in return.
 - In contrast, man's concept of love is something you do to get something in return. Jesus exposed this kind of worldly selfish love as common...

Luke 6:32 - But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.
- Long before I was saved, I recall coming to the conclusion that all people only acted out of selfishness all the time. I come to this conclusion because I saw my own motivation for everything I did. And I was a good person by the world's standards. I did good things to avoid the bad consequences or even to be seen as a good person by others. As Jesus would say, "I had my reward." There is no eternal value in doing good with this kind of attitude, all the value is what ever you can extract from it in the world.
- After I was saved, I learned about God's agape love, the sacrificial love of Jesus. And I learned that it is possible to have a motivation that was not selfish. But only God can enable us to act selflessly with sacrificial love. This is one of the fruits of the Spirit.
- The example I like to give is two men giving a \$100 to the church. One of them God recognizes as a righteous act that will merit rewards in heaven, the other has no eternal value and is in fact regarded "as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). **What is the difference between these two?** Their motivation. One gives out of gratitude for what God has done for him and wants to see the money used to help others to get to know Jesus. The other merely wants to be accepted by the church as a righteous man. This person sees his gift to the church as he would country club dues. As Jesus

would say to those with this attitude, “*they have s their reward*” (Matthew 6:2).

- Certainly the Scriptures encourage us to have the same attitude that Jesus had when He came to see souls saved...

Phil 2:3-8

3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Who commits sin?

All people commit sin...

Romans 3:10, 23 –There is none righteous, no, not one... all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

When did sin begin?

In the Garden of Eden with the first two people, Adam and Eve. There was only one law and they couldn't keep themselves from testing God.

What is the law?

God's commandments, precepts, ordinances, guidelines, etc.

Do most people have a lawful or lawless attitude toward life?

Unfortunately, most people we know will reject the way of God...

Matt 7:13-14 – “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

Most people think they are living lawful lives but this is because they do not have a personal relationship with the Law-giver so they really can not know the spirit of the law:

Matt 7:21-23 – “Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare

to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

Will lawlessness increase or decrease as we get closer to the return of the Lord?

Jesus said in His Olivet Discourse when talking about the events leading up to His return the lawlessness will increase...

Matt 24:12 - And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

We are certainly seeing an increase in lawlessness today people have less and less respect for life. For example, terrorists think they are committing righteous acts in their killing, and people advocate abortion as a valid choice.

What keeps lawlessness from spiraling out of control today?

The Holy Spirit restrains it...

II Th 2:7 - For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.

When will the Holy Spirit's restraining influence on lawlessness be taken out of the way?

When the church is raptured. The Holy Spirit's presence in the world is in believers because He indwells them. When believers are removed from earth, the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit through the church will be removed as well. The rapture marks the end of the church age where the Holy Spirit indwells believers. Now the Holy Spirit does not go into retirement at that point but His ministry changes and becomes more like it was during Old Testament times where His presence in believers is not necessarily a promise (as David prayed, “*do not take Your Holy Spirit from me*” - Psalm 51:1).

Why did God give us the law?

Because he loves us, to protect us from harm, cause us to turn to Him for salvation, and help us to know Him.

What purpose does the Law serve?

Does the law save us?

The Law serves to convict us of our condition of being separated from God.

Rom 3:19 - Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

For example: if we are honest with ourselves, we have to admit that we do not have it within ourselves to perfectly follow the Ten Commandments. This should drive us to look to God to save us because we can not save ourselves.

Gal 3:24-25 - Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

Where does the faith to be saved come from?

Saving faith is a gift from God...

Eph 2:8-9 - For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

If the law is our tutor to bring us to Christ, are believer's under the law?

Believers who are led by the Spirit are not under the law...

Gal 5:18 - But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Believers shouldn't be subject to the law because they live by the Spirit of the law, not the letter of the law...

Rom 7:6 - But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

How is being under the law a form of bondage?

- The law only convicts us of sin, it does not save it so try as hard as you can, you will always fall short in meeting the perfect requirements of the law... Despite what all religions of the world teach, it is not possible to earn salvation by trying to observe the law.
- The problem with the letter of the law is that you can always find loopholes which gets around the true Spirit of the law... this begets more laws to cover the loopholes and you get into an endless cycle of legislation and regulation which eventually will lead you further from the true Spirit of the law.
- Living by the law is an attempt to justify yourself independent from God. It is a great deception which will end only in despair and eventually destruction...

Gal 4:21-26

21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?

22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman.

23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise,

24 which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar--

25 for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children--

26 but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.

- Jesus said that trying to justify yourself under the law is bondage to sin...

John 8:31-36

31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.

32 "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

33 They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can you say, 'You will be made free'?"

34 Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.

35 "And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever.

36 "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

So if we are not under bondage to sin does this mean we are free to sin? Is this what Jesus meant when He said, "you shall be free indeed"?

- Jesus set us free from the most significant permanent consequence for sin: spiritual death, but since we are still in a world which is subject to sin, we still face consequences from sin. These consequences are not only suffered in this world but are eternal in that they result in loss of reward for believers.
- Jesus has given us liberty from the greatest consequence for sin but not license to sin. Paul put it this way...

Romans 6:14-15 - For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!

Paul said that believers "are not under law but under grace..." what does it mean to be under grace?

Grace is unmerited favor. God has blessed us with the gift of eternal life not for anything we did, but just out of His love and mercy...

Ephesians 2:8-9 - For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

It is not possible to earn God's favor. While the free gift of eternal life is offered to everyone, only those who respond to God by receiving Jesus into their life have it...

Matt 22:14 - "For many are called, but few are chosen."

Since we are under grace and no longer under the bondage of sin, what is our motivation to do good works?

Christians seek God's help to avoid sin and do things which honor God out of an attitude of gratitude for what Jesus did for us. Indeed this is why God saved us...

Eph 2:10 - For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

In fact, if a person does not have good works which glorify God, they should question their faith...

James 2:18 - Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

Why do people sin?

- It is our nature; it is like a cat and a bag, the cat can not help itself, a bag on the floor is too attractive, it has to get in the bag – sooner or later a bag on the floor is going to have a cat in it.
- Even believers who are a new creature in Christ still have their old sin nature which tempts us to fall back into sin.
- Sin is fun for a season.

If sin is fun why shouldn't we sin? Isn't it right to do what is fun?

- Not all things that are fun is sin, we should discriminate from sinful fun and righteous fun. We can certainly have fun glorifying God!
- The problem with sin is that it always has consequences.

Why is sin fun for a season?

There is a special attraction to things forbidden. A sense that you are getting something unique and special. A feeling that you are lucky or smart enough to beat the odds of suffering consequences.

Gal 6:7 - Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

Do Christians have a right to tell the unsaved how to live?

No, this is the role of the Holy Spirit. All we should do with the unsaved is point them to Christ. We should however lovingly correct professing Christians who are falling into sin.

What will happen to people who live their lives ignoring sin?

God will give them over to what they have chosen and have dedicated their lives: eternal separation from Him.

You can chose to accept the eternal relationship God wants to have with you right now...

- A – Admit you are a sinner and lost without Jesus in your life.
- B – Believe that Jesus paid the penalty for your sin on the cross
- C – Confess that Jesus is your Lord to men