

The Problem of Sin

SIN. That's a word you don't hear much any more. Sin is not a popular subject in our culture today. It used to be something folks knew something about. If you were a blatant sinner, you knew it, and chances are everyone else knew it, too.

In today's world we now have a whole range of ways to talk about what people do without using the word "sin." We talk about "alternative life style" and close our eyes to what that means. People who kill or assault others or steal are not "criminals," they're "suspects." As if we don't know they actually did it.

The problem of sin has not gone away; but we have gotten used to the way people behave, and therefore we no longer treat it as something abnormal. In other people we ignore it if we want to, or excuse it for one reason or another. We say, "He's not really a bad person." In ourselves we take comfort in being "not as bad as" other people we know.

But sin is still sin, whether we call it that or not. And it is a real problem for every one of us, a problem that must be dealt with if we are ever to grow up into the wonderful life God wants us to have.

What is Sin?



Sin is any action of ours, or any attitude, that separates us from God. Another way to put it is that sin is anything we do that is self-centered or self-serving. If you want a word that sums it up, this is it: **selfishness**.

Sometimes it's easier to get a handle on something by looking at its opposite. The opposite of sin is love—the selfless, unconditional kind of love that God has for us, and that Jesus demonstrated when He died on the cross for us.

Sin is manipulating, hurting, or disrespecting someone else to please myself. Sin is all about me, mine; look out for number one; if it feels good, do it. Love is giving of myself, even sacrificial giving, for the benefit of others.

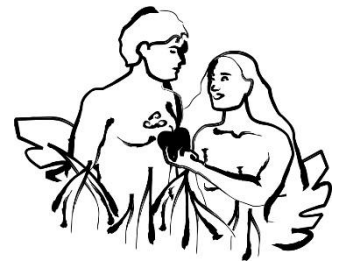
Are there big sins and small sins? Of course there are. Killing someone is a lot bigger deal than stealing a candy bar. So, does that mean that petty

theft is okay, but murder is not? No. Both acts are sin. Either one, or any of the thousands of other sinful things we each have done, is enough to separate us forever from God. "The wages of sin is death," the Bible says in Romans 6:23.

Why do we sin?

Why are we so fond of sinning? Because it feels good, perhaps. Or at least we think it does at the time.

There is something inside each of us that wants to do things "my way," even when we know that "my way" is the wrong way. This is known as "original sin," or "the sin of Adam." It's a part of our nature that we inherit from our first ancestors, Adam and Eve. Because they chose to disobey God, all of their descendants were cursed with the same rebellious nature (see Genesis 2 and 3 on [Page 3](#)).



Besides that, we may be saddled with sinfulness we inherited from our parents or grandparents. Sin that is confessed and forgiven is forgotten; but unrepented, unforgiven sin will be passed down to future generations (see Exodus 34:6-7)

Finally, as if we couldn't get into enough trouble by ourselves, Satan and his fallen angels (demons) are diligently at work, playing with our minds and our emotions to lead us away from the righteous path.

The world, our fleshly desires, and the devil are constantly tempting us to sin.

What does GOD do about our sin?

First of all, God loves us. If we are good, He loves us. If we are bad, He loves us. If we are so full of rebellion and bitterness that we despise Him, curse His name, and spit in His face—He still loves us.

But—because God is Light, darkness cannot exist in His presence. Because He is completely Good, there can be no evil where He is. God's judgment is not an action; it is simply part of His nature that

goodness, light, purity, love and blessedness can come into His presence, but evil, wickedness, and all kinds of sinfulness are cursed by not being able to be where He is. God's wrath is the weight of the awful truth of being separated from Him.

When we are willing slaves to sin, our prayers cannot reach God's ears, no matter how loudly we cry out to Him. (See Psalms 66:18 and Isaiah 59:2) If they are not forgiven, our sins will be punished; the punishment is not inflicted by God, it is simply the end result of the sin that separate us from Him.

There are those who insist that God will save everyone, because His is a loving God. Make no mistake—salvation is available for all, but only on God's terms. (See Galatians 6:7-9) For those who insist on going their own way, God will let them—but their way is the way of eternal punishment and death.



God has provided a better way—The Way, the Truth, and the Life. His name is Jesus. Because there has been sin, there must be its natural consequence—punishment. Because each of us has sinned, we deserve to suffer that punishment. But God has made a Way for us to avoid having to suffer that punishment. He Himself has transferred all of that sin—all the sins committed by every human being who ever lived or ever will live—onto the head of His beloved, only begotten Son, Jesus. And Jesus has accepted the burden of that sin, and has suffered the punishment for it.

If the sacrifice of Jesus for you—for you—does not make you humble; if it doesn't make you want to cry out to God in gratitude and love; then you need to think about it some more. Think about what you would face if God had not sent Jesus to die for us.

The sin debt is paid. Once, for all, it is paid. There is therefore now no condemnation for—for whom?

For those who are in Christ Jesus. (See Romans 8:1)

But that still leaves us with the problem of sin in our lives. Since Jesus paid the price for our sin, should we go on sinning as if it didn't matter? St. Paul dealt with this question pretty thoroughly in Romans 6, and what he said was, in our vernacular, "No way!"

If we receive God's gift of forgiveness by grace, because of the sacrifice of Jesus, there is no way that we should keep on sinning.

Instead (and these are my words) we should start getting ready to live with God eternally by living

with Him now—today. We should start applying God's remedy to get rid of the sin in our lives.

God's Road to Recovery from Sin

How do we deal with our sinfulness, God's way? The Bible tells us what to do.

1. **Confession.** 1 John 1:8-9 says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

No more of this "I'm not so bad" garbage. We need to call our sins what they are, and confess them before God, asking His pardon.

2. **Repentance.** The word "repent" means to "think again." In the Bible, repent always means turn away from sin; turn your face toward God.

Repentance is far more than simply saying, "I'm sorry." Rather than an apology, what is required is a complete re-training of our attention on God and His ways, instead of on our old, sinful ways.

3. **Restitution.** Our sinful actions may have hurt others physically, emotionally, or financially. If so, we need to try to heal that wound.

We must ask God to guide and help us in doing whatever is possible to undo or repair the harm our sinful actions have caused. We must do this not only because it is the morally right thing to do, but also because it gives forgiveness a chance to operate and do its healing work.

4. **Restoration of Relationships** with the church, with family, and with God.

We can't maintain a life style that is completely free of sin, because we're human and we mess up. But going it alone makes it very much harder. We need Christian fellowship; we need loving family relationships; and most of all we need the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit, which we receive primarily through an active prayer life.

Is it possible to get so bogged down in sin that you can lose your salvation? Yes, it is. (See Hebrews 10:26) But you don't have to do that. My advice is, don't!

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6) For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. (Romans 8:14)

God's peace be with you, in the name of Jesus, our Savior and Lord!

Brother Roland



Scriptures referenced or mentioned above (plus a few others) ...

Genesis 2:15-17 The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

Genesis 3:10-13 [The LORD God said to the man,] "Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate."

Romans 5:12 ... just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—

Exodus 34:5-7 The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name, "The LORD." The LORD passed before him, and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, yet by no means clearing the guilty, but visiting the iniquity of the parents upon the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."

1 Peter 5:8 Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour.

1 Timothy 4:1-2 Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will renounce the faith by paying attention to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared with a hot iron.

Psalms 66:18 If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.

Isaiah 59:1-2 See, the Lord's hand is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. Rather, your iniquities have been barriers between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

Galatians 6:7-9 Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up.

1 John 1:5-9 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking



in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Acts 17:30 While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent

Acts 26:19-20 [Paul said,] "I declared ... also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and do deeds consistent with repentance."

Numbers 5:6-7 Say to the Israelites: When a man or a woman wrongs another, breaking faith with the LORD, that person incurs guilt and shall confess the sin that has been committed. The person shall make full restitution for the wrong, adding one fifth to it, and giving it to the one who was wronged.

Leviticus 6:2-5 When any of you sin and commit a trespass against the LORD by deceiving a neighbor in a matter of a deposit or a pledge, or by robbery, or if you have defrauded a neighbor, or have found something lost and lied about it—if you swear falsely regarding any of the various things that one may do and sin thereby—when you have sinned and realize your guilt, and would restore what you took by robbery or by fraud or the deposit that was committed to you, or the lost thing that you found, or anything else about which you have sworn falsely, you shall repay the principal amount and shall add one-fifth to it. You shall pay it to its owner when you realize your guilt.

Matthew 12:32 Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man [Jesus] will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

Hebrews 10:26-27 For if we willfully persist in sin after having received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.

Send your Bible questions or mailing address updates to me:
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The Sin Problem

As you solve this puzzle, think about how easy it is to fall into sin, and how it can take over your life. Jesus came to break the power of sin over our lives, and to set us free to be God's own children. But Satan still wants to destroy us, and his usual weapon is sin. Don't let it be effective against you.

Puzzle:

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Words:

Why We Sin

ADDICTION
NOT BEING LOVED
CARELESS TALK
CARELESSNESS
DISRESPECT
FALSE FRIENDS
GREED
IGNORANCE
LACK OF COMMITMENT
OCCULT INVOLVEMENT
PEER PRESSURE
PRIDE
RACIAL PREJUDICE
REBELLION
SELF INDULGENCE
SELFISHNESS
UNFORGIVENESS
UNHEALTHY HABITS
UNSAVED COMPANIONS
WAYWARDNESS
WORLDLY ENTERTAINMENT
WRONG PLACES

Consequences of Sin

BROKEN DREAMS
DEBTS
DISCOURAGEMENT
DISEASE
DISHONESTY
ESTRANGEMENT
FRUSTRATION
HOPELESSNESS
IMPRISONMENT
LOSS OF FAMILY
POVERTY OF SOUL
PUNISHMENT
SELF-CONDEMNATION
SICKNESS
UNBELIEF
DEATH
HELL

Overcoming Sin

AVOIDING TEMPTATION
BIBLE STUDY
CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY
CONCERN FOR OTHERS
CONFESSION
FAITHFULNESS
FORGIVENESS
GENEROSITY
KINDNESS
OBEDIENCE
POSITIVE ATTITUDE
PRAISING GOD
PRAYER LIFE
REPENTANCE
SURRENDER TO GOD
THANKSGIVING
THE HOLY SPIRIT
TRUSTING JESUS