

Lesson 8 – Sin

Key Verse: Romans 5:12

“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.”

Overview

There is one common thread throughout all humanity—sin. Sin permeates every aspect of our existence. It impacts individuals and societies. It is deep within us and is continually on display. However, since the Enlightenment, civilizations have increasingly denied the reality of sin. There are four main reasons for this: 1) people view humanity as naturally good; 2) people are viewed as the products of their upbringing and, therefore, not morally responsible; 3) moral relativism does not define right and wrong as absolutes; and 4) people’s self-esteem is hurt by the word “sin.” In theology, the study of sin is called hamartiology. *Hamartia* in Greek means “to sin; to err.” In this lesson we will discover what God says about the sinful heart of man.

What is sin?

1. 1 John 3:4. How does John define sin? _____
2. Isaiah 1:2. How is sin defined in this verse? _____
3. Romans 5:19. How does this verse identify sin? _____
4. Romans 2:23. How does this verse define sinners? _____

“Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature.”

—Wayne Grudem, *Christians Beliefs*, pg. 62

Where did sin come from?

1. Hebrews 6:18. What is impossible for God to do? _____
 2. James 1:13. What does this verse tell us about God? _____
 3. Ezekiel 28:13–15. What do these verses reveal about Satan? _____
 4. Isaiah 14:12–14. What was the reason for Satan’s rebellion? _____
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5. Genesis 3:6. What did Eve do in the Garden of Eden? _____
6. Genesis 3:9. Who is primarily responsible for the sin of humanity? _____
7. Romans 5:12. Who is to blame for death in the world? _____

Total Depravity

1. Jeremiah 17:9. What does this verse say about the heart of mankind? _____
2. Titus 1:15. What does this verse reveal about the mind and conscience of man? _____
3. Romans 8:7–8. What does this verse reveal about unbelievers pleasing God? _____
4. John 15:5. What can we do apart from Christ? _____
5. Psalm 14:3. According to this verse, who does good? _____
6. Romans 3:23. Who has sinned against God? _____

Arminian Position of Total Depravity: Although human nature was seriously affected by the fall, man has not been left in a state of total spiritual helplessness. God graciously enables every sinner to repent and believe, but He does not interfere with man’s freedom. Each sinner possesses a free will, and his eternal destiny depends on how he uses it. Man’s freedom consists in his ability to choose good over evil in spiritual matters; his will is not enslaved to his sinful nature. The sinner has the power either to cooperate with God’s Spirit and be regenerated or to resist God’s grace and perish. The lost sinner needs the Spirit’s assistance, but he does not have to be regenerated by the Spirit before he can believe, for faith is man’s act and precedes the new birth. Faith is the sinner’s gift to God; it is man’s contribution to salvation.

Calvinism Position on Total Depravity: Because of the fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the Gospel. The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; his heart is sinful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature, therefore he will not—indeed he cannot—choose good over evil in the spiritual realm. Consequently, it takes much more than the Spirit’s assistance to bring a sinner to Christ—it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature but is itself a part of God’s gift of salvation. Salvation is God’s gift to the sinner, not the sinner’s gift to God.¹

**“We are so entirely controlled by the power of sin, that the whole mind, the whole heart,
and all our actions are under its influence.”**
—John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, pg. 261

¹ H. Wayne House, *Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 99.

Are some sins worse than others?

1. James 2:10. What does man have to do to become guilty of breaking the whole law? _____

2. Ezekiel 8:6. What did God say the house of Israel would commit? _____
3. John 19:11. What did Jesus say about the Jews who delivered Him to Pilate? _____

4. Matthew 11:20–24. What did Jesus say about the cities that did not repent? _____

5. James 3:1. What does this verse say about those who teach the Bible? _____

Sin and the Christian

1. Romans 8:1. What does this verse say about Christians? _____
2. Romans 8:39. What separates a Christian from God’s love? _____
3. Ephesians 4:30. What do Christians do when they sin? _____
4. Hebrews 12:6. What does God do to sinning Christians? _____
5. 1 Corinthians 5:12–13. What do these verses say the church is to do with a professing Christian who is unrepentant? _____
6. 2 Corinthians 5:10. What does this verse say about Christians after they die? _____

7. Psalm 66:18. What happens to those who regard sin in their heart? _____

“While instances of personal sin cannot break the believer’s *union* with Christ, they do have a negative impact on the believer’s *communion* with Christ.”
—“Sin and the Christian”, John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds., *Biblical Doctrines*, pg. 472

Application

1. How does the doctrine of total depravity help you witness to unbelievers?
2. Why has God established church discipline in His church?
3. What are specific sins you need to repent of?
4. How are you comforted by Romans 8:39?