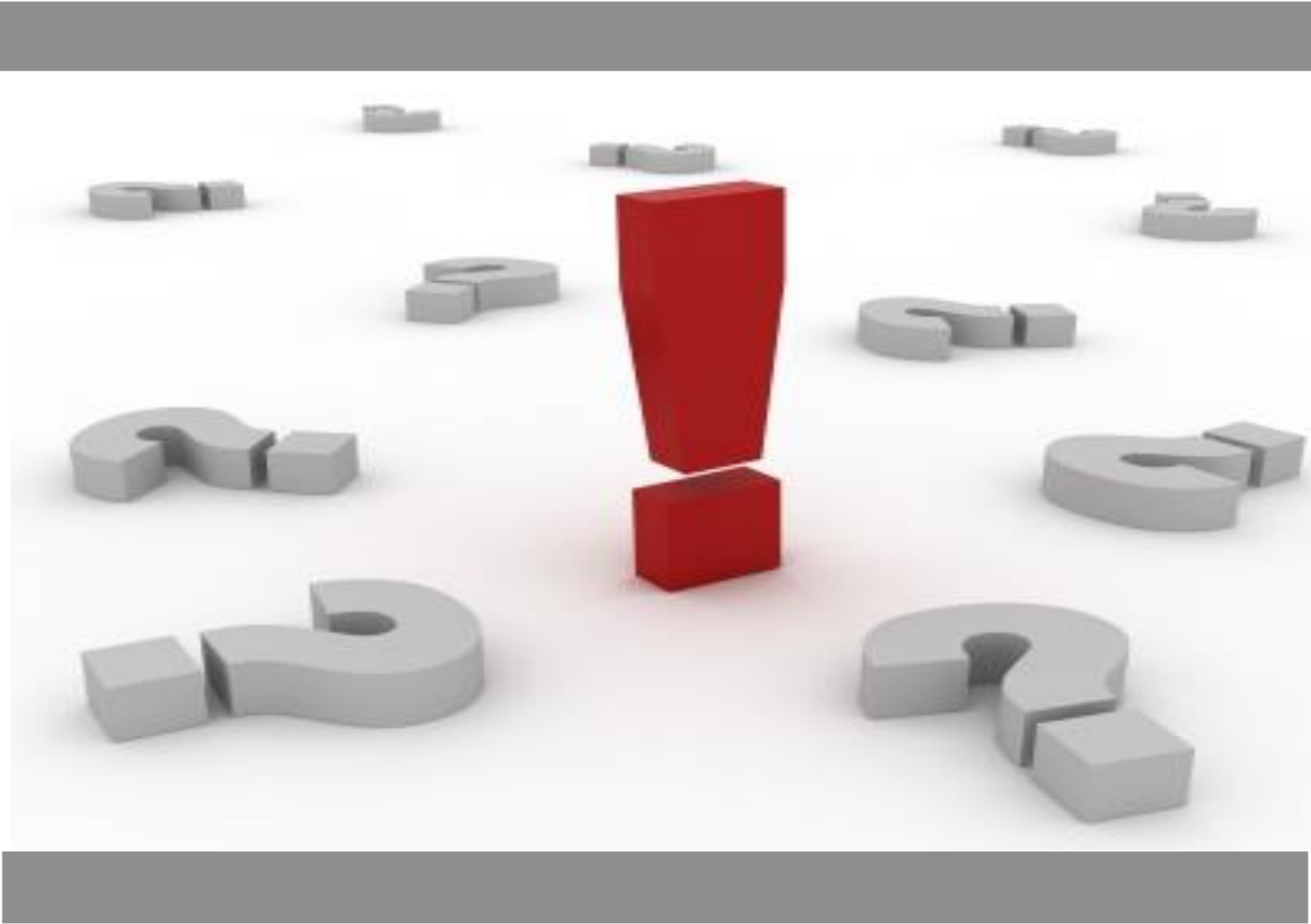


Answers To Life's Most Essential Questions

Lesson 4: What Is Sin?



Discovering God's Word

Bible Study Series

Answers To Life's Most Essential Questions

Lesson 4: What Is Sin?

Learn what sin is and why it is so dangerous

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Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

Study Number: DGW47

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About the author: My name is Eric Krieg. I am a disciple of Jesus, a Bible student, a truth seeker, and an evangelist. My interest is in using the Bible as my only guide in my faith. My desire is to help others understand the message of the Bible and pursue true, New Testament Christianity.

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My plea: It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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Answers To Life's Most Essential Questions

Lesson 4: What Is Sin?

Perhaps you have heard people talk about sin. Perhaps you have even heard preachers preach against sin. Perhaps you can name something that is considered sinful. Perhaps you have always been taught that certain things are sinful. Yet, perhaps, you don't fully understand the concept of sin.

As we endeavor to learn the right answers to life's most essential questions, we must seek the right answer to the question, "What is sin?" Where did it come from? What makes something a "sin"? And, why is sin so bad?

Of all the diseases and illness that have plagued mankind throughout history (i.e. leprosy, cancer, smallpox, tuberculosis, diabetes, dementia, etc.), there is nothing that has been so widespread or so deadly as sin! So, having an accurate understanding of the nature and consequences of sin is essential if we desire to live in a way that glorifies God. In addition, a proper understanding of sin is essential if we want to learn about God's plan for saving mankind (which we'll focus on in the next couple lessons).

As you seriously consider the subject of sin in this lesson, I want you to gain an understanding about what sin is and what sin does. Then, I also want you to make two determinations about sin. First, you should determine to stay away from sin in the future. Second, you should determine to seek the forgiveness of your past sins. You see, sin is nothing to be played with. Therefore, in this

fourth lesson, we will seek the answer to the question, "What is sin?"

The Introduction Of Sin To The World

Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." You can look around and see all the wonderful things God has created – from the universe, to the sky, to the plants, to the animals, to all the people, etc. While we should stand in amazement at God's wonderful creation, we do recognize that not everything that happens on this earth is wonderful. We should recognize that there is evil, death, and suffering in this world. But, since God is a holy God (as we discussed in lesson one), where did these bad things come from? How did sin come into this world?

God did not create mankind in sin

If we are going to develop an accurate understanding about sin, we need to go back to the beginning – to the creation of people and the garden of Eden. God created mankind in His own image (as we've discussed previously from Genesis 1:26-27). As we've seen, this means that God has created people with a spiritual nature – as well as given us a physical nature.

Furthermore, after God had completed His creation, He declared that it was all "very good" (Genesis 1:31). The obvious question is: How could a holy God who is completely separate from everything evil create people in sin – and then declare that His creation was "very good"? Quite simply, He could not – and He did not!

As we keep reading, Genesis 2 shows us the home God gave to the man and woman He had created (who were named Adam and Eve). This home was called the garden of Eden. It was a true paradise on earth. In this place, Adam and Eve had direct access to and a special relationship with God, His Creator. There was no death or suffering. There was no evil being done. At this point, mankind was entirely *sinless*!

God gave mankind a law

In this home, God gave Adam and Eve one law to obey. He commanded them not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This is recorded in Genesis 2:16-17. "And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die.'"

This law and its consequence was not too difficult for them to understand. In fact, when the woman was tempted later by the devil, she was able to tell the difference between what the devil was saying to her and what God had said (Genesis 3:1-5). They both knew that there was one tree in the garden that was off-limits to them. While it is doubtful that Eve fully understood what death was (since death had never occurred on the earth), she did understand that God had promised death as the consequence for breaking the law.

In this, we see that mankind has been given free will. God created people in such a way that they can either choose to follow God by keeping His law or choose not to follow God by disobeying His law. God did not force obedience on anyone. Adam and Eve recognized God's law and had a choice either to obey God or disobey God.

Satan tempted Eve

This is the point at which Satan enters the Bible's story to tempt Eve. This temptation is recorded in Genesis 3:1-5. "Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God really say, "You can't eat from any tree in the garden"?' The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit from the trees in the garden. But about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, "You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die.'" 'No! You will not die,' the serpent said to the woman. 'In fact, God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'"

Satan (the devil, who is the tempter) appeared to Eve, using the form of a serpent. This was a fitting choice, since the serpent "was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the Lord

God had made." He proceeded to lie to Eve about what God had said would happen if they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, saying that they would not die whenever they ate from it. Then, he even made the tree look appealing by saying that God just knows that when they would eat from the tree, their eyes would be opened and they would become like God in knowing good and evil. This made it sound like God was trying to keep something away from Adam and Eve that would be beneficial to them rather than trying to keep them away from something that was harmful.

After listening to Satan as he tempted her, Eve responded (and even involved Adam) in Genesis 3:6. Eve chose to give in to the temptation and satisfy her own desires, thereby disobeying the law of God. The passage says, "The woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it."

Notice how she looked at the tree differently after the temptation. She had believed the lies of the devil. Rather than viewing the tree as something to be avoided, she saw it as a good source of food, delightful to look at, and desirable for obtaining wisdom. Consequently, she ate of the tree. When she did this, she sinned against God. Then, she proceeded to give some of the fruit to her husband, who also sinned whenever he ate from the tree.

They suffered the consequences for sinning against God

After Adam and Eve had violated the law of God, we get to see whether God was bluffing whenever he said they would die on the day they ate of the fruit – or whether Satan was right. Now, it is important to remember something we established in lesson 1: God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). So, of course God meant what He said and said what He meant!

Genesis 3:14-24 records the punishments God gave to Adam and Eve because of their disobedience. These punishments included labor pains in childbirth for the woman and painful labor

for the man as he worked the ground for food. Then, they were both punished by being driven out of the garden of Eden and separated from the tree of life.

Being driven out of the garden and separated from the tree of life would mean that they would experience physical death. Although they did not experience physical death on the day they ate from the forbidden tree, the dying process certainly did begin. Now, life on this earth would no longer be a blissful paradise that was free from evil, suffering, and death. Sin had ruined that paradise. Later, Genesis 5:5 clearly states that Adam died.

But, the punishments that are described also go beyond physical punishments. More important than the physical punishments, their sin also meant that their relationship with the holy God changed. They were separated from the sort of relationship they had enjoyed with God prior to their sin (while in the garden of Eden). This separation from God was the worst punishment of all. The Bible pictures this kind of separation from God as a *spiritual* death. Unlike Adam and Eve's physical death that did not happen until later, their spiritual death did occur on the day they ate the forbidden fruit!

So, with the sin of Adam and Eve, sin entered the world – and has been here ever since! As we continue to study the subject of sin, we can learn a great deal from this first recorded temptation and sin – as our temptations and sins still occur in the same basic way (though a serpent won't talk with us and we won't be tempted to eat any forbidden fruit). We also continue to experience the evil, suffering, and death that remain in this world because of sin. And, those who sin today continue to experience spiritual death by being separated from God.

Understanding Sin

Now that we have a graphic picture of sin in Adam and Eve, we are prepared to consider sin as it relates to us. As we do, let's first try to

understand what sin really is. Surely, sin is not just a single act (i.e. eating forbidden fruit). So, let's understand what all sin has in common and what makes something sinful.

Definition of sin

The concept of sin is doing something God considers to be wrong. As I understand it, the Greek word that is translated "sin" in the New Testament is an archery term. Whenever an archer would miss the target with his/her arrow, the arrow would be said to have "sinned." That is, the arrow missed the mark/target it was supposed to hit.

That's exactly what sin is! God has set a particular "target" for our lives, our conduct, our words, our attitudes, our thoughts, etc. This target God has set for our lives is found in the pages of the New Testament Scriptures – which is the law we all live under today (as we discussed in lesson three). We sin whenever we miss the "target" He wants us to hit! But, as we'll discuss later in our study, there is a very high price to pay for missing God's mark in our lives!

Remember (from lesson 1), God is a perfectly holy God. And, if we want to be in fellowship and at peace with Him, we must also be holy (1 Peter 1:15-16). 1 John 1:5-7 states, "This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in him. If we say, 'We have fellowship with him,' and yet we walk in darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the truth. 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." So, missing the mark God has set for our lives is extremely consequential – in that it goes against the ways of our holy God!

Sin is lawlessness

The Bible also defines sin for us. 1 John 3:4 says, "Everyone who commits sin practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness." To be "lawless" is to act against the law, as if there is no law to govern that area of your life. For example, if a city street has a 35 miles per hour speed limit and

you travel the street at 50 miles per hour, you are being lawless. You are conducting yourself as if there is no law to govern your speed.

In the same way, sin results whenever you act as if God has not given you a law to live by. Some examples will make this clear. Adam and Eve acted as if God had not given them a law when they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. So, they sinned (or, missed the mark God had set for their lives).

In the same way, whenever an individual commits murder, he/she sins because God has given a law that forbids murder. Whenever an individual has sexual relations with someone other than his/her spouse, he/she sins because God has given law regulating sexual relations (i.e. only to be had within the confines of Scriptural marriage). When an individual hates his/her enemy, he/she sins because God has given a command to love one's enemy.

Other verses also help us see that sin occurs because of lawless behavior. 1 John 5:17 teaches that "All unrighteousness is sin." Thus, everything that is outside of God's standard of right is sin (remember that He is entirely righteous – so His laws are also entirely righteous). Furthermore, James 4:17 teaches that failing to do the right thing God wants you to do is sin: "So it is sin to know the good and yet not do it."

Two categories of sin

We might put sin into two categories in order to help us better understand what it is. Although God does not put these labels on sin, this should help us in our own understanding. For, God has given two kinds of laws. He has told us some things He does *not* want us to do. Then, He has also told us some things He *does* want us to do. While both kinds of laws are equally important, we should recognize that we can sin regarding each.

These are sometimes referred to as "sins of commission" and "sins of omission." Both fit the definition of sin in that our actions miss the mark God has set for our lives. And, both categories of sin are equally devastating. That is, neither kind of sin is more serious than the other in terms of spiritual consequences.

First, sometimes God tells us *not* to do something. Sins of commission occur whenever we do what God has said we must not do. So, sins of commission would include things like having unlawful sexual relations, lying, stealing, coveting, gossiping, using profanity, etc. These are all things God has told us *not* to do. If we go ahead and do them, we commit sin.

Second, sometimes God tells us to *do* certain things. Sins of omission occur whenever we fail to do what God has said we must do. So, sins of omission would include things like failing to teach the gospel to others, failing to do good to those we have opportunity to help, failing to pray for our enemies, failing to love our spouses or children in the way God has instructed, etc. These are all things God has told us *to* do. If we refuse or fail to do them, we commit sin.

Examples of sin

There is no single passage in the Bible that lists every sin that can be committed. However, there are some non-exhaustive lists of sin (particularly containing sins of commission). Please read the following passages and seriously consider each of the things mentioned in them – and then continue searching the New Testament Scriptures in order to learn more about the law God has given for your life.

Galatians 5:19-21: "Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and anything similar. I am warning you about these things – as I warned you before – that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

1 Corinthians 6:9-11: "Don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit God's kingdom? Do not be deceived: No sexually immoral people, idolaters, adulterers, or males who have sex with males, no thieves, greedy people, drunkards, verbally abusive people, or swindlers will inherit God's kingdom. And some of you used to be like

this. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

Romans 1:28-32: “And because they did not think it worthwhile to acknowledge God, God delivered them over to a corrupt mind so that they do what is not right. They are filled with all unrighteousness, evil, greed, and wickedness. They are full of envy, murder, quarrels, deceit, and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, arrogant, proud, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, senseless, untrustworthy, unloving, and unmerciful. Although they know God’s just sentence – that those who practice such things deserve to die – they not only do them, but even applaud others who practice them.”

Again, please understand that sin is *not* limited to these lists. However, these passages will help you understand many of the things that are sinful (mostly things that could be classified as sins of commission). Consider each one of the words on these lists very carefully to understand what is being taught. Then, put your continued focused on learning more about God’s law so you can be sure you avoid sin!

How sin works

As you consider what the Bible teaches us about sin, it is not just that people rebel against God for the sake of being rebels (although some people may do this). Instead, we learn from the example of Adam and Eve how Satan is the one who works in the world to lure people into sin. For, Adam and Eve appeared to have had no interest in violating God’s law concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil until Satan told them some things that were not true and made the tree look good. It was at that point Eve decided to pursue her own physical (or, fleshly) desires rather than listen to God. Adam then followed her into sin by making the same choice for himself.

Today, the Bible continues to warn us about Satan’s work. For example, 1 Peter 5:8 says, “Be sober-minded, be alert. Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour.” Although Satan will not literally stand in front of you or whisper in your ear to tempt you, he works in many ways throughout

this world. In everything he does, he should be viewed as your enemy because he only wants to destroy you spiritually (just as he wanted to destroy Adam and Eve). He tries to tempt you to fulfill your own physical desires rather than obey the laws God has given.

James 1:14-15 gives the picture of how temptation is connected with sin. “But each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desire. Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death.”

Temptation occurs whenever you are “drawn away and enticed by” your own “evil desire.” That is, whenever the physical part of your person is drawn away from what is right and enticed by the desire to do something that goes against God’s laws, consider yourself tempted. But, it is important to note that just being enticed by this desire is not sin. This is the work of the devil – just as he drew Eve away from her thinking about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and enticed her physical desires to think about the desirable nature of the tree. So, temptation is like a fisherman’s lure – luring the fish away from what is safe and enticing it so that it will act on its desires and bite the hook.

If temptation is answered correctly, there is no sin. You see, Satan can only tempt you; he cannot make you sin! Just think about if Eve (after being lured away by the devil through her physical desires) had insisted, “No! God has said not to eat from the tree and there will be consequences for doing so.” She would not have sinned. So, if you resist the devil’s temptation by refocusing yourself on God’s law and choose to obey God rather than fulfill your own physical desires, you will not sin.

But, whenever you allow your desire to conceive, sin is the result. Whenever Eve chose to please her own physical desires rather than obey God, she sinned. Similarly, whenever you choose to please yourself rather than obey God, you sin.

Sin's Devastating Effects

“What’s the big deal about sin?” is the question you may be asking. The reality is that sin is not just some harmless thing. God does not just desire to keep you from having a good time in your earthly life. Instead, you should see sin’s devastating effects everywhere you look.

All men continue to sin

Sin did not stop with Adam and Eve. Cain (Adam and Eve’s oldest son) chose to sin when he murdered his brother Abel. Throughout the Old Testament you can read about people who chose to sin against God (by worshiping idols, murdering, committing adultery, committing homosexuality, etc.). In the New Testament, you continue to read about more of the same – people who chose to sin against God by lying, coveting, having unlawful sexual relations, etc.

But, sin hasn’t stopped there. Men and women continue to sin today. Satan continues to lure people away from God. Like we saw from 1 Peter 5:8, Satan is like a prowling lion that is trying to destroy people.

He continues to tempt us to fulfill our physical desires in unlawful ways. You see, everyone is fighting a war for their souls between living for the fleshly (physical) desires they have and their souls (spirits). Satan wants us to convince us to please our own physical desires so our souls will be destroyed. God wants us to listen to Him so our souls can spend eternity in Heaven with Him.

Romans 3:23 tells us the sad reality that we all have been guilty of sin. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Not a single person among us has reached a point of spiritual accountability (where he/she has the ability to know right and wrong and make choices for himself/herself) and has not sinned. At some point, we have all chosen to please ourselves rather than God.

Certainly, the Bible teaches that all sin. However, do you inherit your sin (or a sinful nature) from Adam or from your parents? Many

religious organizations teach “inherited sin” as a part of their beliefs. But, I want to quickly help you to see that this doctrine is *not* Bible doctrine! While this subject is too extensive to provide a detailed explanation and refutation of it here, please consider the following passages.

First, Ezekiel 18:20 shows individual responsibility for sin – and directly contradicts the idea that we can inherit sin from those who have lived before us. It says, “The person who sins is the one who will die. A son won’t suffer punishment for the father’s iniquity, and a father won’t suffer punishment for the son’s iniquity. The righteousness of the righteous person will be on him, and the wickedness of the wicked person will be on him.”

Second, Matthew 18:1-4 demonstrates the purity of children (contrary to this doctrine that teaches children are born in sin or with a sinful nature). In this passage, Jesus said, “unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (verse 3). Now, if children were condemned sinners (due to sin they had inherited), why would Jesus want us to become like them? The truth is that Jesus wants us to become innocent and pure like little children are!

Third, Romans 5:12 says that death spread through sin because all have sinned (not because sin was inherited). “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death spread to all people, because all sinned.” The larger passage (Romans 5:12-21) is used by many to teach the doctrine of inherited sin. However, realize that whatever the passage teaches (and it doesn’t teach inherited sin) must be understood by what is said in verse 12 – that death spreads to all people **because all sinned** (not because we have all inherited sin)!

The bottom line is that each person is responsible for his/her own sin. We are born sinless. However, we reach a point of accountability (whenever we can know right and wrong and make choices for ourselves). And, again, everyone who has reached this point of personal accountability has decided to sin (Romans 3:23) – except Jesus Christ (Hebrews 4:15)!

But, why is this decision to commit sin so devastating? All of our study (up to this point) has been primarily about gaining an understanding of what sin is. Yet, we have not really considered why it is so bad. At the beginning of the lesson, I mentioned that sin is the worse disease mankind has ever known. Now, let me begin to help you understand the reasons why this is true.

Physical consequences

There are many devastating effects of sin. Some of the devastating effects of sin are physical in nature. In fact, all of the horrible things about this world have direct ties to sin. Certainly, this is not the way God had originally designed the world. Yet, because of sin, this is the sad condition of the world today.

Although Satan often wants us to think that sin will result in pleasurable experiences (which may or may not happen), sin has many physical consequences. For instance, remember that Adam and Eve experienced physical consequences for their sin. Today, committing some sins result in premature death. Some sins lead to jail time. Some sins can result in diseases and health problems, losing your job, having your trust broken with your family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc. Sin can ruin your reputation and bring a bad name on your family. Sin can destroy relationships and deeply hurt those you love the most. Sin can hurt and kill other people. These are just *some* of the devastating physical consequences that are associated with sin.

Spiritual consequences

While the physical consequences are devastating, they pale in comparison to the spiritual consequences of sin. Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." And, recall that James 1:15 said, "Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death."

Although physical death exists in this world because of sin, these passages reference spiritual death. For, even those who have not sinned can die physically (think about babies in their mothers'

wombs, newborn babies, and young children). But, spiritual death is reserved only for sinners – and is far worse than physical death!

Death simply refers to a separation. Physical death is a separation between body and spirit. Remember (from lesson two) that James 2:26 teaches physical death occurs whenever the body and spirit separate.

Spiritual death is also a separation – a separation between the sinner and God. For instance, Isaiah 59:1-2 says, "Indeed, the Lord's arm is not too weak to save, and his ear is not too deaf to hear. But your iniquities are separating you from your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not listen." So, when we sin, we separate ourselves from fellowship with God and from the spiritual blessings that come from Him. This is exactly the kind of death Adam and Eve experienced on the day they ate the forbidden fruit. They were separated from the fellowship they had once enjoyed with God in the garden of Eden!

Therefore, the Scriptures talk of the condition of one who is "self-indulgent" being "dead even while she lives" (1 Timothy 5:6). So, even though you are physically living right now, you are spiritually dead if you have sinned against God and have never obeyed the Lord's commands for forgiveness (as we'll talk about in lesson six)!

Then, if you die physically while you are still guilty of sin, you will experience eternal spiritual death. Eternal spiritual death is eternal separation from God. This is called the "second death." Revelation 21:8 says, "But the cowards, faithless, detestable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars – their share will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 shows that this eternal punishment in Hell will be away from God (i.e. eternally separated from Him). When Jesus Christ returns, He will take "vengeance with flaming fire on those who don't know God and on those who don't obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will pay the penalty of eternal destruction from the Lord's presence and from his glorious strength."

Therefore, those who die in their sins will experience the everlasting torment in the place of eternal separation from God the Bible calls Hell. We saw how the Scriptures describe this place in lesson two of our study. Matthew 25:41, Matthew 25:46, Mark 9:43-44, and Revelation 21:8 describe Hell as being a place of eternal fire, extreme torment, and a place that is prepared for the devil and his angels.

The Problem Of Sin

Now that we should have a good understanding of what sin is and its consequences, we need to understand just how big of a problem sin really is. For, we must now begin thinking about how we can escape the consequences we have brought on ourselves by sinning against God. Is there even a way to escape them?

We deserve spiritual death since we have chosen to violate God's law

When we sin, we separate ourselves from our holy God (Isaiah 59:1-2; 1 John 1:5-7). So, it is not God who leaves us, but we who leave Him! We leave His ways of holiness and righteousness. We leave God to fulfill our own selfish ambitions or desires whenever we sin – demonstrating that we would rather fulfill our own fleshly desires than be in fellowship with Him and receive the blessings that come through Him!

Then, once we have sinned (even just one time), we deserve spiritual death. Remember that Romans 6:23 describes the punishment of spiritual death as being our “wages” for sin. For example, whenever you are hired for a job, you agree to a particular wage in exchange for a certain amount of work. Whenever you complete that work, you receive the wage. It’s what you have earned and deserve.

In the same way, sin pays a particular “wage.” The “wages of sin is death.” This is what you **have earned and deserve** for sinning against God! And, every sin is equally deserving of this punishment (no matter how “big” or “small” it may

seem to us). For instance, Romans 1:28-32 (as we read earlier) listed many sins (some of which people would consider to be “big” sins and some people would consider to be “small” sins). However, verse 32 said that “those who practice such things deserve to die” – making no distinction between them!

We can do nothing to justify ourselves

When you understand that sin produces this devastating spiritual consequence, you should desire justification. That is, you should want to become just as if you had never committed sin. So, you should ask yourself, “How can I be justified?”

Then, you will have to come to a very real, but sad, understanding: “I can do nothing to justify myself” (i.e. I can do nothing to make myself just-as-if-I’d never sinned). In fact, even if you never sinned again, you could not remove the consequences of your past sins. You can never undo the sins you have committed. Additionally, there is no good deed that you could ever do to cleanse yourself from your sins so that God will overlook them.

Therefore, you are hopelessly lost and in need of a Savior. You do *not* deserve to be saved from your sins (remember, you have earned your punishment). Rather, you deserve to be eternally punished in Hell. So, you would be hopelessly lost in your sins – **if** you had nothing else to provide you with hope!

Thankfully, you do not have to remain hopelessly lost in sin! God has provided a remedy. There is a Savior! His name is Jesus. We will study about Him in the next lesson. Then, in lesson six, we will discuss what God requires you to do to be saved.

Conclusion

Sin is a devastating problem for mankind. It is far greater than any other problem we could ever have! This is a problem that deals with the soul and that will condemn our souls to an eternal

punishment in Hell! So, what should you take from this study? (1) An understanding of how sin entered the world. (2) An understanding of what sin is. (3) An understanding of what sin does (its physical and spiritual consequences). (4) A desire to discover the answer to our greatest problem (as we will discuss in the next couple lessons). While we could discuss more, I hope that this lesson has helped you understand what sin is!

Study Questions

Why is it essential to know the answer to this question?

1. The Introduction Of Sin To The World

Did God create mankind in sin?

What law did God give Adam and Eve? Did they understand it? Did they have the freedom to choose either obedience or disobedience?

How did Satan tempt Eve? How did Eve respond?

What were the consequences for sinning against God?

2. Understanding Sin

What is the definition of sin?

How is sin lawlessness?

What are two categories of sin?

What are some examples of sin?

How and why do people sin?

3. Sin's Devastating Effects

Does sin continue today? Are people born in sin or born sinless? Have you sinned?

Identify some physical consequences of sin.

What are the spiritual consequences of sin?

4. The Problem Of Sin

What do you deserve because of sin?

Can you do anything to justify yourself? What do you need?