

## “Fall Of Man” The Thorny Issue Of Sin, Part Two

“Do you believe in life after death?” the boss asked one of his employees. “Yes, sir,” the new employee responded. “Well, then, that makes everything just fine,” the boss continued. “After you left early yesterday to go to your grandmother’s funeral, she stopped in to see you!”

Oops! That employee was caught. But, he was no less “caught” than the entire human race, because we all have sinned. Yet, the subject of sin brings up a number of questions, two of which we asked and answered in our previous devotional reading. Though there are many questions we could ask about sin, there are two more we must take up in order to have a good understanding of the core issues.

### (3) Against whom is sin primarily committed?

Often, we tend to define sin merely by those things which hurt other people. While it is true that most of the time sin does hurt us and others, first and foremost the Bible does not describe sin as being committed against other people. Instead it is committed against God. Consider:

- (a) Psalm 51:4a: “Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight...” (Part of David’s prayer of confession after his sin with Bathsheba)
- (b) Neh. 1:7: “We have acted very corruptly against you and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the rules that you commanded your servant Moses.” (Prayer of Nehemiah on behalf of Judah)
- (c) Isaiah 42:24: “Was it not the Lord, against whom we have sinned, in whose ways they would not walk, and whose law they would not obey?”
- (d) Jeremiah 14:7: “...our iniquities testify against us...our backslidings are many; we have sinned against you.”
- (e) Luke 15:18: “...I have sinned against heaven and before you.” (The confession of sin by the prodigal son to his father. Heaven is mentioned before his own earthly father)

Discuss together as a family: Why is it significant that sin is first and foremost against God?

### (4) How has sin impacted mankind?

There are a number of ways sin has impacted us. Look at each one and discuss together why each is significant.

- (a) Every person is born in sin, meaning that there is a bent toward evil and away from God from the beginning. Read the following:

Psalms 51:5: Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.”

Psalms 58:3: “The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray from birth, speaking lies.”

Ephesians 2:1-3: “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins [2] in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— [3] among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”

- (b) Sin separates us from God, which is the very root of mankind’s problem. We are kept from the very source and presence of all good, wisdom, and spiritual health.

Isaiah 59:2: “but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.”

Romans 5:10: Speaking of our state before being saved, Paul writes “we were enemies” of God.

2 Thes. 1:9: “They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.” (Here Paul speaks of those who will face God’s eternal judgment and defines it, in part, as being away from His presence, separated from Him. Here the separation from God has been made permanent)

- (c) Sin has so twisted mankind that it has impacted every aspect of his life. Sometimes we refer to this as total depravity.

Genesis 6:5: “The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

- (d) Sin has so twisted mankind that it has left him totally unable to do anything that is truly good before God and totally unable to want God or respond to Him in faith. Sometimes this is called Total Inability. This also means that man’s will is also twisted and bound. When any human makes decisions of his own (not forced by someone else) he is doing what he truly wants to do and therefore is free. However, humans, left to themselves, never choose to trust in, follow, and serve God because sin has rendered them unwilling to do so.

Jeremiah 13:23: “Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then also you can do good who are accustomed to do evil.”

John 15:5: “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Romans 3:10-11: as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; [11] no one understands; no one seeks for God.”

<p>“The term total depravity...refers to the effect of sin and corruption on the whole person. To be totally depraved is to suffer from corruption that pervades the whole person.” -R. C. Sproul, <u>What Is Reformed Theology?</u></p>
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1 Cor. 2:14: “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.”

Since this is the case, we might ask, “Then how can a person ever trust in Jesus Christ as his/her savior? Look at John 3:5-6; Ephesians 2:8-9; Phil. 2:13; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:3 and see if you can answer this.

If possible, include WSC.