

What Is Sin?

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Sin is not difficult to identify; God does it for us. In understanding rules of “morality,” most men would prefer to make up their own. Let each become his own judge as to what is truly sinful and what is not. Obviously, this results in chaos as a culture needs laws that are fair to all; e.g., society forbids stealing and murder. But should the majority decide what is sin and what is not? This also, is no solution. How many examples may we give in which whole cultures have made objectional laws of morality? No, let us hear what God teaches is sin. So how does the Creator of all, identify sin?

(1 John 3:4, KJV) “3:4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.” If there was no law, then we would not have “sin” as its definition is a violation of law. Whose law? This has reference to the Law of God. God created us and He knows best the way we should live to be happy and fulfilled. He has given us laws that govern our lives in all areas, that we might know the best way to live as human beings. Anytime, we second guess or reject God’s laws and disobey any one of them, we are in sin. By reading God’s laws, we know how we ought to live in harmony with God’s teachings.

(1 John 5:17a, KJV) “5:17 All unrighteousness is sin:...” Here, God makes plain that anything that is not right (as defined in His word) is sin. We often want to consider sin as “big” ones and “little” ones, but ALL unrighteousness is sin. In context, John notes that any sin that we refuse to repent (to stop doing) is a sin that will bring us to spiritual death. Some refuse to acknowledge that God holds all accountable and that we will one day give account for our life good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10).

(Romans 3:23, KJV) “3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;” In this verse, the word used for sin is defined as “missing the mark” (of what God expects of us). This word is similar in both the Old Testament language as well as that of the New Testament. Just as an archer is shooting to hit the bull’s eye of a target, mankind should aim his life to hit the bull’s eye of bringing glory to his God. The world should see in us what is characteristic of our God; His holiness, goodness, and love. There are many ways man can live so as to profane and shame God. This is always sin. God must be first in our priorities and life.

(Romans 14:23, KJV) “14:23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” Our understanding, given the wording of this verse, is helped when we keep and read the context (the paragraph) of this teaching. If one is using versions like the KJV, the word “stumbling” in this chapter is another term for “sin”. The “sins” discussed in this chapter’s context are sins against one’s own conscience; that is, of acting in such a way as we are not trying to do what we believe is right before God (to violate our own conscience). As noted above, any actions contrary to God’s law are sin. However, when our attitude is such that we are not trying to do what we know is right, then that is sin, as well. Our conscience is the part of our heart that passes judgment upon the intent of my heart. Am I acting in what I believe is right or am I acting in what I believe is sin?

(James 4:17, KJV) "4:17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." The Bible shows us all that is good and how we are to act before God (2 Timothy 3:16,17). We may think that we can do "nothing" and be sinless, but God teaches doing nothing when we should do something is sin. We cannot just idly do nothing. In Matthew 25, Jesus offered a parable of a one "talent" man, who was condemned. Why? He was called a wicked man, not because of going out and doing a lot of immoral deeds, but because he didn't do that which he should have done. Get busy and do the things in life that God teaches we should do.

In summary:

- **Sin is acting without (or against) God's law in your life.**
- **Sin is doing anything not right.**
- **Sin is missing the mark of bringing glory to God.**
- **Sin is not keeping your conscience clear.**
- **Sin is omitting duties that you know you should be doing.**