

GAINING VICTORY OVER SIN

A Study Outline



Michael D. Taylor

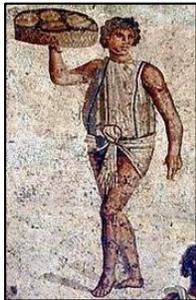
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It seems that very few people want to talk about sin these days. Is it something to be concerned about, or not? The history of the human race as presented in the Bible is primarily a history of man in a state of sin and rebellion against God, and God's plan of redemption to bring back man to himself. Therefore, it is appropriate to consider the nature of the sin that separates man from God.

NO LONGER SLAVES TO SIN



"What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! ¹⁶ Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey-- whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷ But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. ¹⁸ You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. ¹⁹ I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and

to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness. ²⁰ When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. ²¹ What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! ²² But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom. 6:15-23 (NIV)

INTRODUCTION

A. What is Sin?

1. Sin, as defined in the original translations of the Bible, means "to miss the mark."
2. The mark, in this case, is the standard of perfection established by God and evidenced by Jesus. Viewed in that light, it is clear that we are all sinners, and in need of a Savior.
3. Sin is any thought, action, or attitude that falls short of God's holiness (Romans 3:23).

B. If forgiveness is easy and inevitable, if God's one desire is to forgive men and if his grace is wide enough to cover every spot and stain, why worry about sin? Why not do as we like?

1. Sin has a way of enslaving us. The more we sin, the more we want to sin.
2. When a Christian yields to sin, that sin gets a grip on him.

3. It affects his conscience and dims the light within him.
4. Whatever you feed lives.
5. Such a path leads away from God's best.
6. Sin always has natural harmful consequences:
 - a) It makes us hide from God (our relationship is affected)
 - b) It affects our relationship with others (spouse, children, close friends)
 - c) It may even affect our health (guilt, despair, depression, headaches)
 - d) It resulted in a cursed earth
7. God made us free from its grip so why go back to being enslaved by it? Chuck Swindoll, commenting on Romans 6:15-23 in his book "The Grace Awakening" writes:

"Imagine being thrown into jail on suspicion of a charge, left there, virtually forgotten, while system, ever so slowly caught up with you. You get sick. You're treated harshly. Abused. Assaulted. Would you begin to entertain that feeling of lostness and hopelessness?"

Back to the question: How shall we who died to sin still live in it?" Who would volunteer to be dumped in a jail for another series of months, having been there and suffered the consequences of such a setting? His point: Then why would emancipated slaves who have been freed from sin and shame return to live under the same domination any longer?

We have been programmed to think, I know I am going to sin, to fail...to fall short today. Since this is true I need to be ready to find cleansing. You have not been programmed to yield yourself unto God as those who have power over sin.

How much better to begin each day thinking victory, not defeat; to awake to grace, not shame; to encounter each temptation with thoughts like, Jesus,

*"You are my Lord and Savior. I am your child--liberated and depending on Your power. Therefore, Christ, this is Your day, to be lived for your glory. Work through my eyes, my mouth, and through my thoughts and actions to carry out Your victory. And, Lord, do that all day long."*¹

C. What are the sources of sin?

1. The World (1 John 2:16)

- a) Lust of the flesh: The world is the domain of the desires or lust of the flesh, which is the sinful longings for physical pleasures that tempt us, everything from gluttony to drunkenness, sexual sin, and chemical highs.
- b) Lust of the eyes: The world is the place devoted to the desires or lusts of the eyes, where sinful longings for coveted possessions are manifested in everything from advertising and marketing to pornography.
- c) Pride: The world is where pride in possessions is commended, and haughty selfish ambition is considered a virtue rather than a vice.
- d) In response to the world we are:

¹ Quoted by Max Lucado, *Life Lessons with Max Lucado: Book of Romans* (Nashville, W. Publishing Group: 1996), 46.

- (1) Not to love the world (1 John 2:15).
- (2) Not to let the world shape our values (Rom. 12:2).
- (3) Live as crucified to the world because Jesus died to the world (Gal. 6:14).

e) While the world is a source of sinful temptation, it does not mean we are free from moral responsibility. We are still responsible for our decisions.²

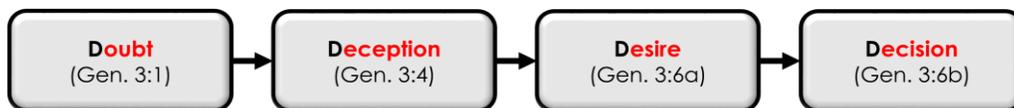
2. **The Flesh** (Mark 7:21-23; Gal. 5:19-21; Col. 3:5-8; Jas. 1:14-15)

- a) The flesh is our internal enemy and a seed of corruption that lingers in us until our glorification following death.
- b) The flesh is our fallen internal resistance to obey God and put self-interests above God's interests.
- c) Flesh sometimes means our physical body, but Paul here is referring to our innate propensity to sin against God; it is the seat of our sinful passions (Rom. 7:18, 25; Gal. 5:16, 19; Eph. 2:3).

3. **The Devil** (Gen. 3:1-6; 1 Tim. 4:1-2; 1 John 3:7-10)

"Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'' The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'" When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it." Gen. 3:1-6

4. Notice Satan's strategy for tempting man to sin. He uses doubt, deception, and desire to get us to decide to sin.



D. What are some sinful responses to sin?³

- 1. Minimizing it.
 - a) Example: My sin is much smaller than other people's sins.
 - b) Example: Mine is only a "white lie."
 - c) See 1 John 1:10 "If we claim we have not sinned..."
- 2. Legitimizing it.
 - a) I have good reason to legitimize my sin.

² Mark Driscoll & Gerry Breshears, *Doctrine: What Christians Should Believe* (Wheaton: Crossway Publishers, 2010), 157-162.

³ Ibid, 168 ff.

- b) To say that God will use my sin for something good (Note: this portrays our sin as a virtue, not a vice)
3. Blaming extenuating circumstances.
- a) Extenuating circumstances, "I simply had to do what I thought was right!"
- b) This is often done by explaining to others why they did what they did in order to gain their sympathy.
- c) By gaining other's sympathy, they feel excused.
4. Blaming someone else.
- a) They made me do it!
- b) Notice how Adam blamed Eve for his sin (Gen. 3:12), and how Eve blamed the serpent (Gen. 3:13).
- c) Saying something like, "My parents were that way, so I am too."
5. Diverting
- a) Trying to avoid our sin by joking about it or saying someone misunderstood us.
- b) Changing the topic from our sin to something else less painful.
6. Partial confession.
- a) Admitting a small portion of our sin.
- b) Failing to address the sin in total.
7. Regretting only its effects
- a) Only the effects but not the sin itself.
- b) Paul refers to this as "worldly sorrow" compared to "godly sorrow" (2 Cor. 7:10).
- c) Worldly sorrow does not produce repentance.
8. Confessing, then repeating the sin
- a) Acknowledging one's sin but not changing—going back and repeating the sin.
9. Excusing it as a personality trait
- a) They rationalize by saying the sin is excusable because it is a disease or sickness over which one has no control.
- b) Saying, "That's just my personality."

E. What are the benefits of choosing to avoid sin?

1. We receive God's forgiveness when we confess our sins (1 John 1:9).
2. Our guilt is lifted (Ps. 32:5).
3. Our prayers become more powerful and effective (Jas. 5:16).

THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF SIN

A. It makes us want to hide from God (Gen. 3:8)

"Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden." Gen. 3:8

B. It brought fear and shame (Gen. 3:10-11)

"He answered, 'I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.' And he said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?'" Gen. 3:10-11

C. It puts the blame on others (Gen. 3:12)

"The man said, 'The woman you put here with me-- she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.'" Gen. 3:12

D. It grew and affected the entire earth (Gen. 3:17-18)

"Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field." Gen. 3:17-18

E. It results in death (Gen. 3:19; Rom. 5:12)

"By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return." Gen. 3:19

"Therefore, 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--" Rom. 5:12

F. It enslaves the sinner (Rom 6:17)

"But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin..." Rom. 6:17

G. It produces denial. (Jer. 2:35)

"...you say, 'I am innocent; he is not angry with me.' But I will pass judgment on you because you say, 'I have not sinned.'" Jer. 2:35

H. It numbs the conscience (1 Tim. 4:2)

"Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron" 1 Tim. 4:2

I. It makes the sinner self-centered (2 Tim. 3:2-4)

"People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" 2 Tim. 3:2-4

J. It reduces our interests in others (Phil. 2:3-5)

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" Phil. 2:3-5

K. It makes the sinner restless (Isa. 57:20-21)

"But the wicked are like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud. 'There is no peace,' says my God, 'for the wicked'" Isa. 57:20-21

L. It produces unhealthy competition (Jas. 4:1-2)

"What causes fight and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?" Jas. 4:1-2

M. It causes rebellion against God (Psa. 2:1-3)

"The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. 'Let us break their chains,' they say, 'and throw off their fetters.'" Ps. 2:1-3

HOW DOES AN UNDERSTANDING OF SIN HELP US?

A. It helps us understand that we are "sin-aholics."

B. It helps understand our need for Christ.

C. It helps us understand the price God paid for our sins.

D. It gives us confidence and peace that we as believers are forgiven, once for all.

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

"And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come." Matt. 12:31-32

"'But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.' He said this because they were saying, 'He has an evil spirit.'" Mark 3:29-30

A. Four views of the unpardonable sin⁴

1. Some believe it was a sin that could only be committed while Jesus Christ was on earth.
2. Some believe the sin is unbelief that continues until one dies.
3. Some believe this sin is serious apostasy by genuine believers, and that only those who are truly born again can commit this sin.
4. The fourth view is that this sin consists of unusually malicious, willful rejection and slander against the Holy Spirit's work attesting to Jesus Christ, and attributing that work to Satan.

B. Which view is correct?

The context indicates that Jesus is speaking about a sin that is not simply unbelief or rejection of Jesus Christ, but one that includes:

⁴ Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine (Zondervan, 1994) pp. 507-508.

1. A clear knowledge of who Jesus Christ is and of the power of the Holy Spirit working through him
2. A willful rejection of the facts about Jesus Christ that his opponents knew to be true
3. Slanderosly attributing the work of the Holy Spirit in Jesus Christ to the power of Satan

Many people fear they have committed some sin that God cannot or will not forgive, and they feel there is no hope for them, no matter what they do. Satan would like nothing better than to keep us laboring under this misconception. The truth is that if a person has this fear, he/she needs only to come before God, confess that sin, repent of it, and accept God's promise of forgiveness. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). This verse assures us that God is ready to forgive any sin—no matter how heinous—if we come to Him in repentance. If you are suffering under a load of guilt today, God is waiting with His arms open in love and compassion for you to come to Him. He will never disappoint or fail to pardon those who do.⁵

GOD'S PROVISION FOR SIN

A. Through Jesus Christ, God provides eternal life (John 3:16)

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

B. Through Jesus Christ, God provides a loving relationship (John 14:23; Rom. 8:38-39)

"Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." John 14:23

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom. 8:38-39

C. Through Jesus Christ, the Edenic curse (Gen. 3:14-19) will someday be lifted (Rev. 22:1-3)

"Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse." Rev. 22:1-3

D. How are we to respond to sin?

1. Remind yourself that you are free from sin's enslavement (Romans 6:6, 11).
2. Practice "zero tolerance" with regard to sin (Rom. 8:13-16).
3. Reflect on the fact that you have a new nature (2 Cor. 5:17).
4. Walk in conscious submission to the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16).

⁵ S. Michael Houdmann, What is the unpardonable sin / unforgivable sin? <<http://www.gotquestions.org/unpardonable-sin.html>>. Accessed February 17, 2016,

5. Repent immediately (1 John 1:9), and be fiercely devoted to change as God commands.

SIN AND EVIL WILL SOMEDAY BE COMPLETELY ABOLISHED

A. Someday there will be no more evil (1 Cor. 15:24)

"Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power." 1 Cor. 15:24

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." Eph. 6:12

B. Someday there will be no more sorrow or death (Rev. 21:4)

"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." Rev. 21:4

C. Someday there will be no more sin (Rev. 21:27)

"Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life." Rev. 21:27

D. Heaven will be incredibly beautiful (Rev. 21:10-26)

"And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. He measured its wall and it was 144 cubits thick, by man's measurement, which the angel was using. The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass.

I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it." (Rev. 21:10-26)

E. There will be perfect fellowship with God (Rev. 22:3-4)

"No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads." (Rev. 22:3-4)

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