



CALLIT

Q U I T S

Quit Sin

DAY 1- *Sin??*

Arguably one of the first and most important steps in salvation is the realization of one's own sinfulness and his need for salvation, or being freed from sin.

The Bible speaks of sin in various tones, each expressing a different aspect of sin. In the OT, the writers often spoke of sin in terms of a breach or rupture in the relationship between man and God. This is why the OT is full of covenants with each working ultimately towards a final "New Covenant" with the death and resurrection of Jesus.

In the Psalms you can often see the parallel use of transgressions and sin to describe our broken relation with God. One of the best examples is when David says, "Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered." (Ps 32:1).

In the NT the writers mostly define sin as "missing the mark". In the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus portrayed the ideal human life as a life of fellowship with God with sin being the lack of this fellowship.

Sin is also represented in contrasting terms. Sin is darkness as opposed to light (Jn 9:41), or bondage as opposed to freedom (Jn 8:34). In his conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus contrasted the flesh and the spirit and taught that spiritual birth from God is necessary to all (Jn 3:3).

While I am hesitant to give any hard definition for sin, as one can begin to think in terms of the law and loopholes, there are some general ideas that we should consider in light of the Bible and what it teaches.

John Wesley described sin as, "a voluntary transgression of a known law". In this definition, we understand that sin is first voluntary. We sin because we choose to. Jesus, when he was being tempted by the Devil, was given the opportunity to sin, to choose his own way and rebel against God. But he chose not to by humbling himself and obeying God. Contrast this to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden who voluntarily ate of the forbidden fruit and sinned.

Second, we sin when we rebel against that which we know. And herein we have our first loophole as some may say, "So if I didn't know I never sinned."

The Apostle Paul wrote that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Ro 3:23). When you take an honest look at yourself, you find that we all have rebelled, whether against God, parents, or others. We all have done things that we know we should not have done. We've all sinned and as such our relationship with God is broken and in need of repair.

In our next lesson we'll explore original sin and why it's important to know.

Things To Ponder

How does the parallelism of transgressions and sin describe our broken relationship with God?

What other contrasting examples for sin can you find in the Bible? How does this help you understand the nature of sin?

The NT writers mostly define sin as "missing the mark". Give examples of how you would describe this?

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DAY 2- *Original Sin*

In our previous discussion we explored sin in terms of a breach or rupture in the relationship between man and God or “missing the mark”. But the big question is - where did sin come from?

Let's first address the question from a creation perspective - God did not create sin as part of creation. The Bible says that as God created he “saw that it was good” (Ge 1:10, 25, 31). The word “good” means completeness, perfection and indicates that there was nothing bad. So, somewhere afterwards, something went wrong.

As we explore original sin in mankind we must understand that sin first occurred in heaven with an angelic rebellion against God (Jude 1:6, 2 Pe 2:4). Although we're not given much detail, we do know that there was a leader, Satan, and that one-third of the angels rebelled with him (Rev 12:3-4). This helps us understand who the serpent is and where he came from.

Next, we find Adam and Eve living in the Garden of Eden. Created in the “image of God” (Ge 1:27), everything is perfect as they live in harmony in their relationship with God. In the garden, they are “free to eat from any tree in the garden” (Ge 2:16), “but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.” (v 17). And herein is the first clue to original sin - the ability to choose - free will.

We're not sure how much time has passed since Adam and Eve were placed in the garden, but we know that the serpent, Satan in disguise, began to talk with Eve with lies and deception. Ultimately Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. Sin had entered into their lives and with it their perfect relationship with God was broken and they were cast out of Eden.

So how does Adam and Eve's first sin become “original sin”? John Wesley wrote that “Original sin is the corruption of the nature of every man, whereby man is in his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth contrary to the Spirit”. Although Adam and Eve had been made in the image of God, that image had now been corrupted by their sin and that corrupted image, nature, would be passed on in their children. Sadly, we see this corruption in their son

Cain when he kills his brother Abel (Ge 4). And we continue to see that corruption played out in mankind today.

Sadly sin separates us from God. But thankfully, God wants to restore our relationship with him through the atonement found in Jesus. And best of all it's free. All you have to do is simply believe and accept Jesus as your savior.

Things To Ponder

Have you ever given much thought to Satan and his sin? Why would this be important to consider?

How does the ability to choose - free will - help you understand sin?

Why would mankind being created in the image of God be only broken, but not destroyed by sin?

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DAY 3- *The Root & Characteristics of Sin*

We've explored sin in terms of a breach or rupture in the relationship between man and God or "missing the mark" and the origin of original sin. Next, we'll explore the root and characteristics of sin. But first, I understand that the topic of sin is very complex and open to interpretations, so please bear with me as I need to be brief and only touch on this subject.

When dealing with any sickness, you must first identify its root. If you don't, you will only treat its symptoms and never find a cure. The same is true of sin. Peter and Paul list many symptoms of sins such as greed, sexual impurity, drunkenness, idolatry, boastful, adultery, sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like (Gal 5:19-21, 2 Pe 2:13-16). So what is the root of sin?

When one begins to look deeper, you notice that the root of sin revolves around the desire to elevate or establish oneself above everything and anyone else. Satan, Adam and Eve and others in the Bible wanted to be like God. This results then in rebellion against God and his authority.

Although we believe that all sins are equal, in his book *Mere Christianity*, CS Lewis described pride as the greatest sin and the root of all sorts of evil.

Pride is essentially competitive—is competitive by its very nature—while the other vices are competitive only, so to speak, by accident. Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. We say that people are proud of being rich, or clever, or good-looking, but they are not. They are proud of being richer, or cleverer, or better-looking than others. If everyone else became equally rich, or clever, or good-looking there would be nothing to be proud about. It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest.

Sin says "Yes! It's all about me!"

Finally, there are three characteristics of sin one should understand. First, a peculiarity of sin is its power to deceive (Rom 7:11). No one could be tempted by sin unless there was seen in the enticing

thing something that seemed to be of value. Sin has its "fleeting pleasures" (Heb 11:25). Also, sin seems to give certain advantages, as were promised in the garden. But in the end it's all deceit, it's all lies. Sin never delivers on its promises.

Second, although sin promises freedom it only enslaves the person into an endless spiral from one deceit to another. Every act of sin becomes a newly braided cord in the tyrant's lash, by which sin lords it over the conscience and enslaves the will. The sinner becomes increasingly free to sin, but not free not to sin until ultimately the sinner is destroyed.

Last, sin never permits the maintenance of a stable plane of character, but is always cumulative in its hardening and depraving effects. Paul expresses it as "resulting in further lawlessness" (Rom. 6:19). Sin is progressive, leading the sinner deeper and deeper into a pattern of self-sovereignty and self-idolatry, with its pride, autonomy, and bent to lawlessness.

Things To Ponder

Would you agree or disagree with my statement that self is the root of sin? Why or why not?

What do you think of CS Lewis' thoughts of pride being the greatest sin?

I describe three characteristics of sin as deceitful, enslaving and progressive. Are there any other characteristics of sin you would add or expand on?

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DAY 4- *If You Sin...*

Until now, we've explored what sin is, where it came from and its characteristics. In this last lesson, we'll explore the question, "What if a believer sins?"

Although we would like to think that confession and repentance of one's sin is a "one and done" act, and to an extent it is for past sins, what if a person sins after accepting Jesus as savior? Do they, can they, lose their salvation? This is an honest question that deserves exploring.

Let me start with a very bold statement - as believers in Jesus, Christians do not have to sin. This is not to say that Christians cannot sin, but that through the power of Jesus and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Christians are no longer slaves to sin, but slave to righteousness (Ro 6:6, 18, 22). Paul talked extensively of putting off the old man and putting on the new man, we are a new creation in Christ (2 Cor 5:17). To say that believers have to sin is to deny the transforming power of God.

But we are still human, still able to choose to obey or rebel. To say yes to God, or no. That is why the Apostle John wrote;

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 Jn 2:1-2)

So, while Christians do not have to sin, there are times when we do. Maybe pride rears its ugly face, or our thoughts or attitudes are not "God honoring". Maybe we lose our temper with someone and speak words that are hurtful. Regardless of what the result is, we "missed the mark" and sinned.

Thankfully, we serve a God of second, third and fourth chances. He loves us despite our frailties. If we do sin, God doesn't abandon us when we fail, but extends to us grace through Jesus, our advocate.

But God's love and grace should not be taken lightly. Is God forgiving? Yes! But be warned. Just as Nineveh at first accepted the message of Jonah and repented (Jonah 3:10), they later returned to their wicked ways

and were destroyed (Nahum 3). Paul warned the Galatians, "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows." (Ga 6:7). Although speaking of money, Jesus warned against trying to serve two masters, "Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other" (Mt 6:24, Lk 16:13).

James warned believers that "each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed." (Ja 1:14). A believer may be saved, but they must still endure temptations. We're still vulnerable and can sin. But take courage. Jesus said, "In this world you will have trouble (and temptations). But take heart! I have overcome the world." (Jn 16:33). Through the power of Jesus, Christians need not sin but can "offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship" (Ro 12:1).

Things To Ponder

Have you ever been tempted to sin thinking you can just ask for forgiveness later? Why is this dangerous thinking?

Would you generally agree or disagree that Christians do not have to sin? How does this affect your view of sin and its consequences?

How can Christians live lives free from the bondage of sin?

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DAY 5-Life Application

In this devotional and series of lessons, we have explored **sin**. This final lesson is unique in that it is time for me to stop talking (writing) and for you to do some Bible study and journaling. .

This is totally optional, but here is what I would like you to do.

1. Get maybe 2 or 3 of your favorite versions of the Bible.
2. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you something new, something you never really noticed before.
3. Read **Genesis 4** at least twice - slowly.
4. Now read the questions below and write down some thoughts and observations. This is just for you, I'll not ask you to share any of it.

Digging Deeper

Main Point - What do you see as the main point or idea the writer wanted to convey?

Learning - What was one new thing you learned or was reminded of from this scripture passage?

Life Application - How can applying what you have learned help you grow?

Next Step - What is the next step you can do to apply what you have learned?

References

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