

# Sin: What it is and What it is Not

## Moral Absolutes/ Right and Wrong

Truth is by its very nature is exclusive and not inclusive. A statement of any kind is either true or untrue. It cannot be both. Concerning our conduct, there is right and there is wrong. We are often told otherwise. Many people have what is called "situational ethics". Nothing is categorically wrong; it just depends on the situation. To discuss sin we must first agree that there are moral absolutes. Without this common understanding we cannot define any sort of conduct as sin. Noted atheist, Aldous Huxley, said that he and many of his colleagues claimed that there are no absolutes and no meaning to life in order to give them liberation to do whatever they wanted. This is flawed thinking. To live outside God's rules of conduct is to live in bondage, not liberation.

*Taken from George Otis Jr.'s "Sin: What it is and What it is not".*

## False Concepts of Sin:

### **Sin is a sickness**

Psychologists, criminologists, lawyers, and sociologists are singing in unison for the rehabilitation of the unfortunate, sick element in our society. *(criminals have a sickness and are no longer considered guilty of sin)* Punishment is out of the question because it is applicable only when an individual is responsible for what he does.

"Is no one any longer guilty of anything? Is it only that someone may be stupid or sick ... ? Is no one responsible, no one answerable for these acts? Anxiety and depression we all acknowledge, and even vague guilt feelings; but has no one committed any sin?" -Dr. Karl Menninger

In a world of lenience, tolerance and rationalization of sin, will even the church of Jesus Christ fail to call sin what it is? Will we join the ranks of those who would make people pathetic rather than guilty? Where in scripture is sin spoken of as a sickness or disease? Where no choice is involved neither can there be accountability. This is certainly basic, elementary reasoning and only those seeking sanctuary from personal responsibility and accountability could possibly find issue.

### **Sin is a substance**

Some today excuse their sin according to their inheritance. We are from Adam and when he fell in the Garden the human race fell. This is true, but we must still see sin as a wrong moral choice and take responsibility for our actions.

## **Sin is a slip**

This concept makes sin out to be like an accident. According to this thinking, committing sin is much like unknowingly stepping on a slippery surface and suddenly finding oneself on the ground. This is not the case. God has given us guidance and instruction to avoid sin. He has warned us throughout His Word.

## **Sin is a Suggestion (Temptation).**

Temptation is not a sin. Some beat themselves up over temptation. Temptation is common to every individual. Immoral behavior is often suggested to us. To give in to the suggestion is a sin. God who has made us the way we are. It is God who has created appetites and desires within us. It is God who formed our emotions to respond to what our minds contemplate. There is no sin in desiring to fulfill or gratify a God-given appetite. Sin enters the picture when we abuse our endowments by trying to gratify ourselves in an illegal manner or proportion.

. A suggestion or temptation is not in itself sinful. Things in themselves are not sinful, for sin manifests itself in unintelligent abuse of an otherwise good thing.

This is especially critical for those who have been suffering under an unnecessary load of condemnation because they have been tempted. When confronted with a strong desire, it is essential to take hold of the thought and give it a long, analytical look. Then ask yourself if it is possible to wisely gratify that desire. Remember, God does not disapprove of pleasure associated with gratification, but He does mind an unintelligent quest for pleasure in order to gratify yourself at the expense of others.

## **Sin is the Status Quo**

This concept says that to sin is "only human". It's just our nature and therefore it's natural. It's normal and should be expected. According to this line of thinking we allow for sin in our lives and become tolerant of actions that we know are wrong. We were not created to have sin in our lives. Whenever one feels remorse, sorrow, or guilt it tells us with eloquence that sin is not natural! This line of thinking exalts the power of sin and ignores Christ's death on the cross which gives us power over sin.

## **What is Sin? Some Definitions**

- 1 Sin is a choice to seek and maintain our happiness supremely in an unintelligent supposition that this is of paramount importance. This state of

- sin and rebellion persists until exposed in an encounter with the cross of Jesus Christ.
- 2 Things in themselves are not sinful, for sin manifests itself in unintelligent abuse of an otherwise good thing.
  - 3 Sin is an unintelligent abuse of God-given endowments of personality."
  - 4 failure to do as one ought toward one's fellow man.
  - 5 an implicitly aggressive quality—a ruthlessness, a hurting, a breaking away from God and from the rest of humanity ... alienation or (an) act of rebellion. --**Dr. Karl Menninger**
  - 6 God does not disapprove of pleasure associated with gratification, but He does mind an unintelligent quest for pleasure in order to gratify yourself at the expense of others. It's probably worth mentioning that all so-called 'secret sin' is ultimately at someone else's expense. When we realize that God wants us to be happy and fulfilled, then we will recognize His restraints as blessings designed to increase our enjoyment of life.
  - 7 the intent to live supremely for oneself at whatever the cost. It is a premeditated, calculated choice to live in a manner contrary to your original design.

## The Effect of Sin

### Corrosive Nature of Sin

Sin is a moral cancer and it tends to spread once it starts. It must be recognized as an extremely dangerous, highly active corrosive that eats away at the human personality. The longer sin continues, the less actual control we have over our lives.

Story to illustrate:

The year 1973 was an especially exciting one for me, as I spent the early months with Youth With A Mission in Switzerland. I have fond memories of the impromptu sledding "expeditions" after evening lectures. After bundling up, several fellows would trudge about half a mile to a local slope puffing their sleds behind them. Even though the slope provided an adequate angle for the average sledder to get a full quota of excitement, the winter sky continually covered the hills with extra coats of snow. As a result, the first few trips down the slope were somewhat less

than exhilarating. Each successive run, however, compressed the newly fallen snow eventually carving out a "slide" that gradually gained our respect. In time, the slope became so slick and treacherous that nobody could manage to remain connected to his sled. It was then that our tired but happy group knew it was time to turn in. This is precisely the manner in which sin, persisted in, manifests itself. In the end it becomes extremely difficult to slow down the train of accumulated indulgences.

## **The Bondage of Sin**

Sin is deceptive. The world says loosen up and be free. If it feels good do it.

. God has admonished us to allow our minds to dwell upon only that which is wholesome (Philippians 4:8), because as a man "thinketh ... so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). In other words:

- \* Our thoughts and choices become actions
- \* Our actions become habits
- \* Our habits become our nature and character
- \* Our character becomes our destiny

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

### **Romans 6:16**

As sin carves its moral slide, each time down becomes easier and easier. We find ourselves inundated by habits.

But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

### **Isaiah 57:20-21**

... the way of transgressors is hard.

### **Proverbs 13:15**

The freedom that the world proclaims only leads to bondage. There is no reason to secretly envy the men and women of the world.

The great danger of sin is that we become slaves to appetites and desires without even noticing what is happening.

## **A Light in the Darkness**

Sadly today the conduct of the church in America is no different from the world. Sexual immorality, slander, dishonesty, materialism and many other sins abound in the Christian circle. What will be said about Chi Alpha Christian Fellowship at Sam Houston State University? Will our lives be different from the rest of this campus?

## **Freedom from sin in Christ**

The Bible is clear that "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). It also calls us to be pure and holy (2 Peter 3:11), to be perfect (Matt. 5:48) and to be blameless (Phil. 2:15). We must respond in obedience. Through Christ's death on the cross and his resurrection we have the provision to walk uprightly before God. "We are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus." (2 Cor. 5:21). Let's walk in freedom and live the abundant life that Christ has provided for us.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us." (Hebrews 12:1)