

## English Transcript

### Foundations of the Christian Faith – Course 2

#### Lesson 4 - Sin (Part 1)

Welcome back to Foundations of the Christian Faith, Course 2. We are continuing with Lesson 4, and this is the first of two lessons on the doctrine of Sin. We are continuing on page 21 in our handout. Let us begin with this brief introduction.

Sin is the problem! Sin separates humanity from God! Sin caused Jesus to go to the cross. Sin harms us in ways we do not realize until it is too late. In this lesson we will explain the definition of sin and explore sin's origin and how we inherit sin. We will also consider the nature of actual sin in our lives and God's ultimate punishment for sin.

There are two Scripture passages provided in the handout to get us started. The first is Romans 3:23 *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*

The second is Galatians 5:19-21. *"Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you as I warned you before that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."*

Both passages provide insight into the issue of sin.

What does it mean that we have fallen short of the glory of God?

God's standard is perfection because God is holy. Every human being has fallen short of God's standard of holiness.

The passage from Galatians provides a list of terms that are referred to as works of the flesh or sin. Some of these terms such as idolatry, strife, jealousy, anger, divisions, envy, drunkenness, and orgies are easily understood.

The term sexual immorality comes from the Greek word *pornea*. We get the word pornography from this word. God defines sexuality immorality as any sexual thoughts or actions outside of what is permitted by God between the marriage relationship between one man and one woman as husband and wife. Everything else would be considered sexual immorality.

The term for "sorcery" or "witchcraft" comes from the Greek word *"pharmacia."* We get the word pharmacy from this root word. In those times, and even in our day, mind altering drugs, were and are used in connection with the occult and dark magic. This is blatant rebellion against God as the source of all life and truth. We should never surrender control of our mind and wills to anyone or anything other than to God and His will.

This passage also states that those who do such things listed will not inherit the kingdom of God. This phrase implies not individual sins or an area of struggle with sin, but rather a lifestyle defined by habitual, uninterrupted, unrepented sin. This kind of lifestyle defines

one's identity as separated from God and not having a saving relationship through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In a classroom setting, I would conduct an activity at this point called "Target Practice."

This activity illustrates the definition of sin presented in Romans 3:23, that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. I ask a few volunteers to attempt to throw a lightweight ball into a small bucket or box located across the room. Inevitably, each person falls short of hitting the target. Some are stronger than others and they might throw it a little farther, but in the end, each person falls short and misses the target.

The results of this activity provide an accurate definition for sin. Sin is missing the mark or missing God's standard of perfection.

**At the bottom of page 21, We will discuss The Definition of Sin.**

We will start by exploring the various words for sin in both the Old and New Testaments.

There are eight words used for sin in the Old Testament. The most commonly used word is "*chata*" which is used 522 times. Its primary meaning is to miss the mark. Missing the mark also implies hitting some other target.

The next most often used word is "*ra*," used 444 times. Its meaning implies breaking up or ruin and relates to wickedness.

As you review the list of words, you see that sin can mean to rebel, to transgress, to be associated with guilt and defiance, to go stray, the opposite of righteousness, and a deliberate act.

On page 22 I have summarized these Old Testament uses of words for sin as follows:

- Sin may take many forms and because of the variety of words used, an Israelite could easily identify the specific nature of any sin.
- Sin is that which is contrary to a norm, and it is disobedience to God.
- Although disobedience involved both positive and negative ideas, the emphasis is on the positive commission of the wrong and not merely in the negative omission of doing what would be good.
- In summary, sin is not only missing the mark but also hitting the wrong mark.

There are twelve words for sin used in the New Testament.

The most common word is "*hamartia*" which is used 227 times. It means missing the mark. This is an archery term. We are aiming at a target and when we release the arrow from the bow, the arrow misses the target completely. You can look up the Scripture references listed in your handout for where this word is used. Here are a few of these references:

1 Cor 15:3 *"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."*

Romans 6:1 *“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?”*

1 John 1:7 *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”*

The word “harmartia” is used for sin in each of these verses.

A summary of the New Testament teaching sin includes:

- There is always a clear standard against which sin is committed.
- All sin is a positive rebellion against God and a transgression against his holy and righteous standards.
- Evil may assume a variety of forms.
- Man's responsibility is definite and is clearly understood.

The word translated “sin” in the New Testament is the Greek word “hamartia.” It means very clearly to miss the mark. This understanding is reflected in the following definition.

*Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or our nature.*

Sin may also be defined as against the character of God. Genesis chapter 39: 9 helps us understand this truth. Joseph was serving under Potiphar and his wife continued to make sexual advances toward Joseph. Finally, Joseph took a stand by saying, *“No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?”*

For Joseph, sexual morality was morally wrong but most importantly for Joseph, it was clearly against the character of God. To sin is not just doing something that is morally wrong but also against the character of God, tarnishing or defaming His glory.

King David says the same thing in Psalm 51:4 following his adultery with Bathsheba, *“Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge.”*

Romans 8:7 communicates the same truth, *“The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so.”*

At the top of page 23, we can see that the basic idea of failing to conform or missing the mark is what is illustrated in Romans 3:23, *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* This is supported by other defining passages, such as 1 John 3:4, *“Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.”*

This is accurate if lawlessness is defined as defection from any of God's standards. While we are not 100% sinful, sin touches every part of our being, including our acts, our attitudes, even our very nature. God is never morally responsible for sin, but he ordained that sin would come into the world through the voluntary choices of moral beings.

In Exodus 20:17 we see sin revealed through an act of the will. In Matthew 5:22-28 sin is revealed through attitudes. And in Romans 5:8, sin is revealed through one's nature. We are not sinners because we sin, but instead, we sin because we are sinners. In the next lesson we will explore how we took on this sin nature.

Do not let these attempts to define sin diminish how terrible sin is in the sight of a holy God. The prophet Habakkuk said it clearly, *"your eyes are too pure to look on evil. You cannot tolerate wrongdoing (Habakkuk 1:13)."*

Sin is so damaging that only the death of God's Son can take it away. In John 1:29, John the Baptist proclaims, *"behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."*

How many sins does it take to fall short of the glory of God? James chapter 2:10 says. *"Whoever should keep the whole law and yet stumble at one point, he is guilty of all."*

God's standard is perfection. It does not grade on a curve. One sin in God's sight simply reflects our true nature, and we are guilty of all before a holy God.

Once we have sinned, can we ever attain to the glory of God? Not through our own good works but only through faith in the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are declared righteous by God, and we are being renewed continually into the image and likeness of our Creator through the indwelling Holy Spirit and the power of God.

And why is sin called lawlessness?

It is living as if there was no law of God. Rebellion is ignoring that law exists. The law is righteous because the law reflects the holy character of God.

### **Let us continue with a discussion on the Origin of Sin.**

Sin entered humans through the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. We are familiar with the context of Genesis 3.

Before Adam sinned and brought death to humans, what was Adam's nature and his relation to God?

- He possessed powers of understanding and reason. God gave him the ability to use language so that communication was possible between God and himself.
- He was without sin. He was able to enjoy fellowship with God. Adam possessed unconfirmed creature holiness. This is different from what God possessed as the Creator.
- Adam had a free will and a mind capable of evaluating choices.
- His responsibilities were to exercise dominion over the earth.

Let us break down the rest of the story into smaller segments.

## **The Test (Genesis 2:15-17)**

*The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 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."*

Adam and Eve were clearly told of the privileges of their home in the Garden of Eden and the prohibition. They were not to eat of one certain tree. There was no other temptation in the garden. There was simply a single choice to obey or disobey God. God demonstrated that he wanted men to voluntarily choose to obey him and to serve him.

## **The Temptation (Genesis 3:1-5)**

*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 certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*

Satan chose to appear in an animal form, a serpent. Even today he usually does not want to be seen or known as he really is. He is a deceiver and the Father of lies. His approach was to first question God's goodness. The first question in the Bible comes from Satan. *"Has God really said that you shall not eat of this tree?"*

Then he blatantly denied God's justice, that there were consequences for sin. He said, *"Surely you will not die."* The temptation involved Satan's counterfeit in comparison to the genuine, and that is always at the heart of the temptation that Satan brings.

## **The Sin (Genesis 3:6)**

*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.*

When Eve had listened to the serpent and doubted God's words, she saw and desired the fruit and then ate it. She then furthered Satan's temptation by giving Adam the fruit. He also listened, doubted, he saw, he desired, and then he ate it.

This sin was unique in that Adam and Eve sinned without having a sin nature. They sinned only by choice. From that point on, the rest of humanity is now sinful by nature and by choice.

Adam and Eve questioned what was true. God warned them not to eat from that tree. Satan directly contradicted God. They chose to question God's warning of the consequences of this disobedience.

Adam and Eve also questioned what was right. God had given them a moral standard of obedience. They decided that the moral standard could be disregarded.

And Adam and Eve also questioned who they were. God told them that they were his creatures, dependent upon God and obligated to obey him in all things. Instead, they wished to be like God themselves.

“Sin takes you farther than you want to go and costs you more than you are willing to spend.”

What does your community believe about how sin and evil came into the world?

How do these passages support the primary teachings related to sin and temptation? There are references to Genesis 3, Matthew 4, and 1 John 2.

1 John 2:15-17 says,

*Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.*

All sin is related to either the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. The temptation in the Garden as well as the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, involved the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life with a desire for power, influence, and position.

As we learn in James 1:13-15, all sin starts with own evil desires in the depth of our nature and being.

*When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*

Eve gave the fruit to Adam, and he also ate. So, what was the nature of Adam's failure in the fall into sin? The Bible says that Eve was deceived, yet Adam sinned. God gave the command to Adam not to eat of the fruit of the tree. Adam had legal responsibility. He represented humanity. This is why Romans 5 says that *“in Adam all die.”*

The sin of one man led to the death of all humanity.

**There are severe consequences for sin listed on page 24.**

### **Consequences on Humanity (Genesis 3:7-13)**

Sin brought guilt, shame, fear, and spiritual and physical death to humanity. Death is always means separation. Immediately, Adam and Eve experienced spiritual separation because the wages of sin is death, and they began to experience the decaying process of their bodies, leading to physical death.

### **Consequences of sin on the serpent (Genesis 3:14)**

The serpent was condemned to crawl. The entire animal kingdom was affected by the Fall.

### **Consequences of sin on Satan (Genesis 3:15)**

There would be enmity between Satan's seed and the Seed of the woman. Sin brought a conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of man that will continue until Jesus returns. Satan bruised the heel of Christ (the Seed of the Woman) at the cross but Jesus crushed Satan's head through the cross and the resurrection and into the future when he will be cast into the Lake of Fire for eternity in Revelation 20.

### **Consequences on Eve and women (Genesis 3:16)**

God would multiply women's sorrow in conception. Childbirth would now be accompanied by pain.

Eve and women would also a desire for her husband. Despite the pain of childbirth, she would experience a deep sexual attraction to her husband, and a desire to bear children. This is also interpreted to mean that she will have a desire to rule over her husband, contrary to God's established order. There are references in your handout illustrating this tension and the resolution and renewal that takes place in Christ. We also taught on this in Lesson 3 in that male and female are created in the image and likeness of God, equal, with different roles and authority, and for relationship.

### **Consequences of sin on Adam and men (Genesis 3:17-24)**

The ground was cursed because of Adam's sin, so that it would grow thorns and thistles, increasing his work to make it produce. Before this, Adam's labor was enjoyable and satisfying. Now it would be difficult and empty outside of Christ.

Death was a reality because of sin. Adam and humanity would return to the dust of the ground at death. Physical death was an imputed consequence for Adam and all humanity.

Adam was also driven from the garden, which was both a geographic and a spiritual act, symbolizing a break in fellowship between God and man.

This concludes lesson 4 on the Doctrine of Sin – Part 1. We have Defined Sin, Discussed the Origin of Sin and summarized the Consequences of sin revealed in Genesis 3.

We will explore these points in more detail when we continue with Lesson 5 as we discuss imputed sin, inherited sin, and personal sin.