

Sin and its Effects

James 1:15

Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin;
and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. NASB

Defining Sin

Mankind forfeited his original state of righteousness by willfully sinning against God. – It is clear from scripture that God had given a single commandment in the garden of Eden, not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. With this commandment came the threat of the consequence of death.

Genesis 2:15-17 - 15 Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. 16 And **the LORD God commanded the man, saying,** "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; 17 but **from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.** " NASB

It is clear that Adam and Eve both willfully sinned against God by violating this commandment He had given, and that up to this time they had not sinned or violated any Word of God. They were therefore in rightstanding with God until such time that they disobeyed the Word of God.

Genesis 3:6-7 - 6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, **she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.** 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings NASB

Sin is either a transgression of God's law or His character. – It is clear from scripture that sin is a transgression or violation of God's Law. This transgression can take place in *thought, word or deed*. Examples of this are clear even in the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:5-17). Whereas the sin of lying(#9) would be a *sin by word*, the sin of stealing(#8) would be a *sin of deed*, and a sin of coveting(#10) would be a *sin of thoughts* or attitudes.

1 John 3:4 - 4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and **sin is lawlessness.**

In the sermon on the Mount(Matthew chapter's 5-7), Jesus clearly lays down that form of thinking and acting which conforms to the character of God. We are told to not only conform outwardly in deed, but also inwardly, in the heart, and in our attitudes and character. Jesus continually points out here that having corrupt thoughts and motives are violations of the standards of the kingdom of God because they violate the character of God, and further threatens the penalty of hell for such violations.

Matthew 5:21-23 - 21 "You have heard that the ancients were told, **'You shall not commit murder'** and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' 22 "But I say to you that **everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty** before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' **shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.** NASB

Here He calls Christians to be perfect, conforming to the very character and nature of God.

Matthew 5:48 - 48 "Therefore **you are to be perfect,** as your heavenly Father is perfect. NASB

It should also be stated that one violation of the Law is as if one had violated the entire Law.

James 2:10 - 10 For whoever keeps the whole law and **yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.** NASB

It is the Law of God which makes us conscious of sin and actually defines what sin is. It is through the law that we "know what sin is!"

Romans 3:19-20 - 19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God; 20 because by the

works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for **through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.** NASB

Romans 7:7-13 - What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, **I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "You shall not covet."** 8 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead. 9 And I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive, and I died; 10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; 11 for sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me. 12 So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. 13 Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! **Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good,** that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful. NASB

Beginning with Adam and Eve, all have sinned, bringing death (physical and spiritual) on the human race. God holds mankind accountable to pay the debt of their sins, death. – It is clear from scripture that all mankind together are sinners, and that sin entered into the human experience through Adam and was passed to all mankind. It is through the agency of sin that all mankind is subject to death.

Romans 5:12 - 12 Therefore, just **as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned** NASB

Because Adam is the physical father and representative of the whole human race, his sin affected all future generations. It is through his one act of sin that all mankind have become sinners now by nature.

1 Corinthians 15:22 - 2 For as **in Adam all die,** so also in Christ all shall be made alive. NASB

Romans 5:18-19 - 18 So then as **through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men,** even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. 19 For **as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners,** even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. NASB

Therefore since sin has become the practice of all mankind, all mankind are subject to God's wrath, even death. This is the just consequence of sin and the exact penalty which God promised would happen should man disobey Him, "in the day you eat of it you shall surely die" (Gen 2:17).

Romans 6:23 - 23 For **the wages of sin is death,** but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. NASB

James 1:15 - 15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and **when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.** NASB

Ephesians 2:3 - 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and **were by nature children of wrath,** even as the rest. NASB

Since mankind's nature is corrupt, he naturally desires to do what is contrary to God's will. – It is clear from scripture that the very nature of man has become corrupted through the sin of Adam.

Romans 5:18-19 - 18 So then as **through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men,** even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. 19 For **as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners,** even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. NASB

Therefore, being corrupted in his nature, he is unable to please God, being in the flesh and sets his mind on the things of the flesh. In Romans 8:5-8, it is clear that the natural "mind of the flesh" has several fatal flaws such as;

- Abiding in death - v-6
- Hostile toward God – v-7

- It does not subject itself to the law of God – v-7
- It is not able to subject itself to the law of God – v-7
- It cannot please God – v-7

Romans 8:5-9 - 5 For **those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh,** but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For **the mind set on the flesh is death,** but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, 7 **because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so;** 8 **and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.** NASB

It is also clear from the scripture that the “natural man” is corrupt in many other ways;

- Is not righteous, does not understand, does not seek God, does not fear God – Rom 3:9-12
- *DEAD* in trespasses and sins – Eph 2:1
- Blinded and *CANNOT* see the light of the Gospel in Christ – 2 Cor 4:4
- *CANNOT* see the kingdom of God – John 3:3
- *CANNOT* except the Holy Spirit – John 14:17
- *CANNOT* understand the things of God – 1 cor 2:14
- Is deceitful and desperately wicked – Jer 17:9
- *CANNOT* hear the Word of God – John 8:43

Titus 1:15 - 15 To the pure, all things are pure; but **to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.** NASB

Jeremiah 17:9 - 9 "The heart is **more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick;** Who can understand it? NASB

It is clear therefore from scripture that mankind naturally desires what is contrary to the will of God.

Mankind is completely incapable of delivering himself, in whole or in part, from either his guilt or corrupt nature. – It is clear from scripture that mankind is corrupted and incapable of even understanding the things of God, much less somehow reverse the penalties of sin which he has incurred against himself.

Ezekiel 18:4 - 4 "Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine.

The soul who sins will die. NASB

Because of man’s great guilt before God, he cannot deliver himself without paying the wages of his sin, which is death.

Hebrews 9:22 - 22 And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and **without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.** NASB

In order for the justice of God to be met for the wages of sin, either man must die for his sin, or someone who is sinless must die in his place. Of course this is the good news of the Gospel held out in Jesus Christ!

1 Peter 3:18 -18 For **Christ also died for sins once for all,** the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; NASB

A man or woman can no more change their nature than a leopard can change his spots! You must be born again of the Spirit to even see the kingdom of God!

Jeremiah 13:23 - 23 "Can **the Ethiopian change his skin Or the leopard his spots?** Then you also can do good Who are accustomed to doing evil. NASB

In this condition, mankind is under God's wrath and is liable to all of the miseries of this life, to death itself and to the pains of hell forever. – It is clear from scripture that it is because of sin that the wrath of God has come and is coming in a much more severe degree in the future.

Ephesians 5:5-6 - 5 For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for **because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.**NASB
Colossians 3:5-7 - 5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. 6 **For it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come.** NASB

As we have pointed out, the wages of sin is death, which is both physical and spiritual. For those who die apart from the saving grace of God, not only will the sinner die a physical death, but will also suffer the pains of hell forever. This is clear from scripture.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 - 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 8 **dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.** 9 **And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,** 10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed — for our testimony to you was believed. NASB

Revelation 21:8 - 8 "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." NASB

How guilty are we? Well consider that God's perfect justice determines the right penalty for sin.....therefore, the reality of hell is God's clear indictment of the infiniteness of our guilt. If our corruption were not deserving of an eternal punishment God would be unjust to threaten us with a punishment so severe as eternal torment. But the Scriptures teach that God is just in condemning unbelievers to eternal hell (2 Thessalonians 1:6-9; Matthew 5:29f; 10:28; 13:49f; 18:8f; 25:46; Revelation 14:9-11; 20:10).

Christians and Sin - What happens when a Christian sins?

Consider several issues here.

Our position in Christ or legal standing before God has not changed.

When we were born again and saved by faith, we were justified before God. This work of justification is an unchangeable work wrought by Christ and changes our standing before God for all time.

Justification is a legal term describing the act whereby God declares us righteous based on the merits of Christ. This justification is a complete work of God whereby He declares the sinner righteous. In this work God.....

- satisfies and appeases the divine requirements of justice - **Propitiation**
- completely removes the guilt of our sins, - **Expiation**
- credits the righteousness and merit of Christ to the believer – **Imputation**
- restores relationship and rightstanding with God - **Reconciliation**

It is clear from scripture that in the death of Christ upon the cross, that God's wrath because of sin has been satisfied by Christ's payment of death. This is called **"propitiation."** Because Jesus was without sin, His was qualified to pay the debt for all sin by His death. He died as a substitute or in place of sinners, and bore the wrath of God Himself. The death of Christ affected a real and

fundamental change in our relationship to God by taking our place and bearing the guilt of our sins as an offering to appease the holy wrath of God.

1 John 4:10 - 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and **sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.** NASB

The actual guilt of sinners has been removed by Christ's payment, because He paid the full price of that guilt. This is called **"expiation."** Jesus removed our guilt having paid the full price of redemption for sins. Christ made a fundamental change in our relationship with God by **expiating** our guilt. Having paid the full price of our sin by His death, **our guilt was removed.** We were bought with a price, a ransom.....we were redeemed by the price of the sinless Son of God, Jesus Christ. Our guilt has been canceled because the debt of it has been paid. All of this was done by God.....it is God who justifies.....and so the scripture says...

Colossians 2:13-14 - 13 And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14 **having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us** and which was hostile to us; and **He has taken it out of the way,** having nailed it to the cross. NASB

Romans 8:33-34 - 33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? **It is God who justifies.** 34 **Who is he that condemns?** Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

1 Timothy 2:5-7 - 5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 **who gave Himself as a ransom for all,** the testimony borne at the proper time. NASB

This is why the scripture can say, there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. The guilt of our sins has been removed.

Romans 8:1-2 - 8:1 There is **therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.** 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. NASB

Now having our **guilt removed** and **God's wrath because of our sins satisfied,** we also have the righteousness of Christ credited to us. This is called **"imputation."** Jesus perfect righteousness has become ours through faith in Him. We can stand in God's presence because Jesus has imputed His righteousness and holiness to us through His sacrificial death on the Cross. It is clear from scripture that Christ's perfect righteousness is now ours by faith, and why the scripture addresses believers as blameless.

1 Corinthians 1:30-31 - 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, **who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,** 31 that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." NASB

Hebrews 10:14 - 14 For **by one offering He has perfected for all time** those who are sanctified. NASB

Romans 5:19 - 19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so **through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.** NASB

2 Corinthians 5:21 - 21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, **that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.** NASB

Colossians 1:21-22 - 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to **present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation-**

Therefore when we say that the sinner is **"declared righteous"** by God it is because the sinner is not actually righteous in himself but in Christ has received a **foreign righteousness which is not his own, but is from God in Christ.** Since Jesus life was one of sinless perfection, this righteousness which is received is also therefore perfect.

Philippians 3:8-10 - 9 and may be found in Him, **not having a righteousness of my own** derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, **the righteousness which comes from God** on the basis of faith, NASB

Romans 3:21-24 - 21 But now apart from the Law **the righteousness of God** has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even **the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe;** for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a **gift by His grace** through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; NASB

And all of this has brought about Justification before God.

Romans 5:9- 9 Much more then, **having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.** NASB

Our eternal standing before God is not changed because we have been Justified. However, several other consequences follow.

Our fellowship with God is disrupted.

When Christians sin, even though God does not cease to love us, He is displeased with us. We are aware that our sin as Christians can **“grieve the Holy Spirit.”**(Eph 4:30) Furthermore we come under the fatherly discipline of God as He will then chastise us and seek to restore us to fellowship with him. Gods discipline has the goal of restored fellowship and righteous living in which **fruitful fellowship** with God is maintained.

Hebrews 12:6-11 - 6 For **those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives.** 7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, **but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness.** 11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards **it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.** NASB

The Westminster Confession of Faith wisely says, concerning Christians,

Although they never can fall from the state of justification, yet they may, by their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure and not have the light of His countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance. (chap. 11, sec. 5)

Revelation 3:19 - 19' **Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline;** be zealous therefore, and repent. NASB

We bring shame on the name of Christ.

When Christians sin, we fail to glorify God and we profane His Name and His holiness. Instead of being a witness of God's purity and righteousness, we become bad witness for God and should rightly be ashamed of our behavior. Consider God's words to Israel....

Ezekiel 36:16-21 - 16 Then the word of the LORD came to me saying, 17 "Son of man, when the house of Israel was living in their own land, they **defiled it by their ways and their deeds;** their way before Me was like the uncleanness of a woman in her impurity. 18 "Therefore, I poured out My wrath on them for the blood which they had shed on the land, because they had defiled it with their idols. 19 "Also I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the lands. According to their ways and their deeds I judged them. 20 "When they came to the nations where they went, they profaned My holy name, because it was said of them, 'These are the people of the LORD; yet they have come out of His land.' 21 "But **I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations** where they went. NASB

Romans 2:23-24 - 23 You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God? 24 For **"the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,"** just as it is written. NASB

Our fruitfulness in Christian life is hindered.

When Christians sin, our fruitfulness in life is hindered. Instead of bearing the sweet fruit of the Spirit(Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Gentleness, etc..), we bear the bitter fruit of sin. This makes our Christian life *truly miserable* because the practical affects of this sin are very painful and loathsome.

When Christians sin, our effectiveness in ministry is hindered.

When Christians sin, we fail to edify those around us but rather bring them down. Our light ceases to shine and glorify God and our ministry is diminished.

John 15:4-5 - 4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, **unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me.** 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for **apart from Me you can do nothing.** NASB
John 15:8 - 8 "**By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit,** and so prove to be My disciples. NASB

What to do when we sin.

When a Christian sins, we have a simple remedy given in the text of Scripture. ***We are to repent or forsake the sin, and confess our sins to God***(and maybe to others), and God will forgive our sins. This is an act of righteousness on the part of God. Because of the cross, God's forgiveness for the believing Christian is an act of "faithfulness" and righteousness. We have no right to bear the guilt of our sins for it has been bought and paid for by the Savior.

1 John 1:8-10 - 8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.** 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. NASB

God longs for us to live fruitful, enjoyable lives of righteousness. He longs to bless us with His wonderful presence and live in continual fellowship with us. He longs for our lives to be filled with His love and power.

Philippians 1:8-11 - 8 For God is my witness, how I long for you all with **the affection of Christ Jesus.** 9 And this I pray, that **your love may abound** still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order **to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; 11 having been filled with the fruit of righteousness** which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. NASB

Therefore it is only reasonable for us to live in the freedom of God's Spirit and willingly abide in that good grace of God by which we were saved.