

LESSON 13

THE NATURE AND EFFECTS OF SIN

Scripture Texts: 1 John 3:4; James 4:17; Galatians 3:22; Mark 7:21



Man sins because he is a sinner, and he is a sinner because he sins. There are widely differing views about sins. One view is that man may sin or not sin as he pleases and that his sins are only the forming of bad habits. Another view is that man is a helpless sinner by nature and therefore he cannot help sinning, thus he is not responsible for his actions. Another view calls attention to sin as an act of transgression, and sin as the fountain source from which transgressions issue. We believe the Bible declares the latter to be true.

MEMORY VERSE: *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."
Romans 3:23*

The Sin of Commission

Sin is usually thought of as an evil deed. Many things are prohibited in the Bible, and these are regarded as sins. There are many things that we are commanded to do, and failure to do them is also considered sin. There are two types of sin. The sin of commission is doing those things that God has instructed us not to do, and the sin of omission is failing to do those things that God, in His Word, has instructed us to do. Long lists of sins may be assembled from the Bible. These would include such sins as murder, adultery, theft, bearing false witness, drunkenness, profanity, idolatry, and many other things. No such list can be made complete, for a man is constantly inventing new ways to sin.

Sin may be committed in thought, word, and deed. All our human faculties may be used either for good or for evil. Sinning in thought usually precedes the other methods. The Law of Moses had no way of knowing the thoughts of men's hearts and could only deal with the outward acts of sin. But the Gospel deals with thoughts as well as with deeds. Jesus speaks of sinning in thought. The man who entertains thoughts of hatred toward his brother, though he never performs the act, is a murderer. The man who entertains unlawful thoughts of lust for a woman is an adulterer.

There is vast difference between thoughts of evil and evil thoughts. Many Christians suppose they have sinned in thought when they have not sinned at all. They have only been tempted. Temptation is not sin until we yield to it. We disclaim evil thoughts by casting them from our minds as soon as we recognize the fact that they should not be there. Sometimes evil thoughts impress us so deeply that we find it difficult to banish them unless we take them to God in prayer. To consent to do evil if it were not for the consequences is sinning in thought.

The Sin of Omission

Sin is a heart ailment. Jesus taught clearly that one's conduct is determined by the attitude of his heart. It is the tree that determines the nature of the fruit. One may NOT do something God said not to do and yet sin by refusing to DO something God has impressed him to do. This is the sin of omission as stated in James 4:17. The greatest sin of omission is to fail to obtain salvation through Jesus. Sins of omission are as wicked as evil deeds.

How Sin Is Imputed

Sin is the willful transgression of God's law. It is not conceivable that one whose heart is free from sin will indulge freely in sins. As a general rule it is quite proper to judge a person by his conduct. When we speak of living free from sin we do not lay claim to absolute perfection and freedom from all mistakes. Many people believe that it is impossible to live free from sin simply because they do not understand how God imputes sin. Sin is not mistakes, neither can we sin unknowingly.

Some people feel that sin is not imputed to them because they are Christians and have been given a license to sin. One might do wrong through ignorance or mistaken judgment while holding a perfect heart attitude. When one's motive is pure, he is not condemned for a mistake or an error in judgment. One man may do a wrong ignorantly from a perfectly pure motive and be excused; another man may do the same thing with a wrong motive and be condemned.

One's responsibility is measured by his knowledge of God's will or the light that he has been shown or the light he has had the opportunity to see. To turn down light is a fast way to have sin imputed against one. Sin does not destroy human nature, but it perverts it. The imputing of sin incurs guilt, enslavement, and defilement on the sinner. The preaching of the Gospel and the convicting power of the Holy Spirit arouse in man the sense of guilt. Christ came to wipe the slate clean by forgiveness of past sins and to change the motive of the heart so that the outside acts are right.

The only way to have our sins erased is through the blood of Jesus Christ, in accepting His full plan of redemption.

JUST A THOUGHT

**God is in the cleaning business,
not the whitewashing business.**

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