

2. God's Forgiveness

Introduction

How would you complete the following statement?

When a person becomes a Christian, ...

- only those sins that he confesses are forgiven.
- all of his sins in the past are forgiven, but not those in the future.
- he becomes perfect and unable to ever sin again.
- all of our sins past, present & future are forgiven.

A problem facing all Christians is **Sin**. In the next two lessons, we will not only learn the correct answer to the above statement, but also *God's Solution* to help Christians overcome sin in their lives!

Dealing with Sin

This study will answer **four questions** that will teach us how to deal with sin in our lives:

1. What is Sin?
2. Who Sins?
3. What is God's Solution for Sin?
4. What Should We Do When We Sin?

1. What is Sin?

The word **sin** translates a *Greek* word which means "missing the mark". It describes the distance between where an arrow lands and the *bull's eye* of the intended target. Notice how it is used in the following Bible passage.

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"
Romans 3:23

Romans 3:23 describes **Sin** as falling "short of the glory of God". **Sin** is *Man's failure* to live up to the *perfect standard* of God. We have **all** broken God's perfect moral law, either in *action* or in *thought*. Even our *failure to do what we know is right* is **Sin**! So there is *no one* innocent or perfect among us!

Sin's Results

"The soul who sins is the one who will die."
Ezekiel 18:20

- Circle the word that describes the *result* of **Sin**.
Do you believe people who are *guilty* of violating the **moral law** should be punished? **So does God!** Sin brings God's Judgment of **death** on all who are guilty of breaking God's perfect moral law.

Sin = *hamartia* (Grk)

- ▶ to miss the mark
- ▶ to err
- ▶ to do wrong

MEMORIZE!

▶ Think of the best person you know. Would you say that person is *perfect*? Why or why not?

 James 2:10
James 4:17

2. Who Sins?

- Circle the *word* in *Romans 3:23* (previous page) that describes *who* God considers a sinner.

*“If we claim to be without sin,
we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ...
“If we claim we have not sinned,
we make (God) out to be a liar and
his word has no place in our lives.
1 John 1:8,10*

- Underline how *1 John 1:8,10* describes *Christians* who **claim** they are *without sin* or *have not sinned*.

3. What Is God’s Solution for Sin?

- Read the Bible passages that describe **God’s Solution** for Sin listed below.


*“When you were dead in your sins and
in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature,
God made you alive with Christ.
He forgave us all our sins,
having canceled the written code,
with its regulations,
that was against us and that stood opposed to us;
he took it away, nailing it to the cross.”
Colossians 2:13-14*

*“When he had received the drink, Jesus said, ‘It is finished.’
With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.”
John 19:30*

*“God made him (Jesus) who had no sin to be sin for us,
so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”
2 Corinthians 5:21*

In *Colossians 2:13-14*, the apostle Paul uses an illustration from the *legal profession*. During his time, convicted criminals were issued a *“written code”* which listed all the *crimes* they had committed as well as their *penalty* sentenced by the court. After fulfilling their sentence, the court took the *“written code”* and stamped over it the Greek word **“tetelestai”**, which means **Paid in Full**. This was the *exact word* Christ used in *John 19:30* when He said, *“It is Finished”*, just before He died on the cross!

- Circle how *many* of our sins God forgave according to *Colossians 2:13-14*.
- Underline what God *did* with the *“written code”* that contained a list of our sins and the penalty of death.
(By *“nailing it to the cross”* God was in essence making His Son, **Jesus**, *pay for our sins* by dying on the cross in our place. If **Jesus didn’t pay for our sins, we would have to!**)
- Circle the phrase *“It is finished”* in *John 19:30*. Write **Paid in Full** above it.
- Underline why God did this according to *2 Corinthians 5:21*.

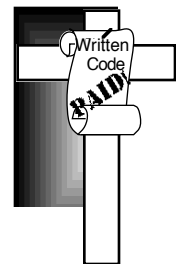
 *Proverbs 20:9
Ecclesiastes 7:20
Isaiah 53:6
Isaiah 64:6*

► Could God have forgiven us without having to sacrifice His Son on the cross? Why or why not?

The Death of Jesus Christ

satisfied two attributes of God. It satisfied His Holiness which required that Sin be punished, and it satisfied His Love which desired Man’s salvation. Through the sacrifice of Jesus. God is able to demonstrate His Love for Man while maintaining His Holiness!

MEMORIZE!



Theologians describe Christ’s death on the cross as *Vicarious Atonement* because He is our *Substitute*, taking the punishment for our sins upon Himself!

4. What Should We Do When We Sin?

*"If we confess our sins,
(God) is faithful and just and
will forgive us our sins and
purify us from all unrighteousness.*

1 John 1:9

1 John 1:9 has been called **"The Christian's Bar of Soap"** because it contains the *key* to dealing with Sin in our lives. This verse describes the *action* we must take whenever we Sin.

- Circle the *word* that describes this *action*.

The word **Confess** comes from a *Greek* word which means *to agree*. To *confess* is to *agree with God* that we have sinned! Notice also that the above verse is a *conditional statement*. *If we confess our sins*, God will do **two things** for us.

- Circle those two things .

Application

1. **Pray and ask God to reveal any sins which you have not confessed to Him.**
2. **Confess them to God by agreeing that you have sinned. Don't make excuses for your sins.**
3. **Turn away from sin and ask God to help you keep from committing them again.**
4. **Claim the two promises which God makes to those who confess their sins according to 1 John 1:9.**
6. **Thank God for His forgiveness as an expression of your faith!**
7. **Memorize 1 John 1:9.**

More Good News!

*"Then He adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more."
Hebrews 10:17*

*"As far as the east is from the west,
So far has He removed our transgressions from us."
Psalm 103:12*

*"Come now, and let us reason together, 'Says the LORD,'
Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow;
Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool."
Isaiah 1:18*

MEMORIZE!

 Psalm 32:5

Confess ► *homologeō* (Grk)
homo = the same
logeō = to say
'to say the same' or to agree

- Why does God require us to confess our sins in order to be forgiven?

- Why is it important to *"turn away"* from sin and not just confess sin?

The three Bible passages at left illustrate our forgiveness in three different ways.

- Recognizing that God knows all things, what do you think it means when it says *'He will remember our sins no more'*? (Hebrews 10:17)
- How far is the east from the west? (Psalm 103:12)
- How white is snow? (Isaiah 1:18)
- From these verses, how complete is our forgiveness in Christ?
- Memorize one or more of these verses.

Questions and Answers

Q: Are all my sins forgiven by God or just the past ones?

A: Christ died for *all* our sins: *past, present* and *future*.



Hebrews 10:8-18

Q: If God has already forgiven all my sins, why then do I have to confess them to Him?

A: *Confession*, allows us to *experience* the forgiveness that is already ours in Christ. *Sin* breaks our *Fellowship* with God, not our *Relationship* with Him. Our *Relationship* with God as His Children is based on *His Unconditional Love* for us, but our *Fellowship* with Him depends on *our keeping an intimate walk* with Him. Whereas Sin *Destroys* this intimacy, Confession *Restores* it!

Q: What if I still feel guilty even after confessing?

A: Any guilt remaining after *genuine confession* is not from God. *Satan*, our *accuser*, delights in keeping us on a *guilt trip* to keep us from serving God!



Job 1:1-11
Zechariah 3:1
Revelation 12:9-10

Q: Why should I confess my sins?

A: *Regular confession* of our sins keeps our *Fellowship* with God open and fresh. It also keeps our heart *sensitive* to God's Spirit. *Continual sin hardens* the heart toward God.



Psalms 66:18

Q: What about making restitution?

A: If your sin has *hurt* others, you should ask their *forgiveness*, and make *restitution* if necessary.



Matthew 5:23-24

Q: How often should I confess my sins?

A: As mentioned above, *1 John 1:9* is the "*Christian's Bar of Soap*". Just as you wash yourself with *real soap* as often as necessary, so should you confess *as often as necessary*. Confess your sins *as soon as God convicts you of them*. Any delay allows *Satan* the opportunity to gain a "*foothold*" in our lives.



Ephesians 4:26-27