

## Sin: The Most Basic Human Problem

### The Problem with the World

The Bible teaches that God has made us for relationships. We do not want to be alone or lonely. Nothing can give us more joy than good relationships with our friends or with someone we love. Healthy relationships with employers and with fellow workers make our lives more productive. But nothing gives us more pain than broken relationships.

Our hearts hunger for healthy relationships. We are hurt by bad relationships. We aim for respect, honor, and harmony between our friends, employers, teachers, and in international relations. But we always fall short of our goal. What is the problem? Why is it difficult for people to have good relationships?

The Bible says the most basic human problem is *sin*. Because this term is not always understood, here is a short summary of the Bible's teaching about sin:

- Sin is an **unpaid debt**. If you borrow from someone, you are obligated and owe them for what they loan you. God gives us life and our abilities. But we do not honor God or show our gratitude for God's goodness.
- Sin is **self-centered**. We were designed to honor and to please God. Because of sin, we seek our own honor or pleasure. We should serve God. Sin leads to selfishness. We serve ourselves and seek our own pleasure.
- Sin is **idolatry**. We should worship the one, true, living God who made us. Because of sin, we look to finite things—a job, a person, or a possession—to give us our meaning and fulfillment. Finite things become substitutes for God in our lives.
- Sin is **rebellion**. If we dishonor our ruler or disobey our nation's laws, we rebel against authority. Sin makes us rebels against God's rule, God's laws, and God's kingdom. We try to build our own kingdoms.
- Sin is **slavery**. We become a slave to people or things that control us. Like an addiction, sin will make us depend on what is harmful to us. Our controlling desires can become slave-masters that rule over us.
- Sin is a **disease** that leads to death. Sin spreads like cancer. Sin is like a disease for which there is no human cure. Only God can heal sin.

### Sin Causes Separation

- **Separation from God**. Because sin is rebellion against God, sin separates us from life with God. If God does not save us, death will bring permanent separation from God. Humans are both physical and spiritual. When we die, our spirits leave our bodies. But sin also separates our spirits from everlasting life with God in heaven.
- **Separation from other people**. Because sin is self-centered, we do not honor, respect, or love other people as we should. Sin kills relationships.
- **Separation from yourself**. Sin can cause psychological problems. When we become slaves to our bad behaviors, we will harm ourselves.

## How God Solves Our Sins and Restores Relationships

The Bible teaches that God created us all. God made us for peace and harmony in relationships. When we live in a right relationship with God as our heavenly Father, we can enjoy healthy and loving relationships with each other. These relationships are connected.

Our sins show our rebellion against God, the true King and perfect Father in heaven. We turn away from God, trying to rule our own lives and seeking our own way. Sin does not mean “crime.” Sin is an attitude of the human heart. Sin is the attitude that says, “I want to live my life independent from God. I want to control my own life. I want to be my own god and king.”

If we dishonor our relationship with God, then we have broken the most important relationship! As a result, we experience both physical and spiritual death, which means separation from God. We build walls between each other. We experience shame, a loss of face, and we also experience guilt. We can try to break down the wall between God and us. We can try to do good works, to act more religious, or study philosophies. But God is 100% pure. We are never 100% pure. For the wall of sin to be removed, God must break through—from the top down (from heaven down to us on earth). We never climb up into God’s kingdom. God’s kingdom must break through the wall. God must come down to earth from heaven.

And God did come down to earth, to break through *the wall of sin*—the barrier to a relationship with God. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came from heaven to this world to bring God’s kingdom to us. Jesus was born as a man, fully God and fully man. He came for us, restoring peace and harmony with God. He lived in a perfect relationship with God. He always obeyed and honored God. He lived a perfectly obedient human life—the kind of life that we should live for God.

Jesus sacrificed himself to die on the cross to bear the punishment of our sins as our substitute. He suffered separation from God the Father in our place. He experienced the ultimate and most painful broken relationship. He did not deserve this pain and death. He died for us to open a way for us to go to his home in heaven. Jesus was rejected by God, so that we can be accepted by God. We can be restored to God’s family if we trust our lives to Jesus.

Only God can restore our broken relationship. We cannot make ourselves right with God. Our best efforts never earn us acceptance or a secure place in God’s family. But Jesus did everything that we need. When we believe and trust in Jesus, we are restored to harmony and peace with God. This is the love of God for us that he sent his Son, Jesus Christ, from heaven to this world to live—the kind of life that we should live for God—and to die for us, bearing the punishment of our sins that we deserve.

A PRAYER IF YOU WANT TO SEEK GOD: “God, I want to know the truth about You. Please reveal Yourself to me. God, if You will reveal Yourself to me, then I will make You the LORD and Master of my life.”

A PRAYER IF YOU WANT TO BECOME PART OF GOD’S FAMILY: “Father God, I have tried to live my life in independence from You. But now, I want to come home to You. Thank you for sending Your Son, Jesus Christ, to die for the way I have dishonored You. Please come into my life and take control. Help me to obey You in all of my life. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit. Thank You!”