

Christianity 101
What is Sin?

A Bible Study of The Mount Zion Church

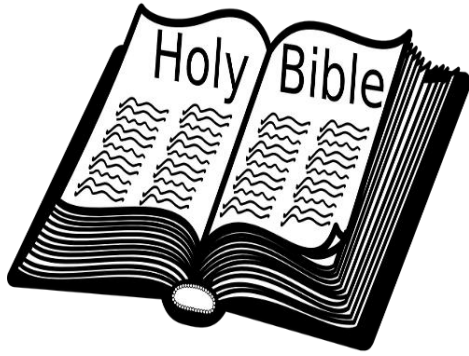
Written by
Pastor Ken Patterson



Introduction: The theology of SIN is under attack in our modern times. To steal a line from a movie, “The greatest trick the Devil ever played was to make people believe he did not exist.” (Something like that) Without a doubt, modern man has diminished the ideas of right and wrong, or absolute truth to an idea that “truth” is what you or I chose to make it. Therefore, God’s truth is not absolute, nor are His rules for mankind. The result of this type of thinking is that many treat sin as something that does not truly exist. The commands of the Bible, in many ways, have become a series of suggestions which we can choose to follow or not with no acknowledgment of consequence.

Much of the challenge to acknowledge sin is that we have forgotten the Bible is centered on God’s plan of salvation for man. Many Christians struggle to describe why we need saving in the first place. This creates “Christianity light” and minimizes the need for people to accept Christ in favor of the theology of “prosperity, purpose, and power.” Many have even abandoned the basic message of Jesus’ forerunner, John the Baptist, who taught repentance from sin. That message of a need for change from evil behaviors in hopes that God will have mercy on the sinner (all of us) is often pushed to the back of our teaching when Jesus spoke of it throughout His ministry.

As disciples of Jesus, we must always remind ourselves of the most significant role that Jesus came to fulfill; that of sacrificial lamb who paid for the sins of the world by dying a horrific death on a cross. The following lesson is written with the purpose to remind students that sin is real, along with the consequences of sin. In addition, students will be able to describe the need for a savior in preparation for Lesson 2: What is Salvation. Welcome to Christianity 101!



Scriptures for this lesson:

John 14:6

John 3:16–18

1 Thessalonians 5:9–10

Romans 5: 12-18

Genesis 2-3

Defining Sin

How do you define sin? _____

The first sin is recorded in Genesis 3. In verses 1-6, one can notice the incident where God gave a direction to Adam (Genesis 2: 16-17) that was then shared with Eve. We are sure that Eve knew the command because she tells the serpent exactly what God told Adam. Yet, with a clear understanding of God’s command, she chooses to do the opposite and then approves of Adam doing the same. Adam, knowing what God expected, also chose to do the opposite of God’s. A simple definition of sin is: When people choose to do anything different than what God expects or commands, it is sin.

To test whether a behavior, thought, or plan is sinful, one simply needs to prayerfully ask: “God, is this what you want me to do right now?” If at any time the answer is no to the question and you do it anyway, you can be sure that you are sinning.



boundaries have for us?

Group Scripture Search Activity: In Genesis chapter 2, an explanation is given for God’s command to not eat the fruit of the tree. Find the command and discuss with your group Gods purpose behind this command. Then discuss with your group why you think God sets boundaries for us? What benefits do

Did you Know? The Bible has over 1000 commands for God’s people to follow? Many of the commands fall under the Law given to Moses and the Israelites which are clarified by Jesus in the New Testament (This will be explained in a later lesson). As you can imagine, it would be impossible to think we can memorize and follow all of the do’s and do nots in the context for which they were given, however we can at a basic level identify that God expects us to obey his overall desires for us. Remember, the check up question for our obedience is “God, is this what you want me to do right now?”



Let’s analyze a few Biblical commands. In the chart below, identify the command and then write the benefit of following the command. Finally, write the negative outcome which comes from not following the command.

Verse	Command Says	Benefit of following	Negative outcome if I don’t follow
1. Romans 16: 17			
2. Deuteronomy 5: 21			
3. 1 Peter 2: 12			



In the previous exercise you identified negative outcomes for not following God's commands. Now let's identify the specific burden sin creates.

The impact of sin cannot be overstated. In fact, it creates a huge set of burdens in our lives. While we could list many of them, the greatest burden is the burden of separation.

Sin creates separation between Man and God? In Isaiah 59: 1-2 we can read what sin does, but this is a general explanation. In Genesis 3, we are able to read the actual reality of the burden sin causes from

the very first sin. This pattern is repeated each time sin occurs.

Again, take a look at Genesis 3. Which verse proves that Adam and Eve and God are now disconnected from one another?

Notice the following

1. Adam's response to God coming through the garden
2. Adam's shame
3. Adam's response to God regarding the gift of Eve

Consider when you have sinned. How do you feel? If you sinned and hurt someone, how does it harm the relationship? These results are the same results Adam and Eve felt towards God. This is also the feeling Jesus had on the cross when he screamed "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27: 46). Forsaken, meaning to leave or turn one's back on another, is the ultimate consequence we face for sin. God turns His back on us. We are separated from God! Why? Because a holy God cannot exist around an unholy people. The relationship is broken.

Conclusion, the intent of this lesson is to sensitize us to the fact that sin is real. The Bible makes it clear that we have an issue that causes major problems for our lives. Our sin issue cannot be ignored because it separates us from our Heavenly Father, the source of all life.

The Big Question: Having studied this lesson, how will it impact your thinking and behavior moving forward?

Remember, sin creates separation between man. A few verses to help you understand the depth of sin's impact on us are Genesis 3: 8-10; Romans 5: 12-18.