

# Palisades Community Bible Church

## Online Sunday School

### What Is Sin?

February 14, 2021

#### Why Should I Care About Sin?

Surely, you've heard the word. Maybe you think about it, maybe you don't. "Sin" is a term used by religious folks, and often by comedians making jokes about it. So, it may be hard for you to take a serious interest in it. You may think; "Why bother?" Let's find out....

"Sin" is a little, bitty word, and it has a big meaning. But, what is it, really? What does it mean to you, as an individual? Why is it important? This study will address these questions and help you come away with a good understanding of what sin is, and what you can do about it. (Bible passages will be added in **Bold** font, followed by where they are found.)

#### What Is Sin?

Webster's defines "sin" as a moral offence, a serious shortcoming, or a transgression against the law of God. If you read the Bible, God's Word to mankind, this definition applies. Let's make it simple;

**Sin is anything that separates you from God.**

Consider your computer; your internet browser is designed to be 'connected' to an internet server. That connection is made through physical wires. If a tree falls on the wire between your computer and the server, that connection is disrupted. The disconnection between your computer and the server makes BOTH fail to work the way they were designed.

God created you. He designed you to be connected to Him. He designed you so that you will love Him, and so that He can love YOU. God made you this way because He knows exactly what will make you the most successful person you can be; and your connection with God is the most important aspect of that success. Sin is like that tree on the wire; it separates you from God, severing that love connection. Without that love connection, your life will be filled with frustration, failure and unhappiness. That is not God's design for you, and it is a SIN when you are separated from God's design.

**"Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate." Mark, 10:9**

Let's not lose sight of the fact that God's design for your life comes directly from the heart of a loving Father. This father, who knew you before you were even conceived, has a plan for your

life. This plan includes you living in the most successful, joy filled, way possible; the way God designed you to live.

**“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love” Ephesians 1:4**

Please don't jump to the conclusion that your life, according to God's plan, means you'll be a nun, or a monk, or living in a grass hut in Africa. Look at the amazing array of life forms that God has put all around you; birds that eat insects, birds that eat nectar, birds that eat only seeds, birds that eat rodents, birds that eat other birds... The same with fish, same with mammals, same with plants. Each and every one of God's creatures has a specific purpose for its life. Each created life has been equipped and blessed by God to carry out a successful purpose in His design. Humans are unique among God's creatures in that we have free will.

You are unique within all of humanity. God put you where you are, at this time, to be what He designed you to be. It's not mysterious, it's not mystical, it's not hocus pocus. If you lack a connection with the living God, you'll always be unfulfilled.

Many people wander through their lives without clear direction, failing as often as they succeed. They try to fill the voids by “doing good things”; volunteering, serving, even going to church. But, if there is no true connection with God – if the sin problem isn't resolved, all the good works in the world won't solve the problem. Example; A diamond ring doesn't make a marriage – it takes love and commitment.

### **Where Did Sin Come From?**

Just as God created you, He created the first, ever, set of parents: Adam and Eve. He created the universe, the earth, all of life on this planet. Then, he created the ONE form of life that would be patterned after Himself: Man and Woman.

**“So, God created man in His own image; in the image of God, He created him; male and female He created them.” Genesis 1:27**

He made humans to be a reflection of Himself within the creation. He gave humans His physical characteristics, His capacity for love, and His freedom of thinking. He also gave humans His spiritual essence; a soul. This soul is our life's energy, and it lives throughout eternity (more about this in a bit).

Right after He created Adam, God gave him a job. This job was a reflection of Adam's greatest strengths and capabilities. Doing this job was satisfying and stimulating to Adam, and doing it gave him joy.

**“The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” Genesis 2:15**

After God created woman, there was work for the both of them. This, also produced joy for them as Husband and Wife as they fulfilled God's plan:

**"Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it, and have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and every living creature that is moving upon the earth." Genesis 1:28**

Remember the part of God's characteristics that He put into humans; freedom of thinking? Yes, he loved humans enough to give us free choice. God did NOT want automatons, pre-programmed to ONLY do what God told them. Animals have instincts, rather than freedom to choose. God, as with your own parents, wants you to live a life that INCLUDES Him. He wants us to CHOOSE to love him – not just have blind obedience, not just to have a 'feel-good' fake relationship. An intelligent, informed, real, relationship with God is your choice.

Is that concept contrary to what you've heard others say about 'religious people?' Have you heard that, to be religious, you have to have blind faith? Unfortunately, there are religious cults and false religions that rely heavily on their followers believing false things about God, and blindly following the human leader's own practices. But, God desires you to know the TRUTH about Himself, and to consciously choose Him.

**"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32**

Now, to the part of where sin came from! When God created freedom of thinking in humans, it allowed them to either LOVE Him, or NOT LOVE Him. That was a big risk on God's part. But, your parents did it with you; had they not let you get to the point of loving them, or not, your love would not be real.

God wants genuine love from humans. So, he gave us all free minds so that we can decide, and make that choice, ourselves. Unfortunately, our first parents made a big mistake. God gave Adam and Eve the most perfect paradise in which to live. He gave them everything they could possibly want, He spent time with them every day, and he gave them the freedom to CHOOSE to love Him as their Father.

**"and gave him only one command: "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" Gen. 2:16-17**

And, we know what happened; they ate of that tree. Out of the millions of trees, plants, and animals God gave them....they CHOSE the one, single, solitary, tree that God told them to avoid. This one tree meant danger! This one tree meant; love me or rebel. As with a child who disobeyed Dad; they Immediately, they knew they had chosen the wrong course. Immediately, they felt shame and they hid from God when He came to visit them. Observe how this "sin" separated them from their loving Father:

**7 At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.**

**8 When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the Lord God walking about in the garden. So, they hid from the Lord God among the trees. 9 Then the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"**

**10 He replied, "I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked."**

**11 "Who told you that you were naked?" the Lord God asked. "Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?" Genesis 3:7-11**

As a father, myself, it has always amazed me that my child may have the entire house in which to play, may have many toys, and many things to do, yet, CHOOSE to put a paper clip into an electrical outlet, or CHOOSE to put the kitten into the toilet, or CHOOSE to swallow marbles. When I tried to prevent her from doing these things, she'd stamp her foot and scream "NO!" Fast forward ten years, and when I said "no" to my teenage daughter dating a guy that I would be scared to be alone with, she claimed that my only function in life was to make her miserable. No, it's because I LOVE her! It's the same love that says; "Don't eat marbles or put kitty in the toilet!"

God said; 'all this perfect creation is all for you....except this ONE thing, which will hurt you.' It was a loving Father's protection. Unfortunately, when Adam and Eve sinned, it became part of their DNA. That genetic trait passed to their offspring, and on, and on, and on. You and I were BORN with the genetic trait to choose to rebel against God. We were born separated from God because of this 'sin gene.'

The evidence, the outward sign, the demonstration of the sin inside of us is the way sin comes out of us. When we lie, cheat, steal, rebel, lust, envy, treat others badly, etc., we are demonstrating that sin is within us. Read on, however, because it's not just how we behave that causes sin to destroy us!

### **What Can Be Done About Sin?**

Understanding that living separated from God is entirely YOUR decision is the first step.

Whether you've never heard about God before, or you have been going to church for 60 years, if you don't have a love connection with God, you need to resolve the sin issue. And, it can be resolved!

Sin isn't about bad behavior. Solving it isn't about good behavior. You cannot do enough BAD things to send yourself to hell. That's because you were born ALREADY going there, because of what you and I inherited from Adam and Eve. Nor can you do enough GOOD things to send yourself to heaven. God honors good deeds, but that is not the solution to the sin issue. Bad behavior is simply an outward symptom of the sin problem. Good behaviors don't take away the sin problem any more than an aspirin cures a broken bone. We are all, from birth, sinners.

**“No one is righteous—not even one. No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God. All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one.” ... For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious (perfect) standard.” Romans 3:10-12**

The problem with the sin condition is that the consequences are dire. Remember what God told Adam about choosing that tree? **“...for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die...”** It takes Jesus’ life – traded for yours - to resolve it for you.

Our sin condition – what we were born with – leads us to BEHAVIORS that are destructive. Because we have this sin gene in us, we show it in how we talk, treat others, view ourselves, and view God. We are not only causing ourselves, and those around us grief with our sinful behaviors, our sin condition – our distance from God – assures us of eternal death.

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

Earlier, I mentioned your SOUL. When God created you in His image, he also gave you the life force that animates your body and will live through eternity....just like God. But, there is a problem with that: SIN! You see; Adam and Eve received their natural bodies, perfectly suited to an earthly environment. However, these bodies became perishable as a consequence of the corruption of sin. Their rebellion, along with the corrupting influence of sin, caused to mankind became mortal. (Webster’s defines “mortal” as; subject to death.) Aging, deterioration, and eventual death now affect all of us. ‘From dust we came, and to dust shall we return:’

**“And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” Genesis 3:22-23**

If your sin issue is not resolved through the sacrifice God offered through His Son, your immortal soul will NOT live forever with God in heaven. At the end of your physical life, your soul will join its corrupted father; Satan. Again, it’s entirely your choice. If we accept Jesus’ payment for our sins, we will be “raised imperishable.” We will receive new, resurrected, bodies in heaven, and we will abide with God forever.

**“For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies. Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled:**

**“Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”**

**For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 15:54-57**

Your body, like Adam’s and Eve’s, has been corrupted. Once your sins have been resolved, your soul is clean to live with God. Your body will pass in this corrupted earth, and you’ll be given a new body – uncorrupted. That means that your body will pass from this earth, but your soul

will live forever. If you have NOT resolved your sin issue, you will NOT live eternally with God. Your choice.

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

Many people accuse God of being mean, harsh, judgmental, unforgiving, and brutal because of this. Yet, He has simply given you and me TWO choices. And, He has given us His word, the Bible, to teach us this. It’s entirely up to you. There are consequences of each choice.

Illustration: I once had an aquarium, and one of the fish seemed to endlessly swim against the glass as if to be 100% intent upon escaping. Little did he know that, just outside that glass was NO WATER, and our cat! Even though every need was met inside the tank, he intensified his efforts to get out. One day, as I was feeding the fish, this one flipped out and onto the carpet. I immediately tackled the cat who’d been hungrily waiting. I got the fish back in, saving its life. Still, he wanted out. One day, I came home to one less fish in the tank, and a cat who did not want her kibbles for dinner. Jesus tells us:

**“In My Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and welcome you into My presence, so that you also may be where I am.” John 14:2-3**

God loves you. He understands your sin issue – this disconnection. He wants to resolve it more than you can know. He gave the ancient Jews a practice for resolving their sin: a sacrifice. Each year, on a special day, the head of the family would take a perfect lamb to the temple. He would put his hands on the lamb’s head and symbolically transfer his sin to the lamb. The lamb would then be sacrificed.

This sounds awful, but God wants us to know how much He hates the sin that separates us. Can you imagine having to put an innocent lamb to death in order to pay for your own sin problem? But, that’s the cost:

**“In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” Hebrews 9:22**

Thank goodness we don’t have to do that! However, the sacrifice of a lamb for human sin was only a picture of what God did to finally eliminate the separation sin causes; Jesus. Jesus is God’s very Son, who was born to serve as YOUR lamb! Jesus suffered a cruel death in order to pay for the separation between humans and God.

**“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”” John 1:29**

So, what Jesus did to pay for your sin has been done. It’s paid for. There’s just one last thing: you must accept it! What good is a debt paid if you don’t accept it? If you don’t accept it, the

debt still stands. The separation is still there....along with the eternal death that accompanies it.

Suppose you have a large financial debt and you cannot pay it. No matter how much you work, nor how much you save, nor how much you deny your own needs, you have no possibility of paying the debt. Then, suppose the person to whom you owe the money tells you that his son has paid off your debt. What is your next move? Will you refuse it? Will you continue to, by YOUR OWN efforts, try to pay the impossible debt? Or, will you humbly, and appreciatively, accept what the Son has done for you?

**“For as by one man's disobedience (Adam's) many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one (Jesus) shall many be made righteous.” Romans 5:19**

### **So, What Must I Do?**

First, you realize it's YOUR decision. You can go on living just as you are. Or, you can know that God has a perfect plan for your life, that He loves you, and that He wants you to live successfully. He wants your life on this earth to be full of joy and success as God's plan lays it out. A life according to God's plan must still be lived out in this mortal body, but His plan will provide you the greatest success. He wants your soul and your resurrected body to live with Him in eternity. If you choose to give your love to your heavenly Father...

Then, you must acknowledge that you are separated from God by sin. Not only by the inherited sin nature, but by the behaviors that nature causes you to do. Then, you confess, or tell it, to God. In a legal sense, you are confessing your guilt as a sinner. (this acknowledgement is key, because if you did not KNOW you had the debt, as in the illustration above, you would not appreciate the Son's payment of the debt)

**“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make Him out to be a liar, and His word is not in us.” John 1:8-10**

You must confess that you are a sinner, believing that Jesus is God's true Son who went to the CROSS to pay for your sins. Jesus traded His life for yours as payment for your sins. Jesus' sacrifice is the ONLY legitimate payment for your sin.

**“that if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with your heart you believe and are justified, and with your mouth you confess and are saved.” Romans 10:9-10**

Then, you must RECEIVE the payment Jesus made for your sins, and BELIEVE that Jesus' payment has cancelled your sin debt – ending the division between you and God.

**“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 5: 1**

**Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would know My Father as well. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him.” John 14: 6-7**

If this seems simple, it is. God’s plan is not complex, but it is required. It must also be genuine. You know when someone loves you, or is faking it, right? The decision is yours. The results of your decision are real. Once you’ve prayed to God acknowledging that you are a sinner, asking Jesus to forgive your sin, and believing that you are now a new person in Christ, you must turn from the sinful behaviors and follow Christ’s teachings.

### **How do I, now, walk with Jesus?**

Throughout this study, I’ve cited verses from God’s word, the Bible, helping you to understand God’s desires for you. There is lots more to learn! You may have many questions. God has a special plan for your life. Read your Bible.

If you do not belong to a church that holds to the teachings of the Bible, you will accelerate the process by joining such a fellowship. The biblical teachings and the relationships you make with other like believers will help you grow and learn. God wants those who love him to be loved by others who do, as well.

**“and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another....” Hebrews 10:24-25a**

If a friend gave this study to you, perhaps you could go back to them and discuss it.

Finally, be joyful and happy that your bondage to SIN has been broken! We will stumble, now and again, but nothing can take away your new life in Christ.

**“Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” Luke 15:10**

**“And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man (Jesus) also will acknowledge before the angels of God” Luke 12:8**

**“The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them.” Psalm 34:7**

**“These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” John 15:11**

God bless you!