

815 Is Sin Real?

Phil Sanders

God's Answers to Life's Questions

Recently a popular television host has been promoting a new age religion that says there is no such thing as sin. This movement has now grown to more than two million people, and in fact fifteen percent of Americans now deny there is such a thing as sin. Well...., is sin real? Stay with us for an important study of God's Word.

Today we're asking the question, "Is sin real?" As I mentioned, fifteen percent of Americans are now saying that there is no such thing as sin. Many more Americans are saying that we should not even bother with thinking about moral issues such as sex before marriage, drunkenness, cheating on taxes, homosexuality, or abortion. For them these things are not an issue and should not be. Such people have cut God out of their lives. This is not immorality; it is amorality. If there are no sins, then how can we think there are crimes or morals or right or wrong.

From the beginning to the end, the Bible tells the story of God's dealing with mankind. At the very center of that story is man's sin and disobedience to God and God's efforts to restore that fellowship with man. From the beginning, we understand that God is holy and without sin. Sin is the transgression of God's laws. To say there is no sin is really to say there is no God or that God does not matter. Now the devil comes into the picture. Since the devil is an opposer everything that God is for, Satan would love to convince people that there is no sin and that they can do as they please without any consequences.

The first lie Satan ever told Eve was to tempt her to sin against God's law. You'll remember Adam and Eve were not to eat the fruit that grew on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Eve said she would die if she ate of the fruit. The devil contradicted God and said, "you shall surely not die." Satan has been contradicting God ever since. He would be happy to tell people there is no God, there is no sin, your sins don't matter, and God won't hold you accountable for anything you do. But all of these things Satan says are still just lies.

The Scriptures teach that sin is the breaking or transgression of the law of God 1 John 3:4. Sin is lawlessness because the one who sins sets aside God's law to do as he wishes. Sin is not merely the breaking of God's law, it is also an offense against God Himself. When Joseph was refusing the immoral advances of Potiphar's wife, he said, "How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9). Every sin is a sin against God. We may think we can do something and no one gets hurt, but sin is always an offense against the God of heaven. Sin says to God that his laws do not matter and that he does not matter. Can you see how offensive and disrespectful that is to your heavenly Father who created you and gives you life?

Sometimes people don't want to hear what God says. They want to make their own rules, whether those rules are legitimate or not. People want to be in control and think that morality is somehow something we can define. Dean Kelly tells this story: "I weighed a certain amount (nope, I am not going to tell, so don't even ask!) on one scale. I guess I wanted a second opinion, so I weighed on another one. It showed me 20 pounds heavier than the first one did. (I liked the first one better; it must be doing a better job.) Therefore, just to see if I could get a majority ruling, I found a third one and weighed on it. It showed me 10 pounds heavier than the first scale, and 10 pounds lighter than the second scale. (I still liked the first one better.) To be honest, I do not know which one was right, so I just went with the one that pleased me the most."

If you cut God out of your life and morality, you may be assuring your own destruction. We can fool ourselves about morality only so long. There comes a time when God will hold us accountable for what we do with our lives. On that day the moral standard we developed for ourselves will be replaced with the teaching of God.

The Bible says in Galatians 6:7-8, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life." God is not going to ask me on the day of judgment what I thought was right and wrong. He will judge me on the basis of what He teaches. Do not lie to yourself. How you live matters to God. If you live an ungodly, fleshly life, you will suffer corruption from it.

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God." The Bible warns us not to be deceived. Anyone who tells you sin doesn't matter is not your friend; he or she is lying to you. You may want to believe what he or she is telling you so badly that you also lie to yourself. You may think you can sin all you want and not get hurt by it. But the simple fact is that sin will keep you out of heaven. You can't live in rebellion to God and expect God to bless you as if you had done nothing wrong. The Bible still says in Romans 6:23 that the wages of sin is death. That hasn't changed even if the whole culture denies it.

The Bible says clearly in Galatians 5:19-21, "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." Now I may not like what God says or I may not agree with what God says; but God is still God and I am only human. Even if I could get every person I know to agree with me and disagree with God, it would not change what God says. God is still God, and no man or group of men can change the will of God.

Jesus, you'll remember in Matthew chapter four, went out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. The devil laid out three very elaborate and enticing temptations before Jesus. In each case Jesus responded to the devil with a three word phrase that settled the issue in the Lord's heart. Jesus simply quoted the Bible and said, "It is written...It is written...It is written." God's word does not change. Psalm 119:89 says, "Forever, O LORD, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens." You may in your mind think that time changes the truth, but God's word is firmly fixed in the heavens. You may think morals change with culture, but God's word is firmly fixed in heaven. You may decide that what God said long ago does not apply to us today, but God's word is firmly fixed in the heavens.

God does not have several different standards by which he will judge the world. He has only one, the one found in his word, the Bible. Jesus said in John 12:48, "The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day." You see, the same standard Jesus used in the first century is the same standard he will use on the last day at the judgment. What was sin in the first century is still sinful and will always be sinful. That's why we must take the apostle Paul's inspired words seriously. He said in 2 Corinthians 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." To say there is no sin is to contradict Jesus and Paul. When someone does that he or she is not receiving the words of Jesus and will be judged for it.

Men have always thought that the concept of sin should be softened. They don't like the idea of sin and cannot see why the consequences of sin are so serious. People call sin a mistake, an error

in judgment, a disappointment, an inappropriate action, a problem, or even a disease. People will do nearly anything to keep from accepting responsibility for their sins. Some wish to blame society, parents, and circumstances and remove responsibility from the perpetrator. I am amazed at how our society seems to blame everyone but the person who committed the crime. Some folks would rather berate all of society than admit someone is actually evil. The prophet Jeremiah said in chapter 17, verse 9 and 10, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds." God sees our hearts and He is not fooled by wickedness.

People offer many excuses to rationalize away their sins. You've heard the excuses: "Just once won't hurt." "Everyone's doing it." "I can quit anytime I want to." "Get with it; this is the twenty-first century! Things have changed!" No matter how many excuses people come up with, sin is still sin. God's word still is the ultimate definition of God's will. It is a good day in a person's life he comes to understand that he is not an exception to God's laws. Some today have sin still destroys people's lives and homes. It still wrecks friendships, churches, and communities. No matter how we'd like to wish it away, rationalize it away, or ignore it, sin and guilt are attached to our very souls.

People often do everything but the obvious to deal with their sins. Pretending that I have not sinned is only deceiving my self. A person who has cancer and pretends that it is not there will soon find the cancer has overwhelmed him. A person who has serious heart disease and pretends that it doesn't matter will soon find himself in ICU at the hospital or in the funeral home. Now, God hasn't placed the burden of sin on us and left it there without any hope. If the problem of sin were unsolvable, we would all be great peril. Jesus, however, was willing to take our punishment for sin, so that we might be forgiven. Forgiveness means that God no longer holds sin against us, and that opens the door for reconciliation with God and leads to the hope of heaven. The blood of Jesus washes away all our sins, frees us completely. Isn't that a better solution than pretending we don't have any sin?

Jesus is the answer; Jesus has always been the answer to sin and death! There really is no other answer, because this is God's own answer. God holiness was offended by sin; He had to punish sin. He decided that the means by which He could forgive you and me is by the sacrifice of Jesus who took our place and took the punishment. Isaiah chapter 53, verses 5-6 prophesies, "But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all." Jesus sacrificed himself for your sins. That was God's answer, and it was the only answer. No one else would or could make such a sacrifice to cleanse you from sin.

That is why coming to Jesus for cleansing and forgiveness is the right way to deal with the problem of sin in our lives. If Jesus had not died for your sins and mine, neither of us would have any hope whatsoever. But through his sacrifice we have a way. The Lord Jesus himself said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John chapter 14 and verse 6). The Bible says in Acts 4:12, "there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." You won't find heaven by fighting God and denying what He teaches. You find heaven by trusting and loving Him enough to obey His word. Won't you do that today?

Sellers Crain, a good friend and preacher in Rivergate, told the story recently of Marghanita Laski, one of England's best-known novelists. She was also a secular humanist who did not believe in God. Just before she died in 1988, she made a statement on British television of surprising candor. Ms. Laski said, "What I envy most about you Christians is your forgiveness; I have nobody to forgive me." How sad to die without forgiveness when God has made every provision for us to be forgiven. Who doesn't want to be forgiven? No matter how dull your conscience may be, down deep inside you, you know that you have sinned against God and against your neighbor at some point in your life. And, you probably wished that you could take it back. Paul said that our consciences alternately excuse and accuse us in Romans 2:16. Even if there were no other proof of sin, in your heart you know that it is real. Your heart tells you that it is every day. Wishing that you could reconcile with that nagging sense of sin is important. God grants to us forgiveness, so that we can forgive ourselves of the evils we have done. There is no better feeling in the world than to know you are right with God and right with yourself. Guilt is a real human emotion, and God gave us this emotion to move to us to deal with the sin in our lives, because He knew how damaging sin is. If you give up on yourself, and allow that sin and guilt to eat away at your soul, how will you ever know the freedom and the joy of forgiveness and salvation? Friend, you won't. The blood of Jesus is only wasted on people who won't do anything about their sins. You can live your whole life alone without God's love and grace and the blood of Jesus to cleanse you, if you choose to; but why do that? The blood of Jesus is available today to forgive your sins, to wash you clean of sin. You access that blood by faith in Christ, when upon repentance you are baptized into the death of Christ, where the blood was shed. Let God wash away your sins and free you from any guilt. You will never be sorry that you found forgiveness in Christ. Along with that forgiveness is so much more. At the time of baptism you are born again as a child of God. At the time of baptism the Lord adds you to his church, which is his family. You not only have forgiveness, you have all the favor of God to support and bless your life. Don't you want to become a Christian today?

*Copyright 2007, Phil Sanders
Concord Road Church of Christ
8221 Concord Rd., Brentwood, TN 37027
1-877-226-5747*

phil@God-answers.org

www.tv.God-answers.org