



## Sin

What is sin? Some call it “errors” or “mistakes” or “poor judgment.” This may be a good starting point, but as we learn more about God and the Bible, we see that it’s something much more serious. Sin is falling short of the perfect standard God has set. And, by our very nature, we are all falling short of His standard. We are all guilty. We have all sinned against Him.

### A Message from Franklin Graham

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans that “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23) and that the “wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). The angel announced to Joseph that the Child in Mary’s womb should be called “Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

When John the Baptist saw Jesus coming to be baptized, he exclaimed, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).

The Bible mentions sin so frequently for a very good reason—it is sin, our sin, that separates us from God and, if not dealt with through faith and repentance, brings eternal death. Facing the truth about our sin and its deadly consequences is a biblical prerequisite to receiving Jesus as Savior.

That’s why I was shocked when I attended a Christian conference and one of the speakers said that we should not mention sin in our preaching because it is offensive. Sin certainly is offensive, but the Person who is affronted is the Holy God. God hates sin. He is eternally, fiercely opposed to it and cannot tolerate it in His presence. That’s why the Scripture spends so much time speaking about sin. It is our fundamental problem and, if ignored, leaves us to rely on our own futile resources for a solution. However, as much emphasis as the Bible places on the reality and peril of sin, it puts an even greater weight on the cure for sin—salvation through personal faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Sin has been dealt with. There is deliverance because we have a Deliverer. There is salvation because we have a Savior. There is redemption because we have a Redeemer.

The Good News is that God forgives sin. He poured out His divine wrath against it by punishing His own Son on the cross. “He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities” (Isaiah 53:5, NASB). Sin’s penalty—eternal death—was paid in full when Jesus died as our substitute at Calvary.

When we turn from our sin—acknowledge our rebellion against God and utter inability to save ourselves—and turn to God in faith, we receive the free gift of salvation. We did nothing to earn it, because we can't.

Amazingly, God not only took away our sins; He also credited His righteousness to us. "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21, NASB). Martin Luther called this the "great exchange," our sin for His righteousness.

Sin is indeed bad news. We are lost, hopeless and without God. However, as we put aside our pride and admit our sin, we are ready to receive the glorious salvation of Jesus Christ.

## If I'm a Christian and Keep Sinning, Will God Turn Away from Me?

It's true that sin puts up a barrier between us and God and cuts us off from the fellowship He wants us to have with Him. The Bible says, "But your iniquities [sins] have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2).

But that doesn't mean God refuses to have anything to do with us. In fact, He wants us to come back to Him and have our fellowship with Him restored—and He does everything He can to wake us up and bring us to repentance. Sometimes the only way He can do this is by making us so miserable that we finally realize what we've done and turn back to Him. Sometimes He quietly shows His love to us even when we don't deserve it, hoping to awaken us to His goodness.

Think about what happens in a family when someone wrongs his or her relative. That person is still a member of the family; nothing can change that. But a barrier has come between that person and the rest of the family; their fellowship has been broken. The only way to restore it is by confessing the sin and asking for forgiveness. The same is true with us.

Don't let sin come between you and God. God loves you, and Christ died to take away our sins. When we do sin, however, we need to confess it and seek God's forgiveness at once. The longer it goes on, the more the devil rejoices.