



What Is Sin?

S received a question on the web site not too long ago from an individual asking why we didn't have more information on the subject of sin on our web site. I was a little at a loss as to the question because not a single article or outline is posted that doesn't have something to do with the avoidance of sin in our lives, but then I realized that the individual probably had reference to the generic subject of sin. There are, I believe, a few things dealing with that subject, but I thought that another article wouldn't hurt.

In 1 John 3:4, John writes, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law"KJV. The American Standard Version reads, "Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness." So is sin "the transgression of the law" or is sin "lawlessness"? The answer is that it is both. Imagine if you would a circle. Name this circle, "the law." Consider one who abides within the circle as one who is remaining within the law. Consider also that the person who steps outside the circle has transgressed the boundary of the law and is now outside the borders of law. Sin is both the transgression of that which is lawful and the exit from law into lawlessness.

In 2 John 9, the apostle writes, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son"KJV. Again, the ASV reads as follows: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son." Here is another passage which is parallel with 1 John 3:4. Consider the same circle as in the above paragraph. Instead of writing "law" in the circle, write "doctrine of Christ." When we step outside the circle, we transgress the doctrine and we go onward outside of Christ's teaching.

Consider also James 4:17 "To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Here we have what many refer to as the sin of "omission" because the sin is committed by not doing something good as opposed to doing something that is right. But if you will once again considered our circle and inside the circle write, "doing that which is good," you will notice that if you step outside the circle, once again, you have transgressed, gone beyond, and gotten into territory where "good" is not defined, lawlessness. This is yet another passage that sets forth the idea that sin is defined as not doing what God wants us to do.

Finally, consider Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Here is a passage that is just the opposite of James 4:17. Draw the circle again. Write inside the circle, "that which is in the name of the Lord," in other words, that which the Lord wants us to do, authorizes us to do. When we step outside of that circle, once again, we transgress, go beyond, and enter into lawlessness.

Our conclusions regarding what sin is must be as follows: sin is going outside of the law of God, the doctrine of Christ, that which is good, and that which is authorized by Christ in our behavior, whether words or deeds. When I go beyond Christ's authority regardless of what the matter is, I have sinned. Sometimes the Bible tells us where the line is and what not to go beyond. Sometimes the Bible simply says, "this is right behavior" and expects us not to behave in a different way. Regardless of whether the Bible says to avoid certain behavior or behave in a particular way, to go beyond what the Bible says is right is wrong.

Kevin Cauley

Forgetting God In Times of Prosperity

In times of prosperity many forget God, Consider the warning Moses gave to the children of Israel. "For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass. When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee. Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day" (Deut. 8:7-11).

Struggling to "make ends meet" can be difficult, but if we stop to think about it, it's obvious that prosperity has its difficulties as well. When we speak of "times of want," we need to be careful. For all the struggles we face when we suffer a shortage of the necessities of life, we face an even greater challenge when we suffer a surplus.

The challenge of prosperity is greater because it challenges us at the level of our character. Trying to "make ends meet" is mostly physical or out-

ward, but wealth presents a host of harder problems that are spiritual in nature. Granted, there are some spiritual issues that must be dealt with when we're struggling financially, but many people who struggle in this area would acknowledge that they found their inward characters growing in positive ways during that experience. By contrast, most people would have to say that their characters tend to weaken when life is completely comfortable. At times it is a struggle to keep from spiritually suffocating in our privileged circumstances.



Paul made an "eye opening" statement in Philippians 4:11-12: "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." It takes some "know how" and some "want to" to be full

and to abound without losing control of our spiritual lives. When we're living comfortably, our spiritual survival is anything but automatic. In fact, according to Jesus, the odds are quite against it: "And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Mt. 19:24).

These truths have sobering implications for those of us who live in the wealthiest nation of the world - the United States. We face some spiritual hardships that our brethren in poorer cultures don't have to deal with, and frankly, we're not handling our abundance as well as we ought. We're "full," but in all too many cases, we're letting our spirits starve to death. Robert Burton said, "If adversity hath killed his thousands, prosperity hath killed his ten thousands."

We all need to give serious attention to the words of Paul, "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. 6:6-10).

Tom Moore
Malvern, AR

Sermons and Study Topics

Week of 12/26/04

Morning	I Want To Learn God's Word
Scripture	Acts 20:32
Evening	The Christian and the Servant of Abraham
Scripture	Genesis 24:2-4
Sunday Morning Bible Study	The Book of Hebrews
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	Studying the Cross

Weekly Record

Week of 12/19/04

Sunday Class	49
Sunday A.M.	60
Sunday P.M.	54
Wednesday	NA
Contribution	\$1206.50
Budget	\$1778.13

Formula For A Happy New Year in 2005

Editor's note: The year 2005 is rapidly coming closer and closer. While I write this paragraph there is only one week separating me from that year. A new year is a great time to renew our vigor and set out to do what needs to be done in service to God. My friend, Mike Riley, has composed this acrostic in order to help us focus upon what truly will give us a happy new year!

"H"old fast to the faith
(1 Corinthians 16:13).

"A"ssemble for worship
(Hebrews 10:25).

"P"ray without ceasing
(1 Thessalonians 5:17).

"P"urify your heart
(James 4:8).

"Y"ield not to temptation
(1 Corinthians 10:13).

"N"eglect not doing good
(James 4:17).

"E"xemplify Christ
(1 Corinthians 11:1).

"W"ork in the vineyard
(John 15:1-8; Philippians 2:12).

"Y"ield first to God
(Matthew 6:33).

"E"xercise unto godliness
(1 Timothy 4:7-8).

"A"nswer to others
(1 Peter 3:15).

"R"edeem the time

(Ephesians 5:15-16).

Brethren, If we put the above formula into practice, we can experience a happy (and more productive) New Year - 2005, doing the Lord's will!

Mike Riley
El Paso, TX



Kevin's Korner — Absolute Zero

We had a generous amount of cold weather this past week. Seems like many of the ponds around town are about frozen up! I hope that everyone has kept warm inside during this cold spell. The combination of freezing temperatures and wind can be quite dangerous and we've had our share of both over the past few days. But as cold as it has been, unbelievably, it could yet get colder. In fact, science tells us that the coldest temperature possible is what is known as absolute zero. Absolute zero is equivalent to -459 degrees Fahrenheit and -273 Celsius. At this temperature, molecular and atomic motion is at an absolute crawl. You might say that it is as frozen as it is going to get. Thinking about such things reminds me of several things that we ought to avoid as Christians.

The covetous person is a cold, cold person. The man who has his wealth, yet refuses to use that wealth for the benefit of other than his own personal interests is, for all intents and purposes, at absolute zero. His pocketbook is frozen because it's stuck to the ice chunk he calls a heart. Hebrews 13:5 says, "Let your conversation be without covetousness...."

The stubborn person is a cold, cold person. Here is a man who knows what is right and how to do right, yet, refuses to do it. Regarding doing that which is right, he is at absolute zero, frozen, stuck in that which is wrong. 2 Chron.30:8 states: "Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the LORD...."

Finally, the selfish person is a cold, cold person. Here is one who never has time nor concern for anyone else. Regarding others, he is at absolute

zero. Phil.2:4 states, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

Where does our heart stand? Are we at absolute zero because we are covetous, stubborn, or selfish? I hope not. Instead, we need to be pliable and plastic so that the Lord may mold and shape us to His will. You can't bend something that is at absolute zero, only break it.

Elders:

Clay Bozarth, Leon Duncan,
Bruce Foster, Bill Fort, Glenn
Quigley

Deacons:

Ken Smith, Brent Stevens,
Rusty Windle.

Preacher:

Kevin Cauley... 870-423-6707

- We are truly thankful to God for the wonderful new Lord's day that he has given us today to worship him in Spirit and in Truth!
- Let us remain constant in prayer for the following individuals: Mary Lynn Cauley, Pat Foster, Molly Milligan, Lindsey Moore, Rose Spencer, Neva Welch, Maxine Whiteley.
- Please remember our shut-ins: Curtis and Opal Hull and Edith Mischler.
- This coming Friday night beginning at 7:00 PM at the building, we will ring in the New Year with 3F! Fellowship, Food, and Fun! Please bring your favorite game and finger foods. Toward midnight we will have a devotional and sing in the New Year.
- The monthly elders and deacons meeting is next Sunday evening.
- There will be a drop in baby shower for Mary Lynn Cauley on January 2nd, 2005 from 2-4 at Shawna Steven's home in Berryville. Mary Lynn has registered with the baby registry at Wal-Mart.
- The revised schedule for next year's monthly assignments is posted in the foyer. Please check these assignments for your monthly duties for next year.
- I want to say "Thank you" to all who came to the nursing home this past Thursday and also to Glenn Quigley for conducting the Bible study. Your love for our seniors is much appreciated. I apologize for my absence.
- The pantry item for this week is Bar Soap.



Welcome!

To the Berryville church of Christ.

Family Times for Worship and Study

Sunday Morning Bible Class:..... 9:30 AM
 Sunday Morning Worship: 10:30 AM
 Sunday Evening Worship: 6:00 PM
 Ladies Bible Class: 10:30 AM
 Wed. Evening Bible Class: 7:00 PM

Serving Each Other

	December 26th, 2004	January 2nd, 2005
Sunday Morning		
Songs:	Brent Stevens	Bill Fort
Preaching:	Kevin Cauley	Kevin Cauley
Opening Prayer:	Ken Smith	George Eddings
Scripture Reading:	Jerry Roller	Dan Hand
Lord's Table	Glenn Quigley	Clay Bozarth
(assist)	Leon Duncan	Glenn Quigley
	Jack Gentry	Brent Moore
	Perry Foster	Jack Gentry
Closing Prayer	Bob Phillips	Ken Smith
Sunday Evening		
Songs:	Bruce Foster	Clay Bozarth
Preaching:	Kevin Cauley	Kevin Cauley
Opening Prayer:	Dan Hand	Rusty Windle
Scripture Reading:	Dale Pinkley	Dale Pinkley
Lord's Table	Ken Smith	Bob Phillips
	Ray Duncan	Jerry Roller
Closing Prayer	Rusty Windle	Bob Moore
Wednesday		
Songs:	Kevin Cauley	Bruce Foster
Opening Prayer:	Rusty Windle	John Gass
Invitation:	Bruce Foster	Kevin Cauley
Closing Prayer:	Ray Duncan	Ray Duncan

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