

Exploring Christianity Study 2

What is Sin?

Introduction

This study is the second of a short series in which we consider the basic facts of the Christian faith. Real Christianity is not performing religious rituals; it is a close personal relationship with the God of the Bible. In the previous study you discovered that the Lord Jesus Christ is very special — that He was man yet more than a man, indeed God Himself. The Bible teaches that all human problems, whether personal, family, social, racial, or international, come from the sinful heart of man. The purpose of this study is to help you understand the serious nature of sin. You are going to be faced with some uncomfortable facts in this study. Have you prayed first?

Section 1 — What Is the law of God?

The moral law of God is contained in the 10 Commandments. You will find the 10 Commandments in Exodus 20. Please read from verse 1 down to verse 17 (Exodus 20:1-17).

1a **Commandment No. 1.** *Thou shalt have no other gods before me* (Exodus 20:3).

Nothing is to take the place of God. Nothing is to come before God in your life. Not even family, friends, career, etc. are to come before God — read Luke 14:26, and fill in the blanks.

If any man come to me, and hate not his _____, and mother, and _____, and _____, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own _____ also, he cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:26).

This is strong language designed to get our attention. In comparison to a person's love for God, other human relationships are to be like hatred. Do you really love God that much? Have you broken this commandment?

1b **Commandment No. 2.** *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image...Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God...* (Exodus 20:4-5).

This command forbids the making of statues for use in worship. This is known as idolatry and this is rife throughout the world.

1c **Commandment No. 3.** *Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain* (Exodus 20:7).

What are proper legitimate ways to use God's name? List some here:

Did you include: prayer, worship, preaching, fellowship, and the like. However nearly everything else is using God's name in vain. Using the Lord's name as a swear word is certainly using God's name in vain. "Vain" means an empty, trivial, thoughtless, careless use of His name. This is a very common sin. Examples—"Oh my G***"; using the name of Jesus as a swear word etc.

Who will the Lord hold guilty?

The Lord will hold guilty those who take his name in _____ .

For what will everyone give account — see Matthew 12:36 and fill in the blank below?

But I say unto you, That every idle _____ that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

Be honest with yourself, have you broken this commandment?

1d Commandment No. 4. *Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy* (Exodus 20:8).

This is a requirement to set aside one day per week to worship God. In the Old Testament, this was a Saturday. The Saturday Sabbath has now been abolished (Colossians 2:16) and this commandment is not repeated in the New Testament (N.T.), unlike all of the other commandments. In Acts 15, the apostles discussed the list of things that Gentile (non Jewish) believers should keep. Read verses 19, 20 and 29 and then list these things here:

What is conspicuously missing from the list? Keeping the _____ is missing from the list. However the practice of setting one day aside specially for the worship of God continues.

1e Commandment No. 5. *Honour thy father and thy mother* (Exodus 20:12).

God requires children to be respectful and to obey their parents. Disrespect for parents is common today.

Have you ever disobeyed or disrespected your parents (when you were younger perhaps)?

Have you broken this commandment?

1f Commandment No. 6. *Thou shalt not kill* (Exodus 20:13).

This is dealing with murder. You will respond that you have never killed anyone, but you can break this commandment by having bad feelings toward another person. What does God regard as murder?

See Matthew 5:21-22 and fill in the blanks.

21 *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not _____ ; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:*

22 *But I say unto you, That whosoever is _____ with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca ("empty head"), shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou _____ , shall be in danger of hell fire. (Matthew 5).*

Have you even had bad feelings toward another person? Have you ever insulted them and called them a fool? How about you? Have you broken the spirit of this commandment?

1g Commandment No. 7. *Thou shalt not commit adultery* (Exodus 20:14).

Definition: Adultery is sexual activity where the participants are not married to each other, and at least one of them is married to another. Fornication is sexual activity between unmarried persons. Both situations are covered by this commandment, and are condemned by God as sinful.

What does 1 Corinthians 6:18 tell people to do?

1 Corinthians 6:18 commands people to _____ fornication.

Read Matthew 5:27-28. When a man looks lustfully at a woman, what is he committing in his heart?

He is committing _____ in his heart.

Have you broken the spirit or even the letter of this commandment?

1h Commandment No. 8 *Thou shalt not steal* (Exodus 20:15).

This commandment forbids the taking of anything that does not rightfully belong to you. This includes taking things from your work without permission; illegally copying music or software; etc. Most people will admit to having taken something that was not theirs, many times in their lives.

How about you? Have you broken this prohibition against stealing?

1i Commandment No. 9. *Thou shalt not bear false witness (i.e. lie) against thy neighbour* (Exodus 20:16).

This is dealing with falsehood. All lies (even “white ones”) are included.

What is the destination for all liars (read Revelation 21:8)? Fill in the blanks below.

The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all _____ will have their part in the _____ of _____.

Be honest with yourself, have you broken this command against lying?

1j Commandment No. 10 *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s.* (Exodus 20:17).

Covetousness is a very common sin. Gambling is based on breaking the 10th commandment. Can you think of occasions when you have coveted? Have you broken this prohibition against coveting?

Section 2 — The Purpose of the Law

2a What does the law do (read Romans 3:19)?

The law stops every _____.

The law makes all the world _____ before God.

2b How many people will be justified (made right) before God by keeping the law of God (read Romans 3:20)?

Delete two of the following statements (just one is correct):

(i) Nobody will be justified before God by keeping the law of God.

(ii) Those people who keep the law of God will be justified before God.

(iii) Everybody will be justified before God by keeping the law of God.

2c What else does the law do (read Romans 3:20)?

The law brings the _____ of sin.

2d Read James 2:10. How much of the law does a person have to break in order to be guilty of all of it?

Delete two of the following statements. One of the following statements is correct, the other two are not.

(i) In order to be guilty of all of the law, a person has to offend in every point.

(ii) In order to be guilty of all of the law, a person has to be really bad.

(iii) In order to be guilty of all of the law, a person has to break just one point.

Conclusion

The law of God makes everyone guilty. That includes you. Do you accept the fact that you have broken God’s laws in many ways? Do you accept that you are guilty before a Holy God? In the next study, we will examine the serious consequences of being in this guilty state.