

26 QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD BE ASKING!

QUESTION #10: WHAT IS SIN AND WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

1. WHAT IS SIN?

Q. What is sin? A. Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature.

Sinful *acts* include things such as stealing, lying, or committing murder. Sinful *attitudes* include things like coveting (desiring to steal), anger, lust, jealousy, selfishness, and pride.

A. SINFUL NATURE

Not only does sin consist of acts and attitudes, but also our very natures. The internal character that is the essence of who we are is also sinful. In other words, we are sinners by our very nature. We are born as sinners.

Ephesians 2.3: "...and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind."

Psalm 51.4: "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

Grudem: "Sin is directly opposite to all that is good in the character of God, and just as God necessarily and eternally delights in himself and in all that he is, so God necessarily and eternally hates sin. It is, in essence, the contradiction of the excellence of his moral character. It contradicts his holiness, and he must hate it."

Another possible definition of sin: Sin is all that God hates and all that humans love, apart from His grace.

B. ORIGIN OF SIN

Where did sin originate from? First of all, we must assert that God never sinned and we cannot blame Him for sin.

Deuteronomy 32.4: "The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he."

James 1.13: "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God,' for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one."

Nevertheless, although God hates all sin (Ps 5.4), He ordained sin to come into the universe through the voluntary choices of moral creatures to accomplish His will (Eph 1.11). This is still largely a mystery to us.

C. INHERITED SIN

We are counted guilty before God because of Adam's sin (Rom 5.12-21). Adam, by sinning as the representative head of humankind, caused his guilt to be imputed to us. The punishment of death is the proof of this guilt.

Romans 5.12: "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned..."

2. WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

Q: What difference does it make? A: All the difference in the world!

A. FOR THE UNBELIEVER

Even the smallest sin makes us legally guilty before God and therefore worthy of eternal punishment.

James 2.10: "For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it."

God's punishment of sin displays His righteousness and glory. If God did not punish sin on the cross, He would not be a righteous God.

Romans 3.25: "whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins."

B. FOR THE BELIEVER

Unlike the unbeliever, the believer's legal standing before God is unchanged. Whenever we sin, we grieve God and bring Him fatherly displeasure. Sin also damages our Christian life and fruitfulness in ministry.

John 15.5: "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."

3. APPLICATION—CORE VALUES

A. HUMILITY

Knowledge of our own sinfulness with respect to God's holiness should produce in us a deep humility, which expresses itself in reverence, awe, and a profound sense of gratitude.

Ephesians 2.4-5: "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved."

B. FREEDOM

Since we have been set free from the bondage of sin, we have the freedom to bear fruit for the kingdom of God.

Romans 6.18: "...and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness."

C. DELIGHT

Freedom from sin is true delight, for as long as we are keeping our lives free from sin, we are free to delight in God!