

It is so exciting to know that you have peace with God! Every human heart desires it. And God desires it for us even more! He was the one who initiated your salvation. You are saved! Heaven is now your home! You need not fear judgment!

But what does this all really mean? That is what we will discover in this study on salvation. In order to truly understand salvation and appreciate what Jesus has done for us, we must understand two essentials: sin & repentance.

## THOUGHTS ON SIN

When we talk about sin we ultimately talk about those actions or inactions by which humans rebel against God, miss His purpose for their life, and surrender to the power of evil rather than to God. And it must be noted that Biblically 'sin' also includes all evil thoughts, intentions, and words. All of us have sinned! (Romans 3:23; Ecclesiastes 5:6; Jeremiah 17:9; Matthew 5:28, etc.)

One of the central truths throughout the Bible is humanity's separation from God (Isaiah 59:1, 2). The cause for this separation is sin, the root cause of all the problems of humanity. The Bible, however, gives no formal definition for sin, though many words are used to describe it. The most important, core description is as an attitude of the human heart that makes sin rebellion against God. Rebellion was at the root of the problem for Adam and Eve (Gen. 3) and has been at the root of humanity's plight ever since.

We would not be complete in our definition of sin without saying that the underlying idea of sin is that of law and of a lawgiver. The lawgiver is God.

## Think about it!

Christ's death on the cross included a sacrifice for all our sins, past, present, and future. Every sin that you will ever commit has already been paid for. All of our sins were future when Christ died two thousand years ago. There is no sin that you will ever commit that has not already been included in Christ's death.

Christ's definition of sin penetrates far deeper than a list of sins on a membership card. It goes to our inner desires, motivations, and secret thoughts.

Men never violate the laws of God without suffering the consequences.

You can choose your sins; you cannot choose the consequences. The one consequence of all sin is separation from God, but it can also separate us from those we love. That is death indeed!

There are several words in the original languages of the Bible that are translated 'sin'. They have the following basic meanings: 'missing the mark', 'crooked', 'disobedience', 'rebellion', 'wickedness', 'crossing the line', 'falling aside', 'impiety', 'injustice', 'lawlessness'.

The central thought in nearly all of them is that of a deviation from an accepted standard- God's law!

Hence, sin is everything in our character, purpose and conduct that is contrary to the law of God (Romans 3:20; 4:15; 7:7; James 4:12,17).

Indeed, the sinfulness of sin lies in the fact that it is against God, even when the wrong we do is to others or ourselves (Genesis 39:9; Psalm 51:4). The person of God and His law are perfectly harmonious, for "God is love." Therefore, **the sum of all the commandments is love;** sin in its nature is egotism and selfishness. Self is put in the place of God (Romans 15:3; 1 Corinthians 13:5; 2 Timothy 3:2, 4; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). Selfishness is at the bottom of all disobedience, and it becomes hostility to God when it collides with His law. Self is put on the throne of our hearts when God alone should be!

Human sin, as we see now, is universal- we all sin. All people without exception are under sin's ruling control (Romans 3:9-23). But how did this happen? God is in no way responsible for sin. Satan introduced

sin when he tempted Eve, but the Bible doesn't teach that sin began with him either. Practically speaking, **sin's origin** can be found in two things: 1) **our rebellious nature**, passed down to us by Adam & Eve after they sinned (Romans 5:12-20, Ephesians 2:3), and **our own wrong, sinful choices** that lead us away from God (Ezekiel 18:19-20; James 1:13-15).

**AND HERE IS THE GREAT PROBLEM WITH SIN: IT IS ONLY PUNISHABLE BY DEATH** (meaning separation from God and living forever in hell)- **it needs a perfect sacrifice to make up for it!** There is no other option with God! How can there be any hope? How can we be 'saved' (from this judgment of death, forgiven of sin and made to live forever in heaven with God)?

**God made a way without violating His own law!** Though you were guilty under penalty of death, God loved you too much to see you perish (2 Peter 3:9). He offered His best to prove His love

There are three reasons why every person needs to repent:

1. Because our sins have broken God's commands
2. Because our sins have broken God our Father's heart
3. Because our sins prove we have lived supremely for ourselves and not for Him

**There are two things I remember: that I am a great sinner and that Jesus is an even greater Savior!**

and to save you- He sent Jesus to live and die for you as the only perfect and acceptable sacrifice so that if you simply believed in Him and what He did for you, you would be saved- forgiven of all your sins (John 3)! Once you realize that your sins separate you from God and know that your sins cost Jesus His life and blood, **you must repent of them, confess them to Jesus and only then are you cleansed and saved** (2 Corinthians 7:9-10, Luke 13:3, 1 John 1:9)!

### **SO LET'S TALK ABOUT REPENTANCE**

This is one of the most avoided yet vital subjects! Without repentance there is no salvation! Did you know that 'repentance' was the first message Jesus preached (Matthew 4:17) and the message He sent His disciples out to share with the world (Mark 6:12)? Did you also know that the Bible tells you that repentance is actually a source of refreshing that comes from God (Acts 3:19)?

It is vital, before we go on, to understand that there are two types of repentance discussed in the Bible: false repentance that leads to death, and true repentance that leads to salvation. So what is repentance?

There are 3 words in the New Testament used for 'repentance'. Their meanings help us:

1. A change of mind that produces regret or remorse on account of sin, but not necessarily a change of heart. This is used in reference to Judas (Matthew 27:3).
2. A change of mind and purpose 'after the fact', i.e., like after one gets caught.
3. A change of mind and purpose and life to which God promises forgiveness- this is used of true repentance.

An unrepented sin is a continued sin

Repentance is a key that opens any lock

Considering these words and 2 Corinthians 7:9-11, we learn that true repentance involves a change of opinion regarding the nature of sin *with a corresponding change of feeling about and towards sin*. True repentance causes you to see sin not as something desirable, but as something revolting. A truly repentant person is astonished that they ever could have sinned and they see their behavior as hateful and worthy of hell.

Repentance is an attitude rather than a single act

Repentance takes God's point of view instead of ones' own

False repentance may see sin from the view that it will ruin them or that God will punish their sin, but they like the very thing they are doing and cannot see why God thinks it wrong. They just don't get or accept that God would judge it with everlasting



## Repentance is God's gift to mankind: it places us in the hands of a merciful, loving God...

punishment. False repentance leads people into the presence of God (and even church membership), but their heart and lifestyle don't change. You see, false repentance loves sin! If sin could end in happiness, they would do it- they would never think of abandoning it!

The truly repentant don't just see sin as God sees it- their heart really hates it! And they want to save others from it! The main point is that the truly repentant agree that sin and sinner deserve hell and think it amazing that they themselves are saved. They don't see God as hard or harsh, but as just and righteous and merciful.

Here are the signs of true repentance in one's life:

1. Personal ownership of one's own guilt and sinfulness
2. A conscious change of mind, views, and feelings in regard to sin
3. A reformation and even permanent change of conduct and character
4. Honest confession and also making things right with others where possible

Though all we learned about repentance is true, there is even more to it. ***Repentance is the means by which we access the love of God and make it effective in our lives.***

Think of it this way: there are a lot of people in the community that are dirty, and yet there is soap all around us. *Soap does us no good until it is personally applied!* 'Knowing' God loves us will not cleanse us of from sins. We must apply the 'soap' of the love of God to our lives by repenting (picking up the bar and applying it to our soul, so to speak). This is what cleanses us and actually saves us!

Once you have repented of your sins and believed in Jesus' death and resurrection for those sins, all you need do is confess with your mouth what you have believed and done in your heart (Romans 10:9, 10)- and you can know that your sins are forgiven and that you have eternal life! You are saved! You are, to use another Bible expression, born-again!

Simply put, repenting and receiving salvation is simple, direct, personal, and public. People think it is a complicated process, but it is not!

And your salvation makes you God's child (John 1:12). You become a new creation that can live for God and not selfishly anymore (2 Corinthians 5:17). Your sins are washed away, forgotten and no one can condemn you (Revelation 1:5, Hebrews 10:17, Romans 1:8)!

Consider this as we close our study:

In saving us, God did three impossible things: He made our past as though it never had been; He re-created us into something better than we could have made ourselves into; He gave us a future and destiny greater and more glorious than we ever could have conceived in our own minds.

**“No eye has seen, no ear has heard,  
no mind has conceived what  
God has prepared for those who love Him”**

**- 1 Corinthians 2:9**

**Looking at the wound of sin will never save anyone. What we must do is look at the remedy.**

**A person may go to heaven without health, without riches, without honors, without learning or without friends; but he can never go there without Christ.**

**See what you have learned!**

**Answer the following questions...**

**...and know your salvation well!**

- 1. Read Genesis 3 carefully. What were the attitudes that led to this most well-known sin? Do you think you would have done the same?**
- 2. Continuing with the above, just imagine this for a minute: what could God's purposes have been for this couple that they never got to be a part of?**
- 3. Read and memorize Romans 3:23. What does this verse simply state? What are its implications?**
- 4. Why did Jesus bleed and die on the cross for us- why did He have to come?**
- 5. Without repentance there is no \_\_\_\_\_ . What are the 4 signs of true repentance.**
- 6. Consider your own past. What patterns and attitudes do you see in your life's actions & attitudes?**
- 7. Read Romans 10:9, 10. Put it to memory!**