

All Have Sinned

(Adapted from *Path to Righteousness* by Linda Poitras)

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

Are we not innocent and good from the beginning of our lives? Do we not have a heart that desires to do good and right? I wish these questions could be answered with a “yes” voice. Unfortunately, they cannot. But why not? What has caused us to be “sinners?”

In the Word of God, we find the answer to every question in life. These questions are addressed in both the Old and New Testaments.

I. The Old Testament Speaks

From the beginning, God had a plan. He did not create the world without a vision or goal in mind. He knew what He wanted His creation to do. He also knew how He wanted to bless and help them along the way. *“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart”* (Jeremiah 29:11-13).

God does not create machines. His creation is able to make up their minds. He created the first man and woman and gave them only *one* restriction – they *must not eat* of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16-17). There was only one thing man must not do, but God left him to choose whether or not he would obey.

“A man is free to make a choice, but not free to choose the consequences.” – T. F. Tenney

There is a basic principle that we need to understand. God had spoken. His Word was clear. He even told man the consequences of a wrong choice. When man doubted God’s Word and did the *one thing* that God had told him he must not do, God’s Word was *still* clear. God could not go against His own Word. He had to keep His promise of death.

The remaining portion of Genesis chapter three tells what God did because of Adam and Eve’s disobedience. He told them exactly what life was going to be like from that point on, and history bears witness that His pronouncement was correct. God said:

“...for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17).

The fact that Adam and Eve did not fall dead as soon as they ate of the fruit (like one would do when poisoned) has caused many people to doubt this scripture. Yes, Adam and Eve were still breathing after they disobeyed God. But their bodies began a process that eventually ended in death for them physically. The Bible tells that God put an angel at the entrance to the Garden of Eden to make sure they did not eat of the Tree of

Life and live forever. This was not the tree God had commanded them not to eat of before. But after their disobedience, they were barred from eating of it (Genesis 3:24).

Adam and Eve did die that day – they died spiritually! No more walking with God in the cool of the evening, no more close communion with Him daily. In fact, the Bible does not record God having another personal conversation with Adam. What a terrible price to pay for one piece of fruit that “*was good for food*” and “*pleasant to the eyes,*” and a “*tree to be desired to make one wise*” (Genesis 3:6).

This is the first reference made to the lust of the flesh (*was good for food*); lust of the eyes (*was pleasant to the eyes*); and the pride of life (*to be desired to make one wise*). We cannot blame God when we sin. It is our own failure to heed God’s Word and obey His voice.

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man; But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1:13-15).

“And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life; And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Genesis 3:14-15).

The serpent did not go unpunished. Before he was used by Satan, he had been more subtle (cunning or clever) than any beast of the field. The fact he could talk did not frighten Eve – she must have been used to it. The serpent certainly is not such an animal today. He now slithers along on the ground, without love from man or beast.

“Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Genesis 3:16).

When a woman gives birth to a child, she suffers pain and sorrow. She can never produce a child without a man, therefore her desire is towards him.

“And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Genesis 3:17-19).

Around the world, men struggle, sweat, and toil to bring the things they need out of the ground. They work hard to put bread on the table for their families, just as God said many hundreds of years ago.

“The most harmful part of sin is that it keeps us from God.”

Adam and Eve began this thing we call “sin” when they chose to perform “an action contrary to the law of God” (according to *Webster’s Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language – Deluxe Edition*). The shepherd/king – David – wrote that

this tendency toward sin began in us at the time of conception in our mother’s womb. *“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 51:5).*

The greatest disaster to result from Adam and Eve’s decision, was their separation from God. No longer did they commune with Him daily, walking in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day. Now they could not reach God directly. He was unable to come to them as He desired, because their disobedience and unbelief in His Word had built a wall of separation. God had to set in motion another part of His plan.

II. The New Testament Speaks

Does God’s Word tell what “sin” is about? Does it show us His plan to bring us back close to Him? Let us first find out what sin *is*, and how it affects our lives.

The Full Life Study Bible tells us that the Greek words used for “sin” in the New Testament describe different parts of it:

- 1) *hamartia* – wrongdoing, transgression, sin against God (John 9:41).
- 2) *adikia* – wrongdoing, wickedness, or injustice (Romans 1:18; 1 John 5:17) A lack of love, since all wrongdoing stems from a failure to love (Matthew 22:37-40). This word also means – a personal power that can enslave and deceive (Romans 5:12; Hebrews 3:13).
- 3) *anomia* – lawlessness, iniquity, and defiance of the law of God (Romans 6:19; 1 John 3:4).
- 4) *apistia* – disbelief, or unfaithfulness (Romans 3:3; Hebrews 3:12).

What do all these big words mean to me? All of these words from the Greek (the language used to write most of the New Testament) simply mean the basic root of sin is *selfishness*. Therefore we find ourselves on the “Road to please self – the Sin Road.”

- 📖 Sin begins with a grasping of things or pleasures for ourselves, regardless of the welfare of others and commandments of God.
- 📖 This leads to cruelty to others and rebellion against God and His law.
- 📖 Finally, sin becomes the refusal to be subject to God and His Word (Romans 1:18-25; 8:7).
- 📖 It is enmity against God (Romans 5:10; 8:7; Colossians 1:21).
- 📖 It is disobedience and unbelief (Romans 11:32; Galatians 3:22; Ephesians 2:2; 5:6).
- 📖 Sin is not just wrong actions, it is a failure to do what we know is right. *“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin”* (James 4:17).
- 📖 All unrighteousness is sin (1 John 5:17).

Adam and Eve did not want to do what God said was right; they wanted to find out for *themselves* about good and evil. Since the day they made that choice, all humanity has been struggling with the same thing.

Sin makes it impossible to follow our best human intentions.

- 📖 It causes us to commit unrighteousness with delight (Genesis 6:5).
- 📖 It makes us take pleasure in the evil actions of others (Romans 1:32).
- 📖 It is powerful enough to enslave us and corrupt as we give ourselves over to it (Romans 3:9; 6:12; 7:14; Galatians 3:22).
- 📖 It is rooted in human desire (James 1:14; 4:1-2; 1 Peter 2:11).

Sin is something we all struggle with.

- 📖 Sin was brought into the human race through Adam (Romans 5:12).
- 📖 Sin affects everyone (Romans 5:12; Romans 3:23).
- 📖 Sin results in divine judgment (Romans 1:18).
- 📖 Sin brings physical and spiritual death (Genesis 2:17; Romans 6:23; James 1:15).

How can we get rid of this sin/curse? The New Testament is a special account of another part of God’s plan for man – Jesus.

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:22).

He *knew* no sin, but he *became* sin for us. He came to lead us to follow Him.

📖 God knew as soon as Adam and Eve chose to know “good and evil” that He would have to do something about it. The next time He came close to mankind, He would have to do it in a different form. He would take on the same “flesh” that He had created for them. He “became flesh” and dwelt among us (John 1:14).

📖 The only way to eliminate the power of sin is by faith in Jesus Christ and His redemptive work for all men (Romans 5:8-11; Galatians 3:13; Ephesians 4:20-24; 1 John 1:9; Revelation 1:5). There is a lovely story in the Gospel of John where Jesus told how this must be: *“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”* (John 3:3).

“He came to save us, not from poverty, or from ignorance, or from the ghetto, but from our sins. Sin must be dealt with first.”
(Vance Havner)

Jesus was trying to help Nicodemus understand that the first time you are born (flesh) you are born with a selfish, sinful nature. When you are born “again” of water and Spirit, you are now a part of His spiritual family – with an eternal home in heaven. What a blessed hope we have in Jesus!

📖 Romans 5:12, 19-21 tells us, *“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

📖 In the writings to various New Testament churches, this wonderful plan that God had to bring us back into communication and fellowship with Him is spoken of again: *“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive”* (1 Corinthians 15:22). *“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation”* (Hebrews 9:27-28).

III. God’s Plan Will Lead Us in the Way We Ought to Go.

God still has a plan! He wants to help every way He can. He willingly paid the ultimate price (His shed blood) to be sure we could get off this path of sin and find a new road. Listen to the Apostle Paul as he writes to the church at Rome with this blessed hope:

📖 *“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God”* (Romans 6:12-13).

- 📖 *“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Romans 6:16-18).*
- 📖 *“For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:20-23).*

Let us not continue in “self” and sin, but let us seek and obey Christ Jesus our Lord.

Study Questions

1. What was the one restriction God placed on Adam and Eve after He created them and placed them in the Garden of Eden? (Support your answer with Scripture reference.)

2. After they had sinned, why did God put an angel at the entrance to the Garden of Eden? (Support your answer with Scripture reference.) _____

3. What is the basic principle involved in the story of Eve’s deception and fall? (Support your answer with Scripture reference.) _____

4. How does James 1:13-15 relate to the deception and sin of Eve and Adam? _____

5. List the results (curse/punishment) given to each participant of Adam and Eve's decision to disobey God. (Support with Scripture reference.)

1) Adam _____

2) Eve _____

3) The serpent _____

6. Given the following Greek words used for "sin" in the New Testament, describe what each one means. Support your answer with the Scripture reference where this word is found.

1) *apistia* _____

2) *hamartia* _____

3) *anomia* _____

4) *adikia* _____

7. Given the following Scripture references, write what each tells us about the struggle we ALL have with sin.

1) James 1:15 _____

2) Romans 5:12 _____

3) Romans 1:18 _____

4) Genesis 2:17 _____

5) Romans 3:23 _____

8. Given the following Scripture references, write what each tells us about God's plan to remove/take care of the sin we all struggle with.

1) John 1:14 _____

2) 1Corinthians 15:22 _____

3) Galatians 3:13 _____

4) John 3:3 _____

5) Hebrews 9:27-28 _____

9. What New Testament Scripture references give us the hope of overcoming sin as related by the Apostle Paul? _____

Additional Notes