

Are All Sins The Same?
(appropriate for Mid Schoolers and older)
Michael R. Daily, March 2021

Other youth bible studies by Michael Daily available at: <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>

Sin is us taking God's rightful place as Lord of our lives. Its using what He gave us for our own purposes instead of His.

Sin is so much a part of us we often have a hard time recognizing it.

I John 1:8-9

If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The Bible tells us that, because of our sin nature, sin comes as naturally to us as drinking a glass of water!

Job 15:16

How much less one who is detestable and corrupt, Man, who drinks iniquity like water!

Iniquity: *gross injustice, wickedness; a wicked act or thing; sin*

Would you like to see a demonstration right now of how much I hate sin? (take a drink of water). Ah, refreshing! That is how much I hate sin. And that is how much you hate sin also.

Even as Christians, sin is a constant struggle for us. For example, the immature Christian sees prayer as a way to get God to run to and fro doing the Christian's will.

James 4:3

You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.

Only after he matures does the Christian realize that prayer is really about God getting us to run to and fro doing His will!

Psalms 37:4

Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart.

John 15:7

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

We know from Ecclesiastes 11:9 that this verse does not mean that God will fulfill all of our worldly or fleshly desires.

Ecclesiastes 11:9

Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things.

What Psalm 37:4 means is that as we spend time with Him in the Word and prayer and obeying Him, God will change the desires of our hearts to more closely match His will.

He will give your heart new desires that are in alignment with His own!

One of the things I most look forward to in heaven is that, unlike now, every desire and impulse I will have in my new resurrected body will always also be 100% God's will. We have never experienced that before!

Today, I may get an impulse. I would like to do "X". "X" would be fun. But then I have to stop and ask myself, "Is this God's will or is it my flesh wanting to do something that will be destructive for me? What does the Bible say about this impulse? Am I being tempted? What should I do? In heaven we will never have to worry about that again. Any impulse or desire of our resurrected bodies will, by definition, be 100% God's will!

(Romans 7:21-25)

I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. ²² For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, ²³ but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

The problem with sin is that it separates us from God.

Isaiah 59:2

But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.

And it only takes one sin to do that. It only takes one sin to separate us from God forever!

James 2:10

For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one *point*, he has become guilty of all.

So, any single sin separates us from God forever. This is why we can't earn our way to heaven. By the time we were old enough to even understand what sin was we had already committed multiple sins!

That is why we need a savior to pay for our sins.

Even so the Bible tells us that not all sins are equal.

For example, the Bible teaches that failure to pray is sin.

1 Samuel 12:23

Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you; but I will instruct you in the good and right way.

But the sin of failure-to-pray is not the same as the sins of murder, rape, or kidnapping, for example. The consequences for other people are very different. If I was pastoring a church, the controls I would put in place around a support group for those recovering from a failure-to-pray problem would be very different from the controls I would require for a pedophile recovery support group!

God also addresses different sins differently on Earth in terms of discipline. For example, a Christian who rebels in willfull, continuous, unrepentant sin may have his life on Earth cut short by God even though he would still go to heaven after death.

1 John 5:16-17

If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not *leading* to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not *leading* to death. There is a sin *leading* to death; I do not say that he should make request for this. ¹⁷ All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not *leading* to death.

For a detailed study on this topic please see, "The Prime Directive", available at:

<http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>

The Bible also teaches that even in eternity there will be more severe punishment for some sins than others. Its hard to relate to severe eternal punishment vs more severe eternal punishment but that is what the Bible tells us is true.

Luke 12:42-48

And the Lord said, “Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time? ⁴³ Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. ⁴⁴ Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

⁴⁵ But if that slave says in his heart, ‘My master will be a long time in coming,’ and begins to beat the slaves, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk; ⁴⁶ the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

⁴⁷ And that slave who knew his master’s will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes,

⁴⁸ but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more

This passage is discussing 3 different types of non-christians. The first (verses 45-46) is one who knows what is correct and intentionally and actively goes in the opposite direction. This is the apostate non-christian. The person who grew up in the church and fully understands the gospel and was involved in the ministry, perhaps even as a leader (ex: Judas Iscariot) but has actively rejected Christ. This person receives the worst punishment (cut to pieces).

The second type of person (verse 47) is the one who has been immersed in the church, who knows the gospel, and knows what to do, but instead of accepting Christ as Savior and Lord they continue to live life by following their routines and habits. These non-christians will receive the second harshest punishment (many lashes).

The third type of non-christian (verse 48) is not knowledgeable of the gospel or God’s Word. If you say, “John 3:16” to these people they have no idea what you are talking about. If you say the word, “saved” out loud they think you are from an alien planet. These will receive the least harsh punishment (a few lashes).

This passage is not referring to losing salvation but to differing degrees of punishment in the Lake of Fire. Just as there are differing degrees of eternal rewards in heaven for Christian obedience, there will be differing degrees of intensity of punishment in the Lake of Fire for non-christians.

Conclusions

It only takes one sin to be separated from God forever.

And sin comes so naturally to us that before we were old enough to even understand the deadliness of one sin, we had already committed numerous sins.

So, there was never any hope that we could earn our way to heaven by being good.

Even so not all sins are the same.

Some sins affect other people more severely than other sins, God disciplines some sins on Earth more than others, and God punishes some sins in eternity more severely than He does others.

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Are All Sins The Same?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I John 1:8-9*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

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