

CORNERSTONE
Bible Church

Theology for LIFE



LESSON #2: HAMARTIOLOGY

HAMARTIOLOGY

— Lesson #2 —

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Meaning “the study of sin,” hamartiology deals with the origin and nature of sin, and its consequences for the world of men, angels, and the created order.

–INTRODUCTION

QUOTE:

“The history of the human race as presented in Scripture is primarily a history of man in a state of sin and rebellion against God, and of God’s plan of redemption to bring man back to Himself.” –Wayne Grudem

Quote:

“The doctrine of Sin is both extremely important and much disputed. It is important because it affects and is also affected by many other areas of doctrine. Our view of the nature of God influences our understanding of sin. If God is a very high, pure, and exacting being Who expects all humans to be as He is, then the slightest deviation from His lofty standard is sin, and man’s condition is very serious. If, on the other hand, God is Himself rather imperfect, or if He is an indulgent, grandfatherly type of being and perhaps a bit senile so that He is unaware of much that is going on, then man’s condition is not so serious. Thus, in a real sense our doctrine of sin will be a reflection of our doctrine of God.” –Millard Erickson

Quote:

“When we are sick physically and know that we are sick, we seek out a doctor and follow his prescription for a cure. But if we did not know we are sick, we would not seek help and might well perish from the illness. It is the same spiritually. If we think we are well, we will never accept God’s cure; we think we do not need it. Instead, if by God’s grace we become aware of our sickness –actually, of something [much] worse than sickness, of spiritual death so far as any meaningful response to God is concerned–then we have a basis for understanding the meaning of Christ’s work on our behalf, and can embrace Him as Savior and be transformed by Him” –James Boice

1A: The Definition of Sin

Sin is a failure to conform to God's standard of _____.

The Greek word *hamartia* literally means to "miss the mark."

Romans 3:23

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Sin is any failure to conform to the _____ of God in nature, attitude, word, or act.

1B. SINFUL NATURE

Sin is not merely an act; it is an inner _____ of hostility and rebellion against God, an essence which dwells within all of mankind.

Our very _____, the essence of who we are as persons, is sinful (Gen. 6:5; 8:21; Job 15:14; Rom. 7:14, 17-25; Rom. 8:7; Eph. 2:3; James 4:4).

Our sin nature inclines the human heart to a deification of _____ and a failure to love, honor, and serve God (Gen. 3:5; Ex. 20:3; Deut. 5:7; Isa. 14:12-15; Mark 12:30; 2 Tim. 3:2-4).

Thus, we are not sinners because we sin; but rather we sin because we are sinners!!!

2B. SINFUL ATTITUDES

Sin manifests itself in attitudes that are _____ to the attitudes God requires of us.

For example, note the sinful attitudes in the following verses.

Exodus 20:17 *"You shall not **covet**..."*

Mat. 5:22 *"But I say to you that everyone who is **angry** with his brother shall be guilty..."*

Gal. 5:19-21 *"Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are... **enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger**..."*

3B. SINFUL WORDS

Jesus taught that sinful hearts spill out into sinful words (Luke 6:45). Many different sins of speech are condemned in Scripture:

- _____, in the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:16 ; Deut. 5:20),
- _____, in the Sermon on the Mount (Mat. 5:33-37),
- _____ words, filthiness, silly talk, and coarse jesting, in Paul's epistles (Eph. 4:29; 5:4).

4B. SINFUL ACTS

Sin is also wrongful acts, first toward God and then toward man (against God: Gen. 39:9; Psalm 51:6; Mat. 22:36-40; Luke 15:18; against man: Ex. 20:1-11; Dt. 5:6-21).

This involves both sins of _____ (doing wrong–James 4:2) as well as _____ (failing to do right–James 4:17).

In all these areas, sinfulness is demonstrated by lack of conformity to the moral law of God (Rom. 2:17-29).

We know from experience that sin is harmful to our lives, and that it brings painful, destructive consequences to us and to others. But sin is more than painful or destructive—it is _____ in the deepest sense of the word. It is directly opposite to all that is good in the character of God. Sin contradicts God's holiness, and He must hate it.

2A: The Origin of Sin

God did not sin, and God is not to be _____ for sin.

God is perfect (Deut. 32:4; Gen. 18:25; Job 34:10).

It was angels and man who sinned, and in both cases they did so by willful, voluntary choice.

James 1:13 *Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for **God cannot be tempted by evil**, and **He Himself does not tempt** anyone.*

Sin was present in the _____ world before the Fall of Man. But with respect to the _____, the first sin was that of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-19).

Their sin struck at the basis for _____, for it gave a different answer to the question, "What is true?" Eve decided to doubt the truth of God's Word.

Their sin also struck at the basis for _____ **standards**, for it gave a different answer to the question "What is right?" God told them what was morally right (don't eat from that tree), but Eve trusted her own evaluation of what was right and what was wrong.

Their sin struck at the basis of their _____, for it gave a different answer to the question, "Who am I?" Adam succumbed to the temptation to "be like God" (Gen. 3:5), thus attempting to put himself in the place of God.

The Bible contains an accurate _____ account of the fall of Adam and Eve. The New Testament authors look back on this account and affirm that...

Rom. 5:12 ...just as **through one man sin entered into the world**, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.

2 Cor. 11:3 But I am afraid that, **as the serpent deceived Eve** by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

1 Tim. 2:14 *And it was not Adam who was deceived, but **the woman being deceived, fell** into transgression.*

All sin is ultimately _____. It did not make sense for Satan to rebel against God; nor did it make sense for Adam and Eve to think there could be any gain in disobeying the words of their Creator.

Sin is still just as foolish today (Prov. 10:23; 12:15; 14:7).

3A: The Doctrine of Inherited Sin



How does the sin of Adam affect us?

1B. IMPUTED GUILT

We are counted guilty because of Adam's sin; this is a _____ guilt.

Rom. 5:12 *Therefore, just as **through one man** sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—*

1 Cor. 15:22 *For as **in Adam all die**....*

Quote:

"Mankind is a single entity, constituting a divinely ordered solidarity. Adam represents the entire human race that is descended from him, no matter how many subgroups there may be. Therefore when Adam sinned, all mankind sinned, and because his first sin transformed his inner nature, that now depraved nature was also transmitted to his posterity. Because he became spiritually polluted, all his descendants would be polluted in the same way. That pollution has, in fact, accumulated and intensified throughout the ages of human history. Instead of evolving, as humanists insist, man has devolved, degenerating into greater and greater sinfulness" –John MacArthur

All humanity was "seminally present" in Adam when Adam sinned, and therefore all humanity participated in the sin. Therefore, the sin of Adam and the resultant _____ is charged to all humanity.

This is NOT referring to our daily sins, but to our inherited sin _____.

Rom. 5:8 *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that **while we were yet sinners**, Christ died for us.*

We had not been born yet when Christ died, but God still thought of us as sinners.

Rom. 5:18 *So then as through one transgression there **resulted condemnation to all men...***

Psa. 51:5 *Behold, I was brought forth **in iniquity**, and **in sin** my mother conceived me.*

This does not mean that David's mother was an adulteress; it's speaking of the inherent _____ to sin that attaches to our lives from the very beginning.

This doctrinal truth always prompts the question of _____. Is it fair that Adam's posterity should be constituted sinners just because he sinned? Does God condemn men for being born sinners, or only for those sins which they have actually committed? If men are born with a sinful nature, and if they therefore sin because they are born sinners, how can God hold them responsible for what they do?

While at first glance that objection appears to be irrefutably logical, there are several other truths that must be weighed into the discussion.

1. Everyone who protests that this is unfair has also _____ committed many actual sins for which God also holds us guilty. These personal sins constitute the basis for our judgment on the last day.

Rom. 2:6 *Who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS...*

Col. 3:25 *For he who does wrong will receive **the consequences of the wrong which he has done**, and that without partiality.*

2. If any one of us had been in Adam's place, we also would have sinned as he did, and our subsequent rebellion against God demonstrates that.

3. If we think it unfair to have Adam's sin imputed to us, then we should also think it is unfair for us to be represented by Christ and to have His _____ imputed to us by God. For the procedure that God used was just the same.

Rom. 5:19 *For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, **even so** through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.*

4. At enormous cost, God sent His Son to die as a _____ for sinners.

Salvation from sin and its wages is offered as a free gift through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Quote:

"God regards the human race as an organic whole, a unity, represented by Adam as its head. And God also thinks of the new race of Christians, those who are redeemed by Christ, as an organic whole, a unity represented by Christ as Head of His people" – Wayne Grudem

2B. INHERITED CORRUPTION

In addition to our **legal guilt** we have an inherited _____ because of Adam's sin.

Sometimes the term " _____ " is used. "Original sin" does not refer to Adam's first sin, but to the guilt and tendency to sin with which we are born. It is *original* in that it comes from Adam, and it is also *original* in that we have it from the beginning of our existence as persons; but it is still _____, not Adam's sin, that is meant.

Psa. 58:3 *The wicked are estranged **from the womb**; these who speak lies go astray **from birth**.*

Children illustrate the fact that we are all born with a tendency to sin. They don't need to be _____ how to do wrong. On the contrary, they have to be taught to do right (Eph. 6:4).

3B. IMPENDING DEATH

Rom. 5:12 *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so **death spread to all men**, because all sinned—*

Quote:

“Even tiny babies can die, not because they have committed sins, but because they have a sin nature, the ultimate consequence of which is death. A person does not become a sinner by committing sins, but rather commits sins because he is by nature a sinner. A person does not become a liar when he tells a lie; he tells a lie because his heart is already deceitful. A person does not become a murderer when he kills someone; he kills because his heart is already murderous” –John MacArthur

Death has three distinct manifestations:

1. _____ **death** or separation from God (Eph. 2:1, 5);
2. _____ **death** (Heb. 9:27); and
3. _____ **death** (also called “*the second death*”), which includes not only eternal separation from God, but eternal torment in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:11-15).

Nowhere in Scripture is anyone ever threatened with Hell merely for the guilt inherited from Adam. Instead, whenever Scripture describes the inhabitants of Hell, the stress is on their _____ acts of sin and rebellion (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:6; Rev. 21:8, 22:15).

Scripture connects eternal condemnation with works of unrighteousness –willful sin.

The sin of Adam and the resulting guilt explain our _____ to be reconciled to God without being saved, but the Bible does not teach that we will answer or be

held accountable for Adam's sin. **We will answer for our own sin.**

The primary damning work of the sinner is _____ (John 3:36, 8:21-24). Unbelief produces evil works. The record of each individual's evil works will be revealed at the Great White Throne Judgment as the grounds for his eternal condemnation (Rev. 20:11-15).

4A: Total Depravity *or* Total Inability

Many who hear the term "total depravity" think it means that all sinners are as _____ as they possibly can be.

That is simply not true; there are people who have striven toward virtue throughout their lives, and they are commendable from a human point of view.

Quote:

"...[some people] have excelled in remarkable deeds and conducted themselves most honorably throughout life." – John Calvin

Theologians call this _____ –God's restraining influence that mitigates the effects of our sin and enables even fallen creatures to display—never perfectly, but in a weak and severely blemished way—the image of God that is still part of our human nature, marred though it was by the Fall. The constraints of civil law, the expectations of family and society, and the conviction of the human conscience (Rom 2:14-15) are all used by God to provide restraining influences on our behavior.

Depravity is “total” in the sense that it _____ every part of our being—not the body only; not the feelings alone; but flesh, spirit, mind, emotions, desires, motives, and will together.

Quote:

“To magnify human free will or minimize the extent of human depravity is to downplay the need for divine grace, and that undermines every aspect of Gospel truth.” – John Calvin

Because of our inherited corruption, and because God’s holy nature demands perfection, **we are not able to do anything that pleases Him.**

Rom. 8:8 ...those who are in the flesh **cannot please God.**

1B. DEPRAVED NATURE

In our _____ we totally lack spiritual good before God.

Scripture compares the sinner’s plight to several _____ conditions—death, total blindness, hopeless slavery, utter hardness of heart, permanent dullness of hearing, and incurable sickness.

Rom. 7:18 For I know that **in me** (that is, in my flesh) **nothing good dwells**; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find (Jer. 17:9; Titus 1:15).

In these passages, Scripture is not denying that unbelievers can do good in human society in some sense. But it is denying that they can do any _____ good or be good in terms of a relationship with God (Eph 4:18).

2B. DEPRAVED ACTIONS

In our _____ we are totally unable to do spiritual good before God.

As sinners we lack the ability to do anything that will in itself please God (John 8:34; Eph. 2:1-2; Heb. 11:6).

Unbelievers are not even able to _____ the things of God correctly, for the "natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (**1 Cor. 2:14**).

Nor can we _____ to God in our own power, for Jesus says, "No one can come to Me unless the Father Who sent Me draws him..." (**John 6:44**).

5A: Freedom of Choice

The question then arises, if we have a total inability to do any spiritual good in God's sight, then do we still have any freedom of _____?

Those outside of Christ do still make voluntary choices—that is, they decide what they want to do, then they do it. In this sense there is still a kind of " _____ " in the choices that people make.

And yet, unbelievers do not have freedom in the most important sense of freedom—that is, the freedom to _____ and to _____ what is pleasing to God.

Quote:

"All humans are free agents in the sense that they make their own decisions as to what they will do, choosing as they please in light of their sense of right and wrong and the inclinations they feel. They are moral agents, answerable to God and each other for their voluntary choices." – J. I. Packer

Quote:

"Free will, however, has been defined by Christian teachers from the second century on as the ability to choose all the moral options that a situation offers, and Augustine affirmed... that original sin has robbed us of free will in this sense. We have no natural ability to discern and choose God's way because we have not natural inclination Godward; our hearts are in bondage to sin, and only the grace of regeneration can free us from that slavery" – J. I. Packer

Quote:

"The application for our lives is quite evident: if God gives anyone a desire to repent and trust in Christ, he or she should not delay and should not harden his or her heart (Heb. 3:7-8; 12:17). This ability to repent and desire to trust in God is not naturally ours but is given by the prompting of the Holy Spirit, and it will not last forever." – Wayne Grudem

Heb. 3:15 Today, if you will hear His voice, **do not harden your hearts** as in the rebellion.

6A: Actual Sin in Our Lives

1B. UNIVERSALITY OF SIN

_____ people are sinful before God.

Psa. 14:3 *They have **all** turned aside, together they have become corrupt; there is **no one** who does good, **not even one** (Psa. 143:2; 1 Kings 8:46; Prov. 20:9; Rom. 3:9-10; 23).*

2B. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SINNER

The idea that we are responsible before God only for what we are able to do is contrary to the testimony of Scripture, which affirms both that we "were dead through the trespasses and sins" in which we once walked (Eph 2:1) and thus _____ to do any spiritual good, **and** also that we are all guilty before God (inherited sin).

The true measure of our responsibility and guilt is not our own ability to obey God, but rather the absolute _____ of God's moral law and His own _____ which is reflected in that law.

Mat. 5:48 *"Therefore you are to be **perfect**, as your **heavenly Father is perfect.**"*

3B. AGE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Even before birth, children have a guilty standing before God and a sinful nature that not only gives them a tendency to sin, but also causes God to view them as sinners (Psa. 51:5; 58:3).

The salvation of infants cannot be on the basis of their own righteousness or innocence, but it must be entirely on the basis of Christ's _____ work.

It is **God's frequent** _____ **throughout Scripture to save the children of those who believe in Him** (Gen. 7:1; Heb 11:7; Josh 2:18; Psa. 103:17; John 4:53; Acts 1:14; 11:14; 16:31; 18:8; 1 Cor 1:16; 7:14; Titus 1:6), though these passages do not show that God automatically saves _____ the children of _____ believers (e.g., Esau; Absalom).

When David's newborn son died, he said in **2 Sam. 12:23**, "**I will go to him**, but he will not return to me."

David had confidence that he would see his infant son again when he died, which implies that his son would be in the presence of the Lord forever.

In his book, ***Safe in the Arms of God***, John MacArthur lays out the following points:

1. God considers all babies to be His, and He loves all who are His "*innocent*" little ones.

Ezk. 16:20-22 "Moreover, you took your sons and daughters whom you had **borne to Me** and sacrificed them to idols to be devoured. Were your harlotries so small a matter? You slaughtered **My children** and offered them up to idols by causing them to pass through the fire."

Jer. 19:4-5 "Because they have **forsaken Me**... and because they have filled this place with the blood of **the innocent** and have built the high places of Baal **to burn their sons** in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, **a thing which I never commanded or spoke of, nor did it ever enter My mind**;" (see also God's pity on the children of Nineveh in Jonah 4:11).

2. The "age of accountability" is not truly one of "age" but rather " ." All children are unique in their development and exposure to the truth. There is no one age in the Bible at which all children are declared to be "accountable."

3. Every child who dies before reaching a condition of _____ goes instantly to Heaven at death. Such a child has not reached sufficient mature understanding to comprehend convincingly the issues of law and grace, sin and salvation. Only God knows when this will happen in the life of a child.
4. Romans 1:18 says, "For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness...."

No miscarried or aborted baby, no infant or toddler _____ God's truth. They have no understanding, no basis on which to believe or not believe. They are incapable of discerning right from wrong, sin from righteousness, and evil from goodness. They have no record of unbelief or evil works, and therefore no basis for deserving an eternity apart from God (Deut 1:39).

Some children, due to mental impairment, _____ reach such a level of maturation.

5. Jesus was fully aware of the realities of His life as the **Son of God** at the age of 12. This may be a good age to look for the condition of accountability.
6. Scripture clearly teaches that the children of idolatrous parents are considered _____ in God's eyes until they reach a state of moral culpability (Jer 19:4-7). The Israelite children of sinful parents were allowed to enter fully into the blessing God had for His people. They were in no way held accountable, responsible, or punishable for the sins of their parents.

Deut. 1:39 "Moreover, your little ones whom you said would become a prey, **and your sons, who this day have no knowledge of good or evil**, shall enter there, and I will give it to them and they shall possess it" (see also Ezk. 18:20, and the example of Jeroboam's son in 1 Kings 14:12-13).

7. A number of passages in Scripture record disturbing violence against children. How is it that we can square the argument that God loves and has compassion on children when He also foretells of children being dashed to pieces (Nahum 3:10; Psa. 137:8-9) as part of the conquest of those who come against His people?

The only way to reconcile this is to understand that those children experienced a better life after their deaths than they would have had they lived to _____ on this earth. The life they experience with God in eternity so far surpasses any good they may have experienced on this earth that there truly is no comparison. (See Job 3:11-19 where he compares his life of misery with that of the stillborn child, and concludes that the stillborn child is better off than he. See also Solomon's words in Eccl. 6:3-6).

Quote:

"We might look at the Biblical data and conclude that when God takes the life of a little one, it is actually an act of mercy keeping that child from being hardened by a life of exposure to evil and a life of deliberate rebellion against God" – Phil Johnson

8. _____ held children in very high regard.
Mat. 18:3-5 "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me" (see Mat. 19:14; Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16).
9. Every tribe, tongue, and people will be represented in Heaven—including the children of people groups who were wiped out without ever receiving a _____.

Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from **every tribe and tongue and people and nation.**"

Everyone in Heaven, including infants, will have been saved by the _____ work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

(Please note—There are NO examples nor teaching of _____ in Scripture! That would be salvation by works.)

4B. DEGREES OF SIN

The question often arises, "Are some sins worse than others?"

There is a sense in which all sins are _____, because they all fail to meet God's standard of perfect righteousness, hence they all deserve punishment in Hell.

However there is another sense in which there ARE varying degrees of _____, and consequently, there will be varying degrees of _____ in Hell.

1. Equally _____

Any **one** sin, even what may seem to be a very small one, makes us **legally guilty** before God and therefore is worthy of eternal punishment.

Rom. 5:16 ...for on the one hand the judgment arose from **one transgression** resulting in **condemnation**...

James 2:10-11 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet **stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.**

2. _____ punished

Some sins are worse than others in that they have more harmful _____ in our lives and in the lives of others; and in terms of our personal relationship to God as Father, they arouse His displeasure more and bring more serious disruption to our fellowship with Him.

John 19:11 Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you **has the greater sin.**"

3. _____ sin

Sins done willfully, repeatedly, and knowingly, with a calloused heart, are more displeasing to God than those done out of ignorance and not repeated.

Sins that are committed with _____ and disdain for God's commandments are viewed very seriously.

Num. 15:30 But the person who does anything **defiantly**, whether he is native or an alien, that one is **blaspheming the Lord**; and that person shall be cut off from among his people.

Mat. 11:23-24 "And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to Heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. Nevertheless I say to you that it will be **more tolerable** for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you."

4. _____ sin

Unintentional sin is still _____.

Lev. 4:22 *When a leader sins and **unintentionally** does any one of all the things which the LORD his God has commanded not to be done, **and he becomes guilty...*** (see Lev. 4:2, 13, 22, 5:17).

Luke 12:48 "...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" (see Rom. 1:22 & 2:12-16).

5. _____ sin

Because of their position as preachers of truth, God holds leaders accountable in a special way.

James 3:1 Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a **stricter judgment**.

However, the distinction between degrees of seriousness of sin does NOT imply an endorsement of the Roman Catholic teaching that sin can be put into the two categories of "*venial*" and "*mortal*."

Venial sin (dishonesty, lust, anger, etc.) can be forgiven, but only after punishments in this life or in purgatory.

A mortal sin (suicide, murder, etc.) is a sin that causes spiritual death and cannot be forgiven; it excludes people from the Kingdom of God.

According to Scripture, all sins are “mortal” in that even the smallest sin makes us legally guilty before God and worthy of eternal punishment. Yet even the most serious of sins are forgiven when one comes to Christ for salvation (example in 1 Cor. 6:9-11) So, in that sense all sins are “venial.”

7A: A Christian’s Sin

1B. DECREED JUSTIFICATION

When a believer sins, his legal standing as “_____” remains unchanged. He is still forgiven. Christ’s death paid for all our sins—past, present, and future. So when Christians sin they still keep their justification.

Romans 8:1 *Therefore there is now **no condemnation** for those who are **in Christ Jesus**.*

When Christians sin, they still remain in God’s family. In the same epistle in which John says, “*If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us*” (1 John 1:8), he also reminds his readers, “*Beloved, now we **are** children of God...*” (1 John 3:2).

2B. DISRUPTED FELLOWSHIP

However, our fellowship with God is disrupted, and our Christian life is damaged. And our Heavenly Father will _____ us to teach us to stay on the path of righteousness.

Isa. 59:1-2 *“Behold, the Lord’s hand is not so short that it cannot save; nor is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. **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.”*

Heb. 12:6 For those whom the Lord loves He **disciplines**, and He **scourges** every son whom He receives (see Prov. 3:11-12).

Heb. 12:9-10 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but **He disciplines us for our good**, so that we may share His holiness.

Rev. 3:19 "Those whom I love, **I reprove and discipline**; therefore be zealous and repent."

Quote:

"Although they never can fall from the state of justification, yet they may, by their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure, and not have the light of His countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance"
– Westminster Confession of Faith

3B. DIMINISHED FRUITFULNESS

When we sin, not only is our personal relationship with God disrupted, our Christian life and _____ in ministry is also damaged.

In the New Testament we are frequently warned not to yield to sin.

Rom. 6:16 "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of **sin resulting in death**, or of **obedience resulting in righteousness**?"

To give in to sinful desires is to assist the enemy. We will inevitably feel loss of spiritual _____ and loss of _____ in ministry.

4B. LOSS OF HEAVENLY REWARD

Paul teaches there are degrees of _____ in Heaven, and that sin has negative consequences in terms of loss of heavenly rewards.

1 Cor. 3:12-15 *"Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, **he will suffer loss**; but **he himself will be saved**, yet so as through fire" (see also 2 Cor. 5:10).*

8A: The Unpardonable Sin

Several passages in Scripture speak about a sin that will *not* be forgiven.

Mat. 12:31-32 *"Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but **blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven**. Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come" (Mark 3:29-30; Luke 12:10; Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-27; 1 John 5:16-17).*

These passages have in view a specific sin— _____ of the work of the Holy Spirit and speaking evil about it, or willful rejection of the truth of Christ and holding Christ up to "*contempt*" (Heb 6:6).

The Pharisees had seen Jesus' clear demonstrations of the amazing power of the Holy Spirit working through Him. But they willfully rejected Jesus' authority and His teaching and attributed it to the _____.

The context of Matthew 12:31-32 indicates that Jesus is speaking about a sin that is not simply unbelief or rejection of Christ, but one that includes **(1)** a clear _____ of Who Christ is and of the power of the Holy Spirit working through Him, **(2)** a willful _____ of the facts about Christ that His opponents knew to be true, and **(3)** slanderously attributing the work of the Holy Spirit in Christ to the power of _____.

Such hardness of heart is unpardonable because it renders repentance and saving faith impossible.

NOTE: *The fact that the unpardonable sin involves such extreme hardness of heart and lack of repentance indicates that those who **fear** that they have committed it, yet still have **sorrow for sin** in their heart and **desire to seek** after God, certainly do **NOT** fall in the category of those who are guilty of the unpardonable sin.*

9A: The Punishment of Sin

The primary reason that God punishes sin is that God's _____ demands it, so that He might be glorified in the universe that He has created (Jer. 9:23-24).

In the cross we have a clear demonstration of the reason God punishes sin: if He did not punish sin, He would not be a righteous God, and there would be no ultimate _____ in the universe. But when sin is punished, God is showing Himself to be a righteous Judge over all, and justice is being done in His universe.

10A: How to Kill Sin in the Believer's Life

Every believer will and must _____ sin, from the moment of his salvation to the moment he enters eternity. There are some fundamental principles in Scripture which ensure victory in this battle.

1B. Recognize fleshly sin

Any kind of spiritual victory begins by _____ the enemy.

Haggai the prophet repeats the command, "*Consider your ways!... Consider your ways!*" (Hag. 1:5, 7).

1 Kings 8:38 speaks of a repentant believer "*knowing the affliction of his own heart.*"

From these and many other passages, the Bible makes the following point: To kill sin in his life, the believer must begin by examining his own heart to see the _____ of what is there.

2B. Fix heart on God

The Psalmist said in Psalm 57:7, "*My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast....*"

He was speaking of undivided worship in which he was given wholly to God. This attitude must reign in the heart that will conquer sin. The believer must be wholly _____ to God in every area of life. Sin cannot be tolerated in any one area, even if it seems like a relatively small area. It must be _____ everywhere.

3B. Meditate on the Word

The victorious Christian life is a life that meditates on the Word of God (Psalm 1:2). The way to kill sin is to feed it Scripture. Scripture is a spiritual weed-killer, poisoning sin. Sin cannot grow in a Spirit-controlled life. The Spirit renews the believer's _____ through the Word of Christ as it is read, heard, learned, studied, memorized, and meditated on (Rom. 12:2; Col. 3:16-17; Eph. 5:18).

4B. Commune with God in prayer

True prayer _____ with God about what sin is, recognizing that any violation of God's law is a direct affront to Him.

Quote:

*"He who pleads with God for the remission of sin also pleads with his own heart to detest it."
– John Owen*

Quote:

"Gospel repentance is not a little hanging down of the head. It's a working of the heart until your sin becomes more odious to you than any punishment for it." – Richard Sibbes

Such a heart will find the strength to battle sin, for such a heart sees sin as the _____ enemy it truly is.

5B. Cultivate obedience

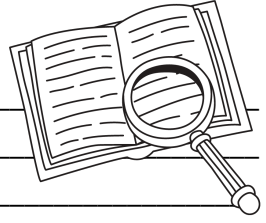
Paul said in **Philippians 3:13-14**, "*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and **reaching forward** to what lies ahead, **I press on** toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*"

Even the Apostle Paul had to deliberately choose and _____ a life of obedience.

Peter speaks of having "*in obedience to the truth purified your souls*" (1 Pet. 1:22).

To be victorious in a real battle with real sin, the believer must set his course, day by day, moment by moment, one step at a time, on the path of _____

Questions to Ask:



Extra Notes:

