

WHAT IS THE DOCTRINE OF SIN?

*Sin is a want of conformity to the will of God; sin is disobedience to God's command; sin is a forgetfulness of the obligations of the relation which exist between the creature and the Creator.*¹⁰ (Charles H. Spurgeon)

*Sin is a universal deformity of human nature, found at every point in every person.*¹¹ (J. I. Packer)

*Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature.*¹² (Wayne Grudem)

Sin in the Bible:

- *Porneia* (NT) – *depravity/corruption*: active intent to harm
- *Kakos* (NT) – *moral badness*: the lack of good
- *Parakoe* (NT) – *disobedience/inattention*: failing to hear or incorrect hearing
- *Shogag* (OT) – *error*: tendency to go astray or to make mistakes
- ‘*Asham* (OT) – *guilt*: to do a wrong, to commit an offense, to inflict injury
- *Asebeia* (NT) – *godlessness*: the contrary of worship or reverence of God
- *Agnoema* (NT) – *ignorance*: darkened in understanding
- ‘*Owel* (OT) – *iniquity/lack of integrity*: a departure from what is right and true
- *Anomia* (NT) – *lawless*: lawbreaker
- *Epithymia* (NT) – *lust*: a corrupt desire that strives after what is inappropriate or illicit
- ‘*Awa* (OT) – *perversion*: to bend or twist
- *Pesha*’ (OT) – *rebellion*: to rebel or disobey
- *Apeitheia* (NT) – *rebellion*: to rebel or disobey
- ‘*Abar* (OT) – *transgression*: to cross over or pass by
- *Parabasis* (NT) – *transgression*: to cross over or pass by
- *Ma'al* (OT) – *treachery*: infidelity or breach of trust
- *Paraptoma* (NT) – *treachery*: infidelity or breach of trust
- *Ra*’ (OT) – *wickedness*: breaking up or ruin
- *Adikeo* (NT) – *unrighteousness*: behavior contrary to the standard of righteousness
- *Chata*’ (OT approx 600 times) – *miss the mark*: deviating from the norm
- *Hamartia* (NT approx 300 times) – *miss the mark*: to err

*Man, as made in the image of God, has implanted within him an innate sense to live as God directs. Every departure from this sense is a coming short of the purpose for which man was made, a missing of the mark.*¹³ (R. Stanton Norman)

¹⁰Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*. Vol. 14. (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1868).

¹¹J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology*, 82.

¹²Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 490.

¹³R. Stanton Norman, “Human Sinfulness,” in *A Theology for the Church*, ed. Daniel L. Akin (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2007), 418.

The Fall:

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. (Genesis 3:6)

... even though we must never say that God himself sinned or he is to be blamed for sin...we must also affirm that the God who “accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will” (Eph. 1:11), did ordain that sin would come into the world, even though he does not delight in it and even though he ordained that it would come about through the voluntary choices of moral creatures.¹⁴ (Wayne Grudem)

The Sin of Adam and Eve¹⁵

1. Their sin struck at the basis for knowledge, for it gave a different answer to the question, “What is true?”
2. Their sin struck at the basis for moral standards, for it gave a different answer to the question, “What is right?”
3. Their sin gave a different answer to the question, “Who am I?”

The Results of the Fall¹⁶

1. The anti-God, self-aggrandizing mindset expressed in Adam’s sin became part of him and the moral nature he passed on to his descendants.
2. Adam and Eve found themselves gripped by a sense of pollution and guilt that made them ashamed and fearful before God—with good reason.
3. They were cursed with expectations of pain and death, and they were expelled from Eden.
4. At the same time, God began showing them mercy.

Original Sin (*Inherited Sin*)

The term “original sin” is not a biblical term but was coined by Augustine to speak of sin derived from our Adamic origin.

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. (Romans 5:12)

1. Sinfulness marks everyone from birth, and is there in the form of a motivationally twisted heart, prior to any actual sins.
2. This inner sinfulness is the root and source of all actual sins
3. It derives to us in a real though mysterious way from Adam, our first representative from God.¹⁷

The assertion of original sin makes the point that we are not sinners because we sin, but rather we sin because we are sinners, born with a nature enslaved to sin.¹⁸ (J. I. Packer)

¹⁴Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 492.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 493.

¹⁶J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology*, 80.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

Total Depravity:

The implication of original sin is total depravity.

*Total depravity is the idea that all of human nature is corrupted by sin. Humankind was originally created to know, love, and serve God perfectly. Depravity is the contamination of these capacities. Our essential nature is corrupted; our relationships with God and others are disrupted. No capacity of our unregenerate nature is free from the pollution of sinful corruption.*¹⁹ (R. Stanton Norman)

*Sin affects every aspect of our being: the body, the soul, the mind, and so forth. The total or whole person is corrupted by sin.*²⁰ (R. C. Sproul)

The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (Genesis 6:5)

Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? There is not one. (Job 14:4)

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. (Psalm 51:5)

... as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. (Romans 3:10-11)

For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (Romans 8:7-8)

→ The Gospel Implications of Total Depravity

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:14)

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. (Ephesians 2:1-3)

And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses. (Colossians 2:13)

*Because of the fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the gospel. The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature, therefore, he will not—indeed he cannot—choose good over evil.*²¹ (David Steele & Curtis Thomas)

¹⁹R. Stanton Norman, "Human Sinfulness," 454.

²⁰R. C. Sproul, *What Is Reformed Theology?*, 118.

How can a right understanding of the doctrine of sin strengthen our intimacy with him?

How can a right understanding of the doctrine of sin strengthen our missional activity?

Lord God, for years we have wandered in the state of spiritual amnesia not knowing who we are, where we came from or what our purpose in life is. We knew not that we were made in Thy image for the single purpose of worshiping and adoring Thee.

*Our plight has been empty and futile. Then Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit, awakened us to our true purpose in life. Now our days are filled with praise. And we praise Thee with our whole being, honoring Thee, adoring Thee in the beauty of Thy holiness. Amen.*²²

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²¹David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas, *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, Documented*. (Phillipsburg, N.J.: The Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Company, 1963), 16.

²²A. W. Tozer, *The Purpose of Man*, (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2009), 17.