

Dealing With Sin

Introduction: The following is the account of the conversion of Ty Cobb, that all-time great who played 3,033 games and for 12 years led the American League in batting averages. For four years, he batted over 400. On his death bed, July 17, 1961, he said, "*You tell the boys I'm sorry it was the last part of the ninth that I came to know Christ. I wish it had taken place in the first half of the first.*"

Everyone must deal with the sin in their life. It is imperative for a person to come to Christ for salvation, like the story of Ty Cobb. But what about a Christian, and their sin.

All are sins equal before God?

The answer to this question is **YES**, all sin is equal in one sense before God, in that it is *a transgression of His Divine Law* (1 John 3:4), *a sin or falling short of His glory* (Rom. 3:23), and *an iniquity that He alone must purge* (Ps. 51:1-5 / Jer. 33:8 / Prov. 16:6).

We have five definitions of sin in the New Testament.

1. **LAWLESSNESS** is Sin. "*Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.*" 1John 3:4. To break any law of God or man is to sin.
2. **NEGLECT** is Sin. "*To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*" James 4:17.
3. **DOUBT** is Sin. "*And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*" Ro 14:23. That is, to do anything we doubt the rightfulness of is SIN.
4. **UNBELIEF** is Sin. "*And when He (the Holy Spirit) is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on ME.*" (Jesus.) John 16:8-9. The crowning sin of all sins is to not believe in Jesus. Men and women are not lost because they are sinners, but because they will not accept Jesus as their Saviour.

5. **ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS** is Sin. "*All unrighteousness is sin.*" 1John 5:17. This is a blanket mortgage that covers every kind of sin.

No matter the type or manner or number – Sin is Sin!

The answer to this question is also **NO** - all sin is not equal in its **degree**, its **consequences**, its **results**, and its **repercussions**.

In the Jewish law, as is indeed the case everywhere, a distinction is made between sins of oversight, inadvertence, or ignorance, (Le 4:2,13,22; 5:15; Nu 15:24,27-29. Comp. Acts 3:17; 17:30,) and sins of presumption; sins that are deliberately and intentionally committed. (Ex 21:14; Nu 15:30; De 17:12; Ps 19:13).

It is obvious to anyone who reads the Scriptures that God treats some sins more seriously than others. Jesus Himself condemned religious hypocrisy more than anything else, pronouncing "*greater damnation*" on those guilty of it (Matt. 23:14).

The Apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, speaks of certain sins as bringing about such judgment as to be given up by God (Rom. 1). The consequences of certain sins to men and the punishment of these sins by man, and even God, are not always equal.

Remember that while Jesus does equate committing adultery with having lust in your heart (Matt. 5:27- 28) and committing murder with having hatred in your heart (Matt. 5:21-22) – He does not mean that these sins are equal nor are their results the same. What Jesus was trying to get across to the Pharisees was that it is still sin even if you only think about or want to do the act. The religious leaders of Jesus' day taught people that it was okay to think about anything you wanted to, as long as you didn't act on those desires.

Jesus is forcing them to realize that God judges a person's thoughts as well as their actions. Jesus proclaimed that our actions are the results of what is in our hearts (Matt. 12:34). So, although Jesus said that lust and adultery are both sins – that does not mean they are equal. It is much worse to actually murder a person than it is to simply hate them – even though both acts are sinful in God's sight.

There are some groups (*Roman Catholicism*) which teach that there are different types of sin, such as, *Venial Sins / Cardinal Sins / Mortal Sins*. They teach that some sins can bring about damnation (mortal) while others (venial) only lessen God's grace in our lives. This is not what the Scriptures teach. All sin, or any sin, brings separation from God and, therefore, places us all under condemnation and in need of the Savior. (Rom. 3:23 / 6:23)

What are the "seven deadly sins," and why are they so particularly bad? Are some sins worse than others?

Proverbs 6:16-19 *These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.*

Answer: The Bible never uses the phrase "seven deadly sins." That is a man-made idea. **The Bible says that EVERY sin is 100% deadly**, in that it causes spiritual death and deserves eternal separation from God. Now, while every sin is equal in the sense that it separates us from God, all sins are not equal in consequences and seriousness. No one would argue that a little white lie is just as bad as adultery. That is foolish. They are both serious in the eyes of God. They both deserve eternal separation from God. But one carries with it much graver consequences on earth.

Dealing With Sin involves:

1-Acknowledging It

1 John 1:8-10 If we say that we have no **sin**, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our **sins**, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (*emphasis mine*)

Sin-Our sinful nature

that we have no sin--"HAVE," not "have *had*," must refer not to the past sinful life while unconverted, but to the *present* state wherein believers *have sin* even still. Observe, "sin" is in the singular; "(confess our) *sins*" (**1John 1:9**) in the plural. *Sin* refers to the *corruption of the old man* still present in us, and the *stain* created by the actual *sins* flowing from that old nature in us. To

confess our need of cleansing from *present* sin is essential to "walking in the light"; so far is the presence of some sin incompatible with our *in the main* "walking in light." But the believer hates, confesses, and longs to be delivered from all sin, which is *darkness*. "They who defend their sins, will see in the great day whether their sins can defend them."

Sins-The out-working of our sin nature that shows itself in actions of sin

Guy King wrote, "*How sadly sinful we are, indeed! We are not sinners because we sin: we sin because we are sinners in character. A dog is not a dog because it barks: it barks because it's a dog. A tree is not a plum tree because it bears plums: it bears plums because it's a plum tree. Actual sins are the symptoms of the deep-seated malady of a sinful character; and it is not merely the spots but the disease that the Great Physician would deal with, as we place ourselves in His hands.*"

we have not sinned--referring to the commission of actual *sins*, even after regeneration and conversion; whereas in **1John 1:8**, "we have no sin," refers to the present GUILT remaining (until cleansed) from the *actual sins* committed, and to the SIN of our corrupt old nature still adhering to us. The perfect "have . . . sinned" brings down the commission of sins to the present time, not merely sins committed *before*, but *since, conversion*.

2-Avoiding It

1 Thessalonians 5:22 **Abstain** from all appearance of evil. (*emphasis mine*)

3-Attacking It

Romans 7:18-25 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, **warring** against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. (*emphasis mine*)

Warring against, fighting against; or resisting.

Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible: Warring against the law of my mind - There is an allusion here to the case of a city besieged, at last taken by storm, and the inhabitants carried away into captivity; carrying on a system of warfare; laying continual siege to the soul; repeating incessantly its attacks; harassing, battering, and storming the spirit; and, by all these assaults, reducing the man to extreme misery. Never was a picture more impressively drawn and more effectually finished; for the next sentence shows that this spiritual city was at last taken by storm, and the inhabitants who survived the sackage (*the act of taking by storm and pillaging*) led into the most shameful, painful, and oppressive captivity.

Every Christian needs a plan of attack against those sins that infest his life, a strategy that can be used to conquer sin in their daily walk.

The words of Dag Hammarskjold -- Secretary General of the UN in the mid and late 1950's beat with wisdom:

You cannot play with the animal in you without becoming wholly animal,

1. You cannot play with falsehood without forfeiting your right to truth,
2. You cannot play with cruelty without losing your sensitivity of mind.

He who wants to keep his garden tidy doesn't reserve a plot for weeds.

Conclusion: London held its breath in June 1987. While working on a building site, a construction foreman thought his workers had hit a cast iron pipe while using a pile driver. After picking up and then dropping the huge object, they realized the pipe looked like a bomb. It was -- a 2,200-pound World War II bomb, one of the largest the Germans dropped during the blitz which killed more than 15,000 Londoners. After evacuating the area, a 10-man bomb disposal unit worked 18 hours before deactivating the seven-foot device.

Unconfessed sin, like an unexploded bomb, can rest in the heart of an individual -- or in a church. Unless it's deactivated through forgiveness, it can detonate and cause great damage. -- Moody, 5-5-91