

We drastically underestimate the power of sin. Sin, by its nature, hides itself. It crouches at your door; it always looks smaller than it is. Your sins are not done with you when you think you are done with them. But there is hope in the gospel.

Why do we sin — even when we know right from wrong? Sin is a power that enslaves us, but we can be freed from its power by encountering God through worship.

The definition of sin is when you replace God with something or someone, and the result is an addiction of spirit. There is an attraction at the spiritual level every bit as powerful as sexual attraction at the physical level: You cannot produce your own meaning in life, your own worth, your own security. Spiritually speaking, if it's not God who is the source of your meaning, then you're in bed with something else.

“You are never a failure until you begin blaming others.”

“Take your life in your own hands, and what happens? A terrible thing: no one to blame.” Erica Jong

When you blame others, you give up your power to change.” Dr. R. Anthony

“It's not whether you win or lose, it's how you place the blame.” Oscar Wilde

“People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I don't believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and if they can't find them, make them” George Bernard Shaw

“We are taught you must blame your father, your sisters, your brothers, the school, the teachers - you can blame anyone but never blame yourself. It's never your fault. But it's always your fault, because if you wanted to change, you're the one who has got to change. It's as simple as that, isn't it?” Katharine Hepburn



Here's the gospel: You're more sinful than you ever dared believe; you're more loved than you ever dared hope. —T Keller

➤ Sin **replaces** God at the center

BITTER Anger always comes from frustrated expectations [I'm king]

BLAME Failure begins by blaming others. [scapegoat]

TWISTED skewed view of reality [kingdom]

“Where do you think all these appalling wars and quarrels come from? Do you think they just happen? Think again. They come about because you want your own way, and fight for it deep inside yourselves.” James 4:1-2

➤ Sin hates its **reflection**

“Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.” John 3:20

Symptoms: bitterness, anger, resentment, grudges, gossip, isolation

➤ Sin **breaks** God's heart

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” Luke 4:18-19 [Isaiah 61:1-2]

NEW BEGINNINGS

Genesis 4:3-15

¹³ In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. ⁴ But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, ⁵ but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

⁶ Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? ⁷ If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.”

⁸ Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.” And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

⁹ Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”

“I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

¹⁰ The LORD said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground. ¹¹ Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. ¹² When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.”

¹³ Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is more than I can bear. ¹⁴ Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”

¹⁵ But the LORD said to him, “Not so; if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over.” Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him.

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“Our sin must be extremely horrible. Nothing reveals the gravity of sin like the cross. . . . It is impossible for us to face Christ’s cross with integrity and not to feel ashamed of ourselves. . . . For if there was no way by which the righteous God could righteously forgive our unrighteousness, except that he should bear it himself in Christ, it must be serious indeed.” — John Stott

“Sin is the missing of a target, a wandering from the path, a straying from the fold. Sin is a hard heart and stiff neck. Sin is blindness and deafness. It is both the overstepping of a line and the failure to reach it – both transgression and shortcoming. Sin is a beast crouching at the door. In sin, people attack or evade or neglect their divine calling. These and other images suggest deviance; even when it is familiar, sin is never normal... Above all, sin disrupts and resists the vital human relation to God.” Cornelius Plantinga, Jr.

“[Repentance] means unlearning all the self-conceit and self-will that we have been training ourselves into... It means killing part of yourself, under-going a kind of death.” — C.S. Lewis (*Mere Christianity*)