



*Crossway Chapel, Fox Valley*

# **GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS**

*Lesson 3: Man and Sin*





# **MAN AND SIN: KNOWING OURSELVES AND HOW OUR SIN KEEPS US FROM GOD**

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## **What is the biggest problem man faces?**

Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going? Every generation that has rejected God's record of creation has attempted to answer these basic questions without success. When God created the universe, as stated in Lesson 1, He made it for the purpose of declaring His own glory. When He created all of the creatures upon the earth and in the sea, He determined that one of them would be His "masterpiece." One of them would be more like Him than any other creature. Mankind was uniquely made in God's own image.

Men and women were created, by God's design, to mirror and reflect His character for His own glory. We are intended to be His "image bearers!" But a devastating problem for all of mankind arose when Adam and Eve, God's first "image bearers," chose to disobey Him bringing sin to every person in every generation to follow.

God had His own predetermined solution to this problem even before it came about which will be dealt with thoroughly in Lesson 3, Salvation. However, God's incredible solution will be difficult to explore and understand until we have a clear and Biblical understanding of the problem of sin itself.

## **The Purpose of Lesson 3 is:**

To help you understand what it means to be created in the image of God and to gain a biblical understanding of where sin came from and the drastic effects it has on all of mankind.

# THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM

*The Fall of Adam... The Fall of ALL Mankind*

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When we open the Bible to take a look at what God has to say about sin, it is good to begin by making it personal. "I have a problem with sin. I am responsible for my sin, not Adam and Eve, not my spouse or my parents, not my upbringing or my cultural surroundings, not my circumstances or difficulties, but ME."

This is the way the Bible charges us to think about sin. We need to humble ourselves and take responsibility for our own weakness and failure before God before we can turn from our sin (repent) and find the true and everlasting joy that comes from His ANSWER to the problem (Lesson 4: Salvation!).

The lesson will go on to show how every man, woman, and child on earth is a sinner but for now read the two key chapters that follow and answer a few questions for each. Don't worry about trying to understand all of the intricate details of these two chapters but feel free to make any other observations about how they help you to see Adam's sin as YOUR sin.

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## Genesis Chapter 3

1. What was the serpent's strategy for deceiving Eve? How did he want her to view God?



# Romans 5:6-21

1. In verses 6-11, how does Paul describe us in relation to God before we trust in Jesus Christ?
2. What did the death of Christ accomplish according to verses 6-11? See verses 9 and 10 especially.
3. According to verses 12-14, why is this “reconciliation” necessary for ALL men? There is more than one reason given.
4. Consider the words “ONE” or “ONE MAN” from verses 12-21. Highlight or note in your Bible where and how many times they are used. Then answer the last two questions.



# MADE IN GOD'S IMAGE

*We messed up what we were supposed to be!*

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The Bible makes it clear, as we learned in lesson 1, that God is the Sovereign and Loving Creator who rules humanity, as well as all creation, in power and glory. We are HIS creation. Though we are nothing like Him in His sovereignty and self existence, the Bible does tell us that God created us “in His image.” This truth indicates that in some sense, by God’s design, He intended for us to be like Him.

**“There is some analogy between God and us. God is an intelligent and moral being. We are also moral agents equipped with a mind, a heart, and a will. These faculties make it possible for us to mirror God’s holiness, which was our original vocation.”**

**-R.C. Sproul**

Take a look at the following Bible passages in order to understand more clearly, the intention of God in creating us in His own image.

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**Genesis 1:26, 27** - God created both male and female in His image and likeness. The use of the term “man (Adam),” in the creation account means “humankind.” Both man and woman were created to reflect God’s image equally in importance and personhood and yet differently in role and authority.

**Genesis 2:15-25, Take special note of verse 17** - Man was created to have dominion over the earth. This means that God intended for mankind to occupy the highest order of the physical beings in creation. In this way, he was intended to mirror the image of God’s righteous rule and reign over the entire universe.

What was included in God's appointment of mankind as "cultivator and keeper of the garden?"

**Genesis 3:1-8** - Mankind severely marred the image of God when he chose to disobey His specific command to refrain from eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This is commonly understood as "the fall of mankind."

**Genesis 2:17, 3:9-24, Ephesians 2:1, Romans 5:12** - The fall resulted in the certainty of physical and spiritual death and the curse of God upon all of humanity. Note the promise of God's plan to save His people even in the midst of His curse ~ See Genesis 3:15 ~ Who is God speaking of here?

**1 Kings 8:46, Jeremiah 13:23, Romans 3:23, 5:12** - Adam's failure to obey God guaranteed that all of mankind would rebel against God's intended purpose for him to be a righteous image bearer. The Bible calls this rebellion **SIN**.

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***THE ORIGIN OF SIN can never be attributed to God because He is altogether holy and righteous. Sin did not surprise or frustrate God who "works all things according to the counsel of His will." -Ephesians 6:1. In His sovereignty, God allowed sin to originate with the voluntary choices of moral creatures in order that He would accomplish His purposes even through men and women who oppose Him (sinners).***

***Think back to Lesson 1. What specific attributes of God do you think require that He deal thoroughly and severely with SIN?***

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# SIN—UNDERSTANDING THE “BAD NEWS”

*Mankind's biggest problem explained...*

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Sin is best understood as “missing the mark.” In marksmanship or archery, there is a target to aim for. When the marksman or archer is unable to see the target clearly or is simply unable to hold steady with his sight, he will miss the bull’s-eye every time and will often miss the target altogether. Every human being is like this with the Law of God. Every human being misses the mark of God’s desired target of righteousness. Every human being is a lawbreaker. Every human being SINS.

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**Romans 3:23, 1 John 1:8-10** - God’s law expresses His standard of righteousness and is the final rule for our behavior. When we do not obey that standard, we SIN.

***The Bible teaches that men and women violate God's law (they SIN) in two primary ways:***

We sin when we do things God does not want. These are considered sins of *commission*. When the Bible tells us, “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain...” and we choose to do it regardless, we sin. **See for example - Exodus 20:7**

We sin when we do not do things God does want. These are considered sins of *omission*. When the Bible tells us, “Honor your father and mother...” and we do not, we sin. **See for example - Exodus 20:12**

Violation of God's law in these two ways can be found in outward actions or inward attitudes. Read Jesus' words on the law in **Matthew 5:17-28** and fill in the summary of His teaching below.

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**By GOD'S standard, ANGER or HATRED in the heart is the same as:**

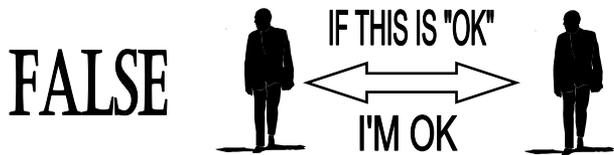
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**By GOD'S standard, LUST in the heart is the same as:**

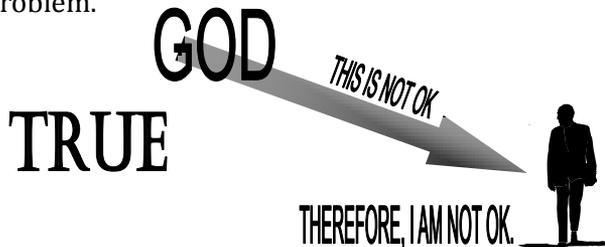
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The problem of sin is not seen as tremendously urgent or serious because most people evaluate their goodness and rightness as it relates to OTHER PEOPLE. "I am good to my fellow man and I do them no harm," we say. In our eyes, that is good enough! This is a drastic error on the sinner's part.



GOD, on the other hand, evaluates our goodness and rightness as it relates to HIM and HIS law. We have all violated it and have therefore offended His holiness (See James 2:10). Only when we look upward at God in addition to our actions toward our fellow man will we see the overwhelming seriousness of our sin. Then, if God opens our eyes and helps us to listen, we will realize the intensity of the problem.



# MAN K I N D ' S **S I N N A T U R E**

*Every person's "inherited guilt."*

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So far in Lesson 2, the Bible has taught us that Adam's failure to obey God guaranteed that all of mankind would rebel against His intended purpose for him to be a righteous image bearer. As a result of Adam's sin, all of mankind now has what is called a sin nature. Look over the following passages in order to better understand what God says about man's inherited guilt.

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**Genesis 2:16-19** - Our SIN NATURE is a result of Adam's sin.

**Psalms 51:5, 58:3, Romans 5:12** - Our SIN NATURE is inherited from Adam as passed down from generation to generation.

**Ephesians 2:3, 1 John 1:8-10** - All of mankind possesses this SIN NATURE.

Possessing a SIN NATURE means that our moral, intellectual, and spiritual qualities will be controlled and motivated by sinful tendencies. When left to ourselves, we WILL violate God's law.

Read the following verses and fill in the information that's missing. Again, remember, we all need to understand the depth of the "bad news" before we can grasp how much we need the GOOD NEWS (the gospel of Jesus Christ).

**Genesis 6:5, 8:21**

Mankind has a heart that is intent on \_\_\_\_\_.

**Jeremiah 17:9**

Mankind has a heart that is filled with \_\_\_\_\_.

**Mark 7:21**

Mankind has a heart from which \_\_\_\_\_ flows.

**When the Bible speaks of the “heart” in these passages, it is referring to the mind, will, and emotions of a person.**

Man has a FREE WILL that works together with His SIN NATURE and therefore, by God’s holy standard, he will always choose to display his sin nature in the following ways...

**Genesis 3:7, 8, Psalm 14:2, 3** - He will never choose or seek God. Note Adam and Eve’s behavior IMMEDIATELY upon their realization that they had disobeyed God. Did they seek Him?

**John 6:44, Ephesians 2:1, Romans 8:8** - He is unable to choose God or to please God. Mankind is SPIRITUALLY DEAD in his sin.

**Isaiah 64:6, Romans 3:12** - His best choices will be sinful in the eyes of a holy God.

**THE BAD NEWS? Romans 5:12-21** - All of mankind is counted guilty because of the sin of Adam.

Although men and women are all sinful, they are still capable of performing deeds that are good and virtuous by humanity's standard. They may even conform OUTWARDLY to the law of God in many ways. Because of this, millions of men and women think they are good enough to please God and find favor with Him. God tells us otherwise in the Bible. We are not sinners because we sin, we sin because we are sinners.

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**CONCLUSION: Mankind has the natural ability to make choices but lacks the moral ability to make godly choices.**

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## **Some things to carefully consider:**

***At this point, how would you describe your understanding of mankind's sin problem in your own life?***

***Are you attempting to gain favor with God through your own good works and moral behavior? If so, how "good" is good enough to erase your sin and guilt before God? See Isaiah 64:6 again.***

***Have you come to know the treasure of trusting Jesus for salvation from sin through His death on the cross in your place? Have you surrendered your life to His loving rule and reign for your good and HIS GLORY?***

***Again, if God is moving your heart, there are many loving Christians who would love to talk about the details of the good news with you. Also, Lesson 3 of Gospel Foundations is "Salvation – Understanding the Gospel of Jesus Christ." But don't wait until then to dive in. We'd love to jump ahead with you as God leads you in your journey to know Him.***

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Unfortunately, the BAD NEWS still has more to it. Yes, sin is an eternal problem between man and God. That truth in itself should be enough for all men and women to cry out to Him for the help and mercy which He freely gives in Jesus Christ. But here are also drastic consequences that are the result of sin.

# **SIN**—ITS DEVASTATING EFFECTS AND ETERNAL CONSEQUENCES

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The reality of sin in every person's life will bring about devastating present day effects as well as eternal consequences apart from God's solution of salvation through Jesus Christ.

***Exodus 34:7, Number 14:18, Nahum 1:3*** - God's perfectly holy and just character requires that He deal thoroughly and severely with SIN? It also means that all sin is equally hateful to God (Remember Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5).

*Death: Romans 6:23*

*Punishment: 2 Thessalonians 1:8-10*

*Judgment: Hebrews 9:27*

***Romans 1:18 and 2:5*** - HUMANITY'S BIGGEST PROBLEM is not necessarily sin itself but God's anger and wrath against the sin mankind practices by nature.

## **Other drastic effects and facts regarding sin in the Bible:**

1. *God has a supreme and severe hatred for sin.*  
***Deut. 25:16, Psalm 5:4, Proverbs 4:16-19, Luke 16:15***
2. *God separates Himself from sinners.*  
***Joshua 7:11, 12, Psalm 66:16-20, Isaiah 64:6, 7***
3. *God will abandon sinners who continually reject Him and allow them to corrupt themselves as far as they desire.*  
***Psalm 81:11, 12, Romans 1:24***
4. *Sin will bring about personal guilt, misery, and shame.*  
***Psalm 40:12, 51:3, Job 15:20, James 5:1-3***
5. *Sin can affect mankind physically while he is alive.*  
***Psalm 32:3, 4, 38:4-8***

# IMPACTING LIFE REAL IMPLICATIONS FROM THE PROBLEM OF SIN

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*The implications of this overwhelming problem that mankind has are far reaching. In fact, every facet and every moment of life is tarnished by the negative and drastic effects of sin in every person from birth.*

*We do not need to train children to lie, cheat, steal, or be selfish. They do not even need to be taught to hate. They will do all of this on their own.*

*We are no better off, in God's eyes, than a convicted murderer. We may not be doing time for our sin but without a solution, we would do eternity separated from our loving Creator.*

*Mankind does not need to be enticed or tempted to sin. He will do it automatically. We do not remain "neutral" by avoiding the obvious acts of sin.*

*The hopes and dreams of every nation or kingdom that has promised a "good life" and answers to the problems of life have been crushed by the reality of sin.*

*A "good economy" is far from able to address or solve the problem of sin. Resting in a comfortable life materially is simply not enough.*

*Even though God's law has been clearly revealed to man, he is still unable to practice it. Education and simply KNOWING God's law is not the answer.*

*Immorality and the lack of integrity will only increase and take greater control of every culture while sin reigns in the hearts of it's people.*

*Without a solution mankind finds itself in a hopeless situation because he has offended the sovereign God of the universe. The God who created all we can and can not see with a word from His mouth, is angry with sinners.*

*The selfish desires and inclination toward self focus that sin creates is the source of countless broken relationships, every painful life story, and seemingly hopeless lives in our world. If this is you – there is hope! Whether you have been trapped in sin like addiction, hate, lust, or bitterness or you are a deeply wounded victim of others' sin – or both (like most) there is hope for healing!*

*By far, the greatest implication sin brings about for mankind is the need for someone to answer the problem. God must punish sin and He must punish it severely. We need a powerful correction. We need an eternal solution. We need someone to MAKE US righteous and acceptable to God. We need a Savior. That Savior is none other than Jesus Christ – crucified and resurrected!*





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## KEY VERSES FOR MEMORY AND MEDITATION:

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

**Romans 3:23**

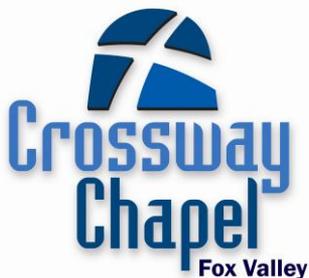
For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Romans 6:23**

For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. <sup>4</sup> But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup> he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup> whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup> so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

**Titus 3:3-7**

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*Gospel Foundations, Lesson 3*

## **MAN AND SIN**

**KNOWING OURSELVES AND HOW  
OUR SIN SEPARATES US FROM GOD**

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*Serving, loving, and leading people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.*

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