

IRON WORKS

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Getting at the Root of Sin...



...in Order to Produce the Fruit of Righteousness

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Synopsis: Sin has become a neglected doctrine in the church. At best it is misunderstood. However, it lies at the heart of the Gospel. Victorious, righteous living can only be achieved when we understand the nature of sin and temptation. Christians must get to the root of the problem in order to produce lasting fruit.

Introduction:

^{ESV} **Matthew 12:33** "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. ³⁴ You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵ The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.

- "The heart of the matter is a matter of the heart."
- "Fixing the symptoms of sin is like hanging good fruit on a rotten tree."

^{NAS} **1 Corinthians 10:12** Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.

Question: What are some of the temptations common to man?

Definition of Sin: " Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature" (Grudem, 490).

- Sin is an abstract concept. It is not a solid thing. It describes an action or state of being.

Origin of Sin:

- Sin existed before the creation of man. Angelic beings failed to conform to the moral law of God.
- Examining the original sin of man will help us understand the root of all sin.

Pre-Fall: (Genesis 1 & 2)

- God created the heavens and earth and mankind in 6 days. After each act of creation God declared that His work was good.
- God declared that it was not good for man to be alone. After creation of woman, God declared Adam's new situation as very good. (Gen. 1:31)
- Man seemed extremely pleased with his companion. (Gen. 2:23)
- God placed man in a garden with the task of tending it and having dominion as God's image-bearer. (Gen. 1:27-28; 2:15-16)
- God gave man 3 positive commands:
 1. be fruitful and multiply
 2. have dominion/tend the garden
 3. of every tree of the garden you may freely eat
- God gave man (woman was not created yet) 1 negative command:
 1. do not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil
- Man had the ability to obey or disobey God's commands (The ability to sin or not sin)

Group Questions:

1. How many times does God pass judgment on His own work (declare "good" or "not good")?
2. How many times does Adam pass judgment on God's work?
3. When God declared that something was "not good" do you think He was saying that he created something bad, or He was about to create something better?
4. Are you surprised that God declared "work" as good? Why or why not?

The Temptation: (Genesis 3 & Matthew 4)

1. Doubt God's provision
 - Has God indeed said, "You *shall not eat* of every tree of the garden?"
 - If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread.
2. Doubt God's word
 - "Has God indeed said...." "You will not surely die...."
 - "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, *for it is written*, "' He will command his angels concerning you,' and "'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"
3. Doubt God's sovereignty
 - "You will be like God...."
 - "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."

Group Questions:

1. How does Satan tempt?
2. How did Jesus respond?

Post-Fall: The Consequences of Sin

- The woman desires to rule her husband, but he will lord it over her.
- Tending the garden becomes harder.
- Death of his relationship to God; physical death; eternal death unless God provides a substitute.
- Man sought to improve his situation apart from God's truth, wisdom, and authority. Instead, the result was less satisfying.

The Pattern of Sin

^{ESV} **James 1:13** Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

1. The temptation to sin comes when we desire something God has forbidden. These desires stem from a dissatisfaction with life (circumstances, suffering, "the way things are"). We declare "not good" what God has declared "good". We ultimately question God's Word, God's moral character, and God's sovereignty.

^{NAS} **Romans 8:28** And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

^{NIV} **James 1:17** Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Wayne Grudem puts it this way:

"Their eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is in many ways typical of sin generally. First, their sin struck at the basis for knowledge, for it gave a different answer to the question, 'What is true?'...Second, their sin struck at the basis for moral standards, for it gave a different answer to the question 'What is right?'...Their sin gave a different answer to the question "Who am I?"...Finally, we should note that all sin is ultimately irrational. It really did not make sense for Satan to rebel against God in the expectation of being able to exalt himself above God. Nor did it make sense for Adam and Eve to think that there could be any gain in disobeying the words of their Creator. (Grudem, 492-3)

2. Dissatisfaction with life leads to dissatisfaction with God (Questioning His character, His laws, His plans, His sovereignty).

^{ESV} **Job 1:8** And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" ⁹ Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? ¹⁰ Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. ¹¹ But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face."

3. Dissatisfaction with God leads to idolatry (violating the "godness" of God), which ultimately leads to sinful thoughts, words, and deeds.

^{NAS} **1 John 2:15** Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world, **the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life**, is not from the Father, but is from the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and *a/so* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.

Dissatisfaction with Life→Dissatisfaction with God→Idolatry/Sin

The Solution

1. **The Cross.** Contemplate daily the power of the cross which paid the penalty of sin and cancels the power of sin.

^{ESV} **Romans 8:1** There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...

^{ESV} **Romans 8:12** So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs- heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

2. **Confession.** Acknowledge your humanity, sinfulness, and finite knowledge. Acknowledge God's deity, holiness, and infinite wisdom.

^{ESV} **Job 42:1** Then Job answered the LORD and said: ² "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. ³ 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. ⁴ 'Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me.' ⁵ I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; ⁶ therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

3. **The Word.** Read the Word of God daily, recognizing that this material world is only temporary. Man shall not live on bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

^{ESV} **Psalms 19:7** The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; ⁸ the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; ⁹ the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether.

4. **Theology.** The study of God as revealed in His Word helps us to know Him better so that we can better worship Him and trust in His character when temptation comes.

^{ESV} **Romans 9:14** What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means!

^{NAS} **Romans 11:33** Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! ³⁴ For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? ³⁵ Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? ³⁶ For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen.

5. **Praise.** The mind, mouth and heart that constantly praises God will not be dissatisfied with God.

^{ESV} **Job 1:20** Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. ²¹ And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." ²² In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.