

# What is sin?

What does sin mean to you?

Webster's Dictionary:

1 a: an offense against religious or moral law

b: an action that is or is felt to be highly reprehensible (it's a sin to waste food)

c: an often serious shortcoming : fault

2 a: transgression of the law of God

b: a vitiated<sup>1</sup> state of human nature in which the self is estranged from God

**We are created in the image of God.** What does that mean?

1. A life received from and lived for God in thanks and obedience
2. A life with and for our fellow human beings
3. A life that is self-affirming and self-fulfilling WHEN we live in community with God and other people

Has anyone ever lived such a life completely?

Is sin “natural” or “unnatural”?

“We must take sin very seriously, but not too seriously.” *Shirley Guthrie Jr.*<sup>2</sup>

“We must not suggest that our sinfulness is the basic truth about what we are. The basic truth is not that we are sinners, but that we are human beings created in God's image. Sin distorts, twists, corrupts, and contradicts this truth, but it does not change us into something other than what God created us to be. Sin is not stronger than God.”

Three basic forms of sin

1. **Disobedience to God** – not legalistic disobedience, but when we don't give our whole selves to God. Not just external actions.
2. **Sins of the “flesh”** – (This is what we tell ourselves is what those “other” people do). Root is not the alcohol, gluttony, sex... the root is in the self... why do we do fall into those traps?  
“The point is that the body is no more sinful in itself than the heart, soul or spirit; and the heart, soul and spirit are no less sinful than the body. I am sinful – not just my body.”

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<sup>1</sup> to make faulty or defective

<sup>2</sup> All following quotes from Guthrie's “Christian Doctrine”

3. Pride – the desire to be like God (Adam & Eve: Gen. 2:15-17; 3:1-5).  
We want to be our own moral instructors.  
We know when others have done wrong and judge them.  
Is one sin worse than another?

Job – Was sin the cause of Job's suffering?

John Calvin's doctrine of Total Depravity

*Doctrine that human nature is thoroughly corrupt and sinful as a result of the Fall of Adam and Eve.*

“Total depravity, correctly understood, means that although both Christians and non-Christians can do much good, nothing we do is free from the corruption of sinful self-interest.”

“The wages of sin is death.” Romans 6:23

“...not so much a warning about what God will do to us as it is a warning about the self-destruction we bring on ourselves when we contradict our humanity in God's image.”