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## Where Does Sin Come From?

**Ephesians 1:7:** (NASB) *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.*

So much of the philosophy of our society today is built around the idea that "I am the center of my universe; therefore what I want, I truly must have," that the whole concept of sin becomes very subjective and often not even really relevant in people's lives. So, is sin as relevant today as it was in the past, or have we outgrown the concept of sin in favor of a much more fluid and progressive understanding of right and wrong?

According to Scripture, sin is anything less than perfection. Jesus showed us what that pattern looks like. How do we make sin as small an influence in our lives as possible so we can live as righteously as possible? What a massive challenge!

**Let's look at the context of the first human sin:** Genesis 2:16-17: Here we have specific *conditions*, a specific *command* and a specific *consequence* surrounding original sin. Sin was defined by action - do not eat of the tree or there will be consequences.

**How does sin enter into our lives? Are there specific doorways sin uses to enter the mind and heart of humankind?** 1 John 2:15-17: (KJV) <sup>15</sup>*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* <sup>16</sup>*For all that is in the world, **the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life**, is not of the Father, but is of the world.* <sup>17</sup>*And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.*

Like any enemy, if we can understand the strategy of sin, we can be better prepared.

*Love not the world:* In its present sinful state, we do not love the way it is run, its priorities and so forth. Satan is the 'prince of this world,' according to Scripture.


**So, what really happened in the Garden of Eden?** Genesis 3:4-7: (NASB) <sup>4</sup>*The serpent said to the woman, you surely will not die!* <sup>5</sup>*For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.* <sup>6</sup>*When the woman **saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise**, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.* <sup>7</sup>*Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.*

Good for food: Lust of the flesh/Pleasant to the eyes: Lust of the eyes/Desirable to make one wise: Pride of life. These were the same three doorways in which sin entered into the Garden. In these three actions all sin is conceived, developed and committed...but all sin does not need to have all three. For example, just the "lust of the eyes" is enough to wreak havoc in your life.

The penalty for sin was death. Implementing this kind of penalty under such perfect and life-perpetuating conditions as existed in the Garden would require radical action, as death is a radical consequence! **The protections of perfection would be removed:** The dying process would now begin. Genesis 2:17: *In the day:* But Adam and Eve did not die that same day; in fact, Adam lived for 930 years! But in both the Old and New Testaments, the formula is given that *a day with the Lord is as a thousand years*. In that sense, Adam did actually die in that day. The phrase *in the day* is also used to convey a period of time, for example, "The kings have had their day." Genesis 3:16-19 **The equality of perfection would be skewed:** *Yet your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you. The earth itself would now be a part of the suffering of death, just as it had been a part of the perpetuation and blessing of life:* <sup>17</sup>*Then to Adam He said, because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, you shall not eat from it; cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.*

Not only would humans now die, but the whole process of God's creation would be affected. Sin's consequences reach far, deep and over long periods of time. **Effort would now become toil as the cursed earth would no longer produce to its formerly blessed capacity:** <sup>18</sup>*Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field;* <sup>19</sup>*By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return. There was work involved to tend and cultivate the Garden - plump grapes didn't just fall into Adam's mouth! But it was pleasant*


and rewarding work, and the ground produced in a blessed, bountiful way. This original sin is the context of the sins of our lives. This is all that we inherit from the *dying thou shalt die* consequence. Having already been sentenced to death and removed from God's presence, our sins pile misery upon the already-encompassing context of a sinful world. **Original sin sets the context for all of our individual sins. We contribute to the mess!** Romans 7:21-24: The curse says we will never be sin-free. How do we deal with wanting to rise above it?

 Self-enhancement defined, *Julian Keenan, thescienceofsin.com*

- *So, self-enhancement is thinking, believing, acting as if you're better than you actually are. Is it a good thing for me to see myself as I really am or is there a benefit for thinking that maybe I am better than I am? And the answer is reality is not necessarily a good thing. People with clinical depression - severe, severe depression - have a lack of self-enhancement, so they actually see themselves as they truly are, whereas people who don't have clinical depression tend to self-enhance.*

Self-enhancement is looked upon as being good and necessary in this world. Do we as Christians do this? Should we be thinking of ourselves as better than we are?

Philippians 4:12-13

 Self-enhancement "benefits," *Julian Keenan, thescienceofsin.com*

- *If you show up at a job interview and you're confident and you might embellish the truth a little bit, people look at that favorably. If you walk into a dating situation and you enhance yourself, that's probably a good thing. Has it been this way through all time? Probably not. Will it be this way in the future? No, perhaps a more humble person will be selected, but in today's Western society a "self-enhancer" certainly has benefits.*

**What are the Christian principles regarding "embellishing" the truth?** Philippians 2:2-8: Look at yourself with great humility; look at others as more important than yourself. Be focused *outside* of you rather than *inside* of you. The Christian way is *not* to embellish; it is to be humble. **Is there any self-enhancement here? If not, then what is here?** Hebrews 5:8-9: Jesus clearly taught us that our approach to life through him would be to humbly learn and grow. So, how do we do this in this world where such an approach is seen as stifling?

**The Problem:** The reality of life - without a larger context - can simply be a stark and unvarnished reality. People can become easily depressed by the reality of life, because it offers no hope and so they "self-enhance."

**The Solution:** The Christian solution is to "**God-enhance**" instead! Put yourself in the context of the larger picture of God's love and plan. There is hope. For any of us having difficulty with depression, focus on God's view of you and His love for you. God will hold you up if you look to Him. He doesn't ever let us down. We can see the reality and say, "Oh, my thoughts and actions are going in the wrong direction. O wretched man that I am." And we can get totally depressed by it. Or we can say "Oh, my thoughts and actions are going in the wrong direction. O wretched man that I am, but God loves me and Jesus died for me. God understands this is where I am. God through Christ is willing to lend me a hand so I don't have to stay this way." Do you see the difference? There is no "self-enhancing" here, telling ourselves how good we are. *Christ* is that good and helps me take a step up to change my life.

**Pride:** Strong's #212 *alazoneia* (al-ad-zon-i'-a); braggadocio, i.e. (by implication) self-confidence

Remember the *pride of life*? This particular word for *pride* is only used twice in the New Testament. We already went over the first Scripture; here is the second.

**Only other use:** James 4:13-17: *Pride of life* in this verse = overwhelming self-confidence, not just appearing above others, but literally, giving yourself God's credit! The Christian should never be focused that way. Humility is making the proper assessment of yourself. It is not beating yourself down, but is reality in the context of the bigger picture. "God-enhance" and find life's larger context! That which we enhance is that which we follow. That which we follow is that which we worship. That which we worship determines the true value of our life. Self-enhancement is really contrary to true growth. It is dishonest. Lying on a resume might actually be "stealing" a job away from someone else.

Proverbs 16:18-19 Proverbs 29:23: (NRSV) *A person's pride will bring humiliation, but one who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor.*

*Lowly in spirit*: Understanding both the deficiencies and strengths we have, both in the context that God loves us.

Sin is subtle! Sin is appealing! Sin is common... but sin does NOT solve our problems - if we "self-enhance," we might be committing another sin.

**Now let's look at how sin lives within us:** Psalms 19:12-13: Sometimes sin can fester quietly on the inside of us. We have *hidden* faults and we have *presumptuous* or arrogant sins.

**Hidden (secret):** Strong's #5641 cathar (saw-thar'); to hide (by covering), literally or figuratively, to hide, conceal, to hide oneself, to be hidden, be concealed

So, this first aspect of sin is the hidden, internal sin. Perhaps sins that are a part of our very nature - hard for us to see clearly, as they are so "natural" to us. Perhaps these sins correlate to our desires. Understand God sees through His eyes what is really there.

Matthew 5:29: Jesus here is obviously talking metaphorically. He is saying if sin is entering your life through your eyes, look somewhere else. Stop observing that thing because it will destroy you. He is trying to explain how sin can take us over. This is a tricky area of sin, for it is not necessarily known or seen by others. **How do we overcome?** Matthew 4:1-4: How did Jesus overcome? First, he answered based on Scripture - that is, his reasons were based on an authority higher than himself - the authority of the word of God. He "God-enhanced!" He did not succumb to his desire of the flesh - eating the food - over his principles of loving his Father. He overcame sin by seeing things through his Father's eyes. That is the process to follow for the internal fight we have with sin.

Remember, anything "off the mark" is sin. Just because we miss the mark, such as with a sin of omission we do not do purposefully, does not mean God is angry with us. If we are really trying but keep falling down, God loves us because of the fact that we are fallen humanity, trying and struggling. He has a plan for us. Jesus came as a sacrifice for all mankind. Sin will not doom us at this time until the sacrifice of Jesus is applied directly for our personal lives. That doesn't happen for the vast majority of mankind until the resurrection. The ultimate solution for sin just has not been activated yet for the majority of mankind.

All three of Jesus' scriptural answers in Matthew 4 were related to the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt. **First text Jesus quoted:** Deuteronomy 8:2-3: In Matthew 4, Jesus is hungry after 40 days in the wilderness. He quotes from Deuteronomy with the context of 40 years in the wilderness as a test for humility. Jesus' mind went right to a core value in the Old Testament. When Satan came with a temptation, Jesus' immediate reaction was to go back to the time when the Israelites were delivered. They were allowed to be hungry so God could feed them spiritually - man does not live by bread alone. Nobody would have known if Jesus fed himself miraculously! But, that was NOT his mission! He knew the physical hunger would focus him on the spiritual. His mission was to feed upon the word of God.

**Our God-enhancing focus:** 1 Timothy 6:6: When we deal with sins we intentionally commit, it is important to go back and feed upon the word of God to help us understand how to be an overcomer of sin. The point of sin is to understand what life is like without God. As a race, we will come to God, having had the experience of being without Him. Humankind chose in the Garden to follow the wrong leadership, that of Satan. We now know the experience of following sinful leadership. The world has fallen apart on every level in every area. That is why Jesus died. God already sent the solution; it just has not been fully activated yet.

**What about external, presumptuous sins? Is it ever a good thing to lie?**

Psalms 19:12-13: (ASV) <sup>12</sup>Who can discern his errors? **Clear <5352>** thou me from **hidden <5641>** faults. <sup>13</sup>Keep back thy servant also from **presumptuous <2086>** sins; Let them not have dominion over me: Then shall I be upright, and I shall be clear from great transgression.

**Presumptuous:** Strong's #2086 zed (zade'); arrogant, proud, insolent, presumptuous

This second aspect of sin - arrogance - has to do with outward display and action. This show correlates to pride. How often do we show to others what is really not our true selves?

Matthew 5:30: Remember Jesus first talked metaphorically about the eye? If what you see is causing you to sin, don't look. In this next example of the hand, it means that people can see what you are doing. If your actions are leading you to sin, don't do it!



**This is a more blatant and publicly discernible area of sin. How do we overcome?** Luke 4:9-12: New strategy - Satan (mis)quotes Scripture! How arrogant! The presentation is for Jesus to arrogantly show off for the people, demonstrating how powerful he was. Satan invited Jesus to join him on his pedestal of arrogance. How did Jesus overcome? He answered based on Scripture. He "God-enhanced!"

**Second text Jesus quoted:** Deuteronomy 6:16 **The actual event of Israel in the wilderness.** Exodus 17:6-7: They should have been thinking, God delivered us. He is not going to abandon us now. (*Our lesson: All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen.*) Jesus kept seeing the parallels of Israel's experience in the wilderness to his own. There was no reason for him to test God by throwing himself off the temple.

**To "God-enhance" is to KNOW that He is always there when we need Him:** Hebrews 4:16: How can we be confident if we keep falling down in sin? We don't have confidence in ourselves; our confidence is in God. God will hear us if we draw near to Him. We come to the *throne of grace*, not the throne of condemnation or the throne of indifference. There we find mercy and grace in our time of need. That helps us to cope with the difficulties of sin.

**Scriptural precedent for lying:** Genesis 3:4-6: Lying is missing the mark. It is out of the context of how we are to live. Can lying get you ahead in this world? It sure can! But it is not worth the price that you pay. It minimizes what is truly right.

**God's perspective on lying:** Proverbs 6:16-19: (NASB) <sup>16</sup>There are six things which the LORD hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: <sup>17</sup>Haughty eyes, **a lying tongue**, and hands that shed innocent blood, <sup>18</sup>A heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, <sup>19</sup>**A false witness who utters lies**, and one who spreads strife among brothers. Two out of seven of the things God hates involve lying!

One can have confidence without being prideful and arrogant. There is nothing wrong with accurately assessing our lives. Philippians 4:12-13 Matthew 10:28: God is the ultimate judge. God has a plan for you. Don't allow the world to skew you from what is important. Personal pride vs. confidence in God.

Isaiah 40:28-31: Life is SO much better when we look *up* rather than *in*! This does not diminish having confidence in the tools we have been given to use. We all have something of value and it should be used for the glorification of God.

Perhaps the bottom line is this: Humanity is hard wired to worship - to have someone or something bigger and better to honor and respect. Mankind originally only looked up to the Creator to fulfill this need. Sin has opened the door for that hard-wired honor and respect to be able to go in all directions - down, sideways and even internally. Thus, those things that we enhance, those things that we "worship" are subject to our whim and fancy rather than being subject to the necessary obligation to our Creator. Sin takes our focus in all other directions.

**Back to basics!** James 4:6-10: This is the opposite action from "the pride of life!" These are the opposite actions from the "lust of the eyes" and the "lust of flesh!" If we put our hope in man, what hope of glory can possibly exist? **What if we hope in God through Christ?**

Colossians 1:27-29: Even in our imperfect state, we have wonderful potential that God sees. We fall down again and again. We need to get up and honor and worship God. There is nothing wrong with the falling down as long as we continue to get up and honor and worship God. God forgives our sin.

*So, where does sin come from?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*