



LESSON THREE:
Sin

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someone.

The Way of Discipleship Tutorials

by Robert Cox

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STUDY #3 - SIN

STUDY GOALS

- **To help your friend know what sin is** (Rom. 7:7, 1 John 3:4, Gal. 5:19-21, James 4:17).
- **To show them how sin operates and what it does in order to create a sense of conviction and urgency** (Rom. 7:8-25. Gen. 2:17, Isa. 59:1, 2, Rom. 3:23).

NOTE: Today's study will use Romans 7 as a foundation. To ease transitions between verses have your student bookmark Romans 7.

READ:

[Romans 7:7b](#)

"I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law."

NOTE: It would not be helpful at this point in the study to attempt to explain the difference between the Mosaic Law and the New Covenant. While Paul's reference to "law" in Romans 7 is a reference to the Mosaic Law, it will be helpful for your student to simply understand "law" as God's word (i.e. the Bible). The Bible as God's word teaches us right from wrong.

? How can one determine if something is right or wrong?

- In this verse Paul says that the only way he could do so was by looking at God's word, the Bible. He also says that this also true for you and me.

? How would you define the word/term sin?

MENTION:

1 John 3:4

“Everyone who sins breaks God’s law, because sin is the same as breaking God’s law.”

? How does John define sin?

- John says that sin is the breaking any of God’s laws. It doesn’t matter what I think or feel, God’s word gets the ultimate say.

NOTE: Explain that you will now look at a couple of passages that list specific sins but to keep your bookmark at Romans 7. Sin generally falls into one of two categories: Doing wrong things or not doing right things. Remember the purpose of this segment is to help them realize what sin is and that they are guilty of sin (i.e. a sinner).

READ:

Galatians 5:19-21

¹⁹ “The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

NOTE: The student must see that he/she is a sinner if this study is to be successful. Make it clear that in God’s eyes no one sin is bigger than another. **Sin is sin!** Accomplishing this will require you to go through Paul’s list of sins, (you may want to use Mark 7:20-23 also) explaining each one (see the [appendix](#) at end of this study outline) and asking the student about specific struggles or involvement. This is awkward but necessary. Being open with your sin struggles can make it easier for your student to be open with theirs. Be open remembering that student and teacher are included in the “*all*” of Romans 3:23 as you ask the following questions.

? (For each) Do you know what _____ is?

? (For each) Have you struggled with _____?

? Are any of these a surprise or shock to you? Which?

? What do you think God was trying to say by placing “orgy” next to “getting drunk” or “witchcraft” next to “hating someone”?

- God wants us to know that **sin is sin**. It is never “my sin is bigger or littler than your sin” - it's always “my sin is the same as your sin.”
- God wants us to see that all sin is **destructive**. “Big sin” and “little sin,” have the same effect if not dealt with.

NOTE: After carefully walking your student through Gal. 5 you are ready to proceed to “sin category 2” the **right things we don't do**. (Omit rather than commit)

READ:

[James 4:17](#)

“Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it.”

? Have you ever known the “right thing to do” but for what ever reason not done it?

- If so, you have sinned... and welcome to the club, you are a sinner!

MENTION:

[Romans 3:23](#)

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

- The Bible teaches that EVERYONE has sinned.

ILLUSTRATE: In the first part of the study we have tried to show what sin IS. The purpose of the next segment is to show what sin DOES to the sinner if it is not dealt with. It is helpful to illustrate the effects of sin with a drawing like the following one. Start by re-creating the illustration below. As you identify (from

Romans 7) what sin does (each effect) your list should look similar to the completed one below it.

YOUR FRIEND'S NAME		GOD
_____	S I N	_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____

YOUR FRIEND'S NAME		GOD
<u>DECEIVED</u>	S I N	<u>ENLIGHTENED</u>
<u>DEAD</u>		<u>ALIVE</u>
<u>ENSLAVED</u>		<u>FREED</u>
<u>HOPELESS</u>		<u>HOPEFUL</u>
<u>LOST</u>		<u>SAVED</u>

READ:

[Romans 7:7b-8a, 11](#)

I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.”^{f 8} But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of coveting ...¹¹ For **sin**, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, **deceived me**, and through the commandment **put me to death**.

TWO VERY IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT SIN:

I. SIN IS DANGEROUSLY DECEPTIVE.

Romans 7:11a *“Sin ... deceived me”*

Note: Sin is so deceptive that it can destroy your life before it’s even identified as evil! Adam and Eve sinned because they were deceived by Satan. He was, and is, a master deceiver and he wants to deceive you!

II. SIN CAUSES THE SINNER TO DIE.

Romans 7:11b *“Sin ... put me to death”*

? What does the author mean when he said, *“I died”*?

? How would you define die or death?

- In Bible language these word mean, *“to separate”* (Our language too, “That relationship is dead.”)

NOTE: Let your student know that the Bible consistently stresses that sin kills, that is it separates man from God. This concept is found in the beginning of the Bible (Genesis), the middle of the Bible (Isaiah), and toward the end of the Bible (Romans). The following passages reinforce this. Cover each passage stressing that when one is separated from God they are separated from the blessings of God. God deeply longs to bless your student but their sin will obstruct His ability to bless, because God's holiness keeps Him from blessing sin or evil.

READ:

[Genesis 2:16-17](#)

“The LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”

? Did Adam or Eve die physically when they ate the fruit?

- The word translated death in the Bible means “a separation.”

? In what way did sin “kill” Adam and Eve?

- They were **separated** from God and separated from His blessings when they were forced out of the garden (Genesis 3).

READ:

Isaiah 59:1-2

“Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. ² But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.”

? These people thought that God was too old or too weak to save them. What was the real reason God was not helping them?

- Their “iniquities” (sin) had **separated** them from God. Their **sin** had made God turn away refusing to listen to or assist them.

READ:

Romans 6:23

“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

? What are wages?

- The pay one receives for what one does.

? What wage is God going to pay you and me for our sin if it is not taken care of?

NOTE: In Romans 7 Paul is painting a picture of sin's destructive nature. In the next verse (13) Paul states the reality that we are trying to convey in this study - that sin is totally evil! Incredible things will happen if you can help your student grasp and personalize Paul's (and Christ's) attitude toward sin.

READ:

Romans 7:13b

“... so that ... sin might become utterly sinful”

The New Century Version says it this way: “... *This happened so that I could see what sin is really like; the command was used to show that sin is very evil.*”

? Do you think most people believe that “sin” is very evil?

- Most people do not take sin seriously, and an important shift must take place in our thinking when we choose to become a disciple. We must do our best to begin thinking about sin like God thinks about it.

NOTE: Paul, in Romans 7, mentions several damaging consequences of sin. His purpose in doing this is to help people see how bad sin really is. People, often take “sin” very lightly. You must help your student grasp the destructive dangerous nature of sin. The next scripture calls on Jesus’ graphic imagery to help accomplish this.

READ:

Matthew 5:29-30

²⁹ “If your right eye causes you to sin, take it out and throw it away. It is better to lose one part of your body than to have your whole body thrown into hell. ³⁰ If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.”

? Is this verse to be taken literally? Do you think Jesus wants a bunch of one-eyed, one-handed followers?

- Of course not! The problem with lust and stealing is a heart / mind problem, not an eye/hand problem. Any person can lust with one eye!

? What point is Jesus trying to make?

- Sin must be viewed as very serious! Remember it is extremely deceptive and destructive!!!
- If we don’t adopt Jesus’ view of sin it will deceive us and separate us

from God and his blessings!

READ:

[Romans 7:14b](#)

“... I am... *sold as a slave to sin.*”

III. SIN ENSLAVES.

? What do you think Paul mean when he describes himself as “a slave to sin”?

- In the beginning we choose our desires and habits, but in the end we are controlled by our desires and habits.

MENTION:

[Proverbs 5:22](#)

“The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast.”

READ:

[Romans 6:16](#)

“Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey-whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness.”

NOTE: Paul is saying that we cannot choose if we have a master, only which master. By choosing our master we choose our fate.

READ:

[Romans 7:24a](#)

“What a wretched man I am ...”

IV. SIN DESTROYS HOPE.

V. SIN CAUSES US TO BE LOST.

READ:

[Romans 7:24b-25](#)

“Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

JESUS CHRIST

- Paul understood that the solution to his and our sin problem involves a relationship with Jesus Christ.
- He also understood that he had to make a choice.

NOTE: This is a good time to refer to the illustration/drawing. Remind your student that Jesus came to take care of his or her sin problem. Let them know that more than anyone Jesus knows how destructive sin is and he longs to protect you from it.

COMING NEXT: The sin study is discouraging and alarming! Let your friend know that the next study (The Cross) will deal with what Jesus did to establish the relationship that can rescue us from the death sentence of sin.



APPENDIX

Galatians 5:19-21 Sin List With Greek Definitions

NOTE: The New Testament we read was originally written in Greek. It is often helpful to look at the definitions of the original Greek words used in order to best grasp what the biblical writers intended for us to understand.

“The acts of the sinful nature are obvious ...

1. **Sexual Immorality (GREEK: *porneia*)** – sex outside of heterosexual marriage; any type of sexual relations with anyone other than your spouse in your heterosexual marriage.
2. **Impurity (GREEK: *akartharsia*)** – a state of moral corruption; immorality, especially in terms of sexual sins; sex outside of marriage, porn, cybersex.
3. **Debauchery (GREEK: *aselgeia*)** – lack of self-constraint which involves one in conduct that violates all bounds of what is socially acceptable; lack of self-control, especially with regard to sexual sin.
4. **Idolatry (GREEK: *eidololatria*)** – worshippers of other gods, other religions; things in your life more important to you than God; putting things of this world in front of God’s will for your life; putting your own wants and desires in front of God’s wants and desires for you.
5. **Witchcraft (GREEK: *pharmakeia*)** – ancient witchcraft where drugs were involved; magic potions; illegal or recreational drug use (weed, cocaine, meth, pills, etc.)
6. **Hatred (GREEK: *echthra*)** – enmity (hatred) towards God and other people.
7. **Discord (GREEK: *eris*)** – Engagement in rivalry, strife, discord; constantly being a jerk to other people; causing problems everywhere you go in life because of your bad attitude.
8. **Jealousy (GREEK: *zelos*)** – intense negative feelings over another’s achievements or success; envy; covetousness; being discontent with what you have and constantly wanting more.
9. **Fits of Rage (GREEK: *thymos*)** – outburst of anger; losing your temper; being abusive; abusive to children, spouse, etc.
10. **Selfish Ambition (GREEK: *eritheia*)** – selfishness; self-centeredness; making yourself god by putting self in the place of God (a form of idolatry).

11. **Dissensions (GREEK: *dichostasia*)** – quarrelsome; quick to fight; a cause of division; a constant troublemaker.
12. **Factions (GREEK: *hairesis*)** – literally, a faction is a group that holds tenets distinctive to it (sect, party, school, faction). This word is not always used in a negative sense in the Bible as it is in Galatians 5:20. Being in a faction becomes sinful when **1)** the group is more important to you than Jesus, **2)** when the group’s agenda is contrary to Jesus’, or **3)** when the group is a heretical sect spreading a false gospel.
13. **Envy (GREEK: *phthonos*)** – Basically the same as *jealousy*. See above.
14. **Drunkenness (GREEK: *methe*)** – recreational intoxication; getting drunk.
15. **Orgies (GREEK: *komos*)** – drunken revelry; a sexual encounter with many people.

... and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.”