



12 Take responsibility for sins - 1 John 3:4-10

It has been written that a wonderful picture of John writing his epistle is seen in the London Eye, where when in a 'pod' and travelling round over London you can view all the sights from different angles. So John returns to the points he is talking about several times throughout the whole book. This time it is the subject of sin which he mentioned in **1 John 1:8-2:2** and he returns to it again in the final chapter.

What is sin?

John likens sin to breaking the law but this is not the criminal law of the land but the Law of God. The law of the land does not accuse us if we do not speak kindly to our neighbour or if we have a bad attitude to people or things, but God's law is very clear about these things and calls them **sin**. Sin is an incurable disease and we all have it! The Law of God covers the whole plan of God for our lives, the way we do everything including our work, our relationships, our money and how we relate to Him. Jesus sums this up in **Matthew 22:37-40** replying: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

So we can understand that those who sin do not keep God's perfect standards of love, so breaking the Royal law. But if we could keep this standard there would have been no need for Jesus to die on the Cross. Because of the Fall even the best person is a lawbreaker in God's eyes with no hope of putting things right himself. Jesus pointed out that sin actually begins in the attitudes and intentions of the inner person leading to sinful behaviour, **Mark 7:20-23**. Then Paul reaffirms this thought, "It is what comes from inside that defiles you. For from within, out of a person's heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you." Like every other human being we stand guilty before God, **Romans 3:9-20**. We will be without excuse when we stand before God on the Judgement Day, **Romans 1:20-23**.

It is good to recognise who we are as a human being in God's sight. We should not deny that we are sinners but instead allow our desperate need to point us towards Christ. One day we have to stand silent before Almighty God with no excuses for our thoughts and actions. Now is the time to choose whether we can hold our heads up at that time as we are changed 'to be like Him' (**1 John 3:2**) or whether we will bow the knee to Jesus and He will say 'I do not know you' **The choice is ours today**.

Sin often appears as a **very attractive** temptation, often looking harmless. Temptation often begins by seeing something we want and it takes up our focus. We become more focused on what we want if we feel we cannot have it, 'naughty but nice'! From just looking we can go down the slippery slope of sin cutting us off from our loving Father and drawing others into our treachery. Look at King David who was meant to be out at battle but had stayed at home; saw Bathsheba; wanted her; went after her; had her; lied about her and to his staff; destroyed her husband and the consequences were very great, **2 Samuel 11-2 Samuel 12**. Sin makes us **feel guilty**, which is a good sign that our hearts are not so hardened that we don't recognise the trouble we cause. We need to be glad we are aware of sin as we do it so we can repent and be restored to full fellowship with our Father who loves us, immediately. We need to keep open fellowship with the Father which He longs for but when we sin our natural reaction is to **hide** and show fear that we cannot attain His standard. We must recognise His unconditional Love which holds no record of wrongs. That makes it so much easier to repent. Sin so often causes us to **blame someone else** or circumstances. This is what happened in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve blamed each other and the serpent, but God knows the Truth and holds each of us responsible for what we do, **Genesis 3:8-13**. There are always consequences of sin, some are generations-long, some are lifelong whilst others last just a few hours but

they are there. Both the act of sin and the attitude of sin have to be dealt with and the ideal is to say 'NO' to the temptation before it starts, just like King David or Eve could have done!!

In Old Testament times Israel used a scapegoat. The priest laid hands on a real goat, putting the sins of the people on it and sent it into the wilderness, totally away from the people. Also Moses had Aaron (**Leviticus 9:15**) burning a goat as a sin offering before going into the presence of God and when he came out of the Holy of Holies the people rejoiced that their sins had been covered, **Leviticus 16:1-35**. That is what Jesus did with sin and sickness; He bore them away from us. He is the only person who ever lived a God-perfect life totally without sin in word, deed, thoughts and love, **1 John 3:5**. So He qualifies to be the only One who can be God's solution to our problem of sin. The only alternative is for us to pay the price ourselves and the results of that are unthinkable. Do we really want to be separated from Love forever, suffering the consequences of our sinful nature described in **Galatians 5:19-21** 'The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 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.' His death was the punishment for our sin, and His resurrection was the victory over that sin so that it no longer has a hold over us. We must believe in Christ and receive His sacrifice as the perfect Lamb of God to wash away our sin, **John 3:15**.

What a battle!!

In **Romans 7:14-25** Paul gives a brilliant description of the battle we have in our body, mind and spirit when we want to follow God and what He is telling us to do, against our flesh that has been in the habit of doing the opposite for years. 'What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!' **Romans 7:24-25**.

When we come to know Jesus personally we will not be free from the temptation of sin while in this earthly body, but with the work of the Holy Spirit in us we can walk in victory and keep short accounts with God. The hold of sin has been broken over us and we have the power in the Holy Spirit to refuse the temptation but it is **our choice**. For someone who does not know Jesus they have no intention of resisting sin and may even enjoy what they are doing and not see it as 'sin'. Those who wallow in activities that are contrary to the Word of God and have no inclination to refuse any temptation cannot have known the transforming power of God in their lives, **Mark 4:13-20**. We know we are born again when we deal with things that are against God's Law rather than just not bothering. Although we often repeat some sins and can feel disheartened, if we look back we can see areas of our lives where there has been progress.

It is like our lives being a beautiful home with many rooms and when we come to Christ, Jesus is the new landlord instead of ourselves. As He goes from room to room, in some rooms He finds 'stuff' that we do not want to part with. It could be a group of friends we like to go out with; a regular activity we want to do; a career move we want for more money; demand of our children; all great things but if Jesus is going to be our landlord and in complete control of our lives we have to lay these things down and die to our own plans. This will prove to be for our good but it will be walking by faith. We are not pure because of outward acts but we become pure on the inside as Christ renews our mind and transform us into His image and then that shows on the outside.

No condemnation!

As true Christians we will do what we can, not to continue in sin as God's seed remains in us so we are working on being victorious. We cannot always prevent temptation but there is always a way of escape, **1 Corinthians 10:13** Run from things that produce evil thoughts as that is where all temptation starts **2 Timothy 2:22**

The light of the Word of God will destroy Satan's grip in our life in every area of sin and suffering if we will let it. The Truth makes us free from his dominion when we realize that our deliverance has already been purchased by the sacrifice of Jesus. Because God loved the world, He engineered the substitution of His only begotten Son to redeem man from the curse

that came upon him as the result of Satan's renegade plan. **Galatians 3:13** says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree." Jesus was willing to take the curse in His own spirit, soul and body so that we would not have to continue under Satan's dominion.

There was no sickness before man became one with Satan in the Garden of Eden. As sin is the outward sign of spiritual death in the heart of man, sickness is a sign of spiritual death in the body of man. Not only did Jesus pay the price for the new birth of our spirit and the healing of our body, He also bore the 'chastisement of our peace', **Isaiah 53:4-5**. Satan has no right to torment us mentally. We have been redeemed from fear, mental anxiety, depression or anything that keeps our mind from enjoying peace. So don't allow Satan to steal your peace. Jesus came to destroy **all** the works of the devil (**1 John 3:8**). He did not destroy sin only to leave sickness in dominion. Partial redemption from Satan's power would not have pleased God nor would it have fulfilled His plan for His family. He paid in full for the whole man, righteousness for his nature, peace for his mind and healing for his body, the whole package! Jesus completely destroyed the works of the devil in the lives of men. **1 Corinthians 6:20** says, "For you are bought with a price." A great price! "Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." So stand up in the Name of Jesus and command sin to go from you. Refuse to allow them in your body, mind, spirit, your home and your family.

The English word 'salvation' comes from the original Greek word 'sozo'. Salvation is not just the new birth of our spirit. It is also peace for our mind and healing for our body. Vine's Expository Dictionary says salvation denotes "deliverance, preservation; material and temporal deliverance from danger and apprehension." So the Gospel is far more than just getting a ticket to heaven. The gospel is the good news for everyone, if you are guilty it is forgiveness; if you are anxious it is peace; if you are sick it is healing; if you are poor it is provision; if you have a bad habit it is deliverance; anything we need is all found in what Jesus did in His sacrifice at the Cross, **Mark 16:15-16**. There is no sin so great such that Jesus' sacrifice was not able to cancel it and wipe it away, as though this sin had never been. He bore your sins, so you do not have to bear them. Now you can be forgiven! He did that for every sinner. The power of God cleanses and changes anyone who takes hold of the gift of salvation. When you are born again, you become a new man, a new creature, **2 Corinthians 5:17**. Your new spirit is created in the righteousness of God. Let's receive our freedom now! Sin is really a no brainer!

Romans 8:1-2 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

Jude 1:20-23 But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear-hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

To sum up all that Jesus has done read **Isaiah 53:3-6** in the Message

'But the fact is, it was our pains He carried—

our disfigurements, all the things wrong with us.

We thought He brought it on Himself,

that God was punishing Him for His own failures.

But it was our sins that did that to Him,

that ripped and tore and crushed Him—**our sins!**

He took the punishment, and that made us whole.

Through His bruises we get healed.

We're all like sheep who've wandered off and gotten lost.

We've all done our own thing, gone our own way.

And God has piled all our sins, everything we've done wrong,

on Him, on Him.'

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you, Thank you, Thank you, Jesus! Thank you!

12 Take responsibility for sins - 1 John 3:4-10 Challenge Questions.

Read the beginning of the notes on 'What is sin?' -1 John 3:4-10

1. What do you think of as sin? Is murder a worse sin than hating someone? Give your reasons and any Bible verses to back up your opinion.
2. Where does sin come from? Does sin affect you? If so how?
3. Think of a particular sin and map the consequences from first thought to slippery slope to repentance and then restoration. (If you are not sure of an example think of King David)

Read the notes 'What a battle!!'

4. Does it encourage you to know that you can be a Christian sinner and that even Paul shared the same battle you are having?
5. When looking back in your Christian life, which areas can you see improvements in? Are there any rooms in the 'house' of your life that God would like to help you deal with?

Read the notes 'No condemnation!'

6. What was new for you in this section?
7. What encouraged you most in this reading?

Read the verses 1 John 3:11-15 from as many versions as you have available

8. What does it mean to 'love ourselves'?
9. Review **Matthew 22:37-40** and to what degree can we love one another?

10. Read **Genesis 4:1-16** for the story of Cain along with these verses from **1 John 3:11-15**. Why do you think he murdered his brother? What was wrong with his offering?

11. Read **Matthew 5:21-24** do you see hate and murder coming from the same source? What is the origin? Is life in the New Testament times harder or easier than Old Testament times?

12. Do you know of examples of the 'world hating you' in your own life? Or anyone else's story? (**1 John 3:13**) Describe the example here.

13. If we do not love some other Christians does this mean we do not have the new birth? (**1 John 3:14-15**)

14. When we are criticising our brothers and sisters do you think God sees it as 'hate' according to the verses we have read in this study? Is it love? Why or why not?

15. Sum up in a short sentence what you have learnt from this study

16. **Memory Verse Jude 1:24 -25** To Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy— to the only God our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.