

# Defining Sin

by A.W. Tozer

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*Sin is the voluntary commission of an act known to be contrary to the will of God, and it requires both moral knowledge and voluntary choice to be considered sinful.*

**Scripture:** Isaiah 14:14, Luke 22:42, Romans 6:16, James 1:14, 1 John 3:4

**Topics:** "Free Will", "Nature of Sin"

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## Description

A.W. Tozer explores the nature of sin, emphasizing that for an act to be sinful, it must be a voluntary choice made with moral knowledge. He illustrates this with the example of Lucifer's rebellion against God, highlighting that sin is the conscious transgression of God's law. In contrast, Tozer points to Christ's submission in the Garden of Gethsemane, where He chose to align His will with the Father's, demonstrating the conflict between human will and divine will. This distinction between the choices of Satan and Christ underscores the divide between righteousness and sinfulness. Tozer reassures that submitting to God's will does not negate our ability to choose, but rather fulfills our purpose as beings created in God's image.

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## Transcript

For an act to be sinful the quality of voluntariness must also be present. Sin is the voluntary commission of an act known to be contrary to the will of God. Where there is no moral knowledge or where there is no voluntary choice, the act is not sinful; it cannot be, for sin is the transgression of the law and transgression must be voluntary. Lucifer became Satan when he made his fateful choice: "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High" (Isaiah 14:14). Clearly here was a choice made against light. Both knowledge and will were present in the act. Conversely, Christ revealed His holiness when He cried in His agony, "Not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42).

Here was a deliberate choice made with the full knowledge of the consequences.

Here two wills were in temporary conflict, the lower will of the Man who was God and the higher will of the God who was Man, and the higher will prevailed. Here also was seen in glaring contrast the enormous difference between Christ and Satan; and that difference divides saint from sinner and heaven from hell. But someone may ask, "When we pray 'Not my will, but Thine be done,' are we not voiding our will and refusing to exercise the very power of choice which is part of the image of God in us?" The answer to that question is a flat No, but the whole thing deserves further explanation.

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