

The Requirements for Sin and Holiness.

by Steve Grochow

Sin is the result of a free moral choice to rebel against God, and we are responsible for our own sin, not our parents or ancestors.

Scripture: Genesis 2:16, Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 14:12, Jeremiah 2:13, Acts 17:30, Romans 5:19, Romans 8:1, Romans 8:4, James 1:13

Topics: "Sin Nature", "Moral Responsibility"

Description

Steve Grochow delves into the concept of sin, emphasizing the importance of knowledge and free will in making moral choices. He distinguishes between natural and moral attributes, highlighting that sin is a result of a deliberate choice to rebel against God's authority. The sermon explores the origins of sin, the misconception of a sin nature, and the responsibility individuals hold for their own actions. Grochow challenges the idea of sin as a hereditary trait, emphasizing that sin is a personal choice and rebellion against God's rightful rule.

Transcript

Isaiah 7:14-16 "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings." KJV

Isaiah 7:14-16 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel. He will eat curds and honey, at the time He knows enough to refuse evil, and choose good. For before the child will know enough to refuse the evil, and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread will be forsaken." NAS

This passage points out two needed things before sin or holiness can exist:

1. Knowledge.
2. A free will and the ability to make a moral choice.

Natural versus moral attributes.

An example of a natural attribute is the fact that water contains oxygen. Without oxygen, water cannot exist. Water does not have any free choice that it contains oxygen nor does it have any moral virtue. It contains oxygen out of a law of necessity.

Sin is a moral attribute. For right and wrong, or sin and holiness to exist there must be a free choice of at least two things. Sin can not exist without true freedom of will. God placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden so man would have a choice. Gen 2:16-17 "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

It takes some knowledge to be able to refuse evil and choose good, but knowledge alone is not enough. There has to be a real choice of at least two different things. Without the ability and freedom to make a moral choice, sin or holiness cannot exist.

Let's put this to the test.

1. Can a rock sin? No, it has no knowledge or free choice.
2. Can a tree sin? No, again it has no knowledge or free choice.
3. Can a whale sin? It may have some knowledge but it still has no moral choice.

We can go on naming different animals. Some animals have a higher degree of intelligence than others, but none of them ever can make a moral choice. God created man with the ability to make a free moral choice. This ability to make a free moral choice can only come from God, it could never evolve. This fact alone removes all possibility for evolution to exist. No animal had, or now has the ability and the freedom to make a moral choice.

What about a sin nature?

A sin nature is NOT a requirement for sin or holiness to exist. Lucifer was the chief angel. He had no sin nature, yet he rebelled against God. Adam and Eve both had no sin nature when they sinned. Before a sin nature can exist, sin has to take place. Also 1/3 of the angels rebelled against God having no sin nature.

Where did sin come from?

Isaiah 14:12-15 "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." KJV

Sin did not exist at all until Lucifer rebelled and turned against God. It is plain that Lucifer had knowledge and a free will that included the ability to make a moral choice. The only reason why sin exists is because Lucifer created it by freely making a wrong moral choice.

Did God create sin?

No!! God created an angel that had the ability to make a moral choice. There was absolutely nothing wrong with the way God created Lucifer. God was not responsible for what Lucifer freely chose to do.

Lucifer was created with the ability to create his own moral character. To put it simply, Lucifer created his own sin out of his free will.

God cannot be responsible for any being's free moral choice.

Remember, sin or holiness cannot exist without knowledge and a free will that includes the ability to make a moral choice.

Can God create a morally holy or sinful being?

No!! It is impossible for God to create moral character in another living being. He has created beings that have the ability to make their own moral character, either good or bad. What any living being chooses to do with his free will is solely dependent on himself and himself alone.

When God created Adam, he was neither sinful or holy. He was given the ability to make and form his own moral character. We know that Adam had knowledge and a free will that included the ability to make a moral choice. Adam and Eve both created their own sin out of their free will.

What is sin?

Sin is the result of a free moral choice to rebel and disobey God. In both of the above cases, Adam and Lucifer freely chose to knowingly rebel and totally disobey God. Instead of letting God rule and reign, they chose to take control of their own lives. Sin is the throwing God out of His rightful place and then taking His place in one's life. Sin is more than just a simple act of defiance. It is a preferred state of the heart. The sinners' only real aim and purpose in life is to bring himself pleasure that totally disregards his own intelligence and God's right to rule.

Sin also is the wrong use of the abilities and resources that God created us with. God did not make any mistake in the creation of Lucifer or Adam. Both of these took what they had been created with and used it in the wrong way and for the wrong reason.

Is a baby born sinful or evil?

Let's put this to the test. Does a baby have knowledge and a free will that includes the ability to make a moral choice? No! A baby does not have any knowledge or the ability to make a free moral choice. When a baby is born it is like Adam in the sense that it is neither sinful or holy. At some point in time it will create and form its own moral character by a free moral choice. A baby cannot sin or repent. If a baby dies, God could never find the baby guilty of any sin or crime. There is absolutely nothing criminal or evil about any baby. Remember, sin is using what we are born with in the wrong way and for the wrong reasons. Sin does not consist in what we have, but in our free moral choice to use our God given resources in a wrong way.

Is sin normal or natural?

No!! Sin goes against God's original design and purpose. Sin not only violates God but it also harms the one sinning. There is no moral defect in the way we are born. We sin when we choose to violate our original design and purpose. There is absolutely nothing normal or natural about rebellion against God. Again, sin is our free moral choice to use our God-given resources in a wrong way.

Did Adam or his descendants lose the ability to obey God after Adam's sin?

No!! The Bible tells the story of many people, some who walked with God and did what was pleasing in His sight and others who rebelled against God and did evil in His sight. It would be impossible to rebel or obey without the freedom to do so.

Joshua 24:15 "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." KJV

Isaiah 1:19-20 "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it." KJV

These passages prove that all of Adam's offspring still had the ability to obey or refuse God.

What about Enoch and others who really followed Gods commands? Again, it would not be possible to obey God if they did not have this ability.

Acts 17:30 "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:" KJV

God could not really command men to repent if they did not have the natural ability to do so.

What is a sin nature and where does it come from?

Do not forget that before a sin nature can exist, sin has to take place. So a sin nature is only the RESULT of sin not the CAUSE of it. A sin nature consists in the willful choice to live supremely for self and not for God. Each sinner is the author of his own sin nature. A sinner develops his own sin nature over a period of time. It starts with his thoughts. Then his thoughts become choices. Then his choices become actions. Then his actions become habits. Then his habits become his lifestyle.

Do we inherit a sin nature from Adam or our parents?

No!! It is impossible for moral character to be passed from one generation to the next. Sin does not exist until one actually sins. Read Ezekiel chapter 18. This chapter teaches that sin cannot be inherited or transmitted from your parent or ancestors. Each person alone is responsible for his own free moral choices.

When does a person become a sinner?

When a young person has enough knowledge to make a free moral choice and then knowingly and deliberately chooses his own way over God's, he sins.

Is a baby born spiritually dead?

No!! Some teach that a baby is born spiritually dead and has no more ability to live holy, than a dead person has to reach for a glass of water. Again, the baby is neither sinful or holy. When it has enough knowledge it will decide for itself whether to rebel against or obey God.

What do we truly inherit from Adam?

We all inherit physical death and are subject to many diseases and weaknesses. This is called physical depravity. This is not the CAUSE of any persons sin. Christ himself inherited this physical depravity

passed down to Him from His mother.

Hebrews 2:17 "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." KJV

Hebrews 4:15 "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." KJV

It would have been impossible for Jesus to be truly tempted if He did not have the possibility to sin. Even though Christ had to deal with being human, He did not sin.

IT IS NO CRIME TO BE A HUMAN. God does not judge or hold anyone guilty for being born human. Instead, He holds the sinner guilty for his own free choice to rebel against Him.

Is sin a sickness or disease?

Disease or sickness is never the cause of sin. If sin was a sickness, man could cure it medically. Christ's life, death on the cross and His resurrection would be in vain.

Where did my sin come from?

Each person created their own sin out of a free choice to oppose God's rightful rulership. I created my own sin and am solely responsible for it. You created your own sin and are also solely responsible for it.

Every person forms their own moral character, either good or evil. It does not exist until we created it. God holds each person fully responsible only for his own free choices, actions and lifestyle.

These following verses clearly teaches that we "birth" our own sin into existence.

James 1:13-16 "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren."

THIS IS THE TRUE DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN. Your sin results from your own free moral choice. It is truly your own creation.

What is a carnal mind and where does it come from?

The carnal mind is not the source or cause of sin. It is the result of sin. It is the deliberate choice to mind (to think on and follow) the desires of the flesh over and against the will of God. The only real and true source for all sin is one's own free moral will. The carnal mind is the result of the free moral choice to rebel against God's righteous authority. This choice shuts out God's life, presence and control. It is a totally voluntary state where the sinner chooses to live in complete rebellion against God and His character. The carnal mind is the total enemy of God. It hates God and is totally hostile to Him. The carnal mind refuses to be subject to the law of God. As long as a sinner stays in this chosen state he will never be obedient to God or His laws. The sinner totally rejects God's true authority and makes himself the king and ruler of his own life. He violates God's original design and purpose. He decides to reject God to pursue self-gratification. The carnal mind is not the mind itself, but a voluntary choice and preference of the mind.

It exists only as a result of a free moral choice. It is not a part of man's body, soul or spirit.

No one is born with a carnal mind or a sin nature. This enmity against God is not transferred from father to son. It is impossible for a voluntary state of mind to pass from one generation to the next. Sin is the free choice of every person to live entirely for the gratification of his desires, lusts, emotions and feelings.

What about Romans chapter seven, where Paul talks about indwelling sin and sin that he cannot help?

Even though this chapter was written in the first person, it could NOT be Paul's personal experience at the time he wrote it. When you honestly look at both Romans chapter 7 and 8 together you will find that they represent two completely and totally opposite experiences. Chapter 7 is one experience while chapter 8 is the extreme opposite experience. It is impossible for any person to have both opposing experiences at the same time. This would be like trying to drive east and west at the same time. You may live in one of these states for a period of time, but you cannot live in both at the same time.

Romans chapter 7 gives the example of a convicted person (who is yet selfish.) This person knows what he should and should not do. He has a desire to obey but as he is still selfish at heart, he only fails time and again. He is blinded (by his own selfishness) to the spirit of the law, and what it requires. After many attempts of trying establish his own righteousness, apart from truly loving God, he comes to the wrong conclusion that is impossible to obey God.

Here are the reasons why this person fails and then thinks that it is impossible for him to obey:

1. He is still committed to self. He has not relinquished control to God. He has not lovingly embraced Christ as the Shepherd and Bishop of his soul. He is trying to establish his own righteousness, and you can't do the right thing for the wrong reason, and be righteous. It is trying to overcome selfishness with selfishness, a thing which is impossible. The key to this dilemma is not self-resolution. The key is not to make myself 'right'. This is self-righteousness - selfishness trying to overcome selfishness - trying to become 'right' for the sake of self. This will never do. The key is to submit one's self totally to a LOVING God, and to make HIM the supreme object of our affection and worship - to want to do right out of love for HIM, and nothing else - to make fellowship with HIM our supreme desire, and not the honor of self-reputation. Without doing that, one cannot be holy and righteous, no matter how much he tries, resolves, prays, fasts, etc.

2. His heart or true aim and direction is continually rejecting God's true righteous authority over him.

It is possible for this person to make some changes in his outward behavior, but in his heart of hearts he remains a total enemy of God.

The choice to live totally free of God's authority becomes the law of the sinner's life. The Apostle Paul calls it the law in one's members that wars against the law of the mind. Romans 7:23 "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."

Romans 7:19-21 says "For the good that I would I do not, but the evil I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but it is sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me."

Paul knows the true solution to this problem when he cries out saying "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Christ himself is the solution to this problem. Paul goes on to chapter 8 which is his present experience at the time of his writing. This chapter gives the example of a person who is truly living under the grace of the gospel.

Romans 8:1 "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit".

This is a conditional statement. If one does not walk after the spirit he will be condemned. It is impossible for anyone to walk after the flesh and to walk after the spirit at the same time.

Romans 8:2 "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

It is impossible to be free from the law of sin and death and be in bondage to it at the same time. Read Romans 6:14 "For sin shall not have dominion over you: For you are not under the law but under grace." Also Romans 6:16 "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."

You have only two possible states to live in:

1. To live unto self. That is, to walk after the flesh and only mind the things of the flesh, which is obedience to sin and death. The person living in this state is continually rejecting God's true righteous authority to only further establish his own. This state is a willful choice that he has made. It is a carnal mind which is enmity with God. As long as a person remains in this chosen state he will never please God or be subject to Him. (Romans 8:7,8)

2. To live unto God. That is, to follow Christ; to live after the Spirit and mind the things that be of Christ, and that be above. To live under His Lordship. As a result we truly fulfill the law in thought, word and deed every day.

Romans 8:4-6 "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit."

Again, it is impossible to mind the things of the flesh and the things of the spirit at the same time.

Many claim to be living "under grace" but they continue living in sin and rebellion to God. These people are deceived. The Bible does not teach that any person can continue in sin and be free from sin at the same time. When a person is really living under true grace he will actually keep God's commandments and practice righteousness. See I John 3:6-10, I John 2:29, I John 2:3-5, I John 5:2-3, and I John 3:2-8. The grace of God is not a cloak for sin. The grace of God is that which offers us pardon for PAST sin, and then teaches us to 'deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;' (Titus 2:12)

Even Christ said that if you really love him you will keep His commandments.

John 14:15, 21a, 24. "If you love me, keep my commands. The person that has my commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves me. The person who does not keep my sayings, loves me not." NAS

Sin is the result of moral choice. No man is born with a 'carnal mind'. His mind becomes carnal when he chooses to live for self and not God.

What about Psalm 51?

Many people think that we are born in sin because David said in Psalm 51:5 "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

This passage is poetic and figurative. In verse 7 he says, "purge me with hyssop, and I will be clean." No one will be cleaned from sin by hyssops.

Even if you took this verse literally, David seems to be referring to the sin of his mother, not the state in which he was born. David's mother is the subject of sin. There is a big difference between being shapen in iniquity and iniquity being shapen in you. For example, I was born in Seattle, but Seattle was not born in me. This verse does not teach that David was born in sin or that sin was transmitted down to David from his mother.

What about Romans 5:19?

Romans 5:19 "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous".

Look closely at this verse. If Adam's sin made all of mankind sinners then Christ's obedience made all righteous. The words are exactly the same. What is true of Adam must also be true of Christ; there is no other possibility. If you believe that Adam's sin made others sinful, then you have to believe that Christ made others righteous. But there is no free choice in either case. This is pure universalism. Everyone will be saved no matter what. If we have no choice in being made a sinner, then we have no choice in being made righteous.

It is true that we will all physically die as a result of Adam's sin, but our own free will is what determines our eternal destiny.

Again, the Bible teaches that sin is a wrong moral choice.

Have you even been exposed to this teaching about sin? The Preacher draws a bull's-eye target and then draws arrows all around it. Most of these arrows fall way short of the target completely. He may draw one or two hitting the target but missing the bull's-eye. He then explains that sin is missing the mark and falling short of God's glory. He then says that no matter how hard we try we will always miss the mark.

This is a total distortion of God's truth! The sinner misses the mark because he is purposely aiming in the opposite direction of the true target!! It is not that he tries to hit the bulls-eye and misses but it is that he knowingly and rebelliously shoots his arrows in the total opposite direction of the true target.

True sin is the aim and intent of the heart to totally disregard God and His love. It is the aim and the intent of the heart that determines if a person is holy or not. The sinner can always come to Christ for salvation.

It is not a criminal act to aim at a target and miss. People do not go to hell for simply missing. A sinner goes to hell because he is a criminal. The reason why the sinner is a criminal is because he has the ability to aim at the right target but he purposely aims in the opposite direction. He deliberately and defiantly has aimed his heart in total opposition to God. He is so stubborn and rebellious that even though he can turn around (repent) and aim in the right direction, he never will without the grace of God. This stubborn refusal is what sends the sinner to hell.

Every sinner has committed two evils. These are, forsaking God and building a system that tries to quench their spiritual thirst and desire. The sinner has not only refused God's right to rule over him but he has replaced the only true God with a false god.

Jer. 2:13 "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

1 John 3:4 "Sin is lawlessness" i.e., breaking the law, a WILLFUL act.

Sin is a CHOICE to disregard God and go one's own way.

Isa. 53:6a "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way."

God would never command or require repentance if man was truly unable to obey.

Acts 17:30 "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."

The sinner's REAL problem is his REFUSAL to come to God when He attempts to draw him near.

Matthew 23:37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

Every person has received light from Jesus Christ and no one has ANY EXCUSE for rejecting God.

John 1:9 "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

Romans 1:20 "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:"

The Word of God does not describe sin as a simple miss or weakness but as rebellion. When you look at the entire Bible you will see a history of many stubborn, rebellious, defiant, prideful, arrogant and disobedient people. None of these people were born this way. They had the ability to follow God and do things pleasing in His sight, but they freely chose to spit in God's face.

Responsibility for sin.

No one can truly repent if they do not believe that they are responsible for their sin. As long as a person blames his parents, Adam, his physical condition, God, the devil, or whatever, he will never truly repent. A person must see and realize that his sin truly is his own creation. The sinner must realize that he has chosen to rebel and refused God's righteous authority over him. He has willingly set his heart against God

to live entirely and only for himself. This is the true condition of the sinner. He is not a victim born in a sinful state in which he has absolutely no control over sin. Sinners do not deserve any pity or sympathy at all! They are chosen criminals fighting against God. Would God punish sinners for something that really was not their own fault?

Answer these questions. Have you actually sinned? Where you an actual sinner or did God just see you as one because of Adam?

If you were an actual sinner based on Adam's sin then God expects you to now actually act righteous based on what Christ did.

Rom 5:8-21 ""But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Study Questions.

1. What two things are needed before sin or holiness can exist? Why?
2. What is sin?
3. What is the difference between natural and moral attributes?
4. Where did sin come from?
5. What is a sin nature? Where did it come from?
6. Can moral character be passed from one generation to the next? Why?
7. Is having a sin nature a requirement for sin or holiness to exist? Why?
8. What are the two evils every sinner has committed?
9. What are the only two possible states a person can live in?

10. Is it possible for any person to live in both states at the same time? Why?

11. Does any sinner deserve pity or sympathy? Why?

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