

Sin Defined

James 1:14-15

Sin is translated in our Bibles from various Greek terms. Each term gives us an idea of sin's denotation. One of these Greek terms is *para,ptwma*. This means to trespass. The image that may enter our minds is the "no trespassing" sign we occasionally see on someone's property. The idea is that there are boundaries which should not be passed.

Another Greek term used is *ptai,w*. This means to stumble. Once again, there is imagery behind this term. We may think back to when we tripped over a chair leg or going up some steps. This indicates that sin is a mistake and can be dangerous.

The most common Greek verb used for sin is *a`marta,nw*. This means to engage in wrong doing. The natural question to ask is what is right and wrong. Otherwise, we will not know if we are sinning. Where are the boundaries that we should not pass? The simple answer is that God has given us boundaries.

God has always spoken to mankind. "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son" (Hebrews 1:2). "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). We know what is right and wrong through God's word which we can find in our Bibles through God's Son.

What is the process of sin according to James 1:14-15?

Sin Committed

Romans 3:23

This world at one time was perfect which is difficult to imagine, but it must have been a wonderful place. God had a close relationship with Adam and Eve (the first two humans). He the only command He gave was, "Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat" (Genesis 2:17). That was Adam and Eve's boundary, but they trespassed against God's command and sin entered the world (Genesis 3).

When we do not follow God's word then we are in a sense stumbling or trespassing in areas we are not allowed in. Just as Adam and Eve sinned, "All have sinned" (Romans 3:23). We have all done something God has told us not to do.

Some may say they have never sinned, is this possible according to 1 John 1:8?

As we might expect, there are consequences to sin. Adam and Eve died in a spiritual sense and eventually they physically died. In the spiritual since they were taken out of God's presence (Genesis 3:23). We are told that "just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned" (Romans 5:12). Everyone is a sinner and everyone awaits the consequence of his sin—physical death and eternal death from the presence of God.

Consider 1 John 3:6 and 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8. What will happen to those who sin?

“God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16). We can have spiritual life and a relationship with God because of His Son, Jesus Christ.

What was our situation before Christ came (Ephesians 2:1-5)?

Christ “Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world” (1 John 2:2). “When you all were dead in your trespasses ... He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our trespasses” (Colossians 2:13). After stumbling around in sin, Christ came to save us. “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15). “He appeared in order to take away sins” (1 John 3:5). Christ “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed” (1 Peter 2:24)

Does this mean that we do not have to act a certain way or do anything, but that we are automatically saved (Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46)?

We must obey what God commands us in His word. Christ said, “I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance” (Luke 5:32). Since we are all sinners we must all answer Christ’s call and repent of our sins. Similarly, James writes, “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts” (4:8). We must make sure that we take the necessary steps in order to be saved.

If we do not change from our sin what will happen (Romans 2:5-8; 2 Corinthians 5:10)?

Not only in the above passages but throughout the Bible, there is a contrast between death in sin and life in Christ. We should open our hearts to Christ because of the love He has shown us and we should do what He asks of us in order to be saved. It is vital that we study God’s word to us, the gospel. After all, the gospel “is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16).

What happens if we follow God’s will (Hebrews 5:5:8-9; James 1:12; Revelation 2:10)?