

“Be killing sin or it will be killing you” - John Owen

Mortification of Sin & Delight in Christ

Theology of Sin

“If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles.” - Sun Tzu

I. The Sinful Nature

A. The Origin of Sin

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” ² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

⁸ And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰ And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” ¹¹ He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹² The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” ¹³ Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” (Genesis 3:1-13)

- Sin is based in a lie about God’s commands (v.1)
- Sin is based in a lie about its consequences (v.4), but it is unable to hide itself (vv.8-10)
- Sin is based in a lie about God’s character (v.5a)
- Sin does not deliver on its promises (vv.5b-7)
- Sin separates us from God and each other (vv.12-13)

B. Original Sin

Definition: The guilty state and corrupt nature into which every human being is born.

a. Total Depravity / Pervasion Corruption

¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. ¹⁹ They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. (Ephesians 4:18-19)

→ Practical Takeaway: be humble, practice self-suspicion—you are blind to some of your sin

b. The Non-Essentiality of Sin to Human Nature

Original human nature: *posse peccare, posse non-peccare* (able to sin, able not to sin)

Fallen human nature: *non posse non peccare* (not able to not sin)

Regenerated human nature: *posse non peccare* (able not to sin)

Glorified human nature: *non posse peccare* (not able to sin)

→ Practical Takeaway: don't define yourself by your sin; in Christ, you can resist your sin

II. The Nature of Sin

A. Sin is the Absence of Good

B. Sin is Cosmic Rebellion

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight. (Psalm 51:4)

C. Sin Springs from the Heart (“disordered love”)

²² But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment...²⁸ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:22, 28)

¹⁴ Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire [Gk. ἐπιθυμία]. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. (James 1:14-15)

ἐπιθυμία means “desire, lust” but literally translates to “over-desire”

How to Kill Sin

“Most of God’s people are content to be saved from the hell that is without; they are not so anxious to be saved from the hell that is within.”
- Robert Murray M’Cheyne

I. Die to Sin (Mortification)

A. See the Ugliness of Sin

The wages of sin is death. (Romans 6:23a)

a. Confess & Repent

To God: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* (1 John 1:9)

To each other: *Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.* (James 5:16)

Urgently: ²³ *If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.* (Matthew 5:23-24)

b. Pursue Godly Sorrow (© Finally Free, Heath Lambert)

⁸ *For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it... ⁹ As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. ¹⁰ For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. ¹¹ For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter.* (2 Corinthians 7:8-11)

Worldly Sorrow

- Grieves over the consequences of sin
- Is short-lived
- Returns to sin
- Fears people will find out
- Wants the sin to be forgotten
- Evades the consequences of sin

Godly Sorrow

- Grieves over sin
- Lasts
- Produces eagerness to be rid of sin
- Fears God
- Wants the sin to be forgiven
- Accepts the consequences of sin

B. Make War

a. Poison Sin from Root to Fruit

¹ *What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?*

² *You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.* (James 4:1-2)

If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. (Matthew 5:29)

b. Fight Personally

Make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. (Romans 13:14b)

c. Fight in Community

¹² *Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.* ¹³ *But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.* (Hebrews 3:12-13)

¹⁹ *My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back,* ²⁰ *let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.* (James 5:19-20)

¹⁵ *If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.* ¹⁶ *But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.* ¹⁷ *If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.* (Matthew 18:15-17)

II. Live to Christ (Vivification)

The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:11)

A. Savor the Beauty of Jesus

“The most effectual way of seeing the evil of sin is in the face of Christ.” - Andrew Bonar

⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin....¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹² Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. (Romans 6:5-6, 11-12)

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. (1 John 2:1)

The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

- Study the Bible
- Meditate on the Bible
- Pray the Bible
- Look to God’s Creation
- Learn from Church Heroes

B. Chase After Jesus (Obedience)

Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. (Galatians 5:16)

¹³ Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. (Romans 13:13-14)

Book Recommendations

- *Finally Free* by Heath Lambert (killing pornography)
- *Good & Angry* by David Powlison (killing anger)
- *When People are Big & God is Small* by Ed Welch (killing fear of man)
- *Respectable Sins* by Jerry Bridges
- *Counterfeit Gods* by Tim Keller