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What is Sin?

Have you ever asked yourself, "What is sin?" The short answer is found in James and 1 John.

James 2:9

But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the **law** as lawbreakers.

Thus, when you break the law, you sin.

1 John 3:4

Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, **sin is lawlessness**.

Christ Himself was asked what the greatest commandment was.

Mark 12:28

He asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

Mark 12:29-31

“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

So then, by the words of Christ Himself, we are to love the Lord with all our being and NOT just our actions. And please note that He is quoting Deuteronomy 6:4-5 here. Yet, how do we love the Lord? 1 John 5:

1 John 5:2-3

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

So then, to love the Lord is to OBEY His commandments. This perfectly parallels with what is given in

Deuteronomy chapter 6.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9

These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

But note that we are not to just love Him in what we do (our strength) but in every aspect of our life. We are to love Him (obey His commands) in our hearts (in that we hold dear), our soul (which is our will) and our mind (which is our thoughts). This is why Christ expounded so much in Matthew 5 when he said things like:

Matt. 5:27-28

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

He's saying that just because one may NOT be committing adultery in the physical (the strength) that it does not mean that he is not doing so in his heart. That in itself would be breaking the greatest commandment as declared by Christ. And notice that Yeshua said "You have heard that it was said" and NOT "You have heard that it was written." Meaning what? He's correcting what has been preached. That which was "said" and bringing clarity to what was written. The eternal Word. This was the purpose of the Law from the beginning; that we would obey with all of our being. That's why Christ named the greatest commandment. Christ did not make these harder; he simply clarified the issue on the original meaning.

It must be noted that one can NOT be saved by the Law.

However, though we do not keep the law FOR salvation, we ARE supposed to keep the law as a RESULT of our salvation. Romans 3:28 says:

Romans 3:28

For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.

Then three verses later:

Romans 3:31

Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

As we've said before, faith is root and obedience is the fruit. In fact, James speaks directly to this topic throughout his book.

James 2:19-24

You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that — and shudder. You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was

credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend. You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

Then, two verses later:

James 2:26

As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

But what deeds is James talking about? What is the context just before all these verses? ...

James 2:8-11

If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

and then he continues:

James 2:12-14

Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment! What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?

The whole context of that which James is proclaiming is based on obedience to the law.

He later mentions in chapter four:

James 4:11

Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it.

So then, though we do not keep the law FOR salvation, we ARE supposed to keep the law as a RESULT of our salvation.

In fact, as mentioned before, we are told that to love the Lord is to keep his commandments. Again:

1John 5:2-3

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

The law can't save. It never could. The law was given for three purposes.

- 1) To reveal what sin is;
- 2) To bless us if we keep it;
- and 3) Curse us if don't keep it.

So, 1) To reveal sin

Romans 7:7

What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have **KNOWN** what sin was except through the law.

AND 2) to Bless us if we keep it and 3) Curse us if don't keep it.

Deut. 11:26-28

See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse; the blessing if you obey the commands of (Yahweh) the LORD your God that I am giving you today; the curse if you disobey the commands of (Yahweh) the LORD your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known.

Knowing that sin is breaking God's law, I will conclude with these words from John.

1 John 2:1

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.

I pray that all of God's people comes to the realization that when we break His law we are offending Him. Thank the Lord for His grace and mercy as He teaches us to walk in His ways.

We hope you've enjoyed this message. Remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom.

For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net.

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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