

## 15. Our Dirty Laundry (Uncovering our wrongs)

Donning special sunglasses revealed corpse-like creatures with bulging eyeballs (from the movie *They Live*).<sup>(1)</sup> If we saw ourselves through God's viewpoint we would see something similar.

### Seriousness of Sin

According to classical Christianity, God, being perfect, cannot be united with impurity. Therefore, to unite with God, his Father aspect must see sinners through the filtering lens of His perfect Son aspect. This Son Christ fulfilled God's prophecies, foreshadowing, and demand for perfect obedience, fulfilling and completing the Father's Law for us. Also, being both God and man, the Son can understand and reconcile both parties. Everyone is still under God's law, but it is a law which allows for grace. If Christians stumble, God's grace is now available through His mediator.

Since the Lord Jesus Christ paid the full price for every conceivable sin, is that a license to freely sin? NO! Paraphrasing Hebrews 10:26-30: {If we sin willfully after having known the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, rather, a certain fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour God's adversaries. Since those that despised Moses' law (a crude prototype) died mercilessly; how much sorer punishment shall one deserve who has trampled on the Son of God, treating His sanctifying blood as something unholy, and has defied the Holy Spirit? Vengeance belongs to me, I will recompense saith the Lord. God shall judge His people.} We may enjoy sin, as one may leap off the Empire State building and get a rush, but go splat!

### Defining Sin

Sin should be defined as anything that is *\*inherently\** wrong, and therefore displeases God, instead of something being wrong because it *\*arbitrarily\** displeases God. Sin is also designated as: disobedience, lawlessness, and unrighteousness, including both what's committed and what's omitted (Ability plus opportunity equals responsibility). Since all sin falls into the categories of misdeeds, inappropriate words or sinful thoughts, we should strive to bring every thought, word, and deed into obedience. Since God's character is purportedly the essence of perfection, Christ admonished His disciples to strive for perfection (Matthew 5:48). Though nobody is perfect, there's an axiom: "Chase perfection and you'll catch excellence."

Some believers delineate sin into mortal and venial. However, mortal sin has sometimes been redefined as whatever sin others have a weakness for, and which I myself am not even tempted with. Believers have also succumbed to categorizing particular sins unequivocally mortal or not. Yet a mortal sin could be any one of three hundred faults or nothing at all. For example, abortion performed because the parents want to avoid producing children who would simply starve to death or die of AIDS, instead of cold heartedness, might reduce the culpability. I'm not saying that's right or even okay. I'm saying to not quickly damn people. One could receive Hell by watching too much television, thereby replacing God, as far as that goes.

### Bad Things Happening to Good People?

In movies, bad guys are bizarre and sadistic serial killers; everyone else is good. Sometimes absolutely everyone is good, and the bad guy is some non-existent space alien. Surveys have been taken, where people were asked if they think they're a good person. People from every segment of society have answered affirmatively, including lifetime criminals in maximum security prison. Sometimes, people take great pride in, unlike others, of having the goodness of recognizing their badness. Yet nobody is righteous. Rather, humanity has become unprofitable, destructive, and miserable (Romans 3:10-16) **Concerning God's standard of**

goodness, it's clear that nobody is truly right or good, not even close. Since we reap what we sow, and God, with a perfect standard, is a consuming fire, whatever bad has happened to us is less than we deserve.

Everyone will be judged according to their works. Works here mean fruitfulness that issues from love, God's Spirit first touching that person somehow. No major religious text considers anyone judged by faith in isolation. Some believers make that claim, using Ephesians 2:8-9 as a proof text. Actually, the Apostle Paul was rebuking those having boasting works, believing they could "dig their way to Heaven," being prideful in their accomplishments, while lacking love toward God and their fellow man.

Ultimately, created beings either do what they're supposed to do or don't. Consider a home appliance. You expect it to work every time it's plugged in one hundred percent. If it sometimes doesn't work correctly, it's broken. God is supremely rich, all-powerful, and completely independent. He doesn't need to save any defective product. Thankfully, God is Love, and His grace (unmerited favor) is a gift, covering one's defects. However, God's standard is still perfect, a triune \*faith\* \*working\* through \*love\* (Galatians 5:6).

### Ten Commandments?

Similar principles for all Ten Commandments exist within other religions besides Judaism and Christianity, but are less prominent. The Jewish, Eastern Orthodox, and non-Lutheran Protestant version of the Ten Commandments are divided almost identically. Another version combines the first two commandments and splits the tenth into two (the Augustinian division). The Catholic Church followed this version, and Lutherans followed the Catholics.

Actually, the Catholic division originated from Augustine around AD 400. He came up with: 9) Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife and 10) Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods because he quixotically thought the tenth commandment made wives mere pieces of property. Men owned women, but did so as parents own children, not like men own lawnmowers. The Augustinian version creates redundancy; two commands against coveting, and Augustine's ninth command doesn't differ from Thou shalt not commit adultery in principle. And there's a difference between false gods and graven images, which I'll address shortly. Besides, Exodus's list has thy neighbor's wife sandwiched in between the coveting list, showing that it was artificially extracted. Also notice how Paul divides the commandments in Romans 13:9. Therefore, reject the Augustinian division.

Actually, following the ten commandments DOES NOT equate with following Christ. Since Christ magnified a couple of these commandments, such as equating hate with murder and lust with adultery, it's assumed that He magnified all ten, extrapolating them into every conceivable sin. There's no proof that he did, and no complete list of sins properly fits that format, despite attempts to squeeze all sins into that mold. For an interesting take on the Ten Commandment format, see the video My Own commandments.2

The ten commandments were as a schoolmaster preparing the world for Christ, but were created for barbaric people. If someone needs an official decree saying that murdering their own kin is wrong in order to avoid doing so, they have bigger problems than trying to live pure, sinless lives. Those ancient principles were primarily designed as laws to prevent complete anarchy. I'm against following the ten commandments format, but since this format is so ingrained in the human imagination, here are my own observations:

I. Having Strange Gods before our Creator (Idolatry): Idolatry is hardly limited to fashioning golden calves or gods like the ancient Roman deities. Anything that consumes most of your time, energy, brainpower, or talent that doesn't advance the Christian life is something you idolize and can be considered your god.

Even spending five hours every day on Internet dating or experimenting with cookbook recipes can be idolatrous. Spending exorbitant sums on home remodeling while polishing your floors to the point where people slip and fall, and using so many cleaning supplies that other family members are gagging on the chemical fumes is certainly idolatry; you have a temple of self-worship. A comeback to this observation is that other people are envious of what they don't have. I agree; and most men may be envious of male porn

stars, and some people may envy proficient serial killers, but this doesn't legitimize the object of envy. Another comeback is presenting the false dilemma: "Would you like to live in a luxury home or in the dilapidated ghetto with drive by shootings? (As if there are only two options). We must love one another without loving money and worldly possessions.

**God even demands that you even put Him before your immediate family and your own life (Matt. 10:37-39).** According to this expanded definition, idolaters include most everybody! Idolaters are thrust from God's presence and condemned to "the lake of fire and brimstone" in Revelation 21:8 and 22:15.

II. Condemnation of Graven Images: Making a graven image can be understood as having a false image or representation of the true God; remolding Him into someone who always agrees with you, or your image or idea limits God somehow, or makes Him physical instead of spiritual. If that's so, ninety-nine percent of the religious world may be guilty of making a graven image, while everyone that is non-religious is guilty of having strange gods (namely themselves, their family, or even sports teams).

III. The Lord's Name in Vain: Saying G D it and misusing Jesus's name certainly constitute using the Lord's name in vain. But so does using minced words such as the expressions "My goodness" (one's goodness is God), "Gee" (a euphemism for Jesus), "By Golly" (a euphemism for God) and many other examples. And we shouldn't use anyone's name in vain, or unnecessarily badmouth or disrespect them, since everyone is made in God's image. However, the word take or misuse is better translated \*carry.\* Do not carry God's name in vain means do not commit evil in God's name. That's the chief import of the text. When irreligious people do evil, it doesn't bring God and religion into disrepute. But when religious people commit evil, especially in God's name, they not only do evil, they do terrible damage to the name of God.

V. Honoring Thy Father and Mother Defined: This should be understood as honoring all members of your immediate family. Perhaps Honor Thy Children wasn't a commandment because civilized parents did that naturally. Besides, when the Judaic command of honoring parents was issued, the parents had to honor the community of elders, with no separation of religious faith and State. The community helped insure that parents honored their children. According to Christianity, we should honor everyone to some extent.

Today, with complete separation of Church and State, parents aren't accountable to anybody, and the family unit is becoming unscrewed. Today, some adults live with their parents since they cannot adequately support themselves thanks to today's broken economic system. These parents should be praised highly for their invaluable financial help and support.

However, some parents, despite their support, constantly bark orders, criticize, are extremely insulting, are controlling bullies, or have boiling tempers. Some have no interest in their adult children's activities. Some are compulsive liars, which destroys trust and personal relationships. Some parents blatantly declare their superiority to others or promote beliefs and habits which oppose Christianity. Some offend others, but won't stop their behavior. Anything they do is explained away or somebody else's fault. They're "never wrong." But if they're bothered, it needs to stop. Some parents never consider their children's feelings, never take their side on anything, and never change.

Therefore, although living in the same house, some adult children often avoid their parents; which preserves their sanity. Oftentimes someone will be pleasant and tolerable for short periods but not on a continuous basis.

Many people condemn those who dislike their parents. This is outrageous since some of these same parents disparaged their own parents. Many nice people avoid their immediate family if family members are mentally, physically, or sexually abusive, or have other intolerable problems. Sometimes parents neglect or abandon their children altogether. Since some who do these things put on a mask that they show the world, people think they're wonderful. Then someone accuses the person with family problems of not honoring their father, mother, or siblings, and being a rotten person, hypocrite, et cetera, exacerbating things further.

Adults are obligated to love their parents, help them with their needs, celebrate special occasions, do nothing which disgraces the family, and try not to offend them. Wealthy adults of poor parents are also obligated to support them financially. We're also obligated to care for elderly parents at home if they so choose, not pawn off this responsibility on nursing homes. Honoring one's father and mother even included obeying their parent's choice of a mate and career for them. However, we're not obligated to have a close personal relationship if that relationship would be harmful. Troublemakers who say otherwise are perverting Christianity, are a busybody in other people's matters, and should repent.

One day, a daughter confided to her mother the torment of her temptation to suicide. Her mother went into a tirade: "You are demented; you are worthless; you can't even kill yourself. Try it!" and opened the apartment high rise window. The daughter jumped out the window to her death. The commandment Honor thy father and mother wasn't designed so that children would be eaten alive by their parents. It was designed to create order. In some cases, the only appropriate course of action is to disown one's parents.

Jesus had the foresight to understand the consequence of Christian children having non-Christian parents. Paraphrasing Matt.10:34-36: I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword; I came to set believers at odds with their own family, one's foes shall be they of their own household.

VII.Adulterous Behavior: Since Jesus said that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery in his heart, many people assume that the counterpart to this precept is women lusting after men is adultery of the heart. Yet there is a reason that this injunction does not appear in Scripture; women are biologically disinclined to sexual lust. Rather, the proper counterpart to Christ's injunction for women is not to stir up lust. Scripture warns against those who entice others and admonishes women to dress modestly. Throughout Jewish and Christian history, what was considered modest apparel for women was being covered from neckline to ankles.

VIII.Stealing: Stealing is unauthorized taking. Even stealing a paperclip from your company is still stealing; you took something that wasn't yours without permission. Small stealing is as water leaking through a crack in a dike which may potentially get bigger.

IX.Bearing False Witness: Any type of lying or dishonesty is a form of bearing false witness; you are witnessing that what you say is true by declaring it so, while it is false. God is Truth personified while the Devil is the father of lies. A little bit of lying is not harmless. Like a little bit of cancer, it's an element that consumes righteousness, grows, and mutates into other sins. When we lie we stab our spirit, which only has life through the Spirit of Truth. In the next life when the spirit realm dominates, we will feel the consequence of falsehood as assuredly as dagger blades. All habitual unrepentant liars shall be damned (Revelation 21:8 and 22:15). Their lies will have severed the bond between their spirit and God's Spirit of Truth as a branch sawed from a tree.

X.Coveting: The most common form of coveting today may be gambling, which was condemned by Christian churches up until the twentieth century. The shocking turnaround of this vice being legalized and sanctioned by the government with state lotteries and smiled upon and participated in by religious leaders dramatically illustrates our society's moral decline. Going to gambling casinos is attending greed school.

### Unforgivable Sin

Unforgivable sin is synonymous with: blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, forever rejecting the Gospel, sinning unto death, having a reprobate mind, and for Christians, continuing to sin willfully and permanently falling away. They're different ways of saying the same thing: a heart permanently hardened.

Sin's gravity is great, but God's mercy is greater. As long as you have true godly sorrow there isn't any one particular sin you could commit that can't be forgiven, rather, one backslides in a progressive

downward spiral to the point of no return. If a Christian always remains humble, and continuously walks in the light, he will have continued assurance of salvation. Legendary baseball player Babe Ruth struck out 1,333 times, but we only remember his home runs. So Christians should never give up in despair, but keep hammering away. However, this requires continuous striving to walk in the light, sin must be continually repented of (I John 1:6-2:6). If it's not, this is the unforgivable sin, which is resigning oneself to sin.

As an aid to repentance, many people find confession to a priest indispensable. For others, this is not part of their belief system. Regardless, there is no question that we should confess our sins to another trusted fellow believer (James 5:16).

### Exhaustive List of Sins

All sin can be extrapolated from a lack of following the two centrifugal commandments of loving God and others. Following these principles wholeheartedly would eliminate the need to memorize every sin that must be avoided. However, to see if you're really following these principles, here is what Christian scripture (King James Bible) deems sinful. These sins are either stated or implied:

**Anger (Unjustified):** arguing/quarreling, assault/violence/wounding, cursing men, heady (rash, reckless, willful), wrath/fits of rage, fierceness/brutality/meanness, indignation (unnecessary, overblown, or misplaced anger), retaliation, threatening others, unrelenting anger, quick tempered

**Authority Problems:** breaking covenants, careless disrespect, breaking truces or vows, despising dominion or the government, employees disobeying employers, extortion, insolence (prideful dis-respect), laxness in judgment, rebellion, swearing oaths, taking by force, stealing/ theft (stealing is any unauthorized taking), unfaithfulness with another's items

NOT: being subject to man's laws, enduring discipline, honoring all men, reverencing Christ's Church, respecting God's creation

**Conflictive:** accusatory, backbiting, complaining, critical tongue, spiteful, discontentment, implacable (unable to be appeased or pacified), dissension, factions/seditions (conflictive splinter groups and movements), faultfinding, hypocrisy, murmuring/grumbling, obsessed with disputes and arguments, offending anybody, pettiness, provoking, rebellion, returning insult for insult, strife or causing contention, tumultuous (disposed to cause commotion, chaos, or agitation), variance/ divisions

**Covetousness:** (Insatiably desiring worldly gain or desiring other's things): covetous conversation, envy, gambling, greed, jealousy, not loaning or giving to those who need it

**Double-Mindedness:** being unequally mated/teamed with unbelievers, bidding Godspeed to un-Christian people/doctrines, controlled by emotions, doing things for the wrong motives, evil desires, thoughts, or speaking, giving place to the devil, hiding your Christian faith, justifying the wicked, loving anybody more than Christ, lukewarm for Jesus/not delighting in the Lord, supposing that gain is godliness, trusting in man's ways, not God's, unholy, unrighteous, violating your conscience

NOT: eliminating occasion of sin, forsaking all for Christ, sacrificing self for Christ, seeking God's kingdom first

**Family Problems:** chauvinism, disobeying parents, divorce, feminism, provoking your children to wrath, remarriage

NOT: bringing up children in the Lord's training and instruction, honoring your parents, honoring your spouse, providing for your household, spanking a disobedient child

**Foolishness:** blasphemy, boisterous laughter, buffoonery, coarse jesting/profanity, doting about foolish questions, drug abuse, drunkenness, eating and drinking with the drunken, excessive drinking, giving heed to foolish speaking, hasty words, meaningless talk, mischief, partaking of vain words, rash promises, rebellion against God, shamefulness, speaking harsh words against God, tempting God, wastefulness, without self-control

**Idolatry:** deriving pleasure from or fellowshiping with other's sin or not hating and exposing sin, disorderly or excessive affection, faring sumptuously (your appetites are God), gluttony/ banqueting, having anything before God, having idols, honoring men as gods or infallible, in love with your own life/self, inventing evil things, making a graven image, overindulgence, immoderation, putting jobs (the work of your hands) before God, reveling, riotous, sensuality

**Lacking Faith:** anxiety (undue), ashamed of Christ and His Gospel, cowardliness, demanding signs, denying Christ, discouragement, doubting, expressing godliness but denying its power, fear, fearing to serve God, feeling worthless, insecurity, making trial of God, negativity, shallow faith, unbelief, wavering faith  
NOT: fearing God, living by faith, giving God the glory, trusting in God

**Laziness:** hearing Christ's sayings but not doing them, excessive sleeping, idleness (when work is available), ignorance, impatience, impulsiveness, inattentiveness, passivity, refusal to work, stubbornness, unreliability, wasting time  
NOT: bearing good fruit (works), using talents

**Lying:** Any deviation from the perfect truth such as: cheating, craftiness/guile, deceit/ deceiving, dishonesty, exaggeration, false accusation/witness, false weights and measures, flattery, fraud, half truths, insincerity, insinuations, perjury, saying one thing but meaning the other, saying you know something is true without checking your facts, saying you'll do something but not doing it, sowing confusion, suppressing the truth, willful ignorance

**Money:** accepting bribes or selling out, blackmail, discontentment with wages, employers paying unfair wages or withholding wages, giving grudgingly, loving money, making bad debts, manipulative advertising/sales practices  
NOT: giving to the poor, paying all your taxes, paying your debts, trusting in riches

**Murderousness:** abortion, causing a weak brother to stumble/perish, drug dealing, consuming blood, hostility, malice, malignity (harboring ill will), murder, smoking or encouraging smoking, suicidal ideology, unnecessary warfare, hatred, revenge/vengeance, not following peace

**Selfishness:** domineering, employers mistreating workers, living selfishly, magnifying other's faults while ignoring your own, opinionated, oppression, overly sensitive to criticism, projecting blame, resentment, seeking your own interests first, selfish ambition, self-justification, self-pity, self-willed, talkativeness (excessive)  
NOT: being meek and quiet (clamorous), doing everything as unto the Lord, proclaiming the Gospel

**Pride:** adorning self with costly array/fancy clothing, bitterness, boasting/proud speech, bossiness, busybody in other men's matters, conceit, controlling, eagerness for victory, exalting yourself, hating instruction/despising correction, high-minded, love of rule, loving to be not-iced/parading self, self-righteousness, scornfulness, scoffing, refusing to admit your sins and confess, puffed up/swellings, superior attitude/wise in your own eyes, vainglorious/glorying, vanity, workaholic  
NOT: humbling yourself, serving God with a humble mind

**Sexual Sins:** adultery, fornication (sex outside marriage), homosexual dominance or passivity, immodest apparel, impure thoughts, lasciviousness (enticing or arousing lust), lewdness, lust, obsessed with sexual fantasies, overly intense desire, pornography, prostitution, uncleanness, walking after the flesh, wantonness/chambering (exposing yourself or others to fleshly lusts)

**Social Problems:** bad manners/discourteous, believing what is said about someone else without checking the facts, being a lone wolf, controlled by peer pressure, despising the poor/class ranking, evil surmising or suspicions, gossip, judging others, judgmental condemnation, mocking, railing/ reviling (figuratively chewing someone up with bad or harsh speech), tattling, oppression, respect of persons/partiality, social ostracism, taking advantage, thinking evil about others, transience (un-necessary moving away which severs relationships) unforgiving/carrying grudges, whispering/ gossip  
NOT: taking care of widows/orphans, intervening on other's behalf

**Unloving:** backbiting, brothers at odds/un-reconciled, contempt, despising others, disloyalty, hard-heartedness, indifferent to other's needs, inhospitable, readiness to accuse, slander/libel, traitorous/betraying, uncompassionate, unfeeling, unforgiving, unjust, unkindness, unmerciful, unsympathetic, unthankful  
NOT: following Christian procedure of settling offenses between brethren, loving your enemies, loving your neighbor or doing good to them  
WITHOUT: natural affection, understanding

**Worldliness:** addiction to any worldly activity, appearing evil, being conformed to this evil world, friendship with the world or being spotted with it, following the mind's desires, intemperance, loving this world, lust for pleasure, materialism, not giving to brethren who are needy, preoccupied with worldly cares, restlessness, worldly minded, worldliness or carnality, worldly philosophy/ dubious scientific theories, emulating anybody but Christ, intense zeal for something besides God, laying up treasures on earth, discontentment with worldly goods, pleasure-mindedness, wandering

**Disconnection from the Church:** following false preachers, keeping company with an immoral brother, prophets, or council, vain worship, partaking of vain traditions or false doctrines, witchcraft, sorcery, astrology, occultism, forsaking assembly with other believers, heresies (obstinate denial of integral truths of the Church), corrupting or distorting the Gospel, conversation unbecoming of Christ, worshipping angels/saints rather than God, younger people not submitting to/ rebuking elders, zealous for God yet without knowledge, contentiously preaching Christ  
NOT: singing, praying, listening to exhortation, subject to Church authority, supporting the Church, partaking of Communion, taking Communion without due preparation, fasting  
LACK OF: caring for, admonishing, and disciplining the brethren, Christian virtues, spiritual fruits

**Church Leadership:** Leaders abandoning the flock, not feeding it, not strengthening the brokenhearted or searching for who was driven away, cruel leadership, inappropriate preaching, accepting judaizing (attempts to conform to precepts and practices of Judaism), making lengthy meaningless prayer, pompous religious display, turning religion into a means of gain, being a deceitful worker for Christ

Besides our actions and inactions, our words either justify or condemn us (Matt.12:35-37). We should even bring every thought to the obedience of Christ (II Corinthians 10:5).

Therefore, if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:

Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. (Mark 9:43-48)

That metaphor illustrates the need for acquiring Christian character, which develops over a lifetime, most decisions being either a step closer to God or a step closer to the Devil. Driving towards the city one night, I saw a particular road sign emblazoned: God Allows U-Turns. However, another sign said: Hell Has No Exit. Therefore, since Christ made it clear that **we must repent or perish**, let's examine and re-examine our lives very carefully. Lord, give me courage to part with what I hold dear, if it separates me from You.<sup>3</sup>

