

## What is Sin?

One of the problems with discussing sin from a New Testament perspective is that the Greek language had one word to discuss the concept of sin. This was unusual for a language that was quite specific with its usage of words. Part of the problem was the lack of a theology that expressed man's sinfulness to a sovereign God. In the absence of this theology, the Greeks expressed the sinfulness of man with the word *hamartia*, which has the meaning of missing the mark. It is like an archer that takes aim at the bulls-eye but when the arrow is released, it misses the target.

Our lives are like that arrow. God has created us to live within the bulls-eye. All of our human efforts ought to be to live within the bulls-eye (the instruction of righteous living as expressed in the Word of God). Our inner desires cause us to desire the things of the world. These desires will cause us to do things that are contrary to the instructions for righteous living. When we give in to these desires, we go off track and we miss the bulls-eye. Sin therefore, is not a list of do and don'ts but rather it is anything that will cause us to miss God's will for our life. We need the guidance of the Holy Spirit to determine the areas of 'sin' in our lives.

Some sin is very easy to detect and is listed by the apostle Paul in Galatians 5:19-21 NLT: *When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. And again by Jesus in Mark 7:20-23 NLT: And then He added, "It is what comes from inside that defiles you. For from within, out of a person's heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you."*

The sins that we commit, place us outside the fullness of God's blessings and they open us up to negative consequences for our life. The type of activities mentioned above cause people to think less of us; they cause problems for us in our relationships for they will cause us to act irresponsibly; thus they will rob us of the positive blessings that will come into our lives.

Beyond the obvious sins, are a host of missed opportunities to serve God. We are commanded by the instructions for righteousness that is found in the Word of God to love God whole heartedly and to love (bless) our neighbors. There are times when we feel we should be spending more time on spiritual matters and we refrain from doing it, so that we can do what we want to do. There are times when God may want us to do something for another person but we may not want to do it. The struggle becomes our putting the will of God for us, before the desires that we have for our own life. The support of the body of believers is very important for us to overcome our shortcomings (sin).

