

What is Sin?

*“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth [breaks] also the law: for **sin is the transgression [breaking] of the law.**”* (1 John 3:4)

Sin is anything we think, say or do that breaks the law of God. In simple terms, **sin is anything we think, say or do that does not please God.**

However, we can sin against God not just by what we think, say or do (sins of **commission**), but also by what we do NOT think, say or do (sins of **omission**), e.g. NOT living by faith (Romans 14:23b), NOT thinking God-glorifying thoughts (Philippians 4:8), NOT doing the right thing when we know we should (James 4:17), etc.

Therefore, it would be more accurate to say that **sin is anything we think (or do not think), say (or do not say) or do (or do not do) that does not please God.**

More importantly, sin does not just refer to an external **deed**, but an internal **“disease”**.

Sin is a “disease” that we inherited from the first man, Adam, which has affected all mankind (Romans 5:12,19a). When Adam and Eve fell into sin (Genesis 3), their nature became corrupt and sinful. Ever since then, every single one of their descendants (i.e. every person born into this world) was born a sinner and inherited their corrupt and sinful nature. Just as how we inherited our DNA (genetic characteristics) from our parents automatically, we inherited our “sin DNA” (corrupt and sinful nature) from Adam automatically.

We inherited our “sin DNA” (corrupt and sinful nature) at the moment we were conceived (Psalm 51:5). As an analogy, we already had the DNA (genetic characteristics) of our parents at the moment we were conceived, even though it was only manifested and developed in our appearance after our birth. Likewise, we already had the “sin DNA” (corrupt and sinful nature) of Adam at the moment we were conceived, even though it was only manifested and developed in our acts and attitude after our birth (Psalm 58:3).

This means that man is not born righteous and then subsequently fell into sin as many today think. We are born sinners, physically alive with a living body, but spiritually dead with a completely corrupt and sinful nature, without God in our hearts (Romans 3:10-18; Ephesians 2:1-3).

We are sinners not because we sin (i.e. we do not become sinners because of our external deeds of sin); **rather, we sin because we are sinners** (i.e. it is our internal “disease” of sin that makes us sinners and causes us to commit external deeds of sin). In other words, we are sinners not because of the sins we commit; we are sinners simply because we are born sinners (i.e. we are born with a corrupt and sinful nature that has an inherent propensity to sin).

This is **the problem of sin** that every person in the world has since birth (Romans 3:10,23; Ecclesiastes 7:20).