

# NICK GUY & THE POWER OF S.I.N. AFFAIR

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**THEME:** In this Nick Guy installment, we take an in depth look at sin, its power and its consequences.

**NOTES:** Using the Biblical definition, we would all have to admit that we have sinned. But, we may be tempted to underestimate both its power and consequences. The result of this underestimation is catastrophic.

**MISSING THE MARK:** Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

The Greek word for sin used in this verse carries the meaning of violating and wandering from the law of God: to miss the mark. This is the simplest Biblical definition for sin - to miss the mark. It is like an archer shooting an arrow at a target and missing the bull's eye.

In the Biblical sense, the mark being missed is God's standard of righteousness. When we miss this standard, we are guilty of sin.

The Westminster Confession of Faith defines sin in this way: "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, any law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature." There are three crucial points to be observed here.

**Point One:** First of all, sin is a lack of conformity. We are not acting in conformity to what God's Law commands. In other words, if God commands us to love our neighbor and we fail to do so, we have sinned. That could be labeled a sin of omission.

**Point Two:** Secondly, sin is defined as a transgression of the Law. Sometimes sin is called a *trespass*. In this sense we are crossing over the boundary of what God requires. We do things we are not permitted to do. A sin of commission - a sin we commit.

Some of God's Law is pronounced in negative terms: "You shall not." When we do what is not allowed by God's Law, we commit sin.

**Point Three:** The third point is that sin is an action performed by reasonable creatures.

As creatures made in the image of God, we are free moral agents. We have a mind and a will and are capable of moral action. When we do what we know is wrong, we are choosing then to disobey God's law. We do so willingly and knowingly, and that is sin.

**SIN IS UNIVERSAL:** The Bible speaks of the universalism of sin on mankind. A term used often in this regard is “Original Sin.” This doesn’t apply merely to the first sin that was committed by Adam & Eve in the Garden, but more so of what resulted from that first sin.

Chapter 6 of The Westminster Confession of Faith speaks specifically of the Fall of man, of sin, and of the punishment for sin. It begins by telling us of what consequences were suffered by Adam and Eve as a result of their sin. It reads:

“By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body.”

What this is telling us is that when Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate the forbidden fruit they fell from their right standing with God and their fellowship with Him was broken. Along with physical death, which they would suffer eventually, they also suffered immediate spiritual death. Their whole being, both body and soul, was affected with the defilement of sin.

We are affected by their sin, but it more inherent than merely a cause that makes us become sinners. Again, the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 3:

“They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation.”

What this is telling us is that since we are all descended from Adam, his guilt is imputed to us. Imputed means the guilt of Adam’s sin is attributed to all of his descendants.

And we share in the same consequences; death in sin, corrupted nature, separation from God. So it is not a matter of us *becoming* sinners, we come into existence in a state of sinfulness.

Sin is universal in that all are born in sin. Romans 5:12 tells us:

“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.”

Verse 18 reinforces this by telling us that one trespass led to condemnation. We are sinners not because we sin, we sin because we are sinners.

David recognized this when he wrote in Psalm 51:5:

“Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”

**BONDAGE OF SIN:** Man was created by God with Free Will. He was free to do that which is good and well-pleasing to God, and equally as free to do just the opposite. But something happened to change that. Adam chose to do the opposite of what is good and well-pleasing to God when he sinned in the Garden of Eden, which we commonly refer to that as the Fall.

The Westminster Confession of Faith says this about the results of the Fall:

“Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

All that can be summed up in the words of Jesus from John 8:34. He said, “Everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.”

Because of sin, man is incapable of securing his own salvation. In fact, sin has so enslaved man that he neither fears God nor desires His favor.

**BONDAGE OF THE WILL:** Does this mean that man has no free will? Well, yes and no.

The will of man is free to choose whatever it desires. But, it is not free to choose what those desires are. For example, a man may be offered his choice of an apple or an orange. He is free to choose either the apple or the orange, but he is not free to choose to prefer apples over oranges.

Men in their fallen state do not desire salvation. Romans 3:10-18 reads:

“As it is written: ‘None is righteous, no, not one;  
no one understands; no one seeks for God.  
All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;  
no one does good, not even one.’  
‘Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive.’  
‘The venom of asps is under their lips.’  
‘Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.’  
‘Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery,  
and the way of peace they have not known.’  
‘There is no fear of God before their eyes.’

I Corinthians 1:18, tells us that, “The word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing.”

Upon hearing the Gospel, the unregenerate man is free to choose the Gospel or to reject it. But he is not free to choose whether or not he considers it foolishness.

The power of sin is inescapable. No one is free from its clutches.

**DEAD IN SIN:** The Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 6, Section 6 says:

Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal.

Sin is serious. Our sin brings the wrath of God upon us, the curse of the law. Galatians 3:10 reads "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them."

The Penalty of sin is death. The Bible does not speak of men as being sick in sin, but dead in sin. And this death is not merely physical, but spiritual.

In Matthew 13:42, and Mark 9:48, Jesus spoke of sin's punishment causing weeping and gnashing of teeth in a place where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. The just punishment for sin is eternal separation from God.

**THE BAD NEWS/THE GOOD NEWS:** Sin is a powerfully destructive thing. Men were created to live in accordance with God's Law. Anytime we transgress that Law there are negative consequences. But the worst consequence of sin is death, both physical and spiritual.

Many do not realize the seriousness of sin, and don't appreciate its power and penalty. Some even embrace sin and glory in it, not realizing the terrible consequences.

Romans 5:12 says, "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned."

That is the bad news, but Romans 5:15 gives us this good news: "But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many."

Jesus took upon Himself the penalty for our sin, setting us free from sin's power and the penalty that we deserved. I Corinthians 15 tells us:

"Death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is your victory?

O death, where is your sting?

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

**CONCLUSION:** Because we have a tendency to not appreciate the seriousness of sin and its consequences, we may also tend to not appreciate the price that was paid by Jesus to set us free from that sin.

Jesus suffered more severely than any one else ever had or ever would. Thousands of people in world history have undergone crucifixion. So what makes Jesus' suffering so different, or so much more severe?

He is the only one who ever felt the pain of the fullness of the unmitigated curse of God on Him. The moment that He was on the cross, Jesus had the sin of the world imputed to Him. The most degrading, vile, and obscene of sins were at one moment focused on one man.

In and of Himself, He was a lamb without blemish—sinless, perfect, and majestic. But by imputation, all of the ugliness of human violence was concentrated on His person. Once sin was concentrated on Jesus, God cursed Him. When the curse of the law was poured out on Jesus, He experienced pain that had never been suffered by anyone else, ever in the history of mankind.

At times we may be tempted to think of sin lightly and downplay the wickedness of it. But it does us good to regularly consider the pain that Jesus felt which caused Him to cry out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

**RESOURCES:** The Westminster Confession of Faith; R.C. Sproul's *Essential Truths of the Christian Faith*.