

## THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF SIN (MISSING THE MARK)

### STRUCTURE VS. DIRECTION

1. People today often have the mistaken notion that both good and evil exist equally as opposites. They think that there are some things that exist as inherently good and some things that are inherently evil. This is not the idea of the Bible.
2. To speak about the nature of sin, theologians often speak of "Structure and Direction".
3. With regard to *structure*, the Bible says emphatically that God created everything good. There is nothing that is inherently evil. Everything is inherently good. (See Genesis 1)
4. With regard to *direction*: Human beings, by an exertion of their own will, take the good creation of God in a *direction* that God never intended.

#### EXAMPLES:

- a. A Knife: There is nothing inherently evil about a knife. It not only is made out of wonderful raw materials, but also has many useful purposes. However, if I take a knife and stab it into someone's back, I take this good part of God's creation in a direction God never intended.
- b. Atomic energy: God created all atoms and sub-atomic particles according to their properties. The human discovery of the energy contained within is a part of God's plan. This energy can be used to power cities and do wonderful things. Such energy can also be used for destructive and evil purposes. This is a direction that God never intended.
- c. Sex: God created human sexuality. It is a wonderful gift from God to us. But if practiced outside the bounds of a monogamous marital relationship, sex can have destructive and disastrous effects in our lives. This is a direction God never intended.
- d. Satan: Even Satan was first created as a powerful and magnificent angel of God. But He used His power in a direction God never intended to rebel against Him and tempt others to do the same. (See Isaiah 14:12-15, Ezekiel 28:11-19)

Study 1 Timothy 4:1-5 — Note that God created *everything* good (including all food and human sexuality)

5. The basic Hebrew word for sin ("chatta") means "to miss the mark." Sin is misdirection.

## EVIL NEEDS GOOD IN ORDER TO EXIST AND THRIVE

1. Augustine: "Evil has no existence except as a privation of good."
2. C.S. Lewis: "Goodness is so to speak, itself: badness is only spoiled goodness. And there must be something good first before it can be spoiled."

- a. In order to be an effective liar, a liar must use the tool of truth.
  - i. Example: When lying about why you came home late:

"On my way home I was abducted by aliens and they did tests on me for three hours...that is why I am late"

**Doesn't work, because it doesn't resemble the truth**

"There was a horrible traffic accident that blocked the highway for hours and my cell phone battery died...that is why I am late"

**Might work, because it resembles the truth**

- b. Someone having an affair doesn't think: 'Oh, I hope I ruin my children's life.' OR, 'I could really use an STD.' They only see the goodness in the sin – the passion, the intimacy, etc.
3. Study Genesis 3:6-7 — Notice how in the first sin Adam and Eve were attracted to the 'goodness' in the temptation. It is only after the sin, that their eyes are opened to the reality of the evil they have committed. How is every other sin we commit like this?

### PRACTICAL APPLICATION:

We often don't evaluate our sinfulness accurately because we only see the "goodness" in our sins. When we view others, we more accurately see the bad qualities of what they are doing. We sin, not for the "Hell" of it, but for the "Heaven" in it. Also, when tempted, a useful tool to ward off temptation is to spend time thinking about all the horrible things that could happen if we give into temptation.