

# What is Sin?

## 1. What is Sin?

In Christian theology, sin is generally understood as any action, thought, or behavior that goes against the will of God or violates God's moral law as revealed in the Bible. The concept of sin is central to many Christian denominations, and its understanding can vary to some extent among different traditions. However, there are several key biblical principles that are commonly referred to when discussing sin:

**Disobedience to God's Commands:** Sin is often depicted as disobedience to God's commands and instructions. In the Bible, God provides moral guidelines for human conduct, and violations of these guidelines are considered sinful.

**Fallen Nature of Humanity:** Many Christians believe that all humans are born with a sinful nature, inherited from the biblical account of Adam and Eve's disobedience in the Garden of Eden. This concept is often referred to as "original sin."

**Separation from God:** Sin is seen as creating a separation between humans and God. The Bible teaches that sin disrupts the relationship between God and humanity, requiring reconciliation.

**Missing the Mark:** The term "sin" is derived from an archery term in the original biblical languages, suggesting missing the mark or falling short of a standard. Sin, in this sense, is failing to live up to the moral perfection expected by God.

**Violation of Love and Justice:** The Bible emphasizes the importance of love, justice, and righteousness. Sin is viewed as actions that violate these principles, harming relationships with both God and fellow humans.

**Individual and Corporate Sin:** Sin can be both individual and collective. Individuals are responsible for their personal actions, but communities and societies can also engage in sinful behaviors, leading to social injustice and systemic issues.

**Repentance and Forgiveness:** Christianity teaches that, through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, individuals can find forgiveness and reconciliation with God. The concept of repentance involves turning away from sin and seeking a changed life in alignment with God's will.

Different Christian denominations may emphasize specific aspects of the understanding of sin, and interpretations can vary. The teachings on sin are found throughout the Bible, including in Old Testament commandments, the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels, and the letters written by apostles in the New Testament.

## 2. Obey God

The concept of obeying God, even when one considers themselves a good person, is rooted in religious and ethical frameworks. Different religious traditions offer various reasons for why obedience to God is considered important, even for those who may perceive themselves as morally upright. Here are some common perspectives:

**Recognition of a Higher Authority:** Many religious believers see God as the ultimate authority and the source of moral standards. Obedience to God is viewed as an acknowledgment of this higher authority and a commitment to aligning one's life with divine principles.

**Divine Wisdom and Guidance:** Obedience to God is often seen as a way to access divine wisdom and guidance. While a person may consider themselves good, religious traditions often emphasize the idea that God's guidance can lead to a deeper understanding of ethical living and righteous behavior.

**Humility and Submission:** Obedience to God reflects a posture of humility and submission to a higher power. It acknowledges that there may be aspects of morality and purpose that transcend individual understanding, and aligning with God's will is an act of trust and humility.

**Spiritual Growth and Transformation:** Even if a person sees themselves as morally good, religious traditions often teach that obedience to God contributes to spiritual growth and transformation. It is a process of becoming more like the divine ideal and overcoming personal flaws.

**Community and Shared Values:** Religious communities often place a strong emphasis on shared values and communal identity. Obedience to God can strengthen the bonds within a religious community and contribute to a collective commitment to moral principles.

**Eternal Perspective:** Many religious traditions, including Christianity, emphasize an eternal perspective. Obedience to God is seen as not only contributing to a meaningful life on Earth but also as a preparation for an afterlife that is in harmony with divine purposes.

**Acknowledgment of Sin and Imperfection:** Some religious traditions teach that all humans are inherently flawed or sinful. Obedience to God is considered a response to this acknowledgment of imperfection, seeking divine guidance and forgiveness.

**Purpose and Meaning:** Obedience to God is often tied to a sense of purpose and meaning in life. Believers may see their moral actions and choices as part of a larger, divine plan, contributing to a sense of significance and fulfillment.

It's important to recognize that different individuals and religious traditions may have varying perspectives on the relationship between personal goodness and obedience to God. Some may emphasize the intrinsic goodness of individuals, while others stress the importance of aligning with divine principles for continued moral development.

## 3. Follow Jesus

Christianity is a monotheistic Abrahamic religion based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. It is one of the world's major religions, with over two billion followers, making it the largest religion globally. Here are key aspects of Christianity:

**Trinity:** Christians believe in the Trinity, which is the concept that God exists in three persons: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit. These three persons are distinct but inseparable.

**Salvation through Jesus Christ:** Central to Christian belief is the idea that humanity is estranged from God due to sin, and salvation is achieved through faith in Jesus Christ. Christians believe that Jesus, the Son of God, became incarnate, lived a sinless life, died on the cross for the sins of humanity, and rose from the dead, providing a way for reconciliation with God.

**The Bible:** The Christian holy scriptures are divided into two main sections—the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament contains religious texts that are also sacred in Judaism, while the New Testament focuses on the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Bible serves as a guide for faith and practice.

**Denominations:** Christianity is diverse, with numerous denominations and traditions. Major branches include:

- **Catholicism:** Led by the Pope, the Catholic Church is the largest Christian denomination. It has a rich liturgical tradition and a hierarchical structure.

- **Protestantism:** Arising from the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, Protestantism includes various denominations like Lutheranism, Calvinism, Anglicanism, and a multitude of independent churches.

- **Orthodox Christianity:** The Eastern Orthodox Church, comprising autocephalous (independent) branches, has a distinct liturgical tradition and theology.

**Worship and Practices:** Christians gather for worship services, typically on Sundays, to pray, sing hymns, read scripture, and receive teachings. The structure of services can vary among denominations.

**Sacraments/Rituals:** Many Christian traditions observe sacraments, such as Baptism and Communion (Eucharist), which are seen as channels of God's grace.

**Prayer:** Christians engage in personal and communal prayer, often using the Lord's Prayer as a model. Prayer can be conversational, liturgical, or contemplative.

**Ethics and Morality:** Christianity provides moral and ethical guidelines based on the teachings of Jesus and the Bible. The Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount are foundational ethical teachings.

**Community and Mission:** Christians are encouraged to live in community, supporting one another in faith and practice. The Great Commission, found in the New Testament, emphasizes the mission to spread the teachings of Jesus.

**Diversity of Beliefs:** While there are core beliefs shared by all Christians, there is also diversity in theological perspectives, worship styles, and social teachings.

**End Times and Eschatology:** Many Christians believe in the return of Jesus Christ and a final judgment. Eschatological beliefs (beliefs about the end times) can vary, with some emphasizing a literal interpretation of prophecies and others taking a more symbolic or allegorical approach.

It's important to recognize the rich diversity within Christianity, with believers holding a wide range of theological perspectives and cultural practices. This diversity is a reflection of the complex history and global spread of the Christian faith over two millennia.

## 4. Benefits of Obeying God

The perceived benefits of obeying God every single day are deeply rooted in religious beliefs and can vary among individuals and religious traditions. Here are some common perspectives on the potential tangible benefits of obeying God within a Christian context, as an example:

**Spiritual Fulfillment:** Many believers find a sense of purpose, fulfillment, and inner peace through their obedience to God. Following divine commandments and aligning one's life with spiritual principles can bring a deep sense of satisfaction.

**Divine Guidance:** Believers often see obedience to God as a pathway to receiving divine guidance and wisdom. They may trust that God's guidance can lead them to make wise decisions in various aspects of life.

**Moral and Ethical Living:** Obedience to God's moral teachings is viewed as a guide for ethical living. This can result in healthier relationships, a stronger sense of integrity, and positive contributions to the community.

**Community and Fellowship:** Many religious traditions emphasize the importance of community and fellowship. Obedience to God's commands often involves participation in a faith community, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual support.

**Inner Transformation:** The process of obeying God is often seen as transformative. Christians may believe that through faith in Christ and obedience to God, they can experience personal growth, overcoming negative habits and attitudes.

**Hope and Assurance:** Believers often find hope and assurance in their faith. Obedience is seen as a response to God's love and grace, leading to the assurance of eternal life and a hopeful outlook on the future.

**Practical Guidance for Living:** Many religious texts, including the Bible, provide practical guidance for various aspects of life, such as relationships, finances, and work. Obedience to these teachings is seen as a way to navigate life's challenges successfully.

**Healing and Wholeness:** Some believers find that obedience to God's principles contributes to emotional, psychological, and even physical well-being. This may include practices such as forgiveness, gratitude, and love.

**Strengthened Relationships:** Obedience to teachings about love, forgiveness, and compassion can lead to stronger and healthier relationships with others, fostering harmony and understanding.

**Eternal Rewards:** Many religious traditions, including Christianity, hold the belief in eternal rewards for those who faithfully obey God. This can include the hope of an afterlife spent in the presence of God.

It's essential to note that these perceived benefits are matters of faith, and individuals may interpret them differently based on their religious beliefs, experiences, and personal understanding of their faith tradition. Additionally, not everyone may subscribe to these beliefs, and perspectives on the benefits of obeying God can vary widely.

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