**The Severity of Sin**

*1 John 3:4-5*

**Introduction**

1. **1 John 3:4** answers the question about what is sin, but what remains with many is the question of its severity.
2. **There are sins which clearly display their severity to any sane person, but there are sins which are minimized in the minds of the majority.**
   1. **NOTE:** Even those most heinous sins which do not have a veil hiding their severity from us are still misunderstood as to their TRUE severity.
   2. **NOTE: The Catholic division of sins into those which are of UTMOST SEVERITY (Mortal Sins) and those which are LESS SEVERE (Venial Sins) is contrary to the Bible’s teaching.**
   3. John did not make a distinction when he used the word ***“sin.” “Sin”*** includes all forms of ***“lawlessness”*** and ***all are equally severe.***
3. As beings who have only experienced this side of eternity it is hard for us to comprehend the degree of sin’s severity. **The only way to gain a grasp on this subject is to read God’s revelation.**
   1. **(v. 5)** – The fact that God thought it important enough to take away sin, along with the way in which the problem of sin had to be dealt with, and the fact that ***“in Him there is no sin”*** gives us a glimpse into its severity.
   2. **Just how severe is sin?**
4. Sin and God
5. Separate from Sin
   1. **1 John 3:5** – Jesus is God in the flesh – He never succumbed to temptation, but was separate from sin entirely.
   2. **1 John 1:5** – Darkness is representative of moral depravity, all that is sinful. God has no darkness within Him.
   3. **James 1:13** – God can have nothing to do with sin. He can’t be tempted by it, and He cannot be the source of the temptation to be involved with it.
   4. **God is a moral being whose character is the definition of purity and morality. God cannot sin, and is separate from sin, for it is not in His character to sin.**
6. Man is Created in His Image
   1. **Genesis 1:26a, 27** – God created man in His image.
      1. Man was created as a **SPIRITUAL BEING**, and as such, a **MORAL BEING**.
      2. ***Having been given free-will, man can live contrary to the purpose for which God created him 🡪***
   2. **Romans 3:23** – When a man transgresses God’s law given to him to know the spiritual way of living, the way in which God intended him to live, he falls short of God’s glory.
      1. Our created purpose is to honor and glorify God by living as He has prescribed.
      2. Sin is missing that mark He has set, in ANY WAY, and therefore failing to glorify Him as God.
      3. **We are made IN GOD’S IMAGE, and when we sin we do not REFLECT THAT IMAGE – IT DOES NOT ILLUMINATE IN OUR LIVES.**
   3. ***We can see the severity of sin when we understand that participation in ANY sin fails to reflect God’s glory.***
7. Sin and Death
8. Physical Death
   1. **1 Corinthians 15:21-22** – All experience physical death, and all that is related to it because of Adam’s sin.
   2. Adam and Eve were cut off from the tree of life as a consequence of their sin.
      1. This brought not only physical death into the world, but all that leads up to physical death.
      2. **Frailties, diseases, catastrophes, etc. – all exist because of sin.**
      3. **Suffering exists because of man’s choice to sin. This suffering serves as a stern reminder of the severity of sin – NO SIN IS HARMLESS.**
   3. ***Death also exists as an indication of sin’s severity when we consider the sacrifices necessary as a payment for sin.***
9. Sacrifices
   1. ***“For the wages of sin is death…” (Romans 6:23).***
   2. **The just punishment for every sin is eternal death. To drive this point home, God required payment to be made for sin through sacrifices, to make atonement for the sins of the people who committed sin.**
   3. **Leviticus 17:10-12** – Life is in the blood – blood is spilled for the atonement of sins.
      1. The severity of sin is seen in the only way those sins can be atoned for – spilling of blood.
      2. 🡪
   4. ***“And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22).***
   5. **Hebrews 10:1-4** – All the blood spilled in the world could not be enough payment for sins committed by man.
      1. **(v. 3)** – The sacrifices reminded men of sins which they were powerless to remove.
         1. **The bloody sacrifices reminded men not only of the sin, but of the severity of the sin.**
         2. **They looked upon the carnage of the sacrificial animal and recognized it was due to THEIR SIN.**
      2. **(v. 4)** – However, these could not take away sin. 🡪
10. Jesus’ Death
    1. ***“but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).***
       1. We can be given life through Jesus because of HIS DEATH FOR SIN.
       2. Sin CAUSED Jesus’ death, and Jesus’ death was FOR sin.
    2. **Matthew 26:26-28** – Institution of the Lord’s Supper.
       1. This is a joyous remembrance of that which takes away our sins, and gives the hope of heaven.
       2. **(v. 28)** – It is also a reminder of the payment for sins – sin made it necessary for Jesus to die.
    3. **Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:29** – When we choose to sin, we are putting Jesus to death once again. This is THE SEVERITY OF SIN.
       1. NOTE: No distinction is made between specific sins.
       2. **All sins accomplish the same thing.**
11. Sin and its Punishment
12. Separation from God
    1. **Isaiah 59:1-2** – Sin separates us from God – God cannot have fellowship with sin.
    2. **Those who think that some sins are no big deal, and that God does not mind as much are severely mistaken.**
    3. The separation takes place ultimately in hell 🡪
13. In Hell
    1. **Matthew 5:27-30** – Jesus shows the magnitude of the horrors of hell in His instruction in these verses.
    2. **Hell is so bad that it would be better for you to dismember your body than be there.**
    3. **Hell** – *geenna*; of Hebrew origin (h1516 and h2011); valley of (the son of) Hinnom; **ge-henna** (or Ge-Hinnom), a valley of Jerusalem, used (figuratively) as a name for the place (or state) of everlasting punishment: — hell. (Strong)
       1. Hell is the place of the future punishment call "Gehenna" or "Gehenna of fire". This was originally the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, where the filth and dead animals of the city were cast out and burned; a fit symbol of the wicked and their future destruction. (Strong)
       2. It was a place of fire, death, and decay.
14. For Eternity
    1. **Revelation 14:9-11** – the torment of hell is FOREVER AND EVER.
    2. **This punishment is NEVER ENDING.**
    3. ***“where ‘Their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched’” (Mark 9:44, 46).***
    4. This is not only the punishment for some sins, but for all sins.
    5. Those who are not washed in the blood of the lamb – shed for the atonement of sins – will spend ETERNITY in hell.

**Conclusion**

1. **We must never forget how SEVERE SIN REALLY IS.**
2. The world is filled with sin, but ***we must not become desensitized to it.***
3. **Sin is no small thing. It will mean eternal destruction if we do not turn from it completely.**