

A Rebel against God

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

[Rom. 3:23]

The doctrine of sin does not come simply to be received as “information.” It is an indictment. So we have a problem understanding it intellectually and dealing with it morally.

Nothing is more repugnant to us as human beings than this indictment of our depravity. We need to plead for an abundance of grace so that we might have ears to hear and eyes to see. We are, after all, masters of manipulating the data to make ourselves look better than we are.

“To err is human, but to forgive is divine.” “Nobody’s perfect.” We hear such statements all the time. Surely these clichés imply a casual attitude toward sin. After all, everybody makes mistakes, so we

should overlook them.

To persuade people of their sin is not difficult. Almost everybody will admit that at some time they have done something wrong. But Christianity is not concerned with showing that people sin. Christianity is concerned with persuading people under judgment how radically serious sin is.

The history of the world after Adam’s sin records God’s saving intentions amid humanity’s desperate plight. Sin’s consequences included alienation from God, aversion to righteousness, moral and spiritual blindness, injustice, death, guilt, and present and future judgments that lead to eternal damnation for the unregenerate.

The Bible uses a variety of expressions to communicate the idea of sin: “rebellion against God,” “missing the mark,” “hatred of God,” and “disobedience.” Most important, however, is the idea of *lawlessness*. Disobeying the com-

mands of God is the heart of what sin is about.

The issue is *theonomy*, the law and rule of God, against *autonomy*, self-rule. Every sin, no matter how slight, manifests a gut-level drive for autonomy. The revolt against God's rule began in the Garden of Eden and has continued ever since. No one is exempt and even our best deeds are tainted by impure motives and selfishness.

Coram Deo

The truth of Scripture's indictment of sin should ring in our ears with the dread felt by a criminal who hears a judge render the death sentence. All humankind will ultimately stand before Christ the Judge to account for their disobedience. If you know the joy of forgiven sin express that joy, both to God and to a friend today.

For further study: [Leviticus 16](#); [Job 15:14](#); [Luke 6:43–45](#); [Romans 1:18–32](#)