

# Bible Studies for Life: March 21

*The Nature of Sin • Isaiah 59:1-13*

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Previous lessons have observed the nature of God and God's created nature. Today's study is a nature that is outside God's character and destructive to God's creation, particularly mankind. It is unnatural in that it is destructive to the natural order created by God. It is the nature of sin.

**Sin Separates Sinners from God (59:1-5).** God uses two terms through His prophet Isaiah for sin in these verses: iniquities and sins. Iniquity refers to lawlessness and rejecting divine rule, while sin is often defined as missing the mark and falling short of God's ways and righteousness.

Some sounds cause cringing. Some odors cause revulsion. Some heinous crimes cause contempt. Sin, because it is contrary to God's nature, likewise is revolting and contemptible to the Holy God. Thus, sin separates the sinner from God. God is not the problem; sin is the problem.

In his book, *Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem describes the nature of sin against the nature of God this way: "In a universe created by God, *sin ought not to be*. Sin is directly

opposite to all that is good in the character of God, and just as God necessarily and eternally delights in himself and in all that he is, so God necessarily and eternally hates sin. It is, in essence, the contradiction of the excellence of his moral character. It contradicts his holiness, and he must hate it." (pg. 492). God did not create sin but Satan, fallen angels, and man have sinned against their Creator in their rebellion against Him.

Sin separates sinners from God. Satan and his demons are cast out of fellowship with God. Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden (Genesis, chapter three). This separation continues through their descendants (Rom. 5:12). Death, the great separator of body and soul, is the wages of sin (Rom. 6:23, James 1:15).

**Sin Runs Soul Deep (59:6-8).** Some say that beauty is skin deep. Sin, however, runs down into the soul. Everyone is born with a nature of sin and a tendency toward sin. Ephesians 2:3 says that we were by nature children of wrath.

Sin corrupts the heart, mind, strength, and soul. Verses six through eight reveal how the sinful heart's direction is toward ruin, wretchedness, crookedness, and injustice. The mind's thoughts are sinful. Sin, including violence, corrupts the works of the hands. The sinner cannot know peace in his soul through works that the sinful heart and mind determine to be good.

Romans 8:7-8 further states that the carnal mind is enmity against God and that the flesh (the carnal mind, heart, strength, and soul) cannot please God. Romans 8:13 warns that living after the flesh leads to death. Ezekiel 18:20 says that the soul that sins shall die.

Again, God clearly makes the connection between sin and death. God has also clearly provided the answer to the problem of sin in sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for the sins of the

world (next week's lesson).

**Sin Blinds Spiritually (59:9-13).** God uses in His Word through Isaiah a third term for sin – transgression. Transgression is commonly defined as crossing the line. The transgressor has stepped into territory of rebellion. In one parable in Luke, the lost sheep wandered off (sin). In another parable, the lost son deliberately ran away and squandered his inheritance (transgression). Both were blind to their danger and/or disobedience.

Why do some people in our society today act as if they have lost their minds? They are spiritually blind. Sin warps the correct answer to three basic questions: What is truth? What is right? Who am I? According to Grudem, Adam and Eve failed the test in all three points:

- They did not believe they would die, contrary to what God said (truth).
- They genuinely but wrongly believed they would be like God (right and identity).

Our society, blinded by sin, fails this three-question test in its attempt to define truth, righteousness, and identity in opposition to the Word of God. Believers in Christ, as children of light, understand that the Word of God is truth, God's ways are always right, and all are sinners in need of the Savior, Jesus Christ the Lord.

Jesus is the answer to the problem of sin. Jesus reconciles sinners to God (Romans 5:10). God's salvation cleanses our heart, mind, strength, and soul from all unrighteousness (1 Thess. 5:23, 1 John 1:9, Heb. 13:12, James 4:8), and Jesus has defeated death.

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