

**“What does it mean to be ‘freed from sin’?” (part 2)
January 11, 2014**

Romans 6:6-14,18

INTRO: To fully appreciate what it means to be “free from sin,” we need a clearer understanding of what “SIN” really is.

- We have a **LIMITED VIEW OF SIN** if we simply define it as *“deliberate rebellion against God—being willfully defiant toward God.”*
 - SIN can be expressed this way—but it involves so much more than open defiance.
1. It is vitally important for us to have **CLEAR, BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT “SIN” REALLY IS.** This has several powerful benefits:
 - a. **INCREASED APPRECIATION** for “so great a salvation” (Heb. 2:3)
 - b. **INCREASED EXPERIENCE** of “freedom from sin”—seeing it as much more than the “forgiveness of our failures.”
 - c. **INCREASED CLARITY** in leading people to Jesus. NOTE: If we speak about sin as purely “willful rebellion against God”—we will have very little impact on people living “moral” (yet, spiritually indifferent) lives!
 2. SIN is **“MISSING THE MARK.”** *The most common word for “sin”—describing well-intention archers who can’t hit the target.*
 - Romans 3:23- *“All have sinned & fallen short of the glory of God”*
 - *“Fall short”—to drop out of a race; fail to reach the goal*
 - *“Glory”-*
 - *To show—make brilliantly evident*
 - *Outshining—consistent inwardly & outwardly*
 - *Weight, substance—tangible; not theory or mere words*

CORE: “SIN” results in LIVING “LESS THAN” you were made to live.

Romans 12:3 describes two ways we can live “less than.”

1. **THINKING OF OURSELVES “MORE HIGHLY THAN WE OUGHT TO THINK”**
 - *Lit.,- ‘to esteem oneself overmuch” (i.e., arrogance)(overachieve)*
 - **Prideful egotism; “we have need of nothing” (Rev. 3:17)**
 - **At the heart of “HUMANISM”—“We can create a “perfect world” w/o God”**
 - **We were created to be “like God”—not “as God” (i.e., in the place of God)**

2. SETTLING FOR LESS THAN GOD CREATED US TO BE

Augustine- *“Man’s most debilitating expression of sin is not his pride. Rather, it is his sloth, his unwillingness to be everything he was intended to be.”*

Paul- *“I urge you to walk worthy of—fully identified with and reflective of—your high calling in Christ.” (Paraphrase of Ephesians 4:1)*

- Adam & Eve failed to “walk worthy” of their calling.
 - On one hand, they “overachieved.” Rather than valuing their God-given place—they sought to supplement it at the “Tree of Knowledge”—seeking to become “as God”!
 - Yet, on the other hand, they “underachieved” by abdicating their place of authority! They allowed themselves to be deceived by “the serpent”—an inferior creature over whom they were to “exercise dominion”! This serpent was “crafty” (not “wise”).
 - Romans 1:25- They believed “THE LIE”—
 - That God was “less than” He said He was
 - That they were “less than” who He created them to be
- Sadly, these would not be the last to fall for the “less than” lie!
 - Moses, when called to liberate the people of Israel from bondage, replied, “I am not eloquent” (Ex. 4:10)
 - Gideon, called to end Midianite oppression, said, “My clan is the weakest...and I am the least in my family” (Judges 6:15)
 - Jeremiah, called to be a prophet to the nations, responded, “I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth” (Jer. 1:6)
- WILLING TO BE HEALED?
 - Jesus addressed both a lame man (John 5) and a blind man (Mark 10) with the question: “Do you want to be healed?”
 - Willing to leave the comfort of the pity & charity of others?
 - Restoration leads to TAKING RESPONSIBILITY
- WILLING TO BE TRAINED? LEARN NEW WAYS?
 - Archers miss due to lack of training—people live “less than” because of lack of wisdom...unwilling to be corrected
 - Learning His ways leads to MAKING CHANGES
 - James 1:5- “As you realize you LACK WISDOM—ASK FOR IT!” (James 1:5). Be teachable. Wisdom is accessible to those who seek it. In fact, God’s Wisdom calls out for disciples:

“Wisdom cries aloud in the streets: ‘How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple?...Give heed to My reproof; behold, I will pour out My thoughts to you. I will make My words known to you...but those who refused to listen...shall eat the fruit of their way...the complacency of fools destroys them. But he who listens to Me will dwell secure and be at ease, without dread of evil.’” (Prov. 1:20-33 RSV)

NOTE: Every cautionary command is for our protection—not suppression!

CLOSING THOUGHT- *(This can bring healing & restoration to you & every relationship you have—both with God & others)*

- **SIN is SIN (Settling for less than living in His glory; in His image)**
- **Whether we INTENDED to sin or not—all sin has DESTRUCTIVE EFFECTS**
 - **Archers miss the mark unintentionally!**
 - **i.e., car accidents—unintentional, but you must take responsibility for your part**
- **It is VITAL that we TAKE RESPONSIBILIITY FOR IT (i.e., “confess it”) even when it was “not our intent” to do it. *(Must move beyond the “but I didn’t mean to” impasse)***