

## 6) How Can I Be Right With God?

Sin is a direct attack on the holiness of God's character and will. The Creator's intention is rejected and His holiness is offended. Before God sin is an offense, a crime, and a transgression. **Sinners who transgress God's standard of holiness have four areas of need that must be dealt with for them to be right before God:**

- Sin Produces **Guilt**—*The guilt of sin must be removed*

**Exodus 34:7** "He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished"

**Leviticus 4:27** "if anyone of the common people sins unintentionally in doing any of the things which the LORD has commanded not to be done, and becomes guilty"

**Leviticus 6:2, 4** "<sup>2</sup>When a person sins and acts unfaithfully against the Lord...<sup>4</sup>then it shall be, when he sins and becomes guilty"

**Numbers 35:31** "You shall not take ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death"

**Deuteronomy 25:2** "if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, the judge shall then make him lie down and be beaten in his presence with the number of stripes according to his guilt"

**Ezra 9:15** "We are before You in our guilt, for no one can stand before You because of this"

**Hosea 10:2** "Their heart is faithless; now they must bear their guilt"

**James 2:10** "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all"

Summary of these passages:

- All who sin are guilty before God
- The guilty deserve punishment
- Punishment must be proportionate to the guilt
- Only those without guilt are right with God
- Guilty sinners are not acceptable to God

"Guilt" means one **legally** deserves punishment. The **law** has been violated and a commensurate (equal, proportionate) **penalty** must be administered. The punishment for offending God is death, as sin creates a moral disqualification for the sinner to live. In order for a guilty sinner to stand before a holy God his guilt must be removed.

Guilt must be satisfied. Punishment must be commensurate with guilt (Deut 25:2). The only way one can *not* be guilty is if he is *free* of guilt!

Are you guilty before God? What are you guilty of? What laws of God have you violated? Does this not make you a guilty sinner? Since you are guilty, what commensurate penalty/punishment do you deserve?

- Sin **Enslaves**—*The power of sin must be **broken***

**Matthew 6:24** “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

**John 8:34** “everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin”

**Romans 6:6** “so that we would no longer be slaves to sin”

**Romans 6:14, 17** “<sup>14</sup>sin shall not be master over you... <sup>17</sup>you were slaves of sin”

**Romans 6:19** “you presented your members as slaves to impurity and lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness”

**Romans 6:20** “When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness” – *this means you don't have a “choice” to live a life that pleases God—you are compelled to sin and you do so willingly*

**Titus 3:3** “enslaved to various lusts and pleasures”

Sin is a domineering master who has absolute power over your life. As a result of your enslavement to sin you serve sin even **more**, resulting in additional sin and further enslavement. As sin increases, the chains become longer and thicker.

Sin's mastery begins at the moment of conception (Ps 51:5), controls through a nature/disposition that is bent toward sin (Eph 2:3), and results in a lifestyle thoroughly affected and driven by sin (Mark 7:21-22). The servant of sin wants nothing to do with real righteousness (Rom 6:20).

If sin's power is not **broken**, you will continue to be its slave and do its bidding. Do you see how you can't free yourself from sin? That you cannot help but sin in your thoughts, feelings, nature, and actions?

- Sin Calls for God's **Wrath**—*The penalty of sin must be fully **paid***

**Deuteronomy 9:18-19** “<sup>18</sup>because of all your sin which you had committed in doing what was evil in the sight of the LORD to provoke Him to anger. <sup>19</sup>For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure with which the LORD was wrathful against you in order to destroy you”

**Luke 12:46-47** “<sup>47</sup>And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes, <sup>48</sup>but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few”

**John 3:36** “he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him”

**Romans 1:18** “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness”

**Romans 2:8** “to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation”

**Colossians 3:5-6** “<sup>5</sup>Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. <sup>6</sup>For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience”

Summary of these passages:

- Sin draws out God’s wrath (righteous anger)
- God’s wrath is “hot” and “destroys”
- God responds with wrath to all sin
- No sin will be left unpunished

God’s wrath is “excited” (drawn out, elicited) only by **sin**. Sin brings guilt and eventual punishment. Between guilt and punishment is God’s anger, which is His holy reaction to violated law, the moral law of His own unchangeable holiness.

Wrath is the response of God’s **holiness** against evil; it is His perfect attitude toward all sin.

While sinners live on earth, God patiently (and graciously) endures their sin. Sinners also experience a certain measure of God’s kindness (rain, sun, etc., Matt 5:45) and a limited measure of God’s justice (certain sins do have consequences). However, once the sinner dies he faces an eternity without *any* measure of God’s kindness and the *full* measure of God’s justice.

You know there will come a time of judgment. Do you not feel a fearful dread of that day? Do you know Whom you have offended?

- Sin Produces **Hostility**—*The sinner must be **reconciled** to God*

**Isaiah 59:2** “your iniquities have made *a separation between you and your God*, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.”

**Romans 5:10** “For if *while we were enemies* we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

**Colossians 1:21** “you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind”

**Ephesians 2:12** “remember that you were at that time *separate* from Christ, *excluded* from the commonwealth of Israel, and *strangers* to the covenants of promise, *having no hope and without God in the world*”

**Ephesians 4:18** “excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart”

**James 4:4** “You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

There can only be harmony and peace between God and man if man is right with God. While Adam and Eve had this at first, they lost it when they sinned against God.

Remember, God created us to enjoy a right relationship with Him. This was our reason for existence, to know God and glorify Him. By being made in His image we were enabled to reflect His character and understand His will—all essential to a right relationship with God.

Sin, however, produces estrangement, enmity, and hostility between the offended God and the offending sinner. Between God and the sinner there is no peace, harmony, or favor. God is **hostile** to and the **enemy** of the unsaved sinner. God is at enmity toward all who are evil. His demand for holiness causes Him to turn away from sinners. While the sinner is hostile to God, God is infinitely hostile to the sinner.

What relationship can a God completely characterized and controlled by holiness have with one who is completely corrupted and controlled by sin? The only “relationship” there can be is one of enmity, hostility, animosity, repugnancy, alienation, open war, estrangement, perfect irritation and hatred. As they are, they cannot be **reconciled**.

What an infinitely lonely and dreadful position to be in: an enemy of God, the infinite and perfect spirit in whom all things have their source, support, and end!

**How can sinners be right with God?** Guilt must be removed, sin’s tyrannical power must be broken, God’s wrath must be satisfied, and the sinner must be reconciled to God.

Statement: *The sinner must be **forgiven** and **righteous** before God.*

## 7) Can good works save me from sin?

**Proverbs 20:9** “Who can say, ‘I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin?’”

**Isaiah 64:6** “For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; and all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.”

**Romans 4:4** “Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due”

**Galatians 2:16** “by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified [declared righteous]”

**Ephesians 2:8-9** “<sup>8</sup>For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; <sup>9</sup>not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

**Philippians 3:4-7** “If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: <sup>5</sup>circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup>as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. <sup>7</sup>But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.”

**Titus 3:5** “He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit”

Summary of these passages:

- The Bible clearly says that no one can cleanse himself of sin
- A sinner's best efforts are sinful and soiled, unacceptable to God
- Good works are expected—they should already be there
- Salvation from sin is by God's grace and mercy and is His gift
- The greatest works done by a sinner are actually credited *against* the sinner rather than *for* him

Can one who is guilty remove his guilt? No amount of prayer, alms, etc., can remove guilt because that is not the commensurate penalty for your guilt (cf. Num 35:31). You are not even able to break free from the power of sin to do things truly acceptable to God. The wrath you face from God is infinite in scope—do you think your sin-stained works will truly satisfy His infinite wrath?

No amount of good works can ever break sin's power, change your sin nature, satisfy God's wrath, or make things right with God.

Religious activities and living a good moral life are “good” in themselves, but remember, they should have already been present! One dare not depend on them in order to be right with God. Good works can *never* earn God's forgiveness and the needed righteousness to be acceptable before God.

Statement: *Good works can never save anyone from sin.*