

Lesson 2 Questions

What Is Sin?

Review/ What did we learn about God in the first lesson?

1. **Genesis 1:27** What is the basic relationship of man and woman to God?
2. **1:26-31** What did God think of them in the beginning?
3. **6:5-7** By the time of this passage, what did God think of the people he had made?
4. Why did he want to destroy them? Also see **Romans 3:23**.
5. **2:15-17, 3:1-11** What had happened to change people and God's thinking about them?
6. What attitude is the basic offense against God that leads to the act of disobeying him?
7. Who else was involved in this situation?
8. What did the serpent say about God's command and warning?
9. Did Adam and Eve believe God or Satan?
10. Why did Adam and Eve disobey God?

Lesson 2 Summary

What Is Sin?

“*God created man in his own image*” is the simple, Biblical description of how the human race began (Genesis 1:27). Basically, people are in a creature-Creator relationship with God. They are the crown of his creation. God thought enough of them to give them dominion over all other life on the earth. When God first evaluated what he had made, his judgment was that it was all good, including man and woman (1:31).

Several generations later, however, God thought differently about the people he had made. In the sixth chapter of Genesis we find that, “*the LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time*” (6:5). God wanted to destroy humanity. What made the difference? If we can find out what happened to cause people to change from good to evil in God's sight, we will discover the essence of sin.

What happened is recorded in Genesis 2:15-17 and 3:1-7. God placed one restriction on the man and woman he had created; in the middle of the garden was one tree from which they were not to eat the fruit. This negative command gave them an alternative to the will of God. They could then exercise their freedom by choosing to obey or disobey their Creator. God warned that the result of eating the forbidden fruit would be death.

A fourth party, appearing in the form of a serpent and identified elsewhere in the Bible as Satan, the enemy of God, spoke to the woman and contradicted God's command and warning. The first man and woman were faced with a decision. They could believe God's word and trust in his goodness, continuing to live in a proper relationship of obedience to him, or they could believe the serpent and eat the fruit, setting themselves free from God's control by disobeying him. They chose to believe the serpent and took the step of disobedience, acting independently of God for the first time.

Going our own way is the essence of what the Bible calls *sin*. It shows up in wrong actions and wrong attitudes. It involves deliberately disobeying God's commands, but it also includes ignoring God, making decisions without consulting him. Sin is not just the failure to live according to God's *principles*, it's also the failure to live for his *purposes*. To run your own life, to leave God out, is to live in sin. Isaiah the prophet put it this way, “*We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way*” (53:6). Sin is also more than wrongdoing itself; it's the inclination to do wrong.

The reality of sin is unsettling, but how concerned we are about it depends on the result of sin. In the next lesson we will see just how serious are the consequences of sin.