

## Lesson 3 Commentary

### What Are the Results of Sin?

Review/ What did we learn from the last study about sin?

**Sin is rebellion against God, whether by disobeying him or ignoring him.**

1. **Mark 7:20-23** How did Jesus say rebellion against God causes a person to act?

**A rebellious attitude of the heart produces acts of immorality, theft, murder, adultery, deceit, lewdness and slander.**

2. Do you recognize some of these things in yourself? Notice that they include not only acts but also thoughts and attitudes.

**The root attitude of rebellion leads to evil thoughts as well as other wrong attitudes, such as greed, malice, envy, arrogance and folly.**

3. What do these things do to a person?

**All of these wrong actions and attitudes make a person unclean.**

Uncleanness is impurity, the opposite of the holiness that characterizes God. The prophet Isaiah was describing the human heart when he said, "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). Even our *best* efforts are impure relative to the righteousness of God.

4. **Psalm 5:4-6** What does God think about sin?

**God hates evil.**

This does not mean, however, that God is happy about the destruction of sinful people or evil doers. In Ezekiel 18:23 God says: "Do I take pleasure in the death of the wicked? Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their wicked ways and live?"

5. What does sin do to our relationship with God? See also **Isaiah 59:1-2** and **Genesis 3:23**.

**Sin separates us from God because he is holy and cannot tolerate sin in his presence. Our sin makes us unfit for a relationship with God.**

The effect of sin on our relationship with God is dramatically demonstrated by the action God took when Adam and Eve disobeyed him. God banished them from the garden; he sent them away from the place where he had personally met with them (Genesis 3:8). Speaking to God, the prophet Habakkuk said, "your eyes are too pure to look on evil" (Habakkuk 1:13).

Paul explains that wrongdoing does even more than separate us from God; it alienates us from him (Colossians 1:21). There is more than distance between us; there is a barrier that keeps us apart. By our sin we make ourselves enemies of God, subject to his judgement and wrath. All men and women are "objects of (God's) wrath" because we "gratify the cravings of our sinful nature and follow its desires and thoughts" (Ephesians 2:3).

6. **Genesis 2:17** What does God call the condition of being separated from him? Compare **Romans 6:23**.

**God said the result of disobeying him would be death.**

In the Bible the word *death* can describe a spiritual condition or a physical one. In this case both are involved. God warned Adam that “in the day” (see NASV, KJV and RSV) he ate from the tree of knowledge he would die. Adam and Eve did eventually die physically, which would never have been their experience if they had not disobeyed God. But their physical death did not occur until hundreds of years after they violated God's command. What took place immediately, as a consequence of their sin, was that God forced them out of the garden, removing them from his special presence, which they had enjoyed there.

This exclusion from the presence of God is spiritual death. Jesus had the distinction between physical and spiritual death in mind when he said, “...let the dead bury their own dead” (Matthew 8:22), and Paul was obviously thinking of spiritual death when he described those who were physically alive as “...dead in your trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1).

Separation from God means separation from good. Separation from his presence (person) means no access to his purpose, power, provision, protection, purity and peace.

7. **Romans 5:8** What did God do because he loves us?

**God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to die for us.**

Jesus took the penalty we deserve for our sin against God; he died in our place. He was crucified, nailed to a cross by his hands and feet and left hanging until he died. Before Jesus died physically, however, he suffered a far more painful death - a spiritual one. God separated himself from his own Son, not because Jesus had any sin of his own but because he was willing to take responsibility for ours. The separation from God which Jesus experienced was manifested by three hours of darkness and the cry of Jesus, “... ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’” (Matthew 27:46).

8. **1 Peter 3:18** What was his purpose?

**Jesus suffered the penalty of spiritual death so that those who are separated from God by their sin might be brought back into relationship with him.**

9. **Isaiah 55:6-7** What must we do in order for God to pardon our sin and restore our relationship with him?

**God forgives the sins of those who “seek the Lord” (“call on him,” “turn to the Lord” for mercy) and “forsake evil.”**

We must turn both *from* sin and *to* the Lord. In the New Testament these conditions are referred to as repentance and faith, calling on Jesus as Savior and submitting to him as Lord. The apostle Peter preached, “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out...” (Acts 3:19).