

Discipleship Questions

What is sin, and what are its consequences?

How have you sinned against God?

What are the two possible ways to be sorrowful over sin?

What is worldly sorrow, and where does it lead?

What is godly sorrow, and where does it lead?

How will godly sorrow cause you to view past sin?

How should you view being separated from God in sin?

What kind of heart will find forgiveness from God?



Ever since Adam and Eve ate from the forbidden tree, sin and its consequences have been in the world (Genesis 3). Sin occurs whenever people give in to their own desires and rebel against the law God has given (1 John 3:4; James 1:13-15). Sin can take the form of doing what God does not want people to do or failing to do what God wants them to do. Regardless of how someone misses the target God has set for their lives, though, there are always consequences for sin. Some consequences are physical and affect your earthly life. Other consequences are spiritual and stem from your broken relationship with God. Therefore, as you recognize these things, you must diligently work to experience godly sorrow over the sin you commit.

Romans 3:9-18, 23

Before you can experience godly sorrow, you must realize the sin in your life. This passage helps demonstrate that you have sinned against God. Whether you have murdered, stolen, gotten drunk, lied, lusted, coveted, cursed, or any number of things (Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:16-26; Revelation 21:8), you have sinned! At some point and in some way, you have sought your own will above God's. Ultimately, you chose to glorify yourself above God. Therefore, you must take an honest inventory of your life to identify the various ways you have chosen to please yourself above God and call out the sins you have committed.

2 Corinthians 7:8-11

Paul was thankful the Corinthians had experienced godly sorrow/grief over their sin. In this, Paul identifies two ways people can respond to

being guilty of sin. One way is worldly sorrow. The other is godly sorrow. However, these two do not lead to the same outcome. Godly sorrow leads to repentance and salvation, while worldly sorrow leads to death. So, it is possible for two people to both be sorry and sorrowful over their sin, but for their sorrow not to result in the same outcome! Worldly sorrow is sorrowful about the worldly/physical consequences of sin (e.g., getting caught, legal consequences, job consequences, relationship consequences, emotional consequences). But, since it stems from the same selfish heart that led to the sinful rebellion in the first place, it will never lead to true repentance and salvation (even though it can result in improvements being made to one's physical life).

Godly sorrow works differently. Godly sorrow does not flow from selfish or physically focused desires for the consequences to be removed (though it can include sorrow over the physical consequences). Rather, it is focused on the damage that sin has done to your relationship with God (e.g., grieving God, offending God, becoming His enemy) and the spiritual consequences that produces (e.g., having no peace, hope, or joy, and a future expectation of eternal punishment and separation from God in Hell). Godly sorrow recognizes the real issue with sin as the separation from God it has caused, and is focused on restoring that relationship with God above all else! In seeking to restore the broken relationship with God, godly sorrow leads to: Diligence to fight against the sin (not a short-lived emotional determination to change), a desire to clear yourself of the wrong at all costs (not a fleeting interest in change), indignation/hatred toward the sin (not the worldly consequences of sin), fear of God knowing about your sin and not being pleased with you (not fear of people finding out or worldly consequences alone), deep longing for restoration with God and others (not just a longing for the subject to be dropped), zeal for what is right (not a momentary emotion that soon vanishes and the sin is returned to), and justice to rightfully be done regarding sin (not trying to avoid all consequences related to sin). This kind of sorrow is the only way to bring about true repentance (a hatred of past sin and commitment to live a changed life) and salvation!

James 4:7-10

As you have not always submitted to God and resisted the devil, you must experience godly sorrow and draw near to God. When you do this, you can be restored to a right relationship with God, as He will also draw near to you! But, for this to take place, you must cleanse your hands (the external sinful things) and purify your heart (your inner person, from which sin has come, Matthew 15:18-19; Proverbs 4:23). You cannot be glad over or view your sin positively if you want to restore your

relationship with God. Instead, you should be miserable, mourn, and weep due to how sin has impacted your relationship with God. Only then will you truly be restored to Him!

Luke 15:11-24

This parable demonstrates the reality of where sin takes people when they rebel against God. The younger son wasted his inheritance with foolish, reckless, and self-absorbed living. At some point, however, he hit rock bottom and recognized where his sin had gotten him. Then, he recognized how much better it was to be with his father and determined to go back. When he did, his father (representative of God) was eager to receive him and celebrated his return! In this, you should recognize how far from God your sin has taken you and sorrow over being separated from him, determining to go back and seek His forgiveness!

Psalms 51:1-19

This psalm contains a prayer of King David, when he sought restoration with God after a series of sins in his life that included adultery and murder (2 Samuel 11-12). In this psalm, David's godly sorrow can be plainly seen. Although he had done many good things in his life for God prior to this, he saw himself as a ruined sinner. Although he had sinned against other people (e.g., Bathsheba, Uriah, other soldiers and their families), he was focused on his sin against God. Furthermore, he recognized that he could only find restoration through God's grace and mercy cleansing him. Although David knew he could go through the motions of bringing God many animal sacrifices (under the Law of Moses), he knew that these would mean nothing without him demonstrating a broken spirit and a humbled, contrite heart that sorrowed over his sin! The only path David saw to being able to rejoice again was if his relationship with God would be restored! So it must be whenever you sin against God!

Conclusion

Sin destroys your relationship with God and brings about many physical and spiritual consequences. However, if you want to experience true transformation, you must experience godly sorrow over your sin. Therefore, your broken relationship with God should be more important to you than any other consequence you experience because of sin, so that you seek restoration with God above everything else and at all costs!

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