

Is All Sin the Same?

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If you are a Christ-follower with a social media account, you might think so. It's important to understand that in God's eyes, not all sin is the same.

I know immature Christians love to proclaim, "All sin is the same, or don't judge me because my sin is a different flavor from yours." That sounds good and it sounds scriptural, but is it biblically accurate? No.

Naïve believers usually say this by repeating what they read on the internet or what they heard someone else say. This all-too-common misconception of biblical truth originates from a misunderstanding of James 2:10, which says, "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet offend in one point is guilty of breaking the whole law." From a biblical perspective, the truth is that if you have broken the law (sinned) you are a lawbreaker (sinner) and need forgiveness from Jesus, just as we all do. That is what James 2:10 says. The mis-perception is that if you break one law, the consequences are the same as if you had broken all the laws.

Imagine if I told my wife, "Babe, I need to confess my sin to you. I sped home and ran a red light." She would ask me why I was in such a hurry and would break the law and put others' health at risk. She would challenge me to be a better man. Now, if I told her, "Babe, I sped home because I just got done committing adultery with a prostitute," that conversation would go a lot differently. What if I told her, "Babe, all sin is the same in God's eyes"? Trust me, after 11 years of marriage, I know that wouldn't pass. And it doesn't pass with God, either.

Many laws had distinctive punishments and consequences. For example, in 1 Samuel 11 and 12, King David committed adultery

and arranged for the certain death of Uriah the Hittite (the husband of Bathsheba, the woman with whom he committed adultery). The consequence of this sin was the death of David and Bathsheba's son. Second Samuel 12:14 says, "Nathan said to David, 'Now the Lord has put away your sin; you shall not die. Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the Lord, the child who is born to you shall die.'" The loss of a child is a tragic consequence for a sin of the flesh.

On another occasion, Moses sinned against God by directly disobeying Him. God gave specific instructions on taking a limited census of one branch of the Levites, the Kohathites. Numbers 4:1-3 says, "The Lord said to Moses and Aaron: "Take a census of the Kohathite branch of the Levites by their clans and families. Count all the men from 30 to 50 years of age who come to serve in the work at the tent of meeting." Though Moses knew God's instructions, so did Satan. Satan rose up against Israel and incited Moses to take a census of all Israel, not just a limited census of the Kohathite branch of the Levites as God had instructed. (See 2 Sam. 24:2-7).

God wanted the children of Israel to count on Him, not on themselves. By numbering or counting all of Israel, they showed they counted on men, not God, for their strength. The outcome of David's direct disobedience to God caused the greatest negative consequence of his life. First Chronicles 21:13 says, "David said to Gad, 'I am in deep distress. Let me fall into the hands of the Lord, for His mercies are very great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man.'" The result of this sin was that 70,000 Israelites died. David's disobedience had a catastrophic consequence.

Other biblical examples of the consequences for greater sins would be Ananias and his wife Sapphira dropped dead after lying to the Holy Spirit in Acts 5, committing blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (Mark 3:29) or even the damnation of receiving the mark of the beast. All of these sins are found in the New Testament and are egregious and have eternal consequences.

We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Yes, if you break even one law, you are a lawbreaker, but specific sins have specific consequences. There are specific sins that God hates more than others. We can't become callous to sin. There is a hierarchy of sin, and the church needs to be discerning of this. Throughout the scriptures, God refers to greater sins as abominations; Proverbs 6 lists some of them. Let's pray for the wisdom and discernment of God so we can know the heart of the Father and the mind of Christ and justly navigate in a spiritually dark world. {eoa}

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