

What is meant with "sin"?

With all the glib applications pertaining to what is sin and what is not, let's get to its root meaning.

"Sin" means to loose/miss one's goal in life (derived from the Heb. chatah). In Greek there is a similar meaning. Think of an archer. He aims at the centre yet missing his target as he does not aim his arrows well. He therefore misses his goal.

Now what would our "goal in life" be? Surely to please God, or may be better worded, to be obedient to God's instructions contained in the Bible, Old and New Testaments (These two books were always basic to Christianity) - and so that it shall go well with us. It would further mean not to twist the Word of God, to rationalize in other words but to take it as it stands.

"Sin" is on the whole applied especially to sexual sin as man is a sexual being and he therefore has a sexual identity, i.e. in accordance with the type of sexuality he is equipped with or then is exercising. This is briefly stated but most of us will be able to understand this concise depiction.

Now, God's goal for us is to live in accordance with His instructions as God knows what is wholesome for us and what is not - that is IF we believe in the God of the Bible, believing His Word and submitting to His authority and guidance. "Missing one's goal" would then be to thwart God's will for us and consequently going the opposite way bringing disaster even spiritual destruction upon ourselves.

There are indeed complexities and specifics within man's make-up and especially pertaining to his circumstances and therefore we have within our socio-societal set-up the married, the unmarried, also of course the divorced. Not everybody's "circumstances" are the same.

However, God knows the person as He also knows his heart (the proverbial seat of his feelings, thoughts and nefesh (= his being) and more than any other, be it counsellor, pastor, or moralistic preacher, He is then the One and only One acquainted with the full picture of everybody's life.

Although God has placed the "task" of procreation on man's shoulders, He also knows that there will always be not only the married ones but also the unmarried (like Paul, Jeremiah, John, even those who were married but who never remarried, e.g. presumably the prophet Ezekiel) and then naturally the divorced.

In the latter case, there are (1) those who are guilty of adultery and who are then the cause of the break-up of their marriages - something the Word of God does allow in this specific instance, and then (2) the innocent party who has to sit with the "stigma" of divorce (on the whole regarded as a "big sin" yet, ironically, not always taking into account the full picture).

Now, without harping on this basic relationship pattern any further, let's focus on the concept of "sin" (missing one's goal in life, meaning of course to harm oneself, to rob oneself of those very things one could have enjoyed had one not succumbed to sin, i.e. then deliberately stopping one's ears to God's instruction and guidance which can also mean to be obstinate and self-seeking, not making use of our God-given opportunities - which again boils down to not trusting God and not believing Him (=the main cause of sin for sin always begins by sinning against God and then the effects thereof branching out to our personal circumstances). And before I promote a sanctimonious, judgmental spirit, let me be clear: The Apostle Paul states in his Letter to Timothy that we all have sinned and we all have fallen short. Therefore Jesus came to save sinners (1 Tim. 1.15).

Something we must then also consider, opening the door to going the wrong way and missing our goal in life, is that we usually pray, asking God to guide us and to help us achieve our goals, yet, when opportunity knocks, then we ourselves either deliberately or through sheer negligence fail to see the door God is either closing or opening for us! (Unbelief/lack of faith is also a sin that can lead to missing one's goal for if we have asked God

something, we must believe that He is able to give us what we have asked for).

And IF we really believe, we will know that God, in His providence, won't cause our downfall but He will give us, not always what we may bring before Him, but He will give us that which will enrich our lives and so that we will be able to achieve our goal in life - sometimes it takes time to see God's will unfolding for us and sometimes Satan causes us, very often through people, even so-called "Christians", to miss our optimal goals in life, i.e. to get married, to be successful in one's career, to be healthy and flourishing in one's general relationships, achieving what God had in store for us, etcetera.

Loosing out in life the aforementioned way can and does happen and therefore God hates the works of Satan (=the works of the flesh, practising the occult against one's fellows, even through jealousy practising mind-power and "binding" somebody's God-given opportunities, or worse of all placing curses on people's lives and just because we don't want them to prosper). However, I am not so much focusing on this type of loosing out in life/missing one's goal for this type of onslaught calls for a separate discussion.

Should one always miss one's goal in life, that is loosing out all the time, one can become so despondent, eventually even denying the goodness of God, also completely loosing faith in Him, or even going the wrong way totally. Therefore we Christians must be careful in our "judgments" for there is no justification with God when cruelly subjecting our fellows to condemnation. However, keeping all these complexities in mind when liaising with people in general, let's keep in mind that it is good to know that if we "sin" it means that we are loosing out for we are then loosing our God-given goal in life, that is to taste the good things God is always ready to give us.

And these "good" things don't automatically apply to our financial and personal prosperity, but it will always include God's will for us for God knows what to give us and what not. Should we regard personal and financial prosperity as a sign of God's utmost approval of us and our doings, then, surely, we will have to classify many sinners (God forgetters) who are rich and affluent the same way! So let us Christians always retain objectivity especially when it comes to applying the label of "sin".

We will not all then receive in the same measure and therefore our lives will also not be the same. Similar may be, but not the same.

God then gives us instructions in His Word first and foremost which we, in our own interests, then will have to go by. Should we defy God's teaching (His instructions contained in His Word), we will go the wrong way (we will sin). We will steer away from the "right" and "faithful" path that will also give us the positive result we have been called to strive for (=eternal life with Him and those who love Him).

However, should our circumstances turn negative (e.g. having to face a divorce or not finding the "real" match), then we still will have to take heed of God's prescriptions, however, our challenges will then, due to our circumstances, often complicate our lives and to the extent where we will then have to make definite choices, i.e. to either remain one hundred per cent true to God's Word (carrying on doing what God demands of us and not loosing our goal/perspective to please Him), or to do as we please which would then be loosing our goal in life by going the wrong way.

It is then how we handle our circumstances, how we accept our challenges, our mishaps, our misfortune, even our successes in life, and which will of course affect the married, the unmarried and the divorced in different and diverse ways.

I have deliberately referred to sexuality as it is basic to man, but and this is the BIG contrast, it is indeed wrong to label people believing "everybody is the same".

Therefore, reasoning that everybody has to have a sexual partner is indeed oversimplification to say the least as individual traits and complexities, also personal circumstances, must always be considered. It is then wrong to assume that everybody has to be the same, i.e. without considering individuality, individual circumstances,

individual traits, personal characteristics, also personality, etcetera. As long as we keep in mind that those who want to follow Christ, must take heed of the Word of God and all its prescriptions. We cannot then live according to what the spirit of the world prescribes and for this reason we can go to Jesus in prayer, for He is interceding for us 24/7. Without Him we are nothing and with Him we can become what He wants us to be!

Now finding the "perfect match" is indeed a blessing but just as there are differences in libido likewise there are differences in choices and matches. There is then individuality in Christ too and therefore there are to this day the married and the unmarried (including those divorced who want to remain unmarried or who are contemplating remarriage "in the Lord" - Paul's guidance, 1 Cor. 7).

In summary: Us Christians have a goal in life and that is to submit to God's instructions contained in His Word. Us Christians have an obligation to walk the way of the Lord, also maintaining purity in mind, soul and spirit = we will sin, losing our goal should we deliberately go the wrong way. Jesus travailed for us in prayer and so that we could be made whole IN HIM, Heb. 5.7). He is and remains the compassionate Jesus and there is always room at the Cross for those in need of salvation.

Should we lapse into sin, getting involved in something God's Word does not approve of, then we have a golden opportunity to turn back to God and confess our sins (Ja 5.16; 1 Jn 1.7-9). We are called to be CLEANSED from sin by the blood of the Lamb (lest we miss the goal God has placed before us namely to PARTICIPATE in redemption, i.e. life in Jesus Christ our Lord) by the blood of the Lamb!

We are indeed not called to rationalize God's instructions, pleasing ourselves. This way we will surely lose our goal, going the wrong way!

Therefore pursuing what is right in the eyes of God is to do what God desires of us who believe in His Son's sacrificial blood, be we married or unmarried. As long as we seek God's will for us regardless of and in our circumstances, what does it matter what others may be saying of us?

And this is the crux! Paul clearly states in his letters that "in the last days people will be slanderous (= to lose one's goal in Christ, namely to be cleansed in mind and in spirit for one who is cleansed in mind and in spirit will not harm his fellows in any way).

Should one then abstain from "sin" (=to do God's will in conformance with His Word), one will safeguard oneself from missing the goal God has placed before each one of us, namely to preserve our soul against all evil regardless of all the pressures our personal circumstances may impose on us!

God wants us to also find happiness in life and so that our lives will be meaningful as this will give purpose to our lives. And it seems making the right choices - and remaining within the boundaries of God's Word, rather opting for the good than the bad - is then indeed the answer!

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