

MORALITY, SIN, AND PERFECTION

Jesse Morrell

UNDERSTANDING MORALITY

* In God's Moral Government morality is of the inward intention of the heart (Gen. 6:5; Joel 2:12-13; Ps. 51:6; Matt. 5:8; 6:1-5; 12:35; 15:11; 15:17-20; 23:25-28; Mk. 7:15-23; Lk. 10:27; 2 Cor. 8:12; Heb. 4:12; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 Tim. 1:5; Titus 1:15).

* All sin or righteousness comes out of the heart (Isa. 14:13-14; Eze. 11:21; Matt. 5:28; 12:35; 15:18-19; Lk. 6:45; Rom. 6:17; 10:10; 2 Pet. 2:14).

* Moral perfection is purity of heart or motive (Matt. 5:8; 1 Pet. 1:22) which is perfection of heart or intention (1 Kin. 8:61; 11:4; 15:3; 15:14; 2 Kin. 20:3; 1 Chro. 12:38; 28:9; 29:9; 29:19; 2 Chro. 15:17; 16:9; 19:9; 25:2; Ps. 101:2; Isa. 38:3).

* God judges the heart (1 Sam. 16:7; Ps. 26:1-2; 17:3; 44:18-21; 51:6; 139:1-2, 23; Prov. 24:12; Jer. 17:10; 2 Cor. 8:12)

* A person's moral character is their intention or heart (Prov. 23:7; Matt. 5:28; Acts 7:51; Rom. 2:29; 2 Cor. 8:12; 1 Jn. 3:15).

* Love is the essence of all virtue (Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:37-40; Mk. 12:30-31; Lk. 10:27; Rom. 13:8; 13:10; Gal. 5:14; Jas. 2:8).

* There is no virtue at all without love (1 Cor. 13:1-3).

* To have outward acts of righteousness, without an inward heart of righteousness, is to have no righteousness at all (Matt. 5:20; 7:15; 23:28; Lk. 11:39).

* The Kingdom of God is internal (Lk. 17:21).

* And since we only have one heart, we are holy or sinful, loving or selfish, obedient or disobedient, at any given time, but never both at the same time (Matt. 6:22-24; 7:17-18; 12:33; Lk. 11:34-36; Rom. 3:10-18; 2 Cor. 5:17; Tit. 1:15-16; Jas. 3:11-12).

WHAT IS SIN?

* All sin consists in sinning, sin is a choice to transgress known Law (Rom. 5:13; Jas. 4:17; 1 Jn. 3:4).

* Sin is not a metaphysical constitution, a physical or spiritual substance, sin is a free moral choice (1 Sam. 8:7; Ps. 78:8; Isa. 65:12; 66:4; Zech. 8:17; Lk. 19:14; Rom. 6:12;

Eph. 4:26-28; 1 Jn. 3:4), a choice to do evil instead of the good that you know you should choose (Jn. 3:19; Jas. 4:17).

* Sin is rebellion of the will or an unwillingness of heart, not a defect or disability of nature (Isa. 14:13-14; 30:9; 30:15-16; 31:6; 42:24; Eze. 20:7-8; Neh.9:29; Zech. 7:11-13; Lk.19:14; 19:27).

* Sin is an unreasonable or unintelligence choice (Isa. 30:1; 47:8; 65:2; Ecc. 9:3; Matt. 7:26; Lk. 6:49).

* Sin is to rebel against the reigning of God (Deut. 9:7; 9:24; 31:27; Ps. 78:8; Isa. 30:1; 30:9; 31:6; 63:10; Jer. 4:17; 5:23; Lam. 3:42; Eze. 2:3; 20:7-8; Lk. 19:14), an attempt to dethrone God and establish yourself as the center of the universe (Isa. 14:13-14).

* The essence of sin is a selfish rebellious heart (Ps. 77:8; Isa. 14:13-14; Jer. 5:23; Eze. 20:7-8; Lk. 19:14).

* Sin is a selfish motive of the will (Matt. 23:5), a state of the inner heart (Matt. 5:28; 15:18-19), which manifests itself into outward action (Matt. 12:33; 12:35).

* Inward sin, a selfish motive of heart, is completely voluntary (Job 11:14; Matt. 23:26; Rom. 6:12).

* A man determines the moral condition of his own heart (1 Kin. 8:61; Zec. 7:10; Eze. 18:31; Ps. 119:112).

* Sin involves the whole heart, so an individual cannot be partly holy (partly loving) and partly sinful (partly selfish) at the same time (Matt. 6:22-24; 7:17-18; 12:33; Lk. 11:34-36; Rom. 3:10-18; 2 Cor. 5:17; Tit. 1:15-16; Jas. 3:11-12).

* To sin (to be selfish) or not to sin (to love) is a daily choice (Lk. 9:23; 1 Cor. 15:31).

* The existence of sin is a contingency, it doesn't have to exist, it is always avoidable and optional (Gen. 4:6-7; Deut. 8:2; Jdg. 2:20-22; Exo. 33:2; 34:24; Eze. 3:19; 12:13; 33:19; Jer. 18:8-10; Ps. 81:13; Job 11:14; Matt. 23:26; Rom. 6:12; 1 Cor. 10:13).

* All sin is either against the person of God (Ex. 10:16; 20:3-11; Deut. 1:41; 9:16; Josh. 7:20; Jdg. 10:10; 2 Kg. 17:7; Jer. 3:25; 8:14; Lk. 10:27), against the person of your neighbor (Ex. 10:16; 20:12-17; 2 Chro. 6:22; Lk. 10:27), or against the person of yourself (1 Cor. 6:18).

* All sin is rebellion against the law or Government of God (Lev. 4:22; Dan. 9:11; Neh. 9:26; 1 Jn. 3:4).

* Sin is not the will of God (Deut. 6:5; 10:12; Matt. 22:35-40; Mk. 12:30-31; Lk. 10:27; Rom. 13:8; 13:10; Gal 5:14; Jas. 2:8).

* Yet sin occurs (Gen. 6:12; Exo. 32:7; Deut. 9:12; 32:5; Jdg. 2:19; Hos. 9:9; Ps. 14:2-3; Isa. 53:6; Ecc. 7:29; Zep. 3:7; Rom. 3:23).

* Therefore the will of God is not always done (Matt. 6:10; Lk. 11:2), His will is not yet entirely done on earth (Zach. 14:9).

* This explains the broken heart of God, God is grieved and disappointed with mankind because of their sin (Gen. 6:5-6; 1 Sam. 15:35; Ps. 78:40; 81:13; 95:10; Isa. 1:14; 63:10; 53:3 Eze. 6:9; Mk. 3:5; Eph. 4:30),

* Because men sin when they don't have to (Gen. 4:6-7; Deut. 8:2; Jdg. 2:20-22; Exo. 33:2; 34:24; Eze. 3:19; 12:13; 33:19; Jer. 18:8-10; Ps. 81:13; Job 11:14; Matt. 23:26; Rom. 6:12; 1 Cor. 10:13).

* God says that sin is "a very horrible thing" (Jer. 18:32), and therefore the Lord does not delight in sin (Isa. 66:4; 65:12; Mal. 2:17), but rather abhors it or hates it (Deut. 12:31; Prov. 6:16-19; Zech. 8:15).

* It's heresy to say God delights in sin (Mal. 2:17).

* Since God doesn't want us to sin at all (Isa. 1:16; 55:7; Job 34:31-32; Jn. 5:14; 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:34; Eph. 4:26-28),

* God gives us the ability not to sin, so that we never have to sin (Gen. 4:6-7; Deut. 30:11, 19; Josh. 24:15; Isa. 1:16-20; 55:6-7; Hos. 10:12; Jer. 18:11; 21:8; 26:13; Eze. 18:30-32; Acts 2:40; 17:30; Rom. 6:17; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Cor. 7:1; Php. 4:13; 2 Tim. 2:21; Jas. 4:7-10; 1 Pet. 1:22).

MORAL PERFECTION

* Having a holy people was God's original intention in creation (Gen 6:5-6; Eph 1:4; Eph 2:10).

* This is the end sought by His government (1 Cor. 10:31; 1 Tim. 1:5; 1 Pet. 1:22).

* Love obeys the law (Jn. 14:15; 14:23; 1 Jn. 5:2; 5:3), because love is the law (Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:37-40; Mk. 12:30-31; Lk. 10:27), love is the fulfillment of the entire law (Rom. 13:8; 13:10; Gal. 5:14; Jas. 2:8).

* Love is an inner motive of the heart, a committal of the will to promote the highest well-being of all (Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:37-40; Mk. 12:30-31; Jn. 3:16; 15:13; Lk. 10:27; Rom. 13:8; Rom. 13:10; Gal. 5:14; Jas. 2:8).

* Love necessarily manifests itself into outward action when possible (Matt. 7:17; 12:35;

Lk. 6:45; Rom. 11:16; Tit. 1:15).

* Being holy, loving, or obedient is a free personal choice (Gen. 4:6-7; Deut. 30:19; Josh. 24:15; Ps. 17:3; Isa. 1:16-20; 55:6-7; Hos. 10:12; Isa. 66:17; Jer. 18:7-11; 21:8; 26:13; Eze. 3:20; 18:30-32; 33:19; Jonah 3:8-10; Joel 2:12-13; Matt. 7:24-26; 21:28-30; Lk. 6:47-49; Jn. 8:34; Acts 2:40; 17:30; 24:16; Rom. 6:13, 19; 6:16-17; 1 Cor. 9:27; 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 6:6; 2 Tim. 2:21; Jas. 4:7-10; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 Jn. 2:3; 3:22; 5:2-3; Rev. 22:17).

* Obedience is an intelligent choice, a choice to live according to your reason or conscience (Matt 7:24; Lk. 6:47-48; Rom. 12:1; Jas. 3:13).

* Repentance is reasonable and intelligent (Isa. 1:18; 55:7; Eze. 12:3; 18:14; 18:29; Job 34:27; Hag. 1:5; 1:7; Lk. 15:17).

* Men are to walk in truth, according to reality, as God does (1 Jn. 1:7). Love is the moral state God chooses to live in (Jn. 3:16; 15:13; Rom. 5:8; 1 Jn. 4:8; 4:16).

* Love is the moral state of all those who follow Jesus (Mk. 6:20; Lk. 1:70; Acts 3:21; 1 Thes. 5:27; 1 Cor. 3:17; Eph. 2:21; 2:22; 3:5; Col. 3:12; 1 Thes. 2:8; Tit. 1:8; Heb. 3:1; 1 Peter 2:5; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 Jn. 2:3; 2:4; 3:3; 3:24; 4:7; 5:2-3).

* Moral perfection is a moral obligation for all men (Gen. 17:1; Deut. 18:13; 1 Chro. 28:9; 2 Chro. 19:9; Ps. 4:4; Isa. 1:16; Matt. 5:48; Jn. 5:14; 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:31; 2 Cor. 13:11; Eph. 4:26-28; 1 Tim. 5:7; Rev. 3:2).

* Moral perfection is not perfection of knowledge, since that is impossible and therefore cannot be an obligation, but moral perfection is purity of heart or motive (Matt. 5:8; 1 Pet. 1:22) which is perfection of heart or intention (1 Kg. 8:61; 11:4; 15:3; 15:14; 2 Kg. 20:3; 1 Chro. 12:38; 28:9; 29:9; 29:19; 2 Chro. 15:17; 16:9; 19:9; 25:2; Ps. 101:2; Isa. 38:3).

* Moral perfection is having a clean conscience void of offense (Acts 23:1; 24:16). Moral perfection is defined as loving God and loving your neighbor (Rom. 13:8; 13:10; Gal 5:14; 1 Thes. 3:12-13; Jas. 2:8).

* Moral perfection is a choice (1 Kin. 8:61; Ps. 101:2; Acts 24:16).

* While physical perfection (glorification) is not attainable in this life (1 Cor. 15:50-56; Php. 3:11-12), moral perfection (sanctification) is attainable in this life (Gen. 6:9; 1 Kg. 15:14; 2 Kg. 18:3-7; 20:3; 2 Chro. 15:17; 2 Chro. 16:9; Job 1:1; 1:8; 2:3; Isa. 38:3; Ps. 17:3; 18:20-24; Lk. 1:6; Jn. 8:34-36; Acts 20:32; 23:1; 24:16; 26:18; Rom. 6:6; 6:18; 6:22; 1 Cor. 1:2; 1:8; 6:11; Heb. 2:11; 10:10; 10:14; Gal. 5:24; Php. 2:15; 3:15; Eph. 4:22-28; Col. 4:12; 1 Thes. 3:12-14; 5:23; 1 Tim. 3:2; 3:10; Tit. 1:6-7; 2:12; 2 Pet. 3:14; Jud. 1:1).

* Though no man is above temptation, not even Jesus (Matt. 4:1; Mk. 1:13; Heb. 4:15),

sin or disobedience to God's moral law is always voluntary, optional, and avoidable (Gen. 4:6-7; Deut. 8:2; Jdg. 2:20-22; Ex. 33:2; 34:24; Eze. 3:19; 12:13; 33:19; Jer. 18:8-10; Ps. 81:13; 1 Cor. 10:13).

* Since God is the author of our nature (Gen. 4:1; Isa. 27:11; 43:7; 49:5; 64:8; Jer. 1:5; Ps. 139:13-14, 16; Ecc. 7:29; Job 10:9-11; 31:15; 35:10), and He formed our nature with free will (Gen. 1:26-27; 9:6; Jas 3:9), we are naturally able to obey God (Gen. 4:6-7; Deut. 30:11, 19; Josh. 24:15; Isa. 1:16-20; 55:6-7; Hos. 10:12; Jer. 18:11; 21:8; 26:13; Eze. 18:30-32; Acts 2:40; 17:30; Rom. 6:17; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Cor. 7:1; 2 Tim. 2:21; Jas. 4:7-10; 1 Pet. 1:22; Rev. 22:17).

* Christ died for our disobedience to God's moral law, not because we couldn't obey, or because God's laws are impossible, but because we didn't obey God. Because we were deliberate criminals, not defective cripples. We need the atonement to atone for our personal choices to disobey God's moral law (Isa. 52:3; 53:6).

* All men are under moral obligation in God's Moral Government, under obligation to the moral law of love (Matt. 22:35-40; Mk. 12:30-31; Lk. 10:27; Rom. 13:8; 13:10; Gal 5:14; Jas. 2:8).

* No sinner can be justified by obeying the law, since present obedience cannot atone for past disobedience (Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:20; 3:28; Gal. 2:16).

* And though Christians are not under the condemnation of the law (Rom. 6:14-15; 8:1; 1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 5:18), nor under obligation to the Jewish laws (Acts 21:25; Gal. 4:21), Christians are under obligation to obey God Himself (Acts 3:19; 5:29; 2 Pet. 3:11; 2 Tim. 2:19) by choosing to love (Rom. 13:8).

* Christians are obligated to walk as Christ walked (Jn. 13:15; 2 Tim. 2:19; 1 Jn. 2:6) and thereby fulfill the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2).

* The law of God is written upon the very heart of the Christian (Ps. 40:8; 51:7; 119:34; Prov. 3:1; Isa. 51:7; Jer. 31:33; Rom. 6:17; Heb. 10:15-16), so that the Kingdom is reigning on the inside of them (Lk. 17:21).

* Christians live a crucified life instead of a self-indulgent life (Matt. 16:24; Lk. 9:23; 1 Cor. 15:31; Gal. 5:24), subjecting their bodies (1 Cor. 9:27) and mortifying the deeds of their flesh (Rom. 8:13), so that they don't walk after the flesh (2 Cor 10:2; 5:15; Gal. 5:16).

* Those who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit have no condemnation (Rom. 8:1).

* Christians are not sinners (Ps. 66:18; Jn. 9:31; 1 Pet. 4:18; 1 Jn. 3:22) unless they backslide (Jas. 5:19-20).

* All Christians are saints (Acts 9:13; 9:32; 9:41; 26:10; Rom. 1:7; 8:27; 12:13; 15:25-16; 15:26; 15:31; 16:2; 16:15; 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:1-2; 14:33; 16:1; 16:15; 2 Cor. 1:1; 8:4; 9:1; 9:12; 13:13; Eph. 1:1; 1:15; 1:18; 2:19; 3:8; 3:18; 4:12; 5:3; 6:18; Php. 1:1; 4:22; Col. 1:2; 1:4; 1:12; 1:26; 1 Thes. 3:13; 2 Thes. 1:10; 1 Tim. 5:10; Phm. 1:5; 1:7; Heb. 6:10; 13:24; Jud. 1:3; 1:14; Rev. 5:8; 8:3-4; 11:18; 13:7; 13:10; 14:12; 15:3; 16:6; 17:6; 18:24; 19:8; 20:9).

* And as saints Christians are sanctified (Acts 20:32; 26:18; 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11; Heb. 2:11; 10:10; 10:14; Gal. 5:24; Jud. 1:1), that is, Christians are free from deliberate rebellion or sin (Jn. 8:34-36; Rom. 6:6; 6:18; 6:22; 8:2; Gal. 5:24; Eph. 6:6).

* Christians keep God's commandments (1 Jn. 2:3; 3:22; 5:2-3).

* The righteous care about the well-being of others, but the wicked disregard the value of other people by sinning (Prov. 29:7; Jn. 13:35; 2 Thes. 3:13).

* True obedience to God is caring about others (Matt. 12:11-12; Lk. 6:9).

* Love is a committal of the will to promote the highest well-being of all (Jn. 15:13; 2 Thes. 3:13)

* Love does not promote the ill-being or harm of his neighbor (Rom. 13:10)

* Love is absolutely unselfish (1 Cor. 13:5), and so love is the fulfillment of the law (Rom. 13:8; Gal. 5:14; Jas. 2:8)

* The one who loves God will keep God's commandments (Jn. 14:15; 1 Jn. 5:2; 5:3; 2 Jn. 1:6).