



fledge: to grow the plumage necessary for flight



Lost Words: Sin Twisting Life

In the previous *fledge*, we looked at the different groups of people and how they see God's commands. (You may need to review those two groups to understand the rest of this *fledge*. [Go here.](#))

I believe many today want to follow God with all their heart, but some commands are harder than others, not because they are difficult to do, but because sometimes they don't make sense. So **we want to understand** 'why' for certain commands. We want to know what 'sin' is so we can better fall into God's purposes.

Now let's step into what sin actually is so we have a better idea of why God wants us to avoid it.

The New Testament is originally written in Greek. And "sin" defined in Greek means "**missing the mark.**" I comment on this in my book, *Living with Questions*.



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Sin is a word that literally means "to miss the mark." And when the chocolate cake you ordered "misses the mark" then you return it to the chef.

If your mechanic "misses the mark" when he's repairing your car, then you don't pay him.

If your doctor "misses the mark" when prescribing your medication, then you require her to try again and get it right.

If your computer "misses the mark" by incessantly crashing, then you order new parts for it.

Nobody wants things that miss the mark and don't work the way they should. We don't want broken things.

Yet this is the very thing that has happened to us. We "miss the mark" of being whole humans all the time.

After reading the Bible over and over again, a man from the 400's saw a meaning to sin woven through the Scriptures. Every time he saw sin, he saw something about what it was. It wasn't just about breaking a law. It was about twisting something real and good in the world. It was about **twisting love and twisting life.**

That man's name was Augustine. And the tapestry of sin he saw in Scripture was "a privation of the good." What did he mean?

He meant that sin was a twisting of the good. It was a parasite on the good. **It manipulated life. It scarred beauty. It bludgeoned truth. It was unoriginal.**

I get many questions on the road asking who created sin, as if sin can stand on its own two legs. If you are one of those, pay attention. Once you know what sin is, you'll have your own answer to your question.

Sin cannot exist without goodness. Look at the 10 Commandments. Why does God tell us not to break these laws? Group One would say, "Because he said so." Group Two would say, "Because the commands protect something good."

"Do not have other gods before Me." Why? *Because it twists **worship**, by following a god who isn't there.*

"Do not steal." Why? *Because it twists **responsibility** of possessions.*



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"Do not murder." Why? *Because it twists **life**.*

"Do not commit adultery." Why? *Because it twists **marriage, commitment, and love**.*

"Do not lie to your neighbor." Why? *Because it twists **truth**.*

"Do not covet." Why? *Because when you focus on what your friend's have rather than what God has given you, then you twist your **time, your attention, your freedom, and your gratitude**.*

Do you see a consistent pattern here? Sin twists goodness and life and love. Sin cannot create anything. It only bends what is already there.

Now here's the great concern about sin. It isn't merely an activity we do. It is something that burrows into our souls. **Sin not only twists our behavior, but it twists us.** If we make a habit of gossiping, we will become a gossip. If we make a habit of flirting, we actually become a flirt, unable to stop. If we make a habit of acting



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out sexually, we may become a whore. If we make a habit of drugs, we may become an addict.

See the danger now? Sin isn't just an activity. It is a bent soul.

In Oscar Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray*, this is exactly what happens. The sin he plays with eventually twists his soul. And his portrait becomes ugly. The interesting thing is, for most of us, we can hide our souls until sin has completely ruined us. **One day we won't be able to hide.** Then people will ask, "What happened?"

Deep in our souls we are sinners. This isn't name-calling. It's a description. We sin easily. We try to avoid it. We feel bad when we do it. We wish we didn't do it. Yet the urge is strong and present within us.

This is where our Deliverer steps in. Romans 5:8... when we were sinners, Christ died for us. Did he die for us to forgive us of twisted behaviors? Yes. But he died for something more. **He died for our twisted souls.**

I have only found one person who can straighten out the depth of our souls. Only one can unbend us ba



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to goodness. And that's Jesus. **He let his life be twisted into death so that our death can be untwisted back into life.**

For those who follow after Him, he is undoing death, smoothing out our wrinkles from the inside out, and pulling the shades to let light into our souls.

As you can see, God isn't an insecure dictator inflicting pain on people who ignore what he says. Rather, **he made us a certain way and wants us to grow back into that.** He wants us appropriately human. He will never ask us to do anything that is contrary to the way we are made.

So if you are unsure if something sinful or not, ask yourself whether it is something that twists you or twists what is good. Ask if it is bending your intimacy with Jesus or warping healthy relationships with friends. Ask if it is something that **frees** you to enjoy loving God and your friends more. Ask whether it makes you self-absorbed or if it opens you up to others.



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Now go, and be honest and courageous about goodness and God.

For more on these ideas, check out the chapter "**Am I Good Enough?**" in my book, *Living with Questions*.

Got questions/comments?

Feel free to **email us**.

or

Join us for Ask! LIVE Wednesdays 6-9PM pacific

Bring any question or puzzling life situation

