

## Man's Biggest Problem

**Intro:** Man's biggest problem not **without** (environment, poverty, drugs, violence, disease, etc.) but **within** - **SIN**. It is and always has been the root of man's discontent.

### 1. Diagnosing the Problem

A. What is sin?

1. "Sin is **lawlessness**" - (1 Jn 3:4). It is violation of God's sovereign law.
2. Sin is rebellion; it is the result of temptations which play upon our desires and self-will - Jas 1:12-16.
3. But the true nature of sin is seen in what it *produces*:

B. Sin is a disease of the soul. It affects man from the inside out and pollutes life:

1. Physical: Sexual sins - STDs, HIV, deviant abuse. Alcoholism; drug abuse. Hatred, jealousy, greed leading to violence/murder. Hunger/starvation - usually linked to despotism, political treachery. (**Illus:** Pulitzer-prize photo of vulture, starving baby. Photographer later committed suicide.)
2. Emotional: Rumors ruin (Richard Jewell); abandoned children/spouses are rejected, betrayed, insecure; guilt leads to self-abhorrence, depression, suicide.
3. Spiritual: Rebellion toward God makes us His enemy - Is 59:1-2; Rom 8:7; Col 1:21 ("*once alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works ...*"). Sin is selfishness, moral pollution, spiritual suicide.

C. Sin is **powerful**: It has *universally* infected every human being - Rom 3:9-12, 23. The unrelenting cry against AIDS, cigarettes has secured funding, research, judicial action to remedy the problem. But *no such outcry* against sin.

### 2. Taking Responsibility for the Problem

A. Avoiding the issue:

1. Denial - **Illus:** Jewish friend: "You Christians are always talking about sin." Minimize or eliminate the concept of sin: vocabulary: words eliminated (sin, fornication, etc. ); euphemisms disguise (cereal box: "crystallized evaporated cane juice"; stigma suppresses (homophobia; racist, etc.). Doesn't change sin.
2. Shift blame - Started with first sinners - Gen 3:2-4, 6, 11-13. It continues to this

day. No one is responsible for anything.

3. Rationalize - “We **love** each other!”; “I didn’t hurt anybody”; “Everyone else is doing it” (David Miles); “I need it worse than they do”; “my ancestors were oppressed”; “man is genetically programmed against monogamy.”

B. Denial leaves the problem unsolved.

1. God urges men to acknowledge sin and its consequences and accept responsibility for it.
2. We must understand Christ’s death **personally**: If we were the *only* human to ever commit sin, then Jesus would still have to be sacrificed. His sacrifice was for **me personally** (Gal 2:20).
3. **Illus**: Man in light plane crashes to avoid collision with loaded jetliner. He died for *each individual*, not merely a faceless, nameless group.

C. Ps 51:1-4, 14-17. David first denied his heinous crime, then confessed and repented. **This will not happen until we acknowledge God, His sovereign laws and our violation of them.** This is the beginning of healing, restoration.

### 3. The “Good News”

- A. Though we make ourselves God’s enemies, He desires reconciliation and fellowship - Rom 5:6-11.
- B. As horrible as sin is, God has made provision for its complete removal - see Paul (1 Tim 1:16).
- C. The decision is entirely in YOUR hands!