

WHAT IS SIN ?

A. The definition

Sin is an evil action that turns us away from God.

B. What is the norm of good and evil?

The norm is obviously God, the essence of God, the wisdom of God. It is in relation to this wisdom of God that one distinguishes himself, that one does an action which is not according to the wisdom of God. Sin is therefore addressed to God.

“Whosoever commits sin commits also iniquity; and sin is iniquity” (1 John, 3,4). It offends God out of disobedience, ingratitude, infidelity and injustice.

C. Is sin a defect to resist temptation?

Temptation is clearly not sin. One can be very tempted and not sin. Sin is an action and temptation is a solicitation to do evil. Therefore, sin is not temptation at all and temptation is not sin at all.

However, if one plays with temptation, if one takes it lightly, neglecting the means to resist it, then he puts himself in the proximate occasion to sin. And beware, the proximate occasion of sin and sin have the same gravity.

In other words, the proximate opportunity of sin is sin.

D. What is the difference between sin and vice?

It is significant. Moreover, in this regard, what are called the seven deadly sins in truth are not sins at all but vices.

The seven vices are pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath, and sloth. They are opposed to the seven virtues, which are faith, hope, and charity, prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude.

Vices are habits or *habitus*, they are dispositions to commit sin.

Sin is an action which is performed in precise circumstances of time, place and conditions.

Vice is a disposition to do evil, as the dispositions to do good, which are called virtues. A vice is therefore a bad inclination to sin.

E. What is the distinction between venial sin and mortal sin?

Venial sin and mortal sin have only the name in common. These are two different things.

St. Thomas Aquinas explains that they simply have the common reason of being defective with respect to the wisdom of God and being both sins.

Mortal sin or grievous sin turns us away from our end, our vocation, which of course is God. Instead of continuing in God's way, one takes another path that turns him away from God's path, which will cause him to lose God eternally if he does not convert.

Venial sin is at the level of means. The great difference is that in venial sin one does not take the right way to reach his end but he keeps this ordination, this ordinance, this journey towards his end. He goes to the right he goes to the left he lengthens his journey, he loses time and graces given by God, but does not lose this orientation to his end who is God.

F. What conditions must be met for an action to be considered a sin?

The three conditions of all sin are:

- a matter (grave for mortal sin).
- an advertence, I know what I do.
- a will, I want it.

For both venial sin and mortal sin, these three conditions are there.

The great difference lies in the matter of sin. Sin is mortal when the matter is grievous, as it diverts man from his end.

G. Where is the difference between serious or grievous matter and light matter?

The killing of an innocent, for example, is a grievous sin, and gluttony is a venial sin, unless it comes to ruin health, or it is an injustice because you no longer feed your children.

H. What are the consequences of sin?

Any sin has three consequences, it is crucial to know this to understand the need for reparation and the use of indulgences.

- The first effect is the fault: you are guilty. Who has done evil knowingly and willfully is guilty. He is not only responsible, but also guilty before God. It is the guilt.

- The second effect of sin is the punishment. Sin has disturbed justice. All sin is a lack of justice at least in relation to God, and justice must be restored, it is the work of penalty.

- And finally, any sin feeds the *fomes peccati*, the inclination to sin. Every time one commits a sin, he takes from the first action and very quickly, says Saint Thomas, bad habits. It is a disastrous consequence of sin.

Virtue is very easy for the one who has never sinned and is always in innocence. Virtue is very difficult for he who goes from sin to sin. *“Who has drunk, will drink.”*

The guilt is entirely remitted by confession, or by perfect charity, it is no more.

However, once the state of grace is recovered, satisfaction must be always fulfilled for the venial sins or the forgiven mortal sins that have seriously wronged God’s righteousness. And that is what indulgences allow; indulgences allow the remission of the temporal punishment due to sin.

I. What precisely shall we do to fight this bad habit of sinning?

Once someone has taken bad habits of sin, it is necessary to ask for help, by prayer and penance first. After making a mountain of sin, let us make a mountain of prayer and penance.

This is often not enough, which is why the sinner should not hesitate to have recourse to a good and regular confessor, a spiritual director and frequent sacraments.

J. Act of contrition:

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven, and the pains of hell; but most of all because they offend Thee, O my God, Who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.