

I had to laugh as I did a little research about sin. The word “Sin” is so old and controversial. In days, gone by, we kind of knew what sin was. Sin was bad, and sin was evil. Santa knew your sin and you received coal as a gift (Who did) when you were bad. The term “Wait till your father got home” was common at my home (And I was a good kid too). Preachers talked about sin and we all rolled our eyes because sin was part of us.

Sin has a very different look depending on who you are. I was flicking channels one night in Canada and I found an Italian soap opera. Well I didn’t understand a word but what the heck. What I didn’t expect is soft suggestive porn on my TV. This show was hot and I do mean steamy. The weird part was the intro. It was a song by a Christian artist in Spanish. That I didn’t understand. I thought porn was a sin?

What I have come to know is that naked bodies are the norm, in Spain, on TV and in commercials. So if I watch that show here in Canada its sin but if I’m in Spain its ok. Muslims say if you don’t believe in Allah it’s a sin and Christians say the same thing about Jehovah. Who is right? Sin seems to be about personal choice or what your culture accepts. I wonder if sin exists anymore. What was sin in the past is not considered sin today.

I looked up sin on the internet and noticed the Catholic religion has it covered. They have levels or categories of sin. There is the unpardonable sin and what they call venial sins. Within those are three traits that categorize where the sin falls. These traits are formed into asking three questions about the sin before it is categorized as unpardonable or venial.

The first is called a “Serious matter.” Does your action seem serious? Do those around you condemn such sins? I suppose our laws might apply. There are serious sins like murder or rape. On the other hand the Joker in the latest Batman movie said “Why so serious”? What is really a serious matter? Where do we draw the line? In each country it is different. I went looking for

“Legal” murder in other countries and didn’t find any that allowed it, but murder is defined differently within many of them. Stoning in Canada might be murder but in Afghanistan it might not. Abortion is murder in the eyes of some but not all people. Again what is defined as a serious matter? It might just come down to the laws we have in each culture or our personal view.

The second trait is “Did you reflect on the act before you did it.” We have several levels of murder in my country of Canada. There is pre-meditated, man-slaughter, and many others like those with a gun. Each one carries a different sentence in jail. The degree is based on the reflection. Did you plan to do it?

I was with a friend who liked to light fires. He was burned pretty badly once after setting one of those big bon fires. I was told to not go near him because I could get in trouble. I did not listen and we set a field on fire that caused a lot of trouble. I reflected on my parents warning and did it anyways. That seemed serious and pre-meditated. Does that mean that if I did the last trait I go to hell for my sin?

Lastly, we have free will. Basically I chose to light the fire. If someone had died I might have gone to jail as a boy. I have said through this whole book that we have free will to love or kill. God wants our free love. That price gives people the free will to rape murder, and set a fire. It’s not totally free because in the end God will judge our sins by his standard. Still, we are free to choose.

John 8:36 says “**So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.**” Conversely it says in Ecclesiastics 12:14 “**For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.**” There seems to be a tug-o-war between free will and judgement. We condemn ourselves for the wrongs we commit. There are people who will condemn us for the things we do. We can run with a crowd that accepts certain sins and all is

forgiven. Who is right and who is wrong? Is categorizing sin worth something, or is sin just part of life?

Jesus is the Son of God. If we have him in our lives we are considered free (I'll get to that later). My thought is that if we were free then why are bad things still called sin? It's an honest question but the answer is slightly complicated. We are free to choose so choose wisely. All three traits work together to decide if you choose wisely. If I want to kill a person then: is that serious, is it reflected on, and is it my choice to pull the trigger. Nobody makes us do anything. Still, according to the Catholic view on the unpardonable sin, willfully choosing to sin is a big no and could be deemed unpardonable.

That brings me to Venial sins. We all have heard the term "Nobody is perfect." Ok except me that is (Just kidding). Like I said I was a really good kid. Kidding aside, we all are sinners. Isaiah 64:6 says "**All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.**" That seems to be a bit harsh don't you think? Basically the Bible says we all sin. Venial sins are those that are less serious (And there are plenty).

What the Catholics have done is rate sin. It's a sin to not worship God and it's a sin to not take communion. Those could be considered Catholic rules, but is it sin? In 1 Samuel 16 it says God looks inward at the heart while people look at appearance. Our actions weigh heavier to God because it begins in the heart. I can do something nice for someone but inside I want recognition. A person could make a mistake but had the best intentions. Sin seems judged on this earth by perception rather than who we are inside.

I don't like people saying that we are filthy rags. I have felt in church that Christians have made it appear that God hates us by quoting Isaiah 64:6 in a non-contextual way. It makes it

appear that God is sickened by our presence. This verse has been used for that purpose so many times. I have often left church feeling so dirty and shameful. That is not our God. How can he love us if we gross him out? How could he kill his own Son if he hates us? That would make God crazy wouldn't it?

In Gods heart and mind, we cannot do good things to make sin all better. He knows our heart and mind, and (By nature) we always reflect on our actions either before or after we do them. No one is perfect. We do something nice but we love praise. We do wrong and try and lie about it. Our nature is filthy rags to God. He cannot get why we do what we do and it makes him feel gross. Look at it this way. Have you ever had an uncomfortable feeling about what you did? It makes you sick. That is the filthy rags to God.

Sin is what we do that hurts others. Someone said it is sin against God. That could be but in reality it is against anyone and even us. We drink ourselves to death. I have a friend who refuses to go to work much. Every day I see him walking to the beer store to get his dozen (gee that is a lot). He knows what booze is doing to him and yet every day he chooses to drink. I have read about people deciding to do one more murder, rape, or bank heist. It's that last one where they got caught. They usually plead that the devil made them do it. In fact our free will says "We did it." In every country we have one thing at-least in common. We have free will to love or hate. Which one hurts others?

So often many non-religious people say religion is bad for us. We would be better off without it. Is Russia safer with no religion? Is North Korea safe? People oppress other people in those countries. Which sin is better? All sin comes down to crimes against someone, and that does include us. I have been caught in a lie and been grounded for it. My freedom was curtailed by my choice to lie. People go to jail for their crimes. Religion is not bad but people make it bad.

So what the hell is Venial sin? I just wanted to say that. Venial sins are those we do because we were just sinners by nature. We strike out at someone because we were mad. We lie because we get embarrassed. These types of sins are in a list that is 7 pages long on the Catholic site. Basically we are screwed when it comes to sinning. This list includes not going to church and watching porn. Incidentally they say sins like the venial ones don't keep you from heaven but they do limit the love of God according to this list. That is just plain false. God's love for us is not based on our actions or sins. What part of unconditional love do we not understand?

What does all this sin talk have to do with a reset in life? That is a good question and I'm glad you asked. There is a tee shirt that has a dog pooping on it. The caption says "Sit happens." I wanted you to see that "Sin happens." We are loved by God in spite of our sin. Some people hate us because of our sin but God is not one of those. A reset lets us see sin through God's eyes rather than ours or the society we live in. Sin is all over the map. What is good or bad? A reset just lets us breathe and evaluate ourselves.

On the first day I was separated from my ex-wife my dad nicely told me that maybe I deserved it. That is not nice but he could have been right. On the first day you want to blame anyone but yourself. She did it and not me. However, if we take the time to reflect then we might see our own sin. In the ensuing months I realized that I played a role in the divorce. It's not good to believe you are sinless in the life you have been dealt.

I have two friends who were treated badly by their ex-wives. These women have given both of my friend's good reasons to blame them for divorce. Adultery is at first private but it always becomes a public sin. Both men were shamed and humiliated by their cheating wives. It was so easy to throw stones on those women so it seemed. In time the sins of these men became

exposed in their other relationships. Hatred can change your heart if you don't reflect on your own responsibility. One guy hid in his parent's basement for 8 years. Another is divorced twice because he thought he was the victim. A reset can bring freedom knowing we all make mistakes.

In John 8, Jesus comes upon a woman who is going to be stoned to death for her sin. He is teaching in the courtyard of the synagogue. The religious leaders bring her in to trap Jesus in false teaching. Jesus proceeds to write something in the dirt. We never see what that he wrote, but one by one, each of the men turn away from the gathering until the woman is left there standing alone before Jesus. Her sin was condemnable to all these religious leaders until their sin was exposed in public. What did Jesus write? We don't know but it shook those standing there pretty bad. Each one left without condemning the woman before them. They had no stone to throw.

I accidentally let the water in my toilet run off and on for a month. I finally fixed it but there was no rush. When I got my water bill there was a rush. My laziness hurt us financially. My daughter can be lazy. She locked my keys in the car and I was late for work. She did not do it on purpose (so I think) but her laziness cost me. A reflective reset on our lives can expose things we do to others that hurt them. It might be far worse to be uncaring, thoughtless, and lazy; rather than an adulteress. Is it possible murder and rape come from those simple sins? We don't realize how much our sin affects others.

This brings me to the "White lie." During the 2008 presidential election my son said he would vote for Barack Obama. I asked him why and he said "Because he is black." I said that is not a very good reason because he might make a bad president regardless of his color. He countered "I trust him because of his color more than the white guy." Be careful when it comes

to honesty. It has no racial and genital boundaries, and that goes for the White lie too. All lies are dangerous. Just because something looks good does not mean it is good.

In the urban dictionary a White lie is “A lie with good intentions.” For example I might tell someone they look nice just to make them feel good, yet they really look like hell. In the Bible Rahab the Prostitute lied to help Gods spies escape. Did God sanction the lie? No, but it served the greater good against evil. White lies are in the gray area of sin (Did I just say that). It seems strange but honesty is not always the best policy. The “Why” is more important than the action sometimes.

In a perfect world we would not lie. I find it interesting that right in the third chapter of the Bible we have our first lie. Everyone thinks Eve sinned first by eating the fruit but Adam’s lie to God might be worse. They both ate of the forbidden fruit. Adam and Eve then chose to hide from God because they knew it was serious, reflected on, and of free will. Adam told God that they hid because they were afraid. That was a lie. They hid because they disobeyed God by eating the fruit. It’s interesting that they were naked but after eating the fruit they covered up. They both amusingly tried to cover up their naked sin in accusations and lies, probably with fruit stain on their lips.

People always say “What’s the big deal about eating that fruit.” That is not a sin compared to murder. Maybe, but that was the only law God had given them. As I write this I realized they had only one law and they couldn’t even keep that one. In Canada the criminal code it has 841 sections. Try and not break the law with thousands of offences. We tell our kids when they are bad “It’s just because.” Behind the scene we say that to them “Because we know better.” We see what they don’t. God knew what opening our eyes to good and evil would do. It created murder, rape, pedophiles, and holocausts. The fruit seemed so small and innocent at the time.

Within our freedom is the ability to choose. We love to do what we want. Just like the fruit in the Garden of Eden, our actions seem so small and innocent. What is the harm if it is good for me? There is a song that says “If it makes you happy it can’t be that bad.” We can tell a white lie to get out of a smaller one. Now you have two lies that seem bigger all of a sudden. We rob a store and by accident someone got killed. It was not planned but “Sin happens.” In a perfect world Adam and Eve would still be in the garden. Some knuckle heads think that was Gods will for us to be in the garden forever. They believe that because God does not make sin. True, but he made creatures that were not God.

I think a good analogy is in electronics. We make electronics because it makes life easier. In reality electric stuff is smarter and faster than humans. Yes, but have you ever talked to your phone or car? Those devices seem downright stupid at times. We are superior, as the maker, in many ways. It is the same with God. He made good but imperfect machines. Our bodies die and our body’s sin. Under Gods wing we can appear sinless but even in that perfect situation we still sin. A lion is beautiful but a lion will kill you. Things are not all what they seem to be.

A reset gives us the ability to see things from Gods point of view. In Christian circles we say “If it’s by Gods will.” His will is basically anything that glorifies God. What God made in Genesis 1 was said to be good. The actions of God know better than us. He sees outside of time. Gods will works around our sins to make things right. The boy Joseph in the book of Genesis had been wronged by his brothers. He says in Gen 50: 20 **“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”** That is a good example of the will of God. God went around the brother’s sin to make it right.



The tale of two natures is who we are: the good and the bad. We choose to do good or evil; to love or kill. Paul says in Romans 7:15 **“I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.”** Every person that is born has one nature: self-preservation: me, myself, and I. We would kill for food and water if pressed, I believe that. I love the Walking Dead TV show. It’s not the zombies but the humanity. Ordinary people put into impossible odds. They have changed to survive, yes survive.

We sin to survive and to keep our perception about ourselves intact. We sin to eat. We sin to have justice served. Who knows the truth about sin? God does because for reasons we don’t understand and can’t comprehend God does not sin. He exists to keep his goodness in front of evil. He does everything for his creations benefit. There are those who don’t believe that but seriously why keep us around if all we do is lie, cheat, and kill. It’s because God can see that there is good in us. He is the good in us. We were good in the beginning before we choose to sin.

Years ago I hated God. I wanted nothing to do with him or his nutty Christians. Life sucked and religion sucked too. I wanted better but thought hell was on earth. It just might be by the way. However, what I thought was fun and good was also degrading and harmful to others and myself. For instance (keep this a secret) I got very high on Cheech and Chong Marijuana type of cigars one night. In our stoned state we decided to hit golf balls at the houses on the other side of the park. Lucky for us we ran out of balls before we broke a window. I just didn’t care what happened because “Sin happens.”

When I met God in my Dad’s basement, after my divorce, things changed. God let me see my sin through his eyes. I had hurt others for my fun. I hurt myself by being lazy. It was time to change all that. God began a reset in me. I used to be Mr. Swearing. Within hours of realizing

God existed I did not care to swear anymore. My heart realized that swearing did not make you a cool person. I dropped the porn because it hurt the women in the films by supporting it. I chose not to drink or smoke because it caused me harm. I eventually dropped all 814 of my Cd's because they dishonored God.

This seems rash but let me explain. Yes, for the most part I wiped out everything in my life. I have known people who even dropped all their family. I never went that far. People thought I was crazy because of all the change. Here is the kicker. Did God need me to be clean of all my sin? I say no, but I do say, I needed to reset. I needed to be simplified to just have God and me for a time. It gave God time to let me see things through his eyes. The reset is not to get rid of but to see the world and my life clearly. Could I have put away some of the things I tossed out, and kept them in a box? Yeah, I guess I could have, but can an alcoholic keep a liquor cabinet? In most cases the answer is "No" we need a clean slate.

I talked about sin because you needed to see sin through fresh eyes. I wish I could see sin through Gods eyes. I sort of do but not really. People ask if Jesus could have sinned. He was tempted in Matthew 4 in the wilderness. Is it possible we could have lost Jesus to temptation in that wilderness? People are born with one nature: we are prone to sin just like Adam and Eve. The second nature is to have the nature of a Holy God within us. That nature arrives within us when we chose to believe in Jesus. The sin nature is foreign territory for Jesus on earth and in the wilderness.

Of two natures Jesus only has his Holy nature of God; the sin one was missing in him. The will to sin was not there. So why tempt him then? A reset takes you out into a desert place where everything is bare bones. I could have kept many things from my past, but in hindsight

that might not have been the best thing for me. Exposing sinless Jesus to temptation was the best thing for us. Jesus helps us contend with our other nature because he contended with it in the wilderness and won.

There is a story told by J Vernon McGee about when he was a boy. They lived in a small Texas town and during one rather large rainy season the wooden train bridge washed away. The government came and built a steel bridge in its place. One day the people heard two train engines blowing their horns on the bridge. All 29 of the town's folk came running to see what the matter is. J Vernon explains that an overly extrovert boy (Probably himself) boldly asked the conductor what's wrong with the bridge. The conductor gruffly said "Nothing." The boy asked again if the bridge might fall down again. The man replied "No, we blow the horns to prove to you it is safe and strong." That is just what Jesus did in the wilderness. His temptation proved he is safe and strong in adversity. A reset allowed me to see that I don't have to behave and think the way I did in the past. We all need that type of insight.

To have Jesus is to go from one nature to two. The first nature will fall. It always has and always will. The second is strong and safe. We still love our first nature but the difference is that we can choose to run to the second nature. Within Jesus, we can choose differently. Christians don't always make the right choices but we can fix mistakes with compassion and love. I did not care about my fate until mine was crushed in divorce. My fate has improved under Gods care. I have loved and been loved better since I became a Christian. Two natures are better than one.

To reset is to see that Gods ways are good ways. In many instances Gods ways are unattainable. Why would he set a bar so high that we cannot reach it? It's for a good reason. It is to keep us grounded. Like I said earlier, my two friends felt they were victims in divorce and

never looked into their own hearts. The whole sin equation comes down to the word “Repent.” That word means to “Go the other way.” In church circles we ask non-Christians (and Christians) to repent. That seems so old and archaic. People don’t use those words anymore. Sin is everywhere in normal life now. A reset helps us go another way in this tough world we live in.

It is true, in this world, sin is normal, but life is not about loving or avoiding sin. It’s about navigating through what is right and what is wrong. For instance smoking is soothing to some. There is nothing like a good smoke while going for a walk at night. The health nuts say smoking is bad but who cares what they say. It’s my health dumb ass. Through Gods eyes I see that those same dumb asses care about my life. God challenges me to care about my own too. It’s not the smoking half as much as the caring that’s important.

Repent really means to see the other possibilities. We are truly a stubborn race. Humans love to be stuck in their ways. There are Muslims that hate Jews because their culture has always hated Jews. There are white people that hate black skinned people because it’s tradition. Repent means to meet the other side and break down the walls in love rather than hate. I have recently met a Muslim man who is quite nice. I think some unclear walls might come down in time through our friendship rather than hatred.

I wish I had kept some of my stuff that I threw out when I was a non-Christian. Some things I am glad I got rid of. I feel I needed to reset my life. I was told once that my old marriage died on Dec 18, 1998 (or before). If we got back together it would have to be a new marriage because the old one did not work. It’s the same with my life before 33. The old ways failed and new ways were needed.

Jesus tells an interesting story in Matthew 9 starting at verse 16 **“No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse. 17 Neither do people pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.”**

We need to reset or start again. We are old wine that needs new leather. Earlier in that chapter Jesus talks about repentance. There is that word again. The old won't do, it's time for something different and new. A rotary dial phone is fun, I miss them. A new cell phone and the internet are better yet. If I am sick it is still me. A healthy self is better yet, but I am still me either way. We are sick; sick with sin; and sick of sin. A reset takes the old us and pours it into a new nature to make it stronger. In the end we pour new insights of the world around us through a new Christ filled nature.

Throughout this book I have tried painfully to guide you towards your faults. I have tried to show you the faults of others. People are sinners. Nobody is perfect or cured of sin. Many types of people have done you harm. Some are in your family, and they have done you harm. There are others hiding in a church that have harmed you too. We are also our own worst enemy. All that means is that you must do your life, family, or church differently. It's the same answer like in the old wine skins parable. Change is needed to accept new wine. Change is needed to accept a new and improved you.

A reset gives sin perspective like I said. It's time to let it all go. That does not mean you drop all the people in your life. It most certainly means you might drop some of them. It took a year to drop all my secular music. One day I realized I did not listen that stuff anymore. In my heart

though, the painful memories of a past life kept me away from that music too. I needed perspective on a great many things before that music could come back to me.

I chose to get rid of it all. I am slightly glad I did. It was a slow reset to clean my house of pain and regret. Recently I have begun to buy back some of the memories. I own music now that I used to love. A Christian radio station I love started playing secular music. I phoned them and complained because I like Christian music now instead of the secular. The lady said that they play both now because they are beyond rejecting the songs of the past. I really did not like her answer, but I think it was more the way she said it. It came across like "She had arrived." Instead she could have told me she plays secular through Gods eyes.

Like I said my reset was to see it through Gods eyes. I can listen to Black Sabbath and know in my spirit and mind whether or not it is worth having in my life. I can reject AC/DC and keep Super tramp. I like Taylor Swift but I am leery of Florida Georgia Line. It's what I view in a Godly way through my eyes and ears. It's not me saying "I'm justified" by what I think is right. Who am I to say what is godly. It's what the reset did for me. Maybe I gained a little discernment.

I Judge less these days. I see people as I was and I am. I know a man who says he willfully does not sin anymore. That is one lost nut. I am serious about that (nice judgment call Pat). I look at God this way. He is on a throne in heaven. Jesus says he sits at his right hand. We are somewhere below that. They say in Bible terms that we come to the mercy seat. We come to the foot of the cross. In any circumstance we are not on the same footing or plane as God or his Son. We are not a judge because were not on the throne. We are still sinners too.

I know how to sin just as much as I know who sins. I tend to think we all sin together rather than sitting there rating sin. We do a lot of rating sin. Surely rape is worse than my lie.

Don't call me Shirley (I had to say that too). In Gods eyes he does not rate sin. We either do or don't. One thing I know is that I am not God. I am not to judge.

I think judging and rating sin has bombed our belief. We use the word "Hypocrite" to stay away from church and God. We have good reasons but those hypocrites have good reasons to avoid you too. It's like Yertle the turtle in Dr. Seuss books. One king turtle wanted to be on top in the mud puddle. The weird part is that "On top" meant "King of the mud puddle." Biggest sinner or littlest sinner: who wins? To reset is to gain perspective. The boy in the parable of the lost son in Luke 15 is interesting. The boy leaves his home to conquer the world. In the end he lost it all. He comes home because he now sees what he could not see before. That boy reset. I love having some old music back but I needed a reset first.

In the last four chapters I want to give you some insight into what a reset looks like. I have done it one way. I never ended up in the pig pen like the lost son. I did however need to get a life. I felt worthless but these days' things are better. A reset did bring one new trait in me. I am now internally positive. I am not one of those nuts who think all is well all the time. Yet, inside I tend to know things work out for those who love God. We are sinners and sin sucks. Through positive thinking and love we have a chance in this world. I guess it comes down to hope. One way or the other I hope love will find a way to overcome my sin.