

WHAT IS SIN? DO DIFFERENT SINS NEED DIFFERENT SACRIFICES?

The Catholic Blog - Helping people find answers to the most common questions about Catholicism with answers from the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Bible.

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“Do different sins need different sacrifices?” - Important Passages of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* to Consider:

- **“The distinction between mortal and venial sin, already evident in Scripture, became part of the tradition of the Church. It is corroborated by human experience” (CCC 1854)**
- **“Mortal sin destroys charity in the heart of man by a grave violation of God’s law; it turns man away from God, who is his ultimate end and his beatitude by preferring and inferior good to him” (CCC 1855)**
- **“Venial sin allows charity to subsist, even though it offends and wounds it” (CCC 1855)**
- **“Mortal sin...necessitates a new initiative of God’s mercy and a conversion of the heart which is normally accomplished within the sacrament of reconciliation” (CCC 1856)**
- **“Mortal sin is sin whose object is grave matter and which is also committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent” (CCC 1857)**
- **“Grave matter is specified by the Ten Commandments” (CCC 1858)**
- **“Grave sin deprives us of communion with God and therefore makes us incapable of eternal life” (CCC 1472)**
- **“every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified here on earth, or after death in a state called Purgatory” (CCC 1472)**
- **“this purification frees one from what is called the ‘temporal punishment’ of sin” (CCC 1472)**

“Do different sins need different sacrifices?” - Important Scriptures to Consider:

- 1 John 2:16–17 “For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. [17] And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.” (ESV)
- Galatians 2:16 “yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.” (ESV)
- Romans 3:19–20 “Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. [20] For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.” (ESV)
- Matthew 5:20 “For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” (ESV)
- Galatians 2:20–21 “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. [21] I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.” (ESV)

- Mark 10:26–27 “And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, “Then who can be saved?” [27] Jesus looked at them and said, “With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.” (ESV)
- James 2:10 “For **whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.**” (ESV)
- James 4:17 “So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.” (ESV)
- 1 John 1:9 “**If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**” (ESV)
- Hebrews 7:27 “He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since **he did this once for all when he offered up himself.**” (ESV)
- Romans 8:1–2 “**There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.** [2] For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.” (ESV)

“Do different sins need different sacrifices?” - Important Questions to Consider:

- **Is 1 John 2:16-17 distinguishing between different levels of sin or different ways in which we are tempted to sin?**
- Is tradition alone such a valid tool to determine whether someone goes to Heaven, Hell or Purgatory?
- Where does the Bible rank, compare, and evaluate the seriousness of sin?
- **What does James 2:10 mean? What does James 4:17 mean?**
- What is the purpose of the law according to Romans 3:19–20? Can fulfilling the law save us?
- Is it possible to fulfill the Ten Commandments? Who is the only one who has fulfilled the law?
- How can we obtain a righteousness that “exceeds the scribes and the Pharisees”?
- In the story of the rich young man (Mark 10:17-27), how did Jesus answer his question? Is it possible for man to save himself by fulfilling the Ten Commandments?
- **Does 1 John 1:9 say anything about different kinds of sins or different ways of obtaining forgiveness? How do we receive forgiveness? Who do we confess to according to this verse?**
- Where does the Bible speak about purgatory? If purgatory exists, why would it exist if we are already forgiven “from all unrighteousness”?
- **What does Romans 8:1-2 mean?**

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