

Sin

You know what? I actually haven't read my Bible in a while. I probably haven't touched that thing in 2 months. I know exactly where it is, though. It's still nicely tucked in that hard-shelled bible-sleeve thing, but it's sitting at pretty much the bottom of this transparent container where I put my miscellaneous stuff. There's, like, a lunch bag, and on top of it's this Amazon box and inside is my little \$95 laptop that I don't even use anymore (because it can't run games).

But that's really the problem here. Life isn't really happening if you're not doing your life's purpose. ***Eternal perspective***, remember? I'm not going to go on a spiel about how the Bible is life. Actually, I'm here to talk about what isn't. Today we're going to be talking about the really fun topic of **sin**. I'm also not going to tell you how to deal with your sin, because I can't do that for you. Sorry man.

I will, however, be very honest with you in saying that I never plan these devotions. My friend was all like, *"If you want we can find time to plan it together. I could send you some stuff,"* and I'm like *"lol ok sorry no."* Then he goes and asks me something like, *"Do you take sin seriously?"* and as one does, I laughed and jokingly said, *"hah who does?"* and he gave me this really judge-y look like *"dude did you really just say that?"* And his face was filled with so much concern.

And even though I probably didn't mean to mean it—because honestly who would—I'm pretty sure I actually meant it. Maybe I'm just a terrible human being. But what about you? **Do you take sin seriously? Look into each other's eyes. Do it.** Be *earnest*.

So if you're old-school Facepainting, sin is like the "dark" page, and simply put it's *"anything we do think or say that displeases God and it leaves our clean shirts dirty so use your washing machine."* If you're in Drama, the language varies but it's usually something like, *"It's anything that displeases God because God knew it would hurt us"* and then some of us do the *"WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT MY PAIN??? MY SUFFERING??>?"* rhetorical question thing near the end.

I started watching this show called The Magicians recently, and basically everyone who goes to this school called Brakebills knows magic. And so there's this one part where this conversation between this girl, Margo, and the main dude, Quentin (he's new to magic btw but has always believed it exists) and it's goes something like:

Margo: *There's this thing about you, Q. You actually believe in magic.*

Quentin: **half scoffs* So does everyone.*

Margo: *No. We all know it's real, but you believe in it. You just love it pure and simple.*

I'm pretty sure everyone in this room knows sin is *real*. You probably wouldn't be here if you didn't. But I'm challenging myself and you to ask the question: **but do you believe in it?**

I didn't think there was a difference because I thought naturally, if you knew something's real, I'm pretty sure you'd believe in it because you'd see no reason not to. But obviously, that's not the case, especially if you don't take sin seriously—or as seriously as it ought to be taken. Honestly, the reason sin isn't always on my mind is because most of the time, it doesn't get in other people's way, I'm always "in the process" of working them out, so there's not much reason to actually do something about it. I mean, how serious can you get about something that's pretty much in your DNA? Not even that, but in your

soul? *shake the shoulder of your closest neighbor for emphasis* Wowow so spooky, but it's there I guarantee it.

I once heard from a winter retreat at Skycroft that the reason why we sin is because we are terminally obsessed with ourselves. As in, we don't really think about other people because everyone's secretly saying "I'm actually the most important thing right now." And that's pretty true. Actually, hold on let me dig up something from my Bible. Ok. Uhhhh ok. So if you go to Luke 17:1-4, it'll say:

1 Jesus said to his disciples: "Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come. **2** It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin.

3 So watch yourselves. "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. **4** If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him."

This, guys, is what we need to get serious about, and it oughta be pretty doable. So from here we can pretty much deduce that sin is not at all a "solo experience". I mean, just look at the first instance of sin with Adam and Eve—it involved someone leading someone else into sin. The second instance involved someone refusing to take responsibility for the well-being of another. So straight up from scripture, sin is much more a people matter than it is "just you and only you" matter. In Luke 17, Jesus says it's interpersonal, and that's something we have to get into our heads. It's not just about "me"—it's about all of us.

Right off the bat, we can split this into 2 sections:

1.) Not causing your brothers to sin and 2.) What to do when your brother sins.

All in all, pretty feels good right? Forgiveness all arouuund. But a huge part of this is basically saying "don't be part of the problem." Read verse 1 again. Ok. Basically Jesus is saying we live in a fallen world so Sin is inevitable, but don't you be that one person who makes that other person sin, because woe to you, then. He literally says if it's better for you to just die than pass that stuff around.

But don't get it wrong. Techincally, we can't make another person sin any more than we can him or her do that which his pleasing to God. But we CAN influence people in either direction, and if we influence people toward sin, we're what we call in our hip Christian lingo a "stumbling block" which is....pretty bad. Better to drown, rememeber? Verse 2.

But just like sin, we're going under the assumption that stumbling blocks are inevitable, so there we get to verse 3 and 4. Watch out for the word "brother" because it's put there on purpose. It might imply 3 truths: that a.) Jesus was informing his disciples that they weren't responsible for rebuking the entire planet, but only those whom they know and closely identify (as opposed to the Pharisees who liked to condemn the people outside their circles) and b.) a sinning brother is still a brother and c.) the fact that we're responsible for each other means we need to be alert to the kinds of sin our brothers and sisters are likely to commit. That's scary stuff. That's what accountability groups are.

If we take sin seriously, then learning of sin in the life of a brother obligates him to act in a way that seeks to bring that brother to repentance. Soooo that's pretty much it haha. I'm not saying this is what it means to 100% get serious about sin, but I am saying that this gives us a way to get there.