



"So act that your principle of action might safely be made a law for the whole world."

—Immanuel Kant

27-Jul-18

Missing the Mark (Part Two)

In Part One, we saw that [sin](#) is not necessarily the breaking of a law—although that is often what we do when we sin—but in relation to the Greek word's meaning (*hamartia*, describing the missing of a target), our transgressions are failures to reach a goal or standard. During His ministry, our Savior [Jesus Christ](#) taught, not just the letter of the law as did the Old Testament, but the spirit of the law, which includes the law's broader intent and our attitudes toward [God](#) and our neighbors. So, for example, Jesus teaches that a person transgresses the commandment against murder when he unjustifiably unloads his anger on a brother ([Matthew 5:21-22](#)).

We also saw that [I John 3:15](#) reinforces this: "Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him." No scripture spells out the breadth of this commandment as clearly as John does here. Solomon writes in [Ecclesiastes 10:1](#), "Dead flies putrefy the perfumer's ointment, and cause it to give off a foul odor; so does a little folly to one respected for wisdom and honor." Putting this together with [I John 3:15](#), we could say that a Christian becomes a stench in God's nose when he or she hates or holds a grudge against a fellow Christian.

We will consider a few Bible verses that show us the mark or target for which we should be aiming, beginning with a nearby passage, [I John 3:17-18](#): "But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in Him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but

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in deed and in truth." James Moffatt's version renders this last phrase, "but into deeds, and make it real."

Notice that the apostle never mentions that we are supposed to wait until our brother asks for help. All we need to do is observe a brother undergoing hardship, and at that point, we should be weighing and planning how we can fulfill his or her need. If we do not live up to this description of a Christian's duty to his brethren, we have missed the mark and remain unprofitable servants (see [Matthew 25:30](#)).

Paul, in [II Timothy 2:24](#), provides another view of our target: "And the servant of the Lord must not be quarrelsome (fighting and contending). Instead, he must be kindly to everyone *and* mild-tempered [preserving the bond of [peace](#)]; he must be a skilled *and* suitable teacher, patient *and* forbearing and willing to suffer wrong" (*Amplified Bible*).

"Servant" (*Strong's* #1401) translates the Greek word *doulos*, "a slave, one who is in a permanent relationship of servitude to another, his will being altogether in the will of the other" (Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*). As a servant of the Lord, totally bound to perform the will of God, we are required to reach for this standard of behavior. This obligation is reinforced by the next word, "must," which implies "necessary, binding, and inevitable." To reveal the full, intended impact, this verse could be better rendered:

And it is absolutely binding upon the bondslave of the Eternal that he not be quarrelsome (fighting and contending). Instead, it is absolutely binding that he behave kindly toward everyone and with a mild temper [preserving the bond of peace]; it is absolutely binding upon him that he be a skilled and suitable teacher, patient and forbearing and willing to suffer wrong. (Author's paraphrase.)

Again, if this verse does not describe us, we have missed the mark and remain unprofitable servants.

Scripture is replete with instructions that take a bit of focused thought to understand. There are plenty of instructions outside the lists of commandments. For these reasons, we need to search the Bible for the details of divine instruction hidden by incomplete or improper translations or by the contexts in which they appear. However, some scriptures get right to the point. Notice [I Corinthians 6:7-8](#):

Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against

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one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated? No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and you do these things to your brethren!

Paul upbraids the members of the congregation in Corinth because they were unwilling to suffer wrong from their brethren. Instead, they took their own brethren to the city magistrates to receive judgment on their disputes! He writes in the same context that, not only should these kinds of matters stay within the bounds of the church, but also that we should be wise enough to be able to settle these matters amicably. True Christians should be humble enough to take the wrong done to them so that such situations never reach this stage (see [Psalm 15:3-4](#); [Matthew 5:38-42](#)). Once again, if these verses describe us and our behaviors, we have missed the mark and remain unprofitable servants.

The apostle James describes a person who practices godly wisdom, the kind we are to be learning and implementing in our lives: "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy" ([James 3:17](#)). If our wisdom is nowhere near this level, we are missing the mark and remain unprofitable servants.

The translation of [I Peter 3:9](#) leaves a little to be desired: ". . . not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing." "Inherit" is not referring to the payout of a will but God's gift of eternal life. This Greek word (*kl ronome*, *Strong's #2816*) is "spoken only of the friends of God as receiving admission to the [kingdom of heaven](#) and its attendant privileges" (Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*). Perhaps this verse should have been translated to make plain that our reactions to others can affect our inheritance of eternal life. So, again, if our actions do not live up to this standard, we have missed the mark and remain unprofitable servants.

The apostle Peter writes in [I Peter 4:18](#), "Now 'If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?'" If we fail to understand and practice how to treat the brethren as Scripture instructs, we are on the wrong side of the knife edge of being "scarcely saved." Jesus warns that "many are called, but few are chosen" ([Matthew 22:14](#)). Perhaps now we realize why! How we interact with our brethren matters to God! The many miss the mark. It is our job to make sure that we are among the few hitting it.

- Mike Fuhrer

World News Highlights

[Antibiotic Resistance Spreads Through the Air We Breathe, Warn Scientists](#)

Inverse 25-Jul-18

[Nicaragua in 'Undeclared State of Siege' as Hooded Gunmen Rule the Streets](#)

McClatchyDC 26-Jul-18

[Israel Shoots Down Syrian Warplane as Golan Frontier Heats Up](#)

News.Trust.org (Reuters) 24-Jul-18

[Deadly Northern California Wildfire 'Taking Down Everything in Its Path,' Spawning Firenadoes](#)

ABC News 27-Jul-18

[Wave After Wave of Garbage Hits the Dominican Republic](#)

WRAL 23-Jul-18

[Islamic State Makes Comeback in Iraq With Switch to Guerrilla Tactics](#)

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[Greece Fires: 60 Dead as Inferno Ravages Countryside Near Athens With Charred Bodies Found Locked in Final Embrace](#)

The Mirror 24-Jul-18

[Iran's Rouhani Warns Trump About 'Mother of All Wars'](#)

Reuters 22-Jul-18

[Cambridge University Scientists Create Artificial Embryo From Stem Cells](#)

The Irish News 24-Jul-18

New Transcripts

[1443c: One Defiant Voice!](#)

Given by Martin G. Collins on 21-Jul-18

[921c: Some Reasons for Hope](#)

Given by John W. Ritenbaugh on 31-Jan-09

Prayer Requests

New prayer request updates have been posted for the following people:

[Jerry Biles](#)

[Clyde Biles](#)

[Deana Garrett](#)

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Do You Take Sin Seriously? God Does!](#)

by Martin G. Collins

Martin Collins, reflecting that the history of the church parallels the history of physical Israel, concludes that just as sin weakened physical Israel, sin also threatens the well-being of the Israel of God. We see this principle demonstrated in the sin of Achan, who took of the accursed spoils, bringing about the defeat of Israel at the hands of Ai. Achan had become dissatisfied with the affairs of his life. This dissatisfaction gave birth to disobedience. Achan began to covet what he could not have; God, not Israel's armies, gave the victory to Israel. Materialism and desire to be fashionable led him to coveting, stealing, and lying. Dissatisfaction leads to temptation. The sources of temptation, the forerunner of sin, are the flesh, the world, and Satan. God does not send temptation, but does use the response to the temptation as a test. The wages of sin are death, corruption, and decay, and for the willfully unrepentant, the Lake of Fire. Jesus never once yielded to temptation, but fought it incessantly; we are obligated to emulate Him, bringing every thought into captivity, trusting in God the Father Who is absolutely reliable. The farther we are away from God, the less Holy Spirit we will have to overcome temptation. The demise of an institution (based on a covenant relationship) can result from the irresponsibility of its constituents; if one member sins, the whole body experiences the effects. God deals with His people consistently, incrementally bringing judgment in measured response to sin, ultimately transforming the Valley of Achor into a door of hope.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[How to Prevent Sin](#)

by Herbert W. Armstrong (1892-1986)

"ALL have sinned," says the Scripture. What *is* sin, anyway? And how do we stop it?

Featured Audio Schedule

Friday Night Bible Study

The next Bible Study will be **Lamentations (Part 7; 1989)**, given by **John W. Ritenbaugh** on **Friday 27-Jul-18**. The Bible Study will be continuously available from **6:00 pm Friday** until **12:00 pm Saturday (EST)**.

Daily Audio Programs

Hear previous sermons, sermonettes, and Feast of Tabernacles messages, **Sunday through Friday**. [Available from the homepage](#).

Date	Title
Sunday 29-Jul-18	News of the Work
Monday 30-Jul-18	Is God in All Our Thoughts?
Tuesday 31-Jul-18	Should All Believers Lay Hands on the Sick?
Wednesday 01-Aug-18	A Time of Great Sacrifice
Thursday 02-Aug-18	God Works in Mysterious Ways (Part Four)
Friday 03-Aug-18	The Present and Future Crisis (Part 1)

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