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2 Sin Is Missing The Mark

To effectively deal with sin we must understand it. The next several lessons will help us better understand this enemy that would destroy our lives.

Three words in Exodus 34:6-7 describe sin.

- Iniquity = to make crooked; to twist; to pervert
- Transgression = to rebel
- Sin = to miss the mark

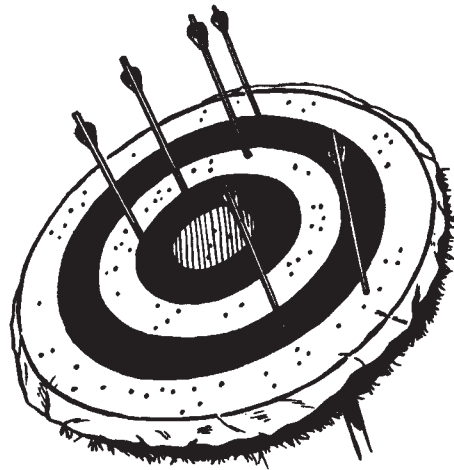
In this lesson we will see:

- Sin is missing *the mark*
- Sin is missing *God's mark*
- Sin is missing *God's moral mark*
- Sin is missing the mark of *God's perfect character*

Sin Is Missing The Mark

The most frequent word in the Old Testament for sin is *hatta't* (khat-taht'). It means

missing the mark.



Sin Is Missing God's Mark



Who missed God's mark in Genesis 4? Cain
How? His offering was not a
"bloody" offering.

From the story in Genesis 4, we learn four lessons.

Not All Offerings Are Accepted By God

What Matters To God

What is the only offering for sin that is acceptable to God? An offering
with shed blood

What Does Not Matter To God

- Sincerity
- Giving your best

You may be the best person on earth. You may go to church, pray, give generously to God's work and even witness and tell others of Christ. But if you have not accepted the shed blood of Christ as payment for your sins, you have *missed the mark* and are still in your sins.

When Man Sins, There Are Two Options

- Death of the sinner
- Death of a substitute

Five Qualifications Of A Substitute

- The substitute had to be an animal.
- The animal had to be "perfect" (without blemish).
- The animal had to be a male.
- The animal had to be either a lamb, a goat or a bull.
- The animal had to die by the shedding of its blood.

Cain's offering missed God's mark. It was not an animal and thus failed in all five areas.

Sin Is Missing God's Moral Mark

Who missed this mark in Genesis 18?

Men of Sodom and
Gomorrah

God's moral standard for marriage consists of two things.

Marriage Is For Male
And Female



We learn this from Genesis 2:22-24. Therefore, homosexuality "misses" God's moral mark. Note God's feelings about homosexuality in the rest of Scripture: "Genesis 19:1-11 tells the story of an attempted homosexual gang rape at the house of Lot by the wicked men of Sodom. Verse 5 mentions specifically the homosexual intentions of the men of Sodom ("to know" referring to having sex). Lot considers this behavior wicked (verse 7). Raping his daughters was considered the lesser of two evils (verse 8). This evil of Sodom is mentioned elsewhere (Jeremiah 23:14; Ezekiel 16:49-50; 2 Peter 2:6-10; Jude 7) in the strongest terms of condemnation. The term "sodomy" has its roots here. A similar story is found in Judges 19:22-30" (*Holman's Bible Dictionary for Windows, Version 1.0c, 1994, Parsons Technology*).

Sexual Behavior Is Limited To Marriage

When David committed adultery with Bathsheba, he confessed: "I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Samuel 12:13). The word "sinned" in this verse is the word that means "missing the mark." David realized that he had missed God's moral mark (standard) and thus stood condemned according to God's covenant law with Israel.

Sin Is Missing The Mark Of God's Perfect Character



Sin is anything that violates the character of God.

What sins violate the following attributes of God?

Truth lying, deception, cheating, stealing

Holiness immorality, compromise with the world, filthy language and jokes

Love hatred, fighting, critical attitude, gossip, causing divisions, selfishness

Mercy unforgiving spirit, desire for vengeance or getting even

Condescending domineering spirit, pride, boasting, self-centeredness

Order disorder, disorganization, disharmony, sloppiness

Absolute relativism, situation ethics

All-Sufficient greed, materialism, worry

All-Powerful or Omnipotent worry, doubt, failing to wait on God and trust in Him

Sovereignty or Lordship disobedience, fighting against God's will, taking matters into our own hands, failing to read and study the Word, failing to pray, failing to attend church faithfully

LEVEL ONE AND LEVEL TWO

The word "abomination" means something that is hated. The following verses name those things that God hates. Each of them misses the mark of God's perfect character. Name the sin that is hated, and name the attribute of God that sin "misses." Use the sins and divine attributes in the list below. You will need to use some of the items in the list more than once.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● God is morally pure ● God is condescending ● Pride ● Planning evil ● God is sovereign ● Idolatry ● God is peace and harmony ● False witness ● Adultery and incest | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quick to do evil ● Dishonesty ● God is truth ● Homosexuality ● God is holy (He hates evil.) ● Murder ● God is life ● Lying ● Sowing discord among brothers |
|---|--|

SCRIPTURE	ABOMINATION (Sins God Hates)	CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD THIS SIN "MISSES"
Leviticus 18:22	Homosexuality	God is morally pure
Deuteronomy 7:25	Idolatry	God is sovereign
Proverbs 6:16-17 (3 things)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pride ● Lying ● Murder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● God is condescending ● God is truth ● God is life
Proverbs 6:18 (2 things)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planning evil ● Quick to do evil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● God is holy ● God is holy
Proverbs 6:19 (2 things)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● False witness ● Sowing discord among brothers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● God is truth ● God is peace and harmony
Proverbs 11:1	Dishonesty	God is truth
Proverbs 12:22	Lying	God is truth
Proverbs 16:5	Pride	God is condescending
Ezekiel 22:11	Adultery and incest	God is morally pure

2

Sin Is Missing The Mark

Active Learning

Bring a dartboard and four darts. Give one dart to each of four students. Give each person one throw at the dartboard from about fifteen feet away. (If you have Sigma teams, give each team ten times the points their representative scores.)

Ask: Did any of these players just "sin"? Later we will see the answer to this question.

What is sin — this deadly snake that lurks behind every bush and tree of life?

To effectively deal with sin, we must understand it. The next several lessons will help us better understand this enemy that would destroy our lives.

Exodus 34:6-7 records God's own description of Himself. He proclaims that He is "*merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.*" He keeps mercy for thousands by forgiving three things:

- Iniquity
- Transgression
- Sin

These are but three words that describe the quality of the universal problem we call "evil" or "sin." In the Hebrew language these three terms have three different meanings, each describing a different aspect of the snake of sin.

- Iniquity = to make crooked, to twist, to pervert
- Transgression = to rebel
- Sin = to miss the mark

Sin is so broad that no one simple definition can adequately characterize all that sin is. Thus, sin is "crookedness," "rebellion" *and* "missing the mark." For the next several lessons, we will continue to look at this hideous "snake" in its many forms. Actually there are dozens of words that could be used to describe sin. But we are not after a *description* of sin so much as we are after a *definition* of sin. What is this thing called "sin"?

Sin Is Missing *The Mark*

Sin is "missing the mark." The Hebrew word most often found in the Old Testament for sin is the word *hatta't* (khat-taht'). It is the word translated "sin" in **Exodus 34:7**. This word comes from a root word *hata'* meaning "to miss." This is the most common meaning of "sin" in both the Old and New Testaments. The Greek word used in the New Testament for "missing the mark" is *hamartia* (ham-ar-tee'-ah) and is the most prominent Greek word for sin. Perhaps it can best be illustrated by an archer missing the bull's-eye — or by the four players who just threw darts.

Discuss: If the bull's-eye of the dartboard was God's mark of sinlessness (righteousness), did any of our dart throwers "sin"?

But what mark does sin miss? Notice how the word *hatta't* is used in the Bible.

Sin Is Missing *God's Mark* (Genesis 4:7)

This is the first occurrence of the word "sin" in the Bible, although it certainly isn't the first sin in the Bible. Even though the word "sin" is not mentioned in **Genesis 3**, we know that Adam and Eve sinned against the Lord and plunged the entire human race into sin. Here, however, is the first use of the Hebrew word for "sin." Here we learn four lessons.

Not All Offerings Are Accepted By God

Cain and Abel both made an offering to the Lord. Cain's offering consisted of the best he had — the work of his own hands, the fruit of his garden. On the other hand, Abel was a shepherd. Abel took the best of his labor — a lamb — and offered it to the Lord. Although both men seemed to be sincere and although both men offered the best they had, God accepted Abel's offering and rejected Cain's. Why? (Discuss this question together.)

What Matters To God

Only one kind of offering for sin is acceptable to God — a "bloody" offering. Note **Leviticus 17:11**. Abel's offering was an offering of shed blood; Cain's was not.

What Does *Not* Matter To God

Sincerity. Cain's sincerity didn't matter. We should be sincere when we stand before God, but sincerity without the shed blood is useless. It is not sincerity that God requires, but the shed blood.

Giving Your Best. Does God want our best? Absolutely! But even our best is not good enough if it is not a blood sacrifice. Cain offered his best, but it wasn't what God wanted. The only thing that counts is that we come to God His way — and the only way to approach Him is through the shed blood.

You may be the best person on earth. You may go to church, pray, give generously to God's work and even witness and tell others of Christ. But if you have not accepted the shed blood of Christ as payment for your sins, you have *missed the mark* and are still in your sins.

When Man Sins, There Are Two Options

When man sins, God requires either the death of the sinner or the death of a substitute.

Death Of The Sinner. Note **Romans 6:23**. The wages of sin is *death*. Abel's sin required death as payment. This is always so. Many verses teach this principle of life.

- **Ezekiel 18:4, 20** — "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die.*"
- **James 1:15** — "*Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*"
- **Romans 5:12** — "*By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.*"

Abel's offering required the death of a lamb. Cain's offering required no death and no shed blood. Thus, Cain's offering *missed the mark*. There was no death or shed blood.

Death Of A Substitute. What is a substitute? It is one who takes the place of another. In Abel's offering, a lamb took the place of Abel. For sin, God requires a life! Abel's sin required death as payment. Abel either had to die, or a substitute had to take his place. Here, too, God gave specific directions.

- The substitute had to be an animal.
- The animal had to be "perfect" (without blemish).
- The animal had to be a male.
- The animal had to be either a lamb, a goat or a bull.
- The animal had to die by the shedding of its blood.

Cain's offering missed God's mark. It was not an animal and thus failed in all five areas.

Sin Is Missing God's *Moral* Mark (Genesis 18:20)

The second use of the word *hatta't* in the Hebrew is in **Genesis 18:20**. Here we see that Sodom and Gomorrah were guilty of "missing God's mark."

What was their sin? It was a moral sin. They were guilty of a "*very grievous*" sin. It was the sin of homosexuality. God has moral

marks set up in His universe; and when we fail to measure up to His moral standards, we are guilty of "missing the mark."

What is God's moral standard?

Marriage Is For Male And Female

First, God's standard for marriage is male and female (**Genesis 2:22-24**). God hates homosexuality. If God approved of homosexuality, He would not have made a woman for Adam, but a man. Note God's feelings about homosexuality in the rest of Scripture: "**Genesis 19:1-11** tells the story of an attempted homosexual gang rape at the house of Lot by the wicked men of Sodom. **Verse 5** mentions specifically the homosexual intentions of the men of Sodom ("to know" referring to having sex). Lot considers this behavior wicked (**verse 7**). Raping his daughters was considered the lesser of two evils (**verse 8**). This evil of Sodom is mentioned elsewhere (**Jeremiah 23:14; Ezekiel 16:49-50; 2 Peter 2:6-10; Jude 7**) in the strongest terms of condemnation. The term "sodomy" has its roots here. A similar story is found in **Judges 19:22-30**" (*Holman's Bible Dictionary for Windows*, Version 1.0c, 1994, Parsons Technology).

Sexual Behavior Is Limited To Marriage

God's standard for sexual behavior requires that it be practiced only in the sanctity of marriage. God prohibited adultery (**Exodus 20:14**) and thereby made sexual faithfulness within the marriage relationship central in the divine will for human relationships.

Many Old Testament regulations deal with adultery. Both the adulterous man and woman were viewed as guilty, and the punishment of death was prescribed for both (**Leviticus 20:10**). The severity of the punishment indicates the serious consequences adultery has for marriage, family and community relationships.

Jesus' teachings expanded the Old Testament law to address matters of the heart. Jesus expanded the definition of adultery to include lust (**Matthew 5:27-28**). Adultery is one of "*the works of the flesh*" — in fact, the first one listed (**Galatians 5:19**). Adulterers will not inherit the kingdom of God (**1 Corinthians 6:9-10**).

Thus, when David committed adultery with Bathsheba, he confessed: "*I have sinned against the Lord*" (**2 Samuel 12:13**). The word for "sinned" in this verse is the word that means "missing the mark." David realized he had missed God's moral mark (standard) and thus stood condemned according to God's covenant law with Israel.

Sin Is Missing The Mark Of God's *Perfect Character* (Romans 3:23)

Finally, sin is missing the mark of God's perfect character. Sin is **anything that violates the character of God.**

Note **Romans 3:23**. Sin is coming "*short of the glory of God.*" What is "the glory of God"? It is God's character. It is God's perfect attributes. Anything that does not measure up to God's moral character is sin, for it "comes short" or "misses the mark" of His character.

This is what Joseph had in mind in **Genesis 39:9** when he refused to commit adultery with Potiphar's wife and said: "*There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he [Potiphar] kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin [hata' — the verb form of hatta't] against God?*"

Joseph realized that adultery would be "sin" against God. The word Joseph used for sin is the word that means "to miss the mark." He understood that sin was a violation of God's character and moral standard. He knew God's moral standard and that adultery would "miss God's moral mark." He also knew God's character. He understood that God was holy and that adultery would violate God's perfect holiness. Thus, he said that this sin was not just sin, but it was "*sin against God.*"

Discussion: As I name the following attributes of God, tell me what "sins" violate each attribute. (Suggested answers are in parentheses.)

- ★ Truth (lying, deception, cheating, stealing)
- ★ Holiness (immorality in any form, compromise with the world, filthy language and jokes)
- ★ Love (hatred, fighting, critical attitude, gossip, causing divisions, selfishness)
- ★ Mercy (unforgiving spirit, desire for vengeance or getting even)
- ★ Condescending (domineering spirit, pride, boasting, self-centeredness)
- ★ Order (disorder, disorganization, disharmony, sloppiness)
- ★ Absolute (relativism, situation ethics)
- ★ All-Sufficient (greed, materialism, worry)
- ★ All-Powerful or Omnipotent (worry, doubt, failing to wait on God and trust in Him)
- ★ Sovereignty or Lordship (disobedience, fighting against God's will, taking matters into our own hands, failing to read and study the Word, failing to pray, failing to attend church faithfully)

Challenge

Have we "missed the mark" in certain areas of our lives? Do we have to say with David, "*I have sinned* [missed the mark] *against the Lord*"?

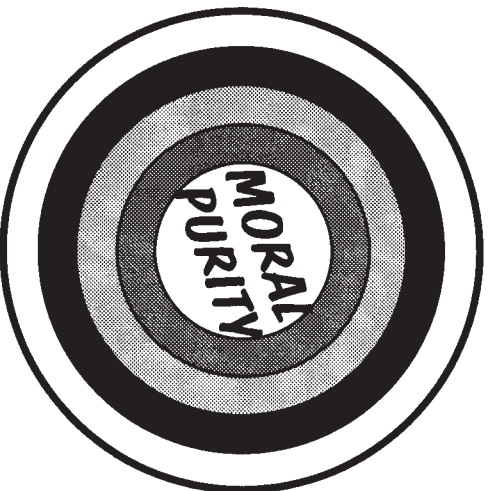
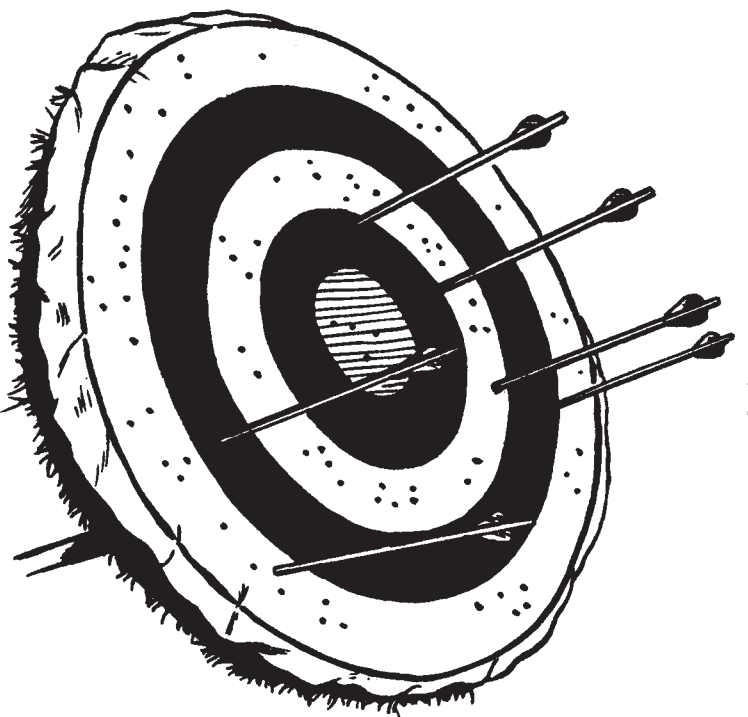
If so, let's bow our heads right now and confess, as David did, those areas where we have "missed the mark" of God's perfect standard.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. (1) Iniquity
(2) Sin
(3) Transgression
2. (1) An offering with shed blood
(2) Death of the sinner; death of a substitute
3. (1) Homosexuality
(2) Adultery
4. (1) D
(2) B
(3) C
(4) A
(5) E
5. Any five of the following would be acceptable:
 - (1) Homosexuality
 - (2) Idolatry
 - (3) Pride
 - (4) Lying
 - (5) Murder
 - (6) Planning evil
 - (7) Quick to do evil
 - (8) False witness
 - (9) Sowing discord among brothers
 - (10) Dishonesty
 - (11) Adultery and incest

SIN IS MISSING THE MARK

- God's mark
- God's moral mark
- God's perfect character



LESSON 2 QUIZ — SIN IS MISSING THE MARK

Name _____ Level _____ Score _____

Maximum Score: 6 points for Level 1 (questions marked by *); 11 points for Level 2

(3) *1. Three words in Exodus 34:6-7 describe sin. Write them below beside the correct definition.

(1) _____ = to make crooked; to twist; to pervert

(2) _____ = to miss the mark

(3) _____ = to rebel

(1) *2. Based on what we learned from Genesis 4, What is the only offering for sin that is acceptable to God? _____

(2)*3. What two sins violate God's moral standard for marriage?

(1) _____

(2) _____

(5)4. Match the following attributes of God with the sin that specifically violates each attribute.

_____ (1) Holiness

A. Cheating and stealing

_____ (2) Sovereignty

B. Failing to pray

_____ (3) All-Powerful

C. Worry and doubt

_____ (4) Truth

D. Immorality

_____ (5) Mercy

E. Desire to get even