



## 5 MINUTE LESSONS ON THE KINGDOM OF GOD

# I've Got a Problem

Recently, I heard a non-Christian that was relating his reasons why he turned his back on the Christian faith. The reasoning went something like this: I know some Christians that are meaner than a snake. They gossip, cheat, lie, commit adultery, watch porn and x-rated movies, hate others, divorce at the same rate as non-Christians, they are unethical, unloving, untrustworthy, poor workers on their job, etc.

The Apostle Paul gave the same report and rebuke to the religious Jews of his day when he said this:

*“There will be trouble and calamity for everyone who keeps on doing what is evil—for the Jew first and also for the Gentile.” (Romans 2:9 NLT)*

*“<sup>21</sup>Well then, if you teach others, why don't you teach yourself? You tell others not to steal, but do you steal?”*

*“<sup>22</sup>The same with idolatry. You can get by with almost anything if you front it with eloquent talk about God and his law. The line from Scripture, ‘It's because of you Jews that the outsiders frown on God,’ shows it's an old problem that isn't going to go away.”*

*“<sup>23</sup>You are so proud of knowing the law, but you dishonor God by breaking it. <sup>24</sup>No wonder the Scriptures say, ‘The world blasphemes the name of God because of you.’” (Romans 2:21-24 NLT & MSG)*

This problem in Christianity is as old as humanity itself. Didn't the Apostle Paul say to the church at Corinth,

*“for you are still controlled by your sinful nature. You are jealous of one another and quarrel with each other. Doesn't that prove you are controlled by your sinful nature? Aren't you living like people of the world?”*  
(1 Corinthians 3:3 NLT)

It could be that you might not be a true Christian at all. The Apostle John wrote in his epistle,

*“Dear children, don't let anyone deceive you about this: When people do what is right, it shows that they are righteous, even as Christ is righteous.”*  
(1 John 3:7 NLT)

*“Here’s how you tell the difference between God’s children and the Devil’s children: The one who won’t practice righteous ways isn’t from God, nor is the one who won’t love brother or sister. A simple test.” (1 John 3:10 MSG)*

*“<sup>7-8</sup>So, my dear children, don’t let anyone divert you from the truth. It’s the person who acts right who is right, just as we see it lived out in our righteous Messiah. Those who make a practice of sin are straight from the Devil, the pioneer in the practice of sin. The Son of God entered the scene to abolish the Devil’s ways.” (1 John 3:7-8 MSG)*

In Matthew 13 verses 24-30, Jesus gives the parable of the wheat and tares. A tare is a weed that resembles wheat when it first comes up. Jesus explains in Matthew 13:36-43 that a tare (the false Christian) will grow beside the wheat (a true Christian) until the end of time when Christ will reveal who belongs to Him and who does not (Matthew 13:39-40).

As fallen, sinful human beings we all face the same problem. Let’s identify them from the Scripture.

## **1) The devil and his evil spirits**

*“<sup>11</sup>Put on all of God’s armor so that you will be able to stand safe against all strategies and tricks of Satan. <sup>12</sup>For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against persons without bodies—the evil rulers of the unseen world, those mighty satanic beings and great evil princes of darkness who rule this world; and against huge numbers of wicked spirits in the spirit world.*

*<sup>13</sup>So use every piece of God’s armor to resist the enemy whenever he attacks, and when it is all over, you will still be standing up.” (Ephesians 6:11-13 LB)*

*“<sup>25</sup>So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. <sup>26</sup>And ‘don’t sin by letting anger control you.’ Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, <sup>27</sup>for anger gives a foothold to the devil.” (Ephesians 4:25-27 NLT)*

## **2) The flesh, the old man, the old nature or whatever term you choose to call it**

The Bible tells us that,

*“The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions.” (Galatians 5:17 NLT)*

But,

*“...live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.” (Galatians 5:16 NIV)*

The Apostle Paul further states,

*“...clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”* (Romans 13:14 NIV)

### **3) The unrenewed mind**

*“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”* (Romans 12:2 NLT)

### **4) A corrupted heart**

*“Guard your heart above all else,  
for it determines the course of your life.”* (Proverbs 4:23 NLT)

*“<sup>12</sup>But now the people believed Philip’s message of Good News concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. As a result, many men and women were baptized. <sup>13</sup>Then Simon himself believed and was baptized. He began following Philip wherever he went, and he was amazed by the signs and great miracles Philip performed.*

*<sup>18</sup>When Simon saw that the Spirit was given when the apostles laid their hands on people, he offered them money to buy this power. <sup>19</sup>‘Let me have this power, too,’ he exclaimed, ‘so that when I lay my hands on people, they will receive the Holy Spirit!’*

*<sup>20</sup>But Peter replied, ‘May your money be destroyed with you for thinking God’s gift can be bought! <sup>21</sup>You can have no part in this, for your heart is not right with God. <sup>22</sup>Repent of your wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive your evil thoughts, <sup>23</sup>for I can see that you are full of bitter jealousy and are held captive by sin.’”* (Acts 8:12-13, 18-23 NLT)

Note: If your heart is right before the LORD you will turn to His Spirit and manifest His life.

*“<sup>22</sup>But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!”* (Galatians 5:22-23 NLT)

If your heart is not right before God, you will turn to your flesh and manifest the work of the flesh.

*“<sup>19</sup>When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, <sup>20</sup>idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, <sup>21</sup>envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.”* (Galatians 5:19-21 NLT)

It's your choice. Will you turn and follow Jesus today? Jesus said,

*"...Follow me and be my disciple..."* (Matthew 9:9 NLT)

If you fail, be quick to repent.

*"I preached first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that all must repent of their sins and turn to God—and prove they have changed by the good things they do."*  
(Acts 26:20 NLT)

## Questions

- 1 Are you a true follower of Jesus?
- 2 Name the four problems we all face at one time or another.
- 3 If we sin, what are we to do?

### **We want to hear from you!**

We would love to hear your feedback on these lessons and how you use them in your own study or in discipling others. If you have any thoughts, stories, testimonies, comments, or questions we would love to hear them!

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## Answer Key

**1** Are you a true follower of Jesus?

***“What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don’t show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone?”***  
(James 2:14 NLT)

***“I preached first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that all must repent of their sins and turn to God—and prove they have changed by the good things they do.”*** (Acts 26:20 NLT)

**2** Name the four problems we all face at one time or another.

- 1) The devil**
- 2) The flesh**
- 3) The unrenewed mind**
- 4) A corrupt heart**

**3** If we sin, what are we to do?

**Confess and forsake our sin (1 John 1:9).**

***“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”*** (Proverbs 28:13 KJV)

**Ask God to create in us a clean heart.**

***“Create in me a clean heart, O God.  
Renew a loyal spirit within me.”*** (Psalm 51:10 NLT)