

# Sin Is The State Of Being Separated From God And His Saints

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What is the spiritual life? Is it not being close to God, as the Psalm says "*But it is good for me to draw near to God.*" (Ps. 73:28).

It is indeed! it is however, something more than this closeness. It means to abide in the Lord, according to what He told us: "*Abide in Me, and I in you.*" (John 15:4).

A person whose life is firmly established in the Lord, enjoys His companionship and His love. He keeps God in his heart, while he himself dwells in God's heart. Is a sinner someone who abides in God, who remains steady in His love? No, not at all! **The sinner follows another path, not God's path.**

The sinner has cut himself off from God through his behavior, his manner and his will. His will has become something other than God's will. He begins to want what God does not want. He becomes a person who challenges God fearlessly and breaks His commandments. In breaking God's commandments, he will have also cut himself off from God's love, because the Lord says: "*If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love.*" (John 15:10) and, "*If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word.*" (John 14:23).

**Therefore, sin is the state of being separated from God's love and from His commandments.** It is the life of a person who has renounced God and His kingdom in order to be independent and who has begun to follow his own desires without putting God before him. Such a person has become cut off from God and persists in the belief that he has an independent personality which can stand on its own and determine whatever it pleases for itself, quite apart from God's guidance and direction. This is just what happened when the Israelites demanded a king to rule them instead of God and God said to the prophet Samuel: "*for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.*" (1 Sam. 8:7).

They rejected the life of submission which the children of God live in obedience and submission to His will. Saul, the king whom they took for themselves, also followed his own desires and asserted his independence from God. He did not want God to order things for him, or direct his affairs, but began to administer everything according to his own personal ideas, without asking what God's will would be! **Sinners cut themselves off from God's will and also dissociate themselves from His guidance and direction. God has expressed this separation with His words, "They have rejected me and forsaken me".** He said, "*They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns; broken cisterns that can hold no water.*" (Jer. 2:13).

Quite simply then, sin is the state of being cut off from God, of having abandoned Him and rejected Him. The sinner feels no love towards God, nor any special intimacy with Him. **He has cut himself off from God, not only in his behavior and manner, but in his heart, in his love and in his feelings too.**

His heart has begun to love other things which have taken the place of God. His concern is no longer for God, because he has started to be concerned about other things apart from God. These are what occupy his thoughts now and take up his time and divert his heart! In the state of sin, the heart is cut off from God, in proportion to the extent that it loves the present world. If one's love for the world is total, then its separation from God will be total too, because "*friendship with the world is enmity with God*" (James 4:4) and "*If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*" (1 John 2:15). It is quite impossible for anyone to reconcile the two opposites, love of God and love of sin. He has to choose: either one or the other. **If you live with God, you will automatically be separated from sin and if you live in sin, you will consequently be separated from God.**

This means that you will be cut off from Him, from His kingdom, His will, His commandments, His love, His work and from fellowship with Him. As the Apostle says: "*God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.*" (1 John 1:5-6). God is light; sin is darkness. The Bible says: "*what communion has light with darkness?*" (2 Cor. 6:14). Whoever lives in darkness is obviously cut off from the light, meaning, from God. It was said about those people who cut themselves off from the Lord Jesus and rejected him, that they "*loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*" (John 3:19). **Therefore, when you live in sin, you are rejecting fellowship with God. What is this fellowship?**

The spiritual life is fellowship with the Holy Spirit, as we hear it said in the blessing at the end of every service (2 Cor. 13:14) and through this partnership we "*may be partakers of the divine nature*" (2 Pet. 1:4). This does not mean that we become partners in the actual divine substance or divinity. Rather we become partners in activity. The Spirit of God participates with us in our lives, working in us, working with us and working through us. If you are in sin, how can the Spirit of God have fellowship with you? **Have you broken this fellowship and cut yourself off from the work of the Spirit, by saying to the Lord: "You have your way and I have mine?"** By breaking away from the Spirit of God like this, you are going against the warning which the Apostle gave, "*Do not quench the Spirit.*" (1 Thess. 5:19). "*Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*" (Eph. 4:30). The sinner is not only cutting himself off from partnership with the Spirit, but what is more serious is that he is resisting the Spirit, as St. Stephen said in his rebuke to the people. (Acts 7:51). **Sin is to be separated from the Holy Spirit and from the Son too**, for the Son is "*the wisdom of God.*" (1 Cor. 1:21).

Therefore, one can reckon that anyone who is clearly foolish, must be cut off from the Son, otherwise his behaviour would be more prudent. The Bible gives us an example of this in the parable of the foolish virgins (Matt. 25:2). The type of behaviour that comes from sinners is foolish behaviour, because it is unconnected to the divine wisdom of God. It is 'the foolishness of your people' of which we speak to the Lord during the Mass. Thus it was said in the book of Ecclesiastes, "*the fool walks in darkness.*" (Eccl. 2:14).

Sin, therefore, is being separated from God, the very substance of wisdom. Christ said to us, "*you in Me, and I in you*" (John 14:20). How can He be in us while we are committing sin?! How can we be in Him at the same time as we are in sin?! It is obvious that if there is sin in us, then, at that time, we are in a state of being cut off from Christ. **While we are in sin, how can we be a**

**temple for the Holy Spirit?!** How can the Spirit of God dwell in us (*1 Cor. 3:16*) while we are committing sin, for the temple of God is sacred? (*1 Cor. 3:17*) There is no doubt then, that sin is a state of being separated from God and from His fellowship. **It is to be separated from that holiness without which no one will see the Lord**, for only the pure in heart will see God (*Matt. 5:8*). Whoever loses the purity of his heart through sin, will not set eyes on God. In fact he will be isolated from Him. Thus throughout history, sin has stood as a barrier between God and Man. **That intervening barrier came to be represented in the Old Testament in the Tent of Meeting.**

This barrier, or curtain, which separated the people from the holiest of holies, so that they could not enter into the sanctuary, (*Ex. 26:33*) is a symbol for their separation from God through sin. This was the barrier which Christ destroyed by his crucifixion and which we, with our sins every day, try to build up again! The Bible says about the foolish virgins, that "the door was closed" and the foolish girls stood outside. Between them and the Lord was this divide, the closed door. Though they begged, "Lord, Lord, open the door for us!", he did not open it for them. In fact he said to them "*I do not know you*". (*Matt. 25:11*). They cut themselves completely from Him and from His kingdom and His throne and also from the other wiser virgins. **We read of the same kind of separation, in the story of the rich man and Lazarus.** While Lazarus was in the arms of his father Abraham, the rich man looked on 'from afar'. Our forefather Abraham said to him, "*Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed*". (*Luke 16:26*). In the life to come, the righteous will be in the heavenly Jerusalem, the place where God dwells with His people. No one unclean can enter here, nor anyone who is defiled, but only those whose names are written in the Book of Life (*Rev. 21:27*). It is here that the righteous will be separated from the sinners for ever. **God will divide the righteous from the sinners, the wheat from the chaff and the sheep from the goats and the wicked will be thrown into the outer darkness.** The darkness here means being cut off from the light, which is God and from the shining city of the heavenly Jerusalem. And the term "outer", applied to the darkness, signifies that the sinners will be beyond the group of the righteous, triumphant martyrs and far away from the Saints, whose lives were so remote from sin and were separated while on earth. **Thus, the sinner will be cut off in the afterlife from all those whom he had loved in this world.**

Here on earth everyone is together: saints and sinners. In heaven however they will be separated. If anyone on earth loves a righteous person, he will not be able to see him in heaven, unless he repents here on earth and becomes righteous like his friend. By doing this, he will become entitled to a place in heaven alongside the righteous man. If he remains a sinner, however, his connection with his loved one will be broken forever, whether that loved one was his son, brother, father or friend. He must become like his righteous friend, in order to enjoy his companionship in the eternal life. If the two who love each other are both sinners together, what would happen to them then? I can tell you that the suffering which each one would find in the hereafter would give him no opportunity to think of his friend and even if it did, the suffering of the other would be an additional torment to him. They would derive no comfort from their companionship. The only solution, then, which unites those who love, in order that they can enjoy each other's close companionship, is for them to live in righteousness here on earth, which will entitle them to be joined together in heaven. Thus we see that sin separates a person from God, from the Saints, from his loved ones and from the angels too. The Bible says that "*The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, and he delivers them.*" (*Ps. 34:7*). If

you are among those who fear the Lord, you will enjoy the companionship of the angels here in this world and in heaven too. As for sinners, though, they cut themselves off by their actions, from the hosts of angels, for the angels cannot bear to see the sinners' awful deeds. As they sin, they are also surrounded by devils, who encourage them further in whatever wrong they are doing. **Sin is not just being cut off from God, but also from His angels, His saints, His heaven and kingdom, both here on earth and in the life to come. In the story of the prodigal son, it is obvious that the young man was separated from his father. He dissociated himself from his father.** This was what he had sought and had actually brought about himself, by his going away to a distant country (*Luke 15:13*). At the same time as he was cut off from his father, the son was cut off from his home, which is a symbol of the Church, the house of God and he was cut off from the members of his family who symbolise the community of believers. The same thing happened to the lost sheep: he parted from the shepherd and from the fold and the rest of the sheep ... and the story of the lost coin also tells of the same kind of situation (*Luke 15*). **Sin is a state of separation from God, which means that it is a separation from the very nature of righteousness and goodness.** It means to be cut off from the divine plan which God laid down for your salvation and to be cut off from the divine course which God wishes you to take. This all comes as a result of being separated from the Truth and following what is false; for the Truth is God. (*John 14:6*). **The separation from God began from the first sin, that of Adam's.**

Adam cut himself off from God's love and from that close companionship and fond intimacy which had existed between them. He began to fear God and to hide from His face and if he heard his voice, he would flee in order not to meet Him, because he could not bear to face Him. How could he face Him?! There is another aspect to Adam's sin, which is that he became cut off from the Tree of Life, from the Garden of Eden and the place of meeting with God (*Gen. 3:22-23*). And what else? He was cut off from that divine image in which he had been formed. After sinning, he was no longer in the form or likeness of God. **The result of Adam's sin was that he was separated from God and being separated from God was itself a sin. But how did it all come about?**

God used to order things for Adam in the Garden of Eden and drew up for him the plan that he was to follow. Adam, in his sin, began to go his own way, independently of God and began to decide for himself what he thought was good and the kind of future he desired when he and Eve would become "*like God, knowing good and evil*". (*Gen. 3:5*) The first human being began to choose friends and advisers for himself, to whom he listened more than to God and he began to behave as if he were an independent person, determining his own life, with no need for God. That is how he disobeyed God's command and became cut off from Him, through the actual sin he committed. **Cain, when he sinned, was also separated from God.** He became a restless wanderer on the earth, fearful and afraid, because in his separation from God he became cut off, not only from righteousness, but also from the help and safety which God had provided. Accordingly he requested from the Lord, (full of bitterness and grief), "*Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face.*" (*Gen. 4:14*). Perhaps it was the same fear which the Prophet David had felt when he said, "*Do not cast me away from your presence and do not take your Holy Spirit from me.*" (*Ps. 51:11*). The phrase "*How long will you hide Your face from me?*" (*Ps. 13:1*) describes a situation which is much easier for a person to bear than to be banished from God's sight, as happened to Cain. **Saul's**

**punishment was even harder, for "the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul ", (1 Sam. 16:14) and it was said that directly afterwards "an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him." The moment Saul was cut off from God, he became under the domination of the devils. He became like an unfortified city, like a house without protection, an easy prey for the devils. **How difficult it is when you are caught up in that regression away from God!** It starts with disobedience against God and leads to contending with Him and being separated from Him. God's face becomes hidden to the individual and the Spirit of the Lord departs from him. He is cast out from God's face and evil spirits descend upon him to torment him. But there is a condition still worse than being cut off from God, which is, to be "*thrown into the fire and they are burned*" (John 15:6 and Matt. 13:42), as was said about the branch which does not bear fruit. This is truly a very painful end for a branch which had once been part of the vine, but which now finds itself cut off from it and from the other branches. **From this example, then, we see that sin is also separation from the Church.****

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