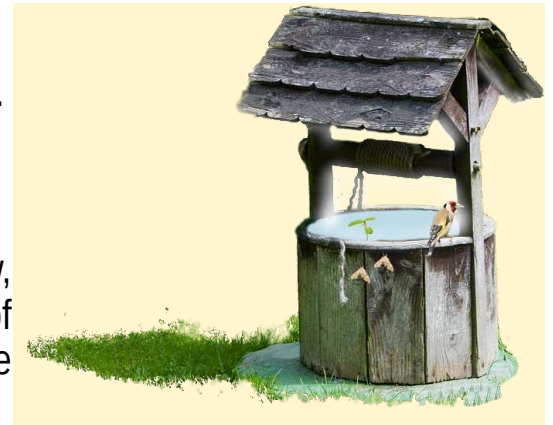


# LIVING WELL #11: DOING SIN WELL

'Be killing sin, or sin will be killing you' – John Owen.

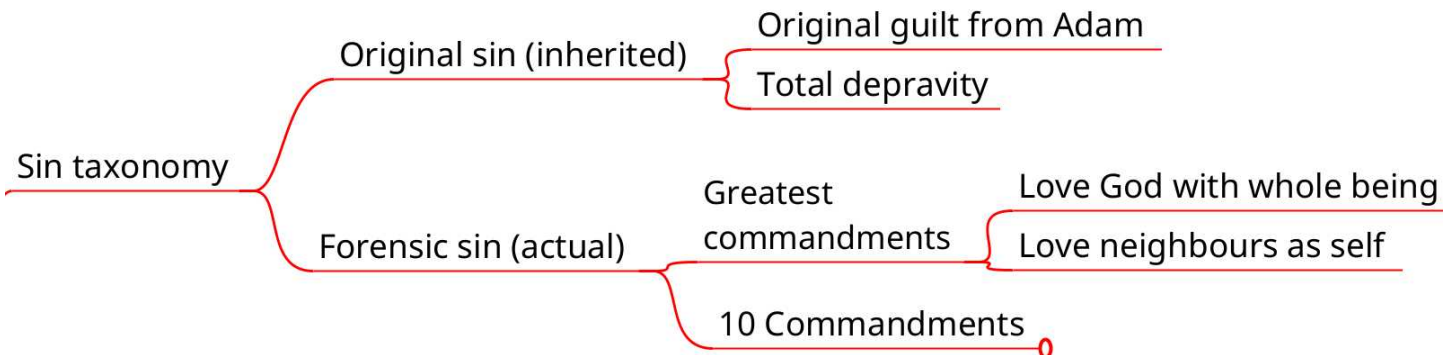
Understanding sin is vital if we are to kill it before it kills us.

Definition: 1 John 3:4 ... sin is lawlessness.



## 1. ORIGINAL SIN AND FORENSIC SIN

At its simplest, sin is anything that is contrary to God's law, but this first level of division of sin into the categories of 'Original sin' and 'Forensic sin' does not sit easily within the individualistic, post-modern, western mind-set:



'Original sin' seems unfair to us because we, as individuals, did not commit it – Adam did, with help from Eve. But, the key is to think of it in terms of the whole human race sinning, of whom Adam is the head. However, Adam is not the only head ...

*1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*

**Q1.** Why is it vital to believe in our original guilt in Adam?

*Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned ...*

*Romans 3:23 ... all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ...*

**Q2.** What other effect did Adam's sin have on humanity?

*Genesis 6:5 The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time.*  
NIV

'Forensic sin' is about what we actually do as a result of our 'total depravity'.

**Q3.** How do the fall, the heart, thoughts and human behaviour relate to each other?

## 2. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND FURTHER CATEGORIES OF SIN

The 10 commandments (Exodus 34:28) give further insight into forensic sin in terms of omission/commission, internal/external and degrees of sin (aggravation). It is also possible to think further in terms of the effects and consequences of sin. [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ten_Commandments)<sup>1</sup> contains this table:

LXX	P	R	T	S	A	C	L	Commandment (KJV)	Exodus
									20:1-17
—	—	(0)	1	—	—	1	—	I am the LORD thy God	2
1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	Thou shalt have no other gods before me	3
2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image	4-6
3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain	7
4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy	8-11
4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	Observe the sabbath day, to keep it holy	
5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	Honour thy father and thy mother	12
6	8	6	6	5	5	5	5	Thou shalt not kill	13
7	6	7	7	6	6	6	6	Thou shalt not commit adultery	14
8	7	8	8	7	7	7	7	Thou shalt not steal	15
9	9	9	9	8	8	8	8	Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour	16
10	10	10	10	9	10	10	9	Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house	17a
10	10	10	10	9	10	10	9	Thou shalt not desire thy neighbour's house	
10	10	10	10	9	9	9	10	Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife...	17b
10	10	10	10	9	10	10	10	...or his slaves, or his animals, or anything of thy neighbour	17c
—	—	—	—	10	—	—	—	You shall set up these stones, which I command you today, on [Mount] Ārgarizem	13d

**Q4.** The Greek translation of the 10 commandments (LXX COLUMN) suggests the perhaps standard division of the text. How might the incorporation of a 0<sup>th</sup> commandment, as per Calvin's Institutes (R COLUMN) help understanding or application?

**Q5.** What effect might a merging of commands #1 and #2 have (as per COLUMNS T to L)?<sup>2</sup>

**Q6.** How does a correct translation of #3 help? (See also Exodus 28:12; Numbers 6:27)  
*You shall not bear<sup>3</sup> the name of the Lord your God in vain.<sup>4</sup>*

**Q7.** How does a correct translation of #6 help? *'You shall not murder.'* ESV

<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ten\\_Commandments](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ten_Commandments), accessed 2026/05/13.

<sup>2</sup> T = Jewish Talmud; S = Samaritan Pentateuch; A = Augustine of Hippo; c = Eastern & Western Catholicism; L = Martin Luther.

<sup>3</sup> נָשָׂא (nasa) to lift: bear, carry.

<sup>4</sup> Tr. DWL as per Dale Ralph Davis – Exposition of Exodus 20:1-3, Alec Motyer; Graeme Goldsworthy – *Prayer and the Knowledge of God*, IVP, 2001.

**Q8.** Which commandments help us with 'sins of commission'?

**Q9.** Which help us with 'sins of omission'?

**Q10.** Which commandments highlight 'external sins'? (1 Corinthians 6:18-20)

*Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? ESV*

**Q11.** Which commands help with 'internal sins'?

*Matthew 7:12 Jesus: "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets." NIV (the 'golden rule')*

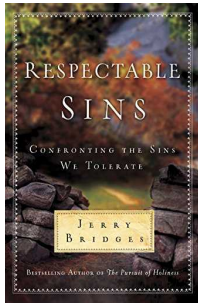
**Q12.** Which commandments focus on 'aggravated' 'sins against God'?

Think about sin against humans as to do with us bearing the image of God.

**Q13.** Which commandments help us with 'sins against creation'?<sup>5</sup>

*Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. ESV*

**Q14.** Ultimately what difference is there between one sin and another?



**3. RESPECTABLE SINS?**

Because of Jeremiah 17:9, we are inclined to reclassify sins to make them respectable. These headings come from *Respectable Sins* by Jerry Bridges.

**Q15.** How do we 're-brand' them to make them seem respectable?

ORIGINAL NAME	RE-BRAND!	OPPOSITE FRUIT
Ungodliness	e.g. Independence!	Faith, reverence, fear, ...
Anxiety and Frustration		
Discontentment		
Unthankfulness		

<sup>5</sup> Where creation includes other people, but not God.

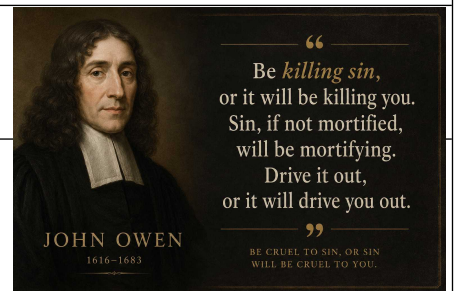
ORIGINAL NAME	RE-BRAND!	OPPOSITE FRUIT
Pride		
Selfishness		
Lack of Self-Control		
Impatience and Irritability		
Anger		
Judgementalism		
Envy, Jealousy, and Related Sins		
Sins of the Tongue		
Worldliness		

These sins can easily be re-branded to become: being worldly-wise, witty, determined, ambitious, discerning, a good judge of character, having a sense of injustice or urgency, preciseness, having an artistic temperament, needing some me-time, having self-love, self-esteem, ambition, sensitivity, independence or zeal. Each has a corresponding, opposite, fruit.

*Romans 8:9-14* 9 ... Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. <sup>12</sup> So then, brothers [and sisters], we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. <sup>13</sup> For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. <sup>14</sup> For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons [and daughters] of God. *ESV*

**Q16.** How does the apostle Paul help us?

**Q17.** How can we kill sin in practice?



*'When our Lord and master Jesus Christ said, in Matthew 4:17, "Repent" he wanted the whole of a believer's life to be one of repentance.'* Tr. DWL (#1 from Luther's 95 Theses)

**Q18.** How does Martin Luther help us?