

Dear Samantha,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You wanted to know how much you had to worry about sin. You wondered if you just needed to try your best, love God and respect people.

Thousands of years ago God gave Moses and the Jewish Nation a Law to live by—the Ten Commandments. Although many Jews and Christians alike have tried to keep these commandments perfectly, all have failed, except for our Lord, Jesus, who was a perfect man. We have failed because we are imperfect, having been born in sin and shaped in iniquity (Psalm 51:5). No matter how hard we may try not to sin, we sin everyday of our lives, sometimes without even knowing it. Even when our sins are not outwardly manifested, we sin in our minds when we are prideful, think evil of someone or covet someone or something. The Apostle Paul tells us, “I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. . . . For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. . . . What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Romans 7:15, 19-20, 24-25) Paul knew that his only solution for the sin in him was to pray to God for forgiveness through our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Do you, therefore, need to “worry” about sin? No, worrying about sin will not eliminate it from your mind, nor will it stop you from outwardly committing a sin. However, you do need to know what sin is and be concerned about its influence in your life. By accepting the fact that you are a sinner, you need to daily evaluate your heart attitude, conscience and conduct as you try to emulate the sinless life of our Master, Jesus Christ. Then, seeing where you have fallen short, ask forgiveness before the throne of heavenly grace. “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who have trespassed against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” (Matthew 6:12-13)

The Book of Proverbs in the Old Testament helps us understand how sin is manifested in us by listing seven things God hates: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.” (Proverbs 6:17-19) Later, the Apostle Paul gives us an obvious list of the acts that make up the sinful nature in Galatians 5:19-21 [sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, and orgies] and warns us “that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Verse 21) He then tells us to live a life guided by the holy Spirit and lists the fruits of such a life. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.” (Galatians 5:22-24)

The Apostle Peter gives us a similar list in 2 Peter 1:5-7. He then adds, "For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 1:10-11)

Do you "just need to try your best, love God and respect people?" You need to do those things and much more. You need to continually check your thoughts and actions and ask yourself if Jesus' thoughts and actions would be in accord with yours. Each time you discover that you have fallen short of the perfect example set before you, you need to ask forgiveness through prayer. Prayer is the Christian's lifeline. You will find refuge and joy in prayer knowing that God hears the prayers of the righteous and is able and willing to forgive your sins if you acknowledge them and are truly repentant. "If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O LORD, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared." (Psalm 130:3-4) "Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon." (Isaiah 55:7) "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." (Hebrews 4:16)

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Sincerely,

Christian Questions Radio