

# Sin, the Good News, and the Law



## SABBATH—MAY 23

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Judges 14; 1 Corinthians 10:12; Romans 3:20; Matthew 5:17, 18; Matthew 7:24–29.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “I will never forget your rules, because you have used them to give me life. I belong to you. Please save me! I have respected your rules” (Psalm 119:93, 94, EASY).



God gave us His law to show us who He is.

**SIN** is our biggest problem. More than anything else, sin gets in the way of our having a close relationship with God. Sin separates us from God now (Isaiah 59:2). Sin also tricks, hurts, and destroys us in the end. Our fight against sin and self is the biggest fight of our lives.

Some people aren't too worried about sin. These people believe that sin is just a normal part of life. Sin doesn't really bother them too much anymore. Or at least not as much as it used to. Are we afraid to talk about sin? Maybe we are afraid of upsetting people if we say that something is a sin. In the end, the more we choose to live with sin, the more problems we will have. Our relationship with God will not be healthy.

Yes, we all are sinners. We all have sinned. Our thoughts, reasons for doing things, behavior, and words hurt other people, ourselves, and God. In the end, sin destroys our relationship with God. But God gave us His law to show us who He is. God's law shows us the sin in our lives.

This week, let's look at the reason God gave us His law. When people break God's law, how can they fix their relationship with God?

**WHEN WE GIVE IN TO SIN (Judges 14)**

**Read about the times when Samson sinned in Judges 14 and Judges 16:1, 4, 16, 17. God chose Samson to serve Him for a special reason. But Samson chose to sin while he served God. How did Samson’s story end? What does his sad story teach us?**

The worldwide war between God and Satan is real. We are all part of it. The war that started in heaven is now fought in each of our lives.

Jesus is coming soon. Satan knows that he doesn’t have much time left. So, he is going to try to do everything he can to keep us from having a close relationship with God. Maybe you are doing something that isn’t wrong or bad: work, TV, internet, shopping, sports, or food. But you spend so much time doing it. So, you don’t have much time left for God and other people. Satan knows that we are weak. He knows the things that will keep us from spending time with God. We should remember to seek God first (Matthew 6:33) before we start our day.

Jesus understands that we are sinners. But Jesus also warns us not to be careless in our relationship with Him (Revelation 2:1–7; Revelation 3:14–22). Yes, Jesus is God. But He also became a human. So, Jesus felt tired, just as we do (John 4:6). Jesus had a very busy life, just as we do. But He always made time to pray to His Father (Luke 5:16; Luke 6:12; Mark 1:35; Matthew 14:23). Jesus knew that time with His Father was the best thing He could do to get strength to fight against Satan and sin. The best thing we can do to win the fight against Satan and sin is to spend time in prayer with God.

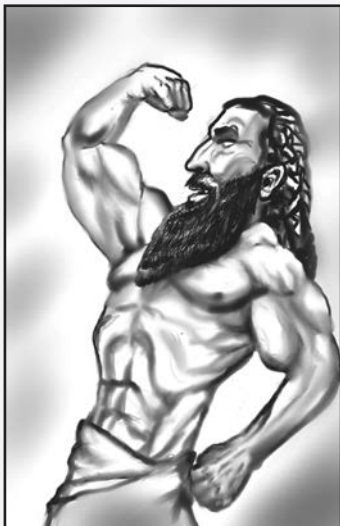
Samson sinned because he depended on his own strength to fight against sin. Every day, we fight against sin. Satan tries to make us weak. He tries to destroy our relationship with God. When we sin, we feel guilty. We stop feeling close to God in our hearts. Satan works hard to get control of our lives. But remember: our faith will help us stand strong against Satan. Our faith grows strong when we read and obey the Bible.

**What sins and problems are you fighting against right now in your life? How can God’s Word, the Bible, help you right now?**



**Jesus knew that time with His Father was the best thing He could do to get strength to fight against Satan and sin.**

## WARNINGS (1 Corinthians 10:12)



Samson trusted in his own strength. Don't do what Samson did.

The Bible is filled with many messages that warn us against things that hurt our relationship with God. These things keep us from growing in Jesus. Below are some of these warnings from Paul and Jesus:

**Paul:** “**So watch yourself! The person who thinks he can stand against sin had better watch that he does not fall into sin**” (1 Corinthians 10:12, NLV). Remember Samson. He trusted in his own strength. Don't do what Samson did. Trust in God.

**Jesus:** “**‘When you give something to a poor person, do not tell anyone [brag] about it. The hypocrites [people who pretend to be religious] do this [brag] in their meeting places. They also do it [brag] in the busy streets of the town. They do this so that other people will praise them’**” (Matthew 6:2, EASY). Stop bragging about all the wonderful things you do! Copy Jesus: empty your heart of all pride.

**Jesus:** “**‘But what I tell you is this [rule]: A man may look at a woman who is not his wife. And he may want to have sex with her. In his thoughts, he has had sex with her, so he has done a wrong thing. If your right eye leads you to do wrong things, then you should take it out [remove it]’**” (Matthew 5:28, 29, EASY). Do anything to remove wrong or evil thoughts. They will keep you from having a close relationship with God.

**Jesus:** “**‘Do not judge other people. Then you will not be judged. You will be judged in the same way you judge others’**” (Matthew 7:1, 2, NIV). Stop judging other people. God is Judge, not you (1 Corinthians 4:5).

**Jesus:** “**‘But I tell you, love your enemies. Pray for those who hurt you’**” (Matthew 5:44, ICB). Stop hating your enemies. When you feel hate for the people who hurt you, your hate separates you from God. Start to pray for your enemies. Wait and see how prayer changes your relationship with God and other people.

**Jesus:** “**‘Anyone who is angry with his brother without having a good reason, will be judged in court’**” (Matthew 5:22, WE). Maybe you excuse your bad behavior when you yell at your friends and family. What does your anger do to your relationship with God? With your friends? With family?

In Mark 9:42–48, Jesus talks about when our hands, feet, and eyes cause us to sin. What does His warning tell us about sin? Are you obeying the warning?

## THE LAW (Romans 3:20)

**How would you explain sin to a non-Christian? What does the Bible say that sin is? Read Romans 3:20 and 1 John 3:4 for the answers.**

Sin is breaking God's law (1 John 3:4). We are sinners (Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9). The law shows us what sin really is. The law helps us to understand what is really in our hearts. The law helps us to want to change our lives for the better. At the same time, the law tells us about God's love. The law also tells us what is important to Him.

God wrote the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:3–17) with His finger. Jesus tells us that the Ten Commandments are important: “ ‘Love the Lord, your God completely. Love him with all your mind and with all your strength. Love him in everything that you think and you do.’ ” The second most important rule is this: “You should love other people as much as you love yourself.” No other rules are as important as these two’ ” (Mark 12:30, 31, EASY). Jesus adds, “ ‘All God's Laws that Moses gave us come from these two rules. All the things that the prophets [God's special messengers] wrote also come from them’ ” (Matthew 22:40, EASY).

God's words to the Israelites at Mount Sinai are also for us today (Hebrews 1:1, 2). God's words tell us that the law is all about relationships. God gave us the law to protect our relationship with Him and other people. But Satan causes people to misunderstand God's law. So, some people think that the law is the same as a heavy load. They don't understand that the law is about love and freedom. The Bible tells us, “We show that we love God when we obey his laws. His laws are not hard to obey” (1 John 5:3, WE).

1. **How precious and important is God's Word, the Bible, and His law to me? Circle the number below that best matches your answer: 1 (not very precious); 2 (maybe a little precious); 3 (precious and important); 4 (very precious and important); 5 (the most precious and important thing in life to me).**
2. **Do I think God's law makes me a slave to good behavior? Or does God's law make me strong and free?**
3. **What would happen if love for God and other people was the most important part of my life? How would my church and my relationships change and grow?**



**Some people think that the law is the same as a heavy load. They don't understand that the law is about love and freedom.**

**THE LAW AND THE GOOD NEWS (Matthew 5:17, 18)**

Jesus gave a short, powerful explanation about His relationship to the law.

**In Matthew 5:17, 18, what does Jesus say about the law?**

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**The best way to grow our love for God is to think about Jesus dying for us on the cross.**

God's law tells us about His love. His law also shows us what is important to Him. God gave us His law to protect our relationships with Him and other people. We've all suffered because of sin, right? God gave us His law to help us live and grow in Him.

The law is all about the love of Jesus. Jesus said, "If you love me, obey my commands" (John 14:15, NIV). When we love Jesus with all our hearts, we will want to keep His law. When we understand His law, we will love Jesus more. More important, the best way to grow our love for God is to think about Jesus dying for us on the cross.

For sure, the Good News is connected closely with the law. We always must remember that the law can't save us. The law doesn't forgive us. God doesn't accept us because of the law. We need Jesus and His death on the cross for that. The law shows us why we need forgiveness. The law also helps us understand why we need Jesus to be our Substitute. The Good News about Jesus helps us to understand the law. The Good News is that Jesus died for our sins. He saves us with His obedience. He gives us His obedience as a gift. We get this gift when we have faith in Him.

**We believe that we should keep the law. But we also believe that the law can't save us. Read the following verses: Romans 3:28; Romans 4:13–16; Galatians 2:16; Galatians 3:13; and Philippians 3:9. How do these verses help us to understand Bible truth about the law?**

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## KNOWING AND DOING (Matthew 7:24–29)

In the Sermon on the Mountain, Jesus talks a lot about relationships: with Him and with other people. Jesus says something important at the end of His message: “ ‘Some people say to me, “Master, Master!” But not all of them will come into the kingdom of heaven. Only the people who obey God, my Father in heaven, will come in. They do what he wants them to do’ ” (Matthew 7:21, EASY).

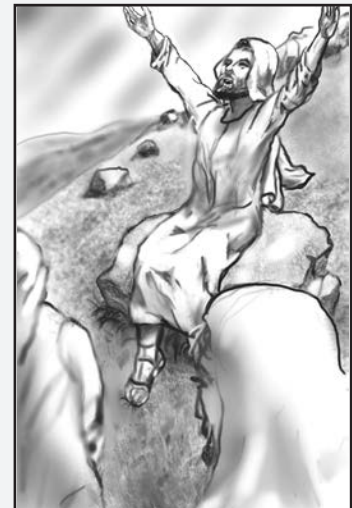
Jesus explains that some people will know **about** Him. But they will not really **know Him**. Of course, knowledge is important. The Bible tells us that God’s people can be destroyed because they don’t know God. God’s people also can be destroyed when they reject their knowledge of Him (Hosea 4:1, 6, 10). So, Bible truth is very important. But Bible truth must change us. Bible truth also must bring us close to God in our hearts. If Bible truth doesn’t do these things, then the knowledge isn’t useful.

Jesus said, “ ‘What does it mean for people to live with you for ever? It means that they know you, the one [the Father] who is the only true God. They also know me, Jesus Christ, the one [the Son] that you have sent’ ” (John 17:3, EASY). Jesus told us what we must do if we want to enter heaven. We must do everything that God wants us to do. We also must **know** God. We can’t do what God wants if we don’t know Him. If your children say that they love you, they will do what you want, right? (At least, most of the time!) Their actions and obedience show that they love and respect you very much. In the same way, when we love God, we’ll want to do what He expects us to do. We know there is nothing better for us to do! Our obedience to God comes from our love for Him. Both our obedience and love show the healthy and loving relationship we have with God.

**How does Jesus end His Sermon on the Mountain?  
Read Matthew 7:24–29 for the answer.**

Jesus’ messages can change our lives for the better. But first, our hearts must be open to Him. Then we can learn His perfect plan for our lives and follow it.

The secret to our having a close relationship with God is in the Bible. God offers this relationship to everyone. We must choose to accept it with faith. Then God will give us Jesus’ holy life in exchange for our sins. God also will give us the strength to live a holy life in Jesus.



**In the Sermon on the Mountain, Jesus talks a lot about relationships: with Him and with other people.**



**Satan's war with God was about His law.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Satan's war with God was about His law. So, we should not be surprised that many people misunderstand the topic of the law.

Some people in Jesus' day thought that He came to destroy the law. But that idea was false. Jesus explained the law and God's beautiful love. Jesus came to keep the law and its promises (Matthew 5:17, 18). Jesus' obedience to the law helped us to understand God better.

"When people respect the Bible, they can make God happy and do everything He wants. The Israelites were strong during King David's time and in the early part of King Solomon's time. That's because they honored the law. In the days of Elijah and Josiah, the people had faith in God's living word, the Bible. Because the people had faith, God changed many lives for the better. The Bible was the most precious gift that God gave the Israelites. Jeremiah also tried to help God's people to change their lives for the better. So, Jeremiah invited the people to follow God's Word."—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, pages 465, 466, adapted.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What do people today think that sin is? What are some of the popular ideas and beliefs in your community?
- ② Did you personally see sin destroy relationships with God and other people? What did the experience teach you?
- ③ Is obeying God's law easy or hard for you? What things in your life cause it to be this way?
- ④ As Seventh-day Adventists, our name shows that we respect the law. So, how do we avoid the danger of believing that we are saved with our own good behavior? (When you stand before God as Judge, what will you depend on to save you? Will it be your obedience to God's law? Or will you depend on Jesus' perfect life of obedience?)
- ⑤ How can knowledge (or no knowledge at all) change someone's relationship with God? Read Proverbs 24:3, 13, 14 for the answer.

## MIRACLE MONEY IN BRAZIL

Tarsis Gomes was a 19-year-old student. Every month his father gave him 50 Brazilian real. A real is Brazilian money, the same as a dollar. At that time, one real was worth one US dollar. Tarsis gave 5 real to God for tithe. Tithe is 10% of all the money we get. Then Tarsis paid 5 real for offering. He had 40 real left for school expenses.

That Sabbath, Tarsis gave tithe and offering in church. Then a friend asked Tarsis to help him buy new tires for his wheelchair. Tarsis said, "Sure, I'll give you 20 real."

Then a second friend, Jairo, also asked for help. Jairo sang in a group that visited churches in Brazil. The group needed money for lodging. Tarsis said, "I'll give you 20 real."

A few days later, Tarsis got in line at an ATM to get money to pay for school expenses. His sister, also a student, was with him. He remembered he promised 40 real to his two friends. He prayed, "Lord, how can I keep my promises to help my two friends? If I help them, I can't study. And how can I help anyone else if I don't get an education? What will Father say when I tell him I spent all the money he gave me for school expenses?"

Right then, Tarsis thought God said to him, "Look at the ATM."

Tarsis looked up and saw money sticking out of the ATM's cash slot! Someone walked up to the ATM and took out some money. But the money that God showed him stayed in the slot! Tarsis couldn't believe it. There were many people in line in front of him. Tarsis prayed, "Lord, if the next three people who use the ATM don't see that money, I'll know You want me to have it."

The next three people in line got money from the ATM. But no one took the money from the slot that God showed to Tarsis.

With a prayer, Tarsis got out of line and went to the ATM. He held out his hand and pulled a 50-real banknote out of the money slot. Everyone watched Tarsis in surprise. Later, his sister said he looked as if he pulled money out of the air!

Tarsis couldn't believe it. He was shaking. His sister came up to him and asked, "Where did you find that money?"

Tarsis said, "Right here. The money was just sticking out of the ATM."

His sister said, "No way. How come I didn't see it?"

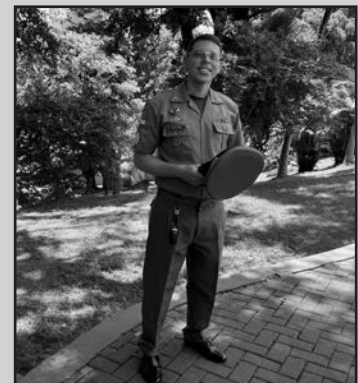
Today, Tarsis is a 42-year-old military police officer in Recife, Brazil. People ask Tarsis why God gave him only 50 real. Tarsis says, "Because I didn't help more people. God gave me what I needed to help the people I promised to help." The 50 real was exactly what Tarsis needed: 5 real for tithe, 5 real for offering, and 40 real for his friends. Tarsis said, "We don't become poor when we help people. God gives us what we need. Honor God!"

Watch a Youtube show about Tarsis at: [bit.ly/Tarsis-IS](http://bit.ly/Tarsis-IS).

## INSIDE *Story*



**Tarsis looked up and saw money sticking out of the ATM's cash slot!**



**Tarsis Gomes**