

# Does God “Allow” Us to Sin? Is Divorce a “Sin” That God “Allows”?

By Stephen Gola

Is divorce sin in itself? The answer is either, yes or no! There are no other answers.

Not understanding the correct answer to this question has caused great wars in the church and has caused many of God’s kids to be damaged needlessly. However, the war was not because of the divorce issue itself, but rather from a fundamental misunderstanding of what sin is – and what it is not. No longer will you have to struggle with the question of whether or not divorce is a sin in itself; as well as knowing what makes something a sin or not.

## Understanding What Sin is and What It is Not

There are four main questions that identify whether or not something is sin “by doing it” or “sin in itself.” There is a difference. We will start with the Ten Commandments (in Exodus 20:1-17) and work our way up the list.

As we go through the Commandments, we will ask ourselves the four vital questions, and, is there Scriptural precedence for that question:

1. Is this specific action ALWAYS a sin in itself no matter what?
2. Is this specific action NEVER a sin in itself no matter what?
3. Is this specific action ONLY SIN WHEN CERTAIN MOTIVES are the driving force behind the action?
4. Is this specific action EVER CONSIDERED A RIGHTEOUS ACT RATHER THAN SIN when certain motives are the driving force behind the action?

These questions are already set by Scriptural precedence. They will fully answer every situation of whether the action is sin or not.

## Identifying Something That is Always a Sin Verses Something That Can Be Sin

### **Always a Sin in Itself (Question #1)**

Let’s find out which of the Ten Commandments of God is always a sin by applying question #1.

**10. You shall not covet** your neighbor’s house, wife, male or female servants, ox (tractor), donkey (automobile), nor anything that is your neighbors. (Exodus 20:17.)

Is there ever a time that you can be justified by God in wanting to have the *very items or spouse* of someone you know? The answer is, no! Therefore, covetousness is ALWAYS a sin.

**9. You shall not bear false witness** against your neighbor. (Exodus 20:16.) (This Scripture is NOT speaking of “lying” in general, but rather, lying as a false testimony against someone.)

Is there ever a time that you can be justified by God for giving a lying testimony against someone you know? The answer is, no! Therefore, bearing false witness is ALWAYS a sin.

**7. You shall not commit adultery.** (Exodus 20:14.)

Is there ever a time that you can be justified by God for screwing someone’s spouse to help them “meet their needs”? The answer is, no! Therefore, adultery is ALWAYS a sin.

**8. You shall not steal.** (Exodus 20:15.)

Is there ever a time when you can be justified by God for taking something that is not yours? The answer is, no! Remember, we are looking for Scriptural precedence in every situation.

Are you getting the picture? These are examples of the first question answered: There are specific actions that are ALWAYS a sin in itself no matter what. The 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> commandments also fall into this same category.

### **Only a Sin When Certain Motives Are the Driving Force (Question #3)**

#### **6. You shall not murder. (Exodus 20:13.)**

Is there ever a time that you can be justified by God for murdering someone? Stop right there! Murder, is NOT the same as killing. Murder is the *motive* behind killing. It is the intent to harm (malice) or take life for your own selfish gain or sport. The answer is, yes, murder is ALWAYS a sin, but killing is NOT a sin in itself. If you hate your brother (or sister) you ARE a murderer, NOT a killer. (See 1John 3:15.)

Killing another human being has never been a sin in itself. You can kill someone out of self-defense, participating in war to defend a nation, or by accident. God even provided specified “cities of refuge” where a person can take refuge in if they were being pursued for a death they caused by accident. (See Joshua 20:1-6.) God does not hide sin!

This is the category in which the action of divorce is in.

Divorce and/or remarriage after a divorce have never been a sin in itself – ever. It has only been taught that way because of misunderstanding these truths.

When we accept a lie as truth, our conscience will convict us of “sin” even though the “sin” is not actually a sin but sin to US. This is Scriptural. Therefore what happens is that because we have accepted a lie as truth and then when we violate that “perceived truth,” it separates us from God – and it never was God in the first place, it was a lie believed as truth. Divorce has never been sin in itself. If divorce was a sin in itself, then God sinned when He divorced Israel.

Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and GIVEN HER A CERTIFICATE FOR DIVORCE. (Jeremiah 3:8a.)

We KNOW that God cannot sin, He only does righteous acts. Therefore when He divorced Israel, GOD DID A RIGHTEOUS ACT— because He could ONLY DO righteous acts – because HE IS RIGHTEOUS. Divorce can be a righteous or innocent act just as killing can be a righteous act in war or self defense. The third question applies: Is this specific action only sin WHEN CERTAIN MOTIVES are the driving force behind the action? The answer is, yes! Divorce in itself has NEVER been sin in itself. It is the UNRIGHTEOUS MOTIVE behind divorce that makes it a sin to THAT person.

### **Breaking a Commandment is Considered a Righteous Act With Certain Motives Behind it (Question #4)**

#### **4. Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy. Work six days to complete all of your work. But the seventh day, do no work. It is the Sabbath Day (of rest). (See Exodus 20:8-11.)**

Is there ever a time when you can be justified by God for working on the Sabbath Day? The answer is, yes! Jesus recognized the precedence set by King David and the Priests as set forth in Matthew 12:1-8. As Jesus and His disciples were walking through the grain fields on the Sabbath (the day set aside to rest from the weeks activities),

...His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. And when the Pharisees [the religious leaders] saw it, they said to Him, ‘Look, your disciples are doing WHAT IS NOT LAWFUL to do on the Sabbath!’ (Matthew 12:1-2.) (Also see 1Samuel 21:1-6, 2Samuel 8:17.)

Jesus immediately recognized that the Pharisees did not understand that there are certain commandments that when violated through specific (righteous) motives, are NOT considered sin, but rather, A RIGHTEOUS ACT.

Coming back to question #4 in how to identify whether or not an action is a sin in itself: Is this specific action EVER CONSIDERED A RIGHTEOUS ACT RATHER THAN SIN when certain motives are the driving force behind the action?

Jesus said to them,

“Have you not read (the Scriptural precedence) what [King] David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread WHICH WAS NOT LAWFUL FOR HIM TO EAT, nor for those who were with him, BUT ONLY FOR THE PRIESTS? Or have you not read in the law (of Moses) that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple PROFANE THE SABBATH, AND ARE?” (Matthew 12:3-5.)

Even though King David “entered the house of God and ate the showbread WHICH WAS NOT LAWFUL FOR HIM TO EAT, nor for those who were with him, BUT ONLY FOR THE PRIESTS” God did not count it as sin but a righteous act. Why? Because they violated the temple of God and the Sabbath Day OUT OF NECESSITY, not selfishness or evil.

### **A Righteous Lie?**

Is there precedence in the Bible that if someone lies to protect another person from bodily harm or lies to protect someone in times of persecution, that it is considered a “righteous act”? Again, question #4: Is this specific action EVER CONSIDERED A RIGHTEOUS ACT RATHER THAN SIN when certain motives are the driving force behind the action?

Remember Rahab the harlot hid the spies from the King in Jericho?

Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, “Go, view the land, especially Jericho.” So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there. And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, “Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country.” So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, “Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country.” Then the woman TOOK THE TWO MEN AND HID THEM. So she said, “Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. And it happened as the gate was being shut, when it was dark, that the men went out. WHERE THE MEN WENT I DO NOT KNOW; pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them.” (BUT SHE HAD BROUGHT THEM UP TO THE ROOF AND HIDDEN THEM WITH THE STALKS OF FLAX, WHICH SHE HAD LAID IN ORDER ON THE ROOF.) Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the city wall; she dwelt on the wall. (Joshua 2:1-6,15.)

The next thing we know is that Rahab is listed amongst the faith hero's of the Bible. Yes, a “faith” hero.

By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies WITH PEACE. (Hebrews 11:31.)

Meaning, Rahab joined with them in their actions and lied to cover-up their whereabouts.

So what did this “righteous lie” buy Rahab? Salmon, one of the spies, married her. They had a son and they named him Boaz. Yes, that's the same Boaz that Ruth, Naomi's sister in law, married. And it continues: Boaz and Ruth had a son, and they named him Obed. Obed had a son and named him Jesse. Yes, this is the same Jesse who is King David's Father; which makes Rahab, King David's great, great, great grandmother. What did that “righteous lie” buy? It gave God a man – King David – in which whose lineage the Messiah (Jesus the Son of God) could come to earth to pay for our sins and rise from the dead for our justification. Who would have ever thought, that breaking one commandment with a right motive behind it can change the world?

### **Specific Actions That Are Never Sin (Question #2)**

There are specific actions that are NEVER sin in themselves. Do you recall what the Scriptures say about the Fruit of the Spirit (in Galatians 5:22-23) which is Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness and self control? It says, “Against such THERE IS NO LAW.” There is no law of God against you in acting in such manner.

Romans 13:10 says that “LOVE does no harm (ill) to a neighbor.” And what is “love”? The previous two verses (V8-9) say that loving another person is “fulfilling the Law.” What law? The Ten Commandments of the Law of Moses cited in those two verses. Therefore, the Ten Commandments are also never sin in themselves. Nobody will ever be harmed by those actions – ever!

## Does God “Allow” Us to Sin? Is Divorce a Sin That God “Allows”?

Because of the premise of wrong translations and teachings that “God hates *divorce*,” (rather than it’s true meaning), it has set the stage in Christianity and the world that has ended in great confusion and needless broken lives. (See teaching on Matthew 19 at <http://www.divorcehope.com/bookofmatthew19biblestudy.htm>.)

It should not be necessary here to point out the truth that ALL relationship failures – whether in marriage, being single or with God, is a direct result of SELFISHNESS on the part of one or more partners. Divorce has never been sin in itself, nor is it the real issue; an unwillingness to “die to self” is!

Let’s assume that God truly does “hate” divorce. This will reveal just how un-Biblical and against His nature this belief is. If God truly did “hate” *divorce* (rather than the actual Greek / Hebrew meaning: to separate or put away) and makes concessions for divorce in “specific cases,” that would mean that God makes “concessions” for sins that He “hates.”

It states in Proverbs 6:16-19 that there are “six things the Lord *hates*, yes, seven are an *abomination to Him* (meaning, God doesn’t just hate them, He abhors – utterly detests them).” And then it lists them:

1. A proud look,
2. A lying tongue,
3. Hands that shed innocent blood,
4. A heart that devises wicked plans,
5. Feet that are swift to running to evil,
6. A false witness who speaks lies,
7. And one who sows discord among brethren.

Does God hate these seven sinful actions? Yes! Does He make concessions for any of them so they will not be considered sin but rather a “righteous act”? Remember the four vital questions to see if something is sin in itself or not. Therefore, the answer is, no! These actions are ALWAYS sin in themselves.

If God “hated” divorce then there would never be a concession on divorce – ever! It would ALWAYS be sin. Because God divorced Israel, we KNOW that God did not sin and divorce is not a sin in itself. But rather, God hates “separating” (putting away) from your spouse and marrying another without ever getting a divorce. God hates for the husband to hang the wife in a limbo state. He detests it!

## Is it The Certain Action That is Sin? Or, The *Motive* Behind That Certain Action?

Just as it is the right or wrong motive behind most actions that makes them sin or not, it is no different with divorce. Again, the Tenth Commandment says, “You shall not covet...” (Exodus 20:17). We have established that this is always a sin. But is it the things themselves that we covet that are wrong, such as nice clothes, a good car, a decent place to live, healthy food to eat, or is it the *motive* that says, “I want what YOU have”?

Back to Proverbs 6:16-19 which mentions things the Lord hates, such as:

**“a proud look.”** Is it the “look” that’s wrong, or the perverted motive that exalts self behind the look?

**“a lying tongue.”** Is it the “spoken words” that are bad or the heart motive to cover up truth? (The Hebrew word for “lying” in this verse means: to cheat, implying deceit, as in a sham – an untruth – without cause.)

**“hands that shed innocent blood.”** Is it the “act of self defense” by killing another person, or the manifestation of hate to murder for a self-gain or sport?

**“one who sows discord among brethren.”** Is it the “sowing of seeds,” or is it that the seeds are seeds of division instead of seeds of unity?

Therefore, if God “allows” us to do a specific action in which He does not consider it to be sin, it was NEVER a sin in itself to begin with.

## The Real Cause of Divorce

Because these truths of divorce (and other actions) are not understood and taught, the whole foundation of our decision-making process is faulty irregardless of whether some of the outcomes are good. God does work all things out for the good when we ask. However, He does not expect us to stay as children in our ignorance causing great messes in the Church just so He can “clean them up.” God expects us to grow and mature in understanding of His heart which His Word reflects.

We know all too well that divorce is one of the most painful things a person can experience in life. It damages families and individuals some times for a lifetime, and normally causes great financial hardship and even serious health problems. And we know that most all divorces are rooted in selfishness on the part of one or both spouses. However, we also know that divorce in itself is not sin nor has it ever been.

In most cases, divorce is NOT the answer to a failing relationship – dying to one’s selfish motives and ambitions is. If BOTH partners in a marriage relationship will not CHOOSE to “die to self” as the Scriptures command, the relationship cannot succeed. It takes both partners to participate in a relationship. It takes both partners to die to self. (We expound on this in our teaching: How to Save My Marriage at <http://www.divorcehope.com/savemymarriagerelationships.htm>.)

ANYONE can have a great marriage relationship – all it takes is TWO people willing to die to self. This is a process. And then allowing the Lord to change your heart with newness of life – His life. Again, this is a process.

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(All Scriptures taken from the King James Version Bible or the New King James version.)

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