

Mortal Sin Vs. Venial Sin Bible Study



The Return of the Prodigal Son - Murillo (1667-1670 AD)¹

LUKE 15:21-24 21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; 23 and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; 24 for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to make merry.

Welcome to this Scripture study on differing magnitudes of sin, and how sin affects our relationship with God. Let's begin this study with a word of prayer.

**Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful;
And enkindle in them the fire of Your love.
Send forth Your Spirit and they shall be created.
And You shall renew the face of the earth.**

Let Us Pray . . .

**O God, Who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful,
grant that by the gift of the same Spirit, we may always be truly wise and ever rejoice
in His consolation, through Christ Our Lord. Amen.**

**Hail Mary, Full of grace the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.**

¹ *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (c. 1667-1670) by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo is an oil on canvas painting, now in the [National Gallery of Art](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Return_of_the_Prodigal_Son_%28Murillo%29) in [Washington, D.C.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington,_D.C.),. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Return_of_the_Prodigal_Son_%28Murillo%29

Notes

Introduction

In this study we will differentiate between sins that **kill** the life of grace (**mortal sin**), in contrast to sins that **wound** the life of grace (**venial sin**). Both types of sins are bad, but mortal sin clearly has worse consequences.²

We will do a brief catechesis on sin then move right into catechesis and Scripture on mortal versus venial sin. We will also review the role of repentance in this section. We will see “mortal sin” requires three things: Grave matter (extreme bad stuff), full knowledge, and full consent.

We will look at the concept of **mitigating factors** (subjectively LESS responsible for your sins) and **compounding factors** (subjectively MORE responsible for your sins). We will see how this is exemplified in the concept of: “to whom much is given, much will be required.”

There are some Old Testament points to be made here with regards to sin, but due to time constraints, I posted the information for you if you want to read it on your own but we won’t do it as part of this study.

Then we will move on to some other New Testament Scriptural teachings on mortal sin especially as it concerns objections raised against the existence of mortal sin. We will look at the James 2:10 objection among others.

Since mortal sin includes “grave matter” many people want to know real-world examples of “grave matter” so I included many examples on Table 1 (which we probably won’t have time to go over as a group).

We will then close with discussion and prayer.

² I will frequently use the NIV Protestant translation in many verses here in this study, because our friends who use predominantly the NIV asked for this study. Some passages will be from the RSVCE though for convenience.

Brief Catechesis And New Covenant Scripture On Mortal Sin And Venial Sin

Before we get into mortal vs. venial sin, first let's define sin.

Sin is an "utterance, a deed, or a desire³ **contrary to the eternal law**" as St. Augustine has pointed out⁴. Some aspects of sin are a mystery. There are different magnitudes of sin (some are worse than others).

CCC 1849 Sin is an offense against reason, truth, and right conscience; it is failure in genuine love for God and neighbor caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods. It wounds the nature of man and injures human solidarity. It has been defined as "an utterance, a deed, or a desire contrary to the eternal law."¹²¹

There are many classifications of sin. Too many to try to unpack here in a study like this.

But you may want to come back to this catechetical segment later and **read on your own**:
"The nine ways to be an accessory to sin".

The nine ways to be an accessory to sin

1. By counsel (telling someone to go and sin)
2. By command (abusing power commanding someone to sin)
3. By consent (approval of someone else's idea to commit sin)
4. By provocation (by urging someone to sin)
5. By praise or flattery (approval of someone else's action of committed sin)
6. By concealment ("Don't worry. I won't tell anyone if you do that.")
7. By partaking ("Let me take you to the abortion place to help you do this")
8. By silence ("Don't worry. I won't tell anyone now that you DID that⁵.")
9. By defense of the sinful action (He's an old curmudgeon and deserved to have a nail out in his tire")

Mortal sin is sin that MORTALLY WOUNDS (kills) the life of the grace of Christ in you. (Cuts you off from the "Vine"—Jesus).

Venial sin INJURES the life of the grace of Christ in you.

All sin (mortal and venial) is bad.

³ "Desires" should be distinguished. A willful **desire can be sinful** that comes out of the heart of man (i.e. Matthew 15:19³). A **desire** in the sense of only a temptation **is not sinful**. These come from **the flesh**, from **the world**, and from **the devil**. This temptation and desire is not in and of itself a sin (for example sinless Jesus was "hungry" [Luke 4:2] and tempted over this desire by the devil—see Luke 4:1-13).

⁴ See **Compendium** of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (often just called "**The Compendium**") section 392.

⁵ "Telling" others about the sin or sins of another person requires discernment. There needs to be truth and even with that there needs to be a good reason to tell others. For example, the Gospel writers had good reasons to tell us about Judas's sins (no sin of detraction from the Gospel writers revealing Judas's sins, as there were good reasons to do this **in this case**).

CCC 2477 *Respect for the reputation* of persons forbids every attitude and word likely to cause them unjust injury.²⁷⁸ He becomes guilty:

- of *rash judgment* who, even tacitly, assumes as true, without sufficient foundation, the moral fault of a neighbor;

- of *detraction* who, without objectively valid reason, discloses another's faults and failings to persons who did not know them;²⁷⁹

- of *calumny* who, by remarks contrary to the truth, harms the reputation of others and gives occasion for false judgments concerning them.

Jesus does not will or want the destruction of anyone (2nd Peter 3:9, Ezekiel 18:23) but He also has to allow you to **freely choose** Him (He doesn't "force" discipleship).

With mortal sin, you **freely CHOOSE** to say a definitive "NO!" to your special saving relationship with God that you once had, cutting yourself off from the Vine—Jesus.

So the people in John 15 who do not "abide" or "remain" (NIV) in Jesus who were "already made clean", **freely CHOOSE** to leave Jesus on their own (we must believe 2nd Peter 3:9 AND John 15:2. Not an either/or but a yes/and. We believe ALL of Scripture).

JOHN 15:1-6 (NIV) 1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch **in me** that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. 3 You are **already clean** because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 **Remain in me**, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; **it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.** 5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; **apart from me you can do nothing.** 6 If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is **thrown away** and **withers**; such branches are picked up, **thrown into the fire and burned.**

The people who were IN THE VINE (In Jesus) but did not (by GRACE) bear fruit, God "**takes away**" or "**cuts off**" from the Vine (Jesus). Apart from Jesus, this person then "witheres" (they spiritually **die**). Left in this state, these people are eventually gathered, "thrown into the fire and burned."

And they cannot just "pray" to God to re-establish their relationship as they have LOST their proverbial "phone connection" to God.

1st JOHN 5:16b There is sin which is mortal; **I do not say that one is to pray for that.**

Q: Yikes! So is the person who commits mortal sin, destined for Hell?

A: By no means. God "**MAY**" give this person graces ("Godly grief") to REPENT. But they cannot "repent" on their own. Even their repentance is a GRACE that is INITIATED and helped through by God. Once this guy has this GRACE given to him to repent, he MUST RESPOND accordingly.

2nd TIMOTHY 2:24-26 24 And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to every one, an apt teacher, forbearing, 25 correcting his opponents with gentleness. **God may perhaps grant that they will repent** and come to know the truth, 26 and they may escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

CCC 1861 a, c Mortal sin If it is not redeemed by **repentance** and God's forgiveness, it causes exclusion from Christ's kingdom and the eternal death of hell, for our freedom has the power to make choices for ever, with no turning back. . . .

So he/she NEEDS to be **gifted with a repentance from Christ.**

Then he needs to accept that gift of repentance (see CCC 1864⁶) to get back into a state of grace (back into the “Vine”—Jesus).

For Catholic Christians (who have been “given much”) . . . repentance from mortal sin necessitates going to Confession. There are some rare exceptions to that requirement⁷.

THEN AFTER appropriate repentance, this restored person can pray and fast again in the way that he is supposed to (re-connected to “the Vine” because the proverbial “phone line” to God has been re-established—ALSO see Isaiah 58:3a to see God refusing to “see” fasting until repentance).

2nd CORINTHIANS 7:10 10 For godly grief produces a **repentance that leads to salvation** and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death.

In the Old Testament, people **had grace**, but only in the sense of gifts and God’s favor.

In the New Covenant, we have MORE Graces. We have gifts and God’s favor, but we ALSO have Jesus HIMSELF and the whole **Trinitarian LIFE put into us** through His work on Calvary, when we are born again (Baptized into Christ Jesus).

People of the Old Testament did not have the GRACE of Jesus’ work on Calvary yet and therefore did not have the Divine Life dwelling within them in **the way Christians do**.

Since mortal sin is a cutting yourself off of that Divine Life, strictly speaking, you won’t see this in the Old Testament in the same way (you cannot be cut-off from something [someone] that you did not have in the first place). So keep that in mind as we study in the Old Testament.

We need to look instead for shadows or prefigurements of mortal sin in the Old Testament (i.e. exiled, being cut-off from your people, or even death). This is not to say that everyone in the Old Testament eventually went to Heaven or Hell. God judges them all perfectly with respect to THEIR gifts.

In the Old Testament people got judged by a different standard. That’s WHY Jesus says: You have heard (in the Old Covenant), you shall not commit adultery. But I say to YOU (in the New Covenant when you get my LIFE IN YOU) you can’t even LOOK lustfully at a woman (see Matthew 5:27-28 for specifics).

The saved people of the Old Covenant had to mysteriously await (in “Abrahams’ Bosom”—See Luke 16:22-23) Christ’s coming to open the Gates of Heaven for those Old Testament saved people.

These perfect and individual judgment standards should not surprise us, as we see even among New Covenant Christians, we get judged individually according to for example, individual expectations. James 3:1 is a prime example of that:

⁶ **CCC 1864** “Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the **blasphemy against the Spirit** will not be forgiven.”¹³⁶ There are no limits to the mercy of God, but **anyone who deliberately refuses to accept his mercy by repenting**, rejects the forgiveness of his sins and the salvation offered by the Holy Spirit.¹³⁷ Such **hardness of heart** can lead to final impenitence and eternal loss.

⁷ “Usually” because sometimes for example on their deathbed, they cannot go to Confession because they are dying and too weak or unconscious to go to Confession. The “Anointing of the Sick” (seen in James 5:14-15) is another channel of Christ’s grace in such situations (again Catholic Christians have been given “much”).

JAMES 3:1 1 Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, for you know that **we who teach shall be judged with greater strictness.**

So mortal sin for this study **pertains to Christians** who **choose** to destroy the life of the grace of supernatural charity they were given when they were born again in Baptism (along with supernaturalizing their faith and hope). Let's look at some more catechesis on mortal and venial sin . . .

CCC 1854 Sins are rightly evaluated according to their gravity. The distinction between mortal and venial sin, already evident in Scripture,¹²⁹ became part of the tradition of the Church. It is corroborated by human experience.

And as we mentioned earlier, mortal sin destroys or kills (that's why it is called "mortal") the life of grace in a person who had it. Venial sin wounds the life of grace in a person who had it.

CCC 1855 *Mortal sin* destroys charity in the heart of man by a grave violation of God's law; it turns man away from God, who is his ultimate end and his beatitude, by preferring an inferior good to him.

Venial sin allows charity to subsist, even though it offends and wounds it.

1st JOHN 5:16-17 16 If any one sees his brother committing what is **NOT a mortal sin**, he will ask, and God will give him life for those whose sin is **not mortal**.

There is sin which is mortal;

I do not say that one is to pray for that.

17 All wrongdoing is sin, but **there is sin which is not mortal**.

Let's rephrase that for a moment using catechetical language so it becomes even more obvious . . .

If any one sees his brother committing **a venial sin**,
he will ask (God in prayer), and God will give him life for those whose sin is **venial**.

(You and/or that sinner himself/herself can pray and fast with effectiveness to heal and remedy that sinner's relationship with God and others due to that venial sin.)

There is sin which is mortal;

I do not say that one is to pray for that.

(That sinner can't pray [or fast] to remedy his lost relationship with God due to the effects of mortal sin. He has purposefully turned his back against God. He is in NEED of repentance **first**.)

All wrongdoing is sin, but **there is sin which is venial**.

In order to commit a mortal sin three things must be present:

CCC 1857 For a *sin* to be *mortal*, three conditions must together be met: "Mortal sin is sin whose object is grave matter and which is also committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent."¹³¹

Mortal Sin

- **Grave Matter**
- **Full knowledge** (“knowledge of the sinful character of the act, of its opposition to God's law.”)
- **Deliberate Consent** (“a consent sufficiently deliberate to be a personal choice”)

Sacred Scripture & the CCC gives us some examples of sins that constitute “grave matter”. See Table 1.

Compounding and Mitigating Circumstances With Sins “To Whom Much Is Given, Much Is Required” (Luke 12:48)

I want to say a word here about mitigating and compounding circumstances with sin.

First let’s discuss mitigating circumstances. In the Old Covenant era, pagans were of course given less gifts and graces than the Jews. Listen to Jesus’ talk to (pagan) Pontius Pilate:

JOHN 19:10-11 10 Pilate therefore said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" 11 Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore he who delivered me to you has the greater sin."

This mitigation and compounding is in part due to the gifts (“**power**” “**given you from above**”) they have been given by God. Responsibility for sin, **mitigated for Pilate, compounded for** the Jewish leaders like Caiaphas (had “the greater sin”—John 19:11). **Addiction** can mitigate sin culpability (i.e. see CCC 2352c).

Not only the gifts given but how you respond to those grace gifts given

MATTHEW 5:19 19 Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

To whom much is given, much is REQUIRED, so it is even WORSE for the **Christian** to sin (who has been given MUCH) than a guy who has never had Christ or “known better”.

LUKE 12:48b (NIV) From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

For example, St. Peter talks about people who “knew: Jesus as their personal “lord and savior” and decide to cut themselves off of Jesus despite “knowing” Him. The results are hair raising

2nd PETER 2:20-22 (NIV) 20 If they have **escaped the corruption of the world** by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and **overcome**, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. 21 It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, then to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. 22 Of them the proverbs are true: “A dog returns to its vomit,” and, “A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud.”

They were “born again” or knew Jesus as “Lord and Savior”, but they were (by choice) “overcome”⁸.

I also want to say something from the Catechism concerning the people who do NOT KNOW better (those that have an uninformed or “ignorant” conscience).

They will not be “let off the hook by God” at their judgment if they WILLFULLY remain uninformed either by their laziness in their prayer, study and/or blowing-off other ways to seek truth. A lazy slothful ignorance has consequences too.

CCC 1791 This ignorance can often be imputed to personal responsibility. This is the case when a man “takes little trouble to find out what is true and good, or when conscience is by degrees almost blinded through the habit of committing sin.”⁵⁹ In such cases, **the person is culpable for the evil he commits.**

CCC 1801 Conscience can remain in ignorance or make erroneous judgments. Such ignorance and errors are not always free of guilt.

This is WHY it is so important to carefully and prayerfully form your conscience.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 12:36⁹ that we must “render account” for “every wrong word we utter”.

At this point I just want to say a word about us “rendering an account”. The “account” due to sin against God is infinite because it is against God who is infinite.

But sins against different people can change the magnitude of the sin too.

A big brother can get away with hitting his little brother, but he is in a lot bigger trouble if he hits his mother. Society knows that too. When he gets his driver’s license if he gets pulled over for speeding and hits a cop he will get a real awakening.

But sins against God “keep on giving” because it is against ALL of God and God is infinite.

Therefore, we NEED an INFINITE SACRIFICE to REALLY atone for our sins. God is perfect in His justice and thus cannot merely ignore your sins. (Apart from Christ’s sacrifice and us IN CHRIST, that would mean eternal punishment on an account we could NEVER PAY. Praise God to be IN Jesus Christ!)

Never-the-less, there is still an ACCOUNT or WAGE we MUST PAY for our sins. Jesus says so. The most obvious example for this is found in Romans 6:23 where we are told the “wages of sin is death”.¹⁰ We all die. Christians die. Even tiny babies “who **did not sin** by breaking a command as did Adam”¹¹ die.

This account that WE ALL MUST PAY (John 15:2b) to differing degrees is called TEMPORAL punishment (not eternal punishment but “temporal”).

⁸ They were born again or “knew” Jesus. But not all born again people are among “the elect”. “**The Elect**” (from God’s perspective as God is outside of the realm of time) are the people that eventually will (by GRACE) choose to go to Heaven. “**The Reprobate**” (again, from God’s perspective) are the people that will choose to go to Hell.

⁹ **MATTHEW 12:36-37** 36 I tell you, on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter; 37 for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

¹⁰ **ROMANS 6:23** 23 For **the wages of sin is death**, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

¹¹ See Romans 5:14 (NIV).

If you remain tethered to Christ, you (along WITH Christ) will be able to pay those TEMPORAL accounts. You could never, on your own, pay an ETERNAL account.

Let's look at a guy in the Gospels who has different situations applied and differing sins (including mortal and venial sins) and see how he gets justice applied perfectly tailored to him from Jesus ("The Master"). We will use the NIV translation here for this. We will see four scenarios.

- A SERVANT (Christian) of the Master (Jesus) who does well and ends up in Heaven.
- A SERVANT (Christian) of the Master (Jesus) who utterly abuses his gifts and ends up in Hell (with the "unbelievers").
- A SERVANT (Christian) of the Master (Jesus) who abuses his gifts but to a lesser degree than the guy who ends up in Hell. He does NOT get put with the unbelievers. But he gets a "severe beating" (a brutal Purgatory).
- A person (Master-Servant relationship here? We are not told.) who "does things deserving punishment" but this guy **doesn't KNOW much**. He gets a "light beating" and is not described as being put with the unbelievers.
- And Jesus finishes it up by reminding us, to whom much is given, much is required.

Here in Luke 12, Jesus is talking about "the Master" (that's Jesus) and His "servants". And a person who is a servant, whom the Master puts over His other servants ("manager"). If he is a faithful and wise manager, he goes to Heaven (in charge of all God's possessions).

But suppose "the servant" (not a different servant) of the Master (notice he is explicitly described as a "servant" of the Master) abuses those under him and begins to eat and gets drunk while abusing those under him, he is assigned to a place "with the UNBELIEVERS" ("unbelievers" don't go to Heaven. Without faith it is impossible to please God—Hebrews 11:6). This is a mortal sin. He who was a "servant" of "the Master" sinned seriously (and will lose his benefits from "the Master").

But "the servant" who "**knows** better, but disobeys, but doesn't eat and get drunk and beat the menservants and maidservants, pays a severe account (temporal punishment—a long hard Purgatory). This servant of the Master is not described as being put with "the unbelievers".

But one who "**does not know**", but still "does things deserving punishment", and also doesn't eat and get drunk and beat the menservants and maidservants, pays a diminished account. This servant of the Master is not described as being put with "the unbelievers" either.

LUKE 12:40, 42b-48 40 You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."42 . . . "Who then is the faithful and wise **manager**, whom **the master puts in charge of his servants** to give them their food allowance at the proper time? 43 It will be good for **the servant** whom the master finds doing so when he returns. 44 I tell you the truth, he will put him **in charge of all his possessions**.

45 But suppose **the servant** says to himself, 'My master is taking a long time in coming,' and he then begins to beat the men-servants and maidservants and to eat and drink and get drunk.

46 The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. **He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.**

47 **"The servant"** who knows the master's will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants **will be beaten with many blows**.

48 But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment **will be beaten with few blows**.

From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

"To whom much is given, much will be required" ("everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked"). Jesus teaches us at least part of the same principle in John 9:41.¹²

Old Testament Types Of Mortal Sin

Due to time constraints, we will skip this section, but I am leaving it here so **you can read it on your own**. For our study we will **go to the next section on page 13**.

Remember; the existence of mortal sin at least in a **New** Covenant sense, assumes we have the life of Christ dwelling in us (that we are Christians).

The **Old** Testament people did not have this, but they had some life of grace in the sense of favor. Therefore, the Old Testament people killed their own life of grace in other ways though.

Let's go back for a moment to Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve had a special relationship with God (but not the Trinitarian life we are given at Baptism which flows from the work of Christ on Calvary). They LOST that special relationship with God and killed the life of grace that they were given (in the day you eat of it [the forbidden fruit], you will DIE."—Genesis 2:16-17).

The Fathers of the Church knew that this "Fall" triggered in motion Christ's coming and even GREATER GRACES than Adam and Eve had (but not all at once). That's WHY they referred to "The Fall" as **"O happy fault . . . which gained for us so great a Redeemer"**—see CCC 412.

¹² **JOHN 9:41** 41 Jesus said to them, **"If you were blind, you would have no guilt**; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains.

So "mortal sin" includes grave matter, with full knowledge and consent **in the objective order**. But all sin is also evaluated by God, in light of a person's gifts (or lack of) **in the subjective order** (which is part of WHY we can and **we must judge acts**, but **we cannot judge souls**).

CCC 1936 On coming into the world, man is not equipped with everything he needs for developing his bodily and spiritual life. He needs others. Differences appear tied to age, physical abilities, intellectual or moral aptitudes, the benefits derived from social commerce, and the distribution of wealth.⁴¹ **The "talents" are not distributed equally.**⁴²

For more on differing gifts and a Scriptural example of mortal sin, see Matthew 25:13-30 on your own. You will see how "servants" of "the Master" (the Master is Jesus and these are his SERVANTS, not satan's servants) and how one of them does not carry out his "talents" in accord with the Master's will and gets thrown into the darkness where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth (he gets condemned).

MATTHEW 25:30 30 And cast the worthless **servant** into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.'

Since in God's plan when we in the New Covenant are regenerated, our SOULS have the Trinitarian Life in them, but our BODIES are still left with many of the effects of The Fall including the DESIRE or yearning to sin¹³. (That desire to sin gets remedied when we get our new and glorified bodies back at the end of time¹⁴.)

We too in the New Covenant, have special gifts, but not to the extent of Adam and Eve had by their NATURE before they sinned. Our great gifts in the New Covenant come via GRACE. We get the grace of the Trinity living within us!

Since Adam and Eve were given such special gifts by their **nature**, and to whom much is given much is REQUIRED (Luke 12:48), MORE was expected of Adam and Eve in that sense.

Consequently, this ONE SIN (eating of the forbidden fruit) for Adam and Eve resulted in **their immediate killing the life of whatever grace they had** (which again, was **not** the grace of Christ from His work on Calvary that we receive, but a foreshadow of what we receive) and injuring their nature to the point that their bodies had **immediately began the decay toward death too** (because sin has negative effects on our bodies too)!

An excellent Old Testament summary of many of these principles can be seen in Ezekiel 18. . . .

EZEKIEL 18:21-25 (NIV) 21 "But if a wicked person turns away from all the sins they have committed and keeps all my decrees and does what is just and right, that person will surely live; they will not die. 22 None of the offenses they have committed will be remembered against them. Because of the righteous things they have done, they will live. 23 Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign Lord. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?

24 "But if a righteous person **turns from their righteousness** (notice they CAN "turn from their righteousness") and commits sin and does the same detestable things the wicked person does, will they live? None of the righteous things that person has done will be remembered. Because of the unfaithfulness they are guilty of and because of the sins they have committed, **they will die**. (Continued in footnotes¹⁵.)

For more on the Old Testament in this context, please see Table 4 (ask Joan for this electronically if you want this).

Extremely interesting fact. Sin affects our bodies too. I have some Biblical examples of avoidance of sin being associated with slowing of aging (in Caleb) and how sin itself can cause sickness and death. Please see Table 2 for more details.

¹³ The experts call this draw or yearning to sin (associated with our fallen nature), concupiscence. Concupiscence is not sin in and of itself, but it can lead to sin. To see this progression laid out, please see James 1:14-15.

¹⁴ **REVELATION 21:1, 5** 1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. . . . 5 And he who sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new."

¹⁵ **EZEKIEL 18:25-30 (NIV)** ²⁵ "Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' Hear, you Israelites: Is my way unjust? Is it not your ways that are unjust? ²⁶ **If a righteous person turns from their righteousness and commits sin, they will die for it; because of the sin they have committed they will die.** ²⁷ But if a wicked person turns away from the wickedness they have committed and does what is just and right, they will save their life. ²⁸ Because they consider all the offenses they have committed and turn away from them, that person will surely live; they will not die. ²⁹ Yet the Israelites say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' Are my ways unjust, people of Israel? Is it not your ways that are unjust?

³⁰ "Therefore, you Israelites, **I will judge each of you according to your own ways**, declares the Sovereign Lord. **Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall.**

Objections To New Covenant Teachings On Mortal Sin

Error Of "ALL SIN" Is Mortal

Some people will point to Adam and Eve and wrongly conclude **all sin is mortal** because Adam and Eve's sin was mortal.

Remember. To whom much is given much is required (Luke 12:48). So in our Fallen Nature, God is fully aware of our weakened fallen state. We have less of a nature than Adam and Eve to start out with (but Jesus more than compensates by giving us GRACE and His Divine Life in us which flows from His work on Calvary).

So Adam and Eve's sin is not completely applicable to us because we start out with a FALLEN NATURE. Adam and Eve did not start out with a Fallen Nature. So their Original Sin, would be mortal.

Objection: "Whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. So ALL sin is mortal."

JAMES 2:10 10 For **whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.**

Answer: First of all you cannot say: "I'll take James 2:10, but I am going to ignore 1st John 5:16-17¹⁶." Since the Holy Spirit is the primary author of Sacred Scripture, and God cannot tell lies and/or falsehoods, **BOTH passages MUST be believed, affirmed, and harmonized.**

Second of all, Catholic Christians admit they are sinners with Original Sin and almost always committed sins¹⁷. But remember. Mortal and venial sin concerns not only sinning, but the MAGNITUDE or gravity of sin (see CCC 1854) and possible mitigating factors (such as "knowing" or "not knowing").

NOT JAMES 2:10 For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it **to the SAME DEGREE of guilt because SINS are all of the SAME MAGNITUDE.**

Objections To New Covenant Teachings On Mortal Sin

Error Of "ALL SIN" Is Venial

Some people insist that for the Christian, ALL SIN is venial. If a saved person begins to murder, rape, rob etc. the excuse is . . . "Well **he is merely backsliding** but he is saved anyway."

¹⁶ **1st JOHN 5:16-17** 16 If any one sees his brother committing what is **NOT a mortal sin**, he will ask, and God will give him life for those whose sin is **not mortal**.

There is sin which is mortal; I do not say that one is to pray for that.

¹⁷ All wrongdoing is sin, but **there is sin which is not mortal**.

¹⁷ Adam and Eve are exceptions to Original Sin. Jesus and Mary are exceptions to both original and committed sins. Romans 5:14 reminds us that there are some people that have not sinned like unto Adam too. He is almost certainly talking about exceptions of infants and people who are profoundly mentally retarded from birth who cannot COMMIT sins.

ROMANS 5:14 (NIV) 14 Nevertheless, death reigned from the time Adam to the time of Moses, even over **those who did not sin by breaking a command**, as did Adam who was a pattern of the one to come.

Or

. . . “Well this guy never REALLY KNEW Jesus in the first place.”

This teaching DENIES the Scriptures that you can be IN THE VINE and still be cut off and “thrown into the fire”.

It also DENIES you can “know” Jesus as your personal “Lord and Savior” and get “entangled in” the world “**and overcome**”. (This is “the sin of presumption.” The sin of presumption is the sin of thinking you could NOT possibly fall out of favor with God no matter what you do. St. John the Baptist railed against the sin of presumption with some of the Pharisees in Matthew 3¹⁸ who thought they also could not fall out of favor with God because of their racial/ethnic benefits (descendants of Abraham) in being among “God’s chosen people”.)

Let’s go back to 2nd Peter 2, this time as an example of a person who KNEW Jesus as Lord and Savior (he is saved), gets entangled in the world (he is in venial sin), and then “overcome” (he is now in mortal sin and killed the life of grace). This guy has not only killed the life of grace, but he killed the life of grace from a guy who has been given MUCH. So his punishment will be worse.

2nd PETER 2:20-22 (NIV) 20 If they have **escaped the corruption of the world** by **knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ** and are again entangled in it and **overcome**, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. **21 It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, then to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them.**

Here would be an example of all sin being venial

NOT 2nd PETER If they have **escaped the corruption of the world** by **knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ** and are again entangled in it and **overcome**, just remember, they are merely **backsliding** and they are still better off than if they never knew Christ and they are still saved anyway.

Here is an example denying that someone can be “overcome” by the “corruption of the world” by a person who “**knows**” (to “know” someone is an intimate term) Jesus as “Lord and Savior”. . . .

NOT 2nd PETER If they have **escaped the corruption of the world** by **knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ** and they REALLY AUTHENTICALLY knew Him in the first place, they could never get entangled in the world and **overcome**.

¹⁸ The Pharisees here thought they couldn’t commit a sin that cut them off from their relationship with God because of their race (they had Abraham as their father).

MATTHEW 3:7b-10 “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 **Bear fruit that befits repentance**, 9 and **do not presume** to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. 10 Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; **every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.**”

Here below in Matthew 6, Jesus is talking to people who have God as their FATHER! These are not people who Jesus says “Your father is the devil”—John 8:44, but are people who have God as their “Father”.

These people who have God as their Father may decide to commit the sin of unforgiveness¹⁹. For those that do, Jesus gives them a warning. The parenthesis will by MY additions

MATTHEW 6:8-9, 13-15 8 **Do not be like them** (“them” = the Gentiles or pagans), for **your Father** knows what you need before you ask him. 9 Pray then like this: **Our Father** who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. . . . 13 And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. 14 For if you forgive men their trespasses, **your heavenly Father** (remember. Jesus is addressing people here who have a relationship with God, with God as their **Father**) also will forgive you; 15 **but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.**

In Conclusion

In this study we looked at sins that **kill** the life of grace (**mortal sin**), And contrasted them with sins that **wound** the life of grace (**venial sin**). We saw both types of sins are bad, but mortal sin clearly has worse consequences.

We did a brief catechesis on sin with catechesis and Scripture on mortal versus venial sin. We looked at the role of repentance here. We saw “mortal sin” requires three things: Grave matter (“extreme bad stuff”), full knowledge, and full consent.

We looked at the concept of **mitigating factors** (subjectively LESS responsible for your sins) and **compounding factors** (subjectively MORE responsible for your sins). We saw how this is exemplified in the concept of: “to whom much is given, much will be required.” We mentioned that “addictions” can be mitigating.

We studied some other New Testament Scriptural teachings on mortal sin especially as it concerns objections raised against the existence of mortal sin, especially the James 2:10 objection.

I included many examples of “grave sin” or “grave matter” on Table 1 (which we probably won’t have time to go over as a group).

And we can now close with any discussion and then a prayer.

Table 1 What Constitutes Grave Matter?

Sacred Scripture gives several lists (none of them exhaustive) as to what constitutes “Grave Matter”. Matthew 15:18-20, 1st Corinthians 6:9-11, Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 5:3-8, Colossians 3:5-10, and Revelation 21:8 and 22:15²⁰

¹⁹ See also Matthew 18:23-35 for forgiveness teachings.

²⁰ Thanks to 4marksofthechurch for listing some of these.

MATTHEW 15:18-20 18 But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a man. 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. 20 These are what defile a man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man."

1st CORINTHIANS 6:9-11 9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

GALATIANS 5:19-21 19 Now the works of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, 21 envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

EPHESIANS 5:3-8 3 But fornication and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is fitting among saints. 4 Let there be no filthiness, nor silly talk, nor levity, which are not fitting; but instead let there be thanksgiving. 5 Be sure of this, that no fornicator or impure man, or one who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for it is because of these things that the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not associate with them, 8 for once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light

COLLOSSIANS 3:5-10 5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming. 7 In these you once walked, when you lived in them. 8 But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices 10 and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

REVELATION 21:8 8 But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, as for murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their lot shall be in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur, which is the second death."

REVELATION 22:15 15 Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters, and every one who loves and practices falsehood.

The CCC lists some examples of "Grave" sin as well. Some CCC examples of grave sins . . .

CCC 1858 *Grave matter* is specified by the Ten Commandments, corresponding to the answer of Jesus to the rich young man: "Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and your mother."¹³² The gravity of sins is more or less great: murder is graver than theft. One must also take into account who is wronged: violence against parents is in itself graver than violence against a stranger.

CCC 2148b . . . Blasphemy is contrary to the respect due God and his holy name. It is in itself a grave sin.⁷⁹

CCC 2152 A person commits *perjury* when he makes a promise under oath with no intention of keeping it, or when after promising on oath he does not keep it. Perjury is a grave lack of respect for the Lord of all speech.

CCC 2181 The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice. For this reason the faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason (for example, illness, the care of infants) or dispensed by their own pastor.¹¹⁹ Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin.

CCC 2210 The importance of the family for the life and well-being of society¹³ entails a particular responsibility for society to support and strengthen marriage and the family. Civil authority should consider it a grave duty "to acknowledge the true nature of marriage and the family, to protect and foster them, to safeguard public morality, and promote domestic prosperity."¹⁴

CCC 2261a Scripture specifies the prohibition contained in the fifth commandment: "Do not slay the innocent and the righteous."⁶¹ The deliberate murder of an innocent person is gravely contrary to the dignity of the human being, to the golden rule, and to the holiness of the Creator. The law forbidding it is universally valid: it obliges each and everyone, always and everywhere. . . .

CCC 2265 Legitimate defense can be not only a right but a grave duty for one who is responsible for the lives of others. The defense of the common good requires that an unjust aggressor be rendered unable to cause harm. For this reason, those who legitimately hold authority also have the right to use arms to repel aggressors against the civil community entrusted to their responsibility.

CCC 2268 The fifth commandment forbids *direct and intentional killing* as gravely sinful. The murderer and those who cooperate voluntarily in murder commit a sin that cries out to heaven for vengeance.⁶⁹

Infanticide,⁷⁰ fratricide, parricide, and the murder of a spouse are especially grave crimes by reason of the natural bonds which they break. Concern for eugenics or public health cannot justify any murder, even if commanded by public authority.

CCC 2269a The fifth commandment forbids doing anything with the intention of *indirectly* bringing about a person's death. The moral law prohibits exposing someone to mortal danger without grave reason, as well as refusing assistance to a person in danger.

2271a Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable. Direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law

CCC 2272a Formal cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense.

2274a Since it must be treated from conception as a person, the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed, as far as possible, like any other human being.

CCC 2281 Suicide contradicts the natural inclination of the human being to preserve and perpetuate his life. It is gravely contrary to the just love of self. It likewise offends love of neighbor because it unjustly breaks the ties of solidarity with family, nation, and other human societies to which we continue to have obligations. Suicide is contrary to love for the living God.

CCC 2282 If suicide is committed with the intention of setting an example, especially to the young, it also takes on the gravity of scandal. Voluntary co-operation in suicide is contrary to the moral law.

Grave psychological disturbances, anguish, or grave fear of hardship, suffering, or torture can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide.

CCC 2284 Scandal is an attitude or behavior which leads another to do evil. The person who gives scandal becomes his neighbor's tempter. He damages virtue and integrity; he may even draw his brother into spiritual death. Scandal is a grave offense if by deed or omission another is deliberately led into a grave offense.

CCC 2290b . . . Those incur grave guilt who, by drunkenness or a love of speed, endanger their own and others' safety on the road, at sea, or in the air.

CCC 2291 The *use of drugs* inflicts very grave damage on human health and life. Their use, except on strictly therapeutic grounds, is a grave offense. Clandestine production of and trafficking in drugs are scandalous practices. They constitute direct co-operation in evil, since they encourage people to practices gravely contrary to the moral law.

CCC 2297a *Kidnapping* and *hostage taking* bring on a reign of terror; by means of threats they subject their victims to intolerable pressures. They are morally wrong. *Terrorism* threatens, wounds, and kills indiscriminately; it is gravely against justice and charity. . . .

CCC 2302 By recalling the commandment, "You shall not kill,"⁹⁴ our Lord asked for peace of heart and denounced murderous anger and hatred as immoral.

Anger is a desire for revenge. "To desire vengeance in order to do evil to someone who should be punished is illicit," but it is praiseworthy to impose restitution "to correct vices and maintain justice."⁹⁵ If anger reaches the point of a deliberate desire to kill or seriously wound a neighbor, it is gravely against charity; it is a mortal sin. The Lord says, "Everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment."⁹⁶

CCC 2320 The murder of a human being is gravely contrary to the dignity of the person and the holiness of the Creator.

CCC 2321 The prohibition of murder does not abrogate the right to render an unjust aggressor unable to inflict harm. Legitimate defense is a grave duty for whoever is responsible for the lives of others or the common good.

CCC 2322 From its conception, the child has the right to life. Direct abortion, that is, abortion willed as an end or as a means, is a "criminal" practice (GS 27 § 3), gravely contrary to the moral law. The Church imposes the canonical penalty of excommunication for this crime against human life.

CCC 2323 Because it should be treated as a person from conception, the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed like every other human being.

CCC 2324 Intentional euthanasia, whatever its forms or motives, is murder. It is gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator.

CCC 2325 Suicide is seriously contrary to justice, hope, and charity. It is forbidden by the fifth commandment.

CCC 2352 By *masturbation* is to be understood the deliberate stimulation of the genital organs in order to derive sexual pleasure. "Both the Magisterium of the Church, in the course of a constant tradition, and the moral sense of the faithful have been in no doubt and have firmly maintained that masturbation is an intrinsically and gravely disordered action."¹³⁸ "The deliberate use of the sexual faculty, for whatever reason, outside of marriage is essentially contrary to its purpose." For here sexual pleasure is sought outside of "the sexual relationship which is demanded by the moral order and in which the total meaning of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love is achieved."¹³⁹

To form an equitable judgment about the subjects' moral responsibility and to guide pastoral action, one must take into account the affective immaturity, force of acquired habit, conditions of anxiety or other psychological or social factors that lessen, if not even reduce to a minimum, moral culpability.

CCC 2353 *Fornication* is carnal union between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman. It is gravely contrary to the dignity of persons and of human sexuality which is naturally ordered to the good of spouses and the generation and education of children. Moreover, it is a grave scandal when there is corruption of the young.

CCC 2354 *Pornography* consists in removing real or simulated sexual acts from the intimacy of the partners, in order to display them deliberately to third parties. It offends against chastity because it perverts the conjugal act, the intimate giving of spouses to each other. It does grave injury to the dignity of its participants (actors, vendors, the public), since each one becomes an object of base pleasure and illicit profit for others. It immerses all who are involved in the illusion of a fantasy world. It is a grave offense. Civil authorities should prevent the production and distribution of pornographic materials.

CCC 2355 *Prostitution* does injury to the dignity of the person who engages in it, reducing the person to an instrument of sexual pleasure. The one who pays sins gravely against himself: he violates the chastity to which his Baptism pledged him and defiles his body, the temple of the Holy Spirit.¹⁴⁰ Prostitution is a social scourge. It usually involves women, but also men, children, and adolescents (The latter two cases involve the added sin of scandal.). While it is always gravely sinful to engage in prostitution, the imputability of the offense can be attenuated by destitution, blackmail, or social pressure.

CCC 2356 *Rape* is the forcible violation of the sexual intimacy of another person. It does injury to justice and charity. Rape deeply wounds the respect, freedom, and physical and moral integrity to which every person has a right. It causes grave damage that can mark the victim for life. It is always an intrinsically evil act. Graver still is the rape of children committed by parents (incest) or those responsible for the education of the children entrusted to them.

CCC 2394 Christ is the model of chastity. Every baptized person is called to lead a chaste life, each according to his particular state of life.

CCC 2395 Chastity means the integration of sexuality within the person. It includes an apprenticeship in self-mastery.

CCC 2396 Among the sins gravely contrary to chastity are masturbation, fornication, pornography, and homosexual practices.

CCC 2397 The covenant which spouses have freely entered into entails faithful love. It imposes on them the obligation to keep their marriage indissoluble.

CCC 2399 The regulation of births represents one of the aspects of responsible fatherhood and motherhood. Legitimate intentions on the part of the spouses do not justify recourse to morally unacceptable means (for example, direct sterilization or contraception).

CCC 2400 Adultery, divorce, polygamy, and free union are grave offenses against the dignity of marriage.

CCC 2485 By its very nature, lying is to be condemned. It is a profanation of speech, whereas the purpose of speech is to communicate known truth to others. The deliberate intention of leading a neighbor into error by saying things contrary to the truth constitutes a failure in justice and charity. The culpability is greater when the intention of deceiving entails the risk of deadly consequences for those who are led astray.

CCC 2486 Since it violates the virtue of truthfulness, a lie does real violence to another. It affects his ability to know, which is a condition of every judgment and decision. It contains the seed of discord and all consequent evils. Lying is destructive of society; it undermines trust among men and tears apart the fabric of social relationships.

TABLE 2

Sin Associated With Sickness And Health

Sin has negative effects on our soul, but **sin has negative effects on our bodies** too.

For Biblical evidence of this effect of sin hurting even our bodies, see how 85 year-old (!) Caleb's testimony in Joshua²¹ 14:10-11 who was still strong and in a sense young, and 1st Corinthians 11:29-30 to show two examples of faithfulness resulting in delay of deteriorating bodies contrasted to sin which can accelerate body deterioration—1st Corinthians 11 more explicitly²².

Since in the Old Testament, people did not have the Trinitarian life of grace, we expect to see differences from the New Testament. But we do see phrases that teach a catastrophic loss (such as losing their life, or being cut-off from their people, or dying in a foreign land, etc.). The Israelites were a real people, but they were also a macrocosm of falling and broken relationships with God. After the Golden Calf, the Israelites rebelled against God over the next 40 years. None of them from Sinai and the Golden Calf days were allowed to enter the promised land (except Joshua and

²¹ When God told the Israelites to go into the Promised Land, the people of Israel sinned against God and REJECTED God's plan (they were afraid of the "Giants". In Numbers 14, two people in addition to Moses and Aaron kept faith with God. Those two Israelites, were Joshua and Caleb. The people of Israel threatened to stone all four of them for wanting to follow God's plan (see **Numbers 14:10**) requiring God to "appear" in a cloud at the Tent of Meeting to instruct Moses (and save the four against the Israelite rebellion). Scripture even points out about Jesus—"God's Holy one"—didn't even have bodily corruption AFTER DEATH! (See Acts 2:27-31).

JOSHUA 14:6b-11 Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know what the LORD said to Moses the man of God in Kadesh-barnea concerning you and me. 7 **I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land;** and I brought him word again as it was in my heart. 8 But my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt; yet I wholly followed the LORD my God. 9 And Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land on which your foot has trodden shall be an inheritance for you and your children for ever, because you have wholly followed the LORD my God.' 10 And now, behold, the LORD has kept me alive, as he said, these forty-five years since the time that the LORD spoke this word to Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness; and now, **lo, I am this day eighty-five years old. 11 I am still as strong to this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me; my strength now is as my strength was then,** for war, and for going and coming.

²² Some medieval artists knew about this phenomenon of incorruption of the body due to lack of sin, and thus painted probably about a 65 year-old Blessed Virgin Mary when God Assumed her into Heaven, as YOUNG and HEALTHY in appearance. Those artists KNEW that theology.

Caleb who remained faithful and did not rebel against God. Even Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land for a sin he later committed).

Those Old Testament people, with repentance can recover their relationship with God with repentance (just like in the New Covenant too). For example, King Hezekiah who was destined to die due to his sin²³ of pride repented and was granted an extra fifteen years of life (see 2nd KINGS 20:5-6).

But sometimes repentance wasn't enough and you needed **INTERCESSION from someone else** on your behalf too. Such is the case when Miriam and Aaron rebelled against Moses' leadership, Miriam got leprosy, and Aaron sensed he too was being threatened with leprosy. Miriam needed Moses' intercession for God to heal her (see Numbers 12:1-16).

TABLE 3

A Couple Of Scripture-Like Objections Against Mortal Sin Based Upon Emotions

Objection: "Nothing can separate me from the love of God!" (As per Romans 8:39).

Answer: Nothing CAN separate you from the LOVE of God.

But mortal sin doesn't separate us from the "LOVE" of God.

Mortal sin separates us from the "LIFE" of God.

Just as a branch cut off from a tree withers and dies, so a sinner who cuts themselves off from Christ (the Vine) do so (withers and dies) too.

Objection: There is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus!

ROMANS 8:1 1 Therefore, there is now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus,

Answer: That's correct. There IS NO condemnation for those IN CHRIST Jesus. But if you refuse to "abide" or "remain" in Jesus, you are no longer "in Christ Jesus" and then there IS "condemnation".

St. Paul himself knew he could be "disqualified for the (Heavenly) prize"!

1st CORINTHIANS 9:27 27 No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, **I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.**

The Greek word for "disqualified" or literally "rejected" is "a-duck-ee-moss" ("adokimos"²⁴) which if you do a word study, you will see this word used for people who will not receive salvation.

²³ We don't know exactly what that sin was. Most Bible scholars think it was "pride" and that is right but how was that manifest for him to get a death sentence from God? Probably for having a heart that was showing-off his "riches" to pagans (Hezekiah brought a curse upon Judah for doing this—see 2nd Kings 20:12-17). The passage implies Hezekiah showed the pagan envoys the Sacred Vessels of the Temple. (In Daniel 5:2, Belshazzar was having "a drunk" with his fellow pagan buddies using Sacred Temple vessels and likewise brought a curse upon himself and people too for this desecration that was executed that very night).

²⁴ Greek = ἀδοκιμος