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# BIBLE TALK

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This week we are investigating this question: **Can a single sin matter?**

Many people view salvation with God like a pair of balance scales. Balance scales are easy to make and very accurate. Picture this: Imagine **all the good deeds** you have done being put on one side of the scales and on the other side, the counterbalanced side, there are **all the bad deeds** you have done. It is believed that if the good deeds outweigh the bad deeds on Judgment Day, then everything will be okay.

This, by the way, is how Islam views the judgment of God. This, for the most part, is how most people in most denominations view the judgment of God. The preachers in all the various churches may teach otherwise, but the average member of the average church thinks that when Judgment Day comes and they stand before God, He will carefully weigh all the good a person has done and compare it to all the bad they have done ... and if the good outweighs the bad, then that person is allowed into heaven.

But there is a problem with this view of the Judgment. Let me tell you something about balance scales – and remember, we're discussing the question: Can a single sin matter? I lived in Russia for two years. Balance scales were used in the market where we bought our food. When we would buy potatoes, for example, the potatoes were piled up on one side of the balance scales, but on the other side of the scales **a standard** weight was placed. If I said I wanted two kilos of potatoes, a two kilo standard weight was placed on the scales and on the opposite side the merchant began piling the potatoes until the scales balanced. The point is: When balance scales are used, **a standard** goes on one side and the customer's goods go on the other side.

If God used the "balance scale" method to judge men, He would not put a person's good deeds on one side and the person's bad deeds on the other side. No ... He would put **the person's deeds** (all his deeds – good or bad) on one side and on the other side would be placed a standard by which to measure those deeds. What standard do you suppose God would place on the other side? According to the Bible, **the standard** by which God measures deeds is **His law**.

## **Revelation 20:12**

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead

were judged according to their works, **by the things which were written in the books.**

Now ... if God was going to judge us by balancing our good deeds against our bad deeds, we might stand a chance. But if He balances our deeds (period) against His law, we are in trouble.

You see ... if we always did what the law of God says at all times, the scale would stay balanced and God would "owe us" – so to speak. It would be unjust for Him to condemn us to punishment if we always did what the law said.

The problem is, none of us have behaved so well – none of us. No one can truthfully say he has always done what he should have done. No one can truthfully say he has never done what he should not done.

### **Romans 3:23**

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Suppose for a moment that a person committed a single sin. Suppose also that this single sin was just a small sin. Let's say, for example, there was one occasion when this person spoke a little disrespectfully toward his mother. You see ... that one little sin makes the scales unbalanced in favor of the law. The scales stay balanced only when we have done perfectly everything the law of God says.

### **Galatians 3:10**

10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in **all things** which are written in the book of the law, to do them."

Do you see why we need grace and mercy from God?

Because we have not always done what we should have, the scales are unbalanced and if we were judged based on our deeds, we would be forever lost. But the grace of God brings us hope (Tit 2:11). God is willing to forgive us for the times we have failed. When He forgives us, He sets the scales back in a balanced position. He doesn't have to do this – that's why it's called "grace." Grace means "undeserved favor." We don't deserve to have the scales put back to a balanced position, but God graciously does this when we "obey the gospel" (2 Th 1:8).

What does it mean to "obey the gospel"? It means:

- We believe Jesus to be the only begotten Son of God (Jn 3:16).
- We repent of our sins (Lk 13:3).
- We confess audibly our faith in Christ (Rom 10:10).
- We are baptized in water for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38).

This is called "obeying the gospel" and when we do this, God removes all of our sins and sets the scales of justice back to a balanced position.

**Can a single sin matter? Yes it can.** A single sin, no matter how small, is enough to condemn any person to punishment. We need forgiveness in order to be saved – even if we are guilty of a single sin.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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Call again next week when we consider a new subject on ***Bible Talk***.