

Growing in a Relationship With God

Sin, the Gospel, and the Law

Lesson #9 for May 30, 2026

Scriptures: Judges 14; Mark 9:42-48; Romans 3:20,28; 14:23; Matthew 5:17-18; 7:24-29; Psalm 119:93-94.

1. What is sin? Is it an act? Is sin an attitude we have? Can a thought be sin?

[From the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*=BSG:] Without a doubt, **sin is the greatest obstructor to a close relationship with God.** Not only does sin separate us from God now (*Isa. 59:2*), but it also deceives, hurts, consumes, and eventually destroys us. Our battle against sin and self is the greatest battle we'll ever face, with tremendous, even eternal, implications.—BSG* for Sabbath Afternoon, May 23.^{†§}

Isaiah 59:2: It is because of your sins that he doesn't hear you. It is your sins that separate you from God when you try to worship him.—American Bible Society. (©1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation*^{®*} [GNT] (*Today's English Version*) [TEV], Second Edition (Isaiah 59:2). Philadelphia: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible-TEV** or *GNB-TEV**].^{†‡} [Doesn't God hear everything?][‡]

2. How does the Bible describe sin? How can you define or describe sin to a non-Christian?

1 John 3:4: For sin is the transgression of the law.—*King James Version*.^{*†}

1 John 3:4: Whoever sins is guilty of breaking God's law, because **sin is a breaking of the law.**—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†} [What 1 John 3:4 actually says is, "**Sin is lawlessness.**"][‡]

Romans 3:20: For no one is put right in God's sight by doing what the Law requires; **what the Law does is to make people know that they have sinned.**—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†}

3. **The best and most comprehensive definition of sin is found in Romans 14:23.**

Romans 14:23: But if they have doubts about what they eat, God condemns them when they eat it, because their action is not based on faith. And **anything that is not based on faith is sin.**—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†} [Underlining of text is added for emphasis.][‡]

4. So, in order to understand sin, we need to understand *faith*.

[A. Graham Maxwell:] **Faith is [just] a word we use to denote a relationship with God as with a Person well known. The better we know Him, the better this relationship may be.** [We cannot say *will be* because we know of the story of Lucifer!]

Faith implies an attitude toward God of love, trust, and deep admiration. It means having enough confidence in Him, based upon the more than adequate evidence revealed, to be willing to believe whatever He says [as soon as we are sure that He is the One who has said it], **to accept whatever He offers** [as soon as we are sure that He is the One who is offering it], **and to do whatever He wishes** [as soon as we are sure He is the One who wishes it]—**without reservation—for the rest of eternity.** [The Devil would love to act in God's place!]

Anyone who has such faith is perfectly safe to save. This is why faith is the only requirement for heaven. [See Acts 16:31.]

[*Faith* also means that, like Abraham, Job, and Moses, God's friends, we know God well enough to **reverently ask Him, "Why?"**—A. Graham Maxwell, *You Can Trust the Bible*, Pacific Press Publishing Association; Mountain View, California. (1967, Revised 1978) Page 81.^{†‡} [Sections in brackets are added based on frequent statements by Dr. Maxwell in his classes.][‡]

5. Unfortunately, we are born with sinful natures. We need to recognize our failings and study God's law to help us be aware of Satan's devices.

[From the *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*=T-BSG:] **The only passage that discloses the effect of sin on the nature of Adam and Eve is found in Genesis 3:22, 23, in which God notices that Adam and Eve were originally like God. (Note that the Hebrew verb *hayah*, translated "has become" in Genesis 3:22 [NKJV], should be translated as "was" in the past tense, just as in Genesis 3:1).—T-BSG* 121.^{†Ω§}**

Genesis 3:22-23: ²²Then the LORD God said, "Now these human beings **have become like one of us [or, "were like one of us"]** and [now] have knowledge of what is good and what is bad. **They must not be allowed to take fruit from the tree that gives life, eat it, and live forever.**" ²³So the LORD God sent them out of the Garden of Eden and made them cultivate the soil from which they had been formed.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†‡}

[T-BSG:] The common translation "has [or "have"] become" wrongly suggests that the sin marked an improvement in their condition and status. In addition, such translation gives the impression that the serpent was right when he warned Eve that God did not want her and Adam to become like Him (*Gen. 3:5*). In reality, God deplores the tragic reality that, after sin, Adam and Eve have lost their likeness to Him. Only God acknowledges, then, the real negative effect of sin on them. Adam and Eve were unable to make a confession of sin because **they had lost their connection with God**. As long as Adam and Eve had not sinned, their connection with God allowed them to discern the reality of sin. **As soon as they departed from God's presence, they lost their capacity to discern between good and evil.** [That describes all of us now!] [Then, Ellen G. White is quoted; that is expanded below.]—*T-BSG** 121-122.^{†‡§}

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] Man lost all because he chose to listen to the deceiver rather than to Him who is Truth, who alone has understanding. **By the mingling of evil with good, his mind had become confused, his mental and spiritual powers benumbed. No longer could he appreciate the good that God had so freely bestowed.**—Ellen G. White, *Education** 25.3.^{†‡}

[<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p29.86&index=0>][‡]

[T-BSG:] The basic lesson we learn from the fall of humanity is simply this: **because humans have sinned, they have lost their innate sense of discernment, the capacity to distinguish between good and evil.** So,

apart from God, we are unable to exercise that judgment successfully. For this reason, God gave us the law and the gospel. We need the law to guide us in the right direction. Likewise, we need the grace of Christ to help us walk with hope and love in that direction.—*T-BSG** 122.†‡

Psalms 51:5: I [David] have been evil from the day I was born; from the time I was conceived, I have been sinful.—*GNB-TEV.*†*

Jeremiah 17:9: “Who can understand the human heart?

There is nothing else so deceitful; it is too sick to be healed.”—*Good News Bible-TEV.**

[BSG:] Some dismiss sin as just a regular part of life. After all, it’s human nature to indulge in pleasure. But do we make light of sin because society has become so comfortable with it? We can tiptoe around the topic of sin, afraid that we’ll offend someone if we call it what it is, but in the end, **the more we choose to live comfortably with it, the further we’ll slip from a healthy relationship with God.**

Yes, every person has sinned, and our thoughts, motives, actions, and words hurt others, ourselves, and God. Ultimately, sin destroys our relationship with God, but God has revealed Himself to us through the knowledge of His law, which shines light on the sin in our lives.

... Let’s explore the reason God gave us His law and, when someone transgresses God’s law and consequently sins, what or who can help to restore their relationship with God.—*BSG** for Sabbath Afternoon.†‡

6. What Is Sin? Why Is Sin Evil?

[T-BSG:] **Failing to Identify Sin.** When we fail to call sin by its name, we add to the problem of sin. For instance, if we fail to call adultery a sin, we run the risk of minimizing its threat and, worse, of normalizing it.

The problem of failing to call sin by its name is particularly rampant in many cultures today. **In secular society, we may avoid using the term “sin” for a number of reasons. First, secularized society may avoid the term “sin” because it has religious connotations.** For most people, sin does not exist; it implies something that is forbidden by God or by religion. For most people who do not believe in God and do not adhere to the moral standards of religion, there is no such thing as sin. **They speak of mistakes, crimes, ethical or social misbehaviors, but not of “sins.” From their perspective, a discussion of sin is, therefore, irrelevant or even is perceived as an attack on their liberties. However, one of the dire consequences of our refusing to acknowledge sin is remaining ignorant of evil. Thus, for the secular mind, the motivation for refraining from making a “mistake” is not because it is bad or evil; rather, refraining is simply a matter of social, or civic, consideration. The secular mind doesn’t know that it sins, because it has no knowledge of what the Bible calls the “fear of God.”**

When Abraham traveled to a foreign land, he worried that he would be mistreated because the people there did not have the fear of God (*Gen. 20:11*) presiding over their hearts. Thus, the concept of “sin” was foreign to

them. Just because the concept was foreign to them does not mean, however, that those who ignore sin are not responsible for their sins. Even if those who are ignorant of their sins do not believe in the God of Israel, this same God will judge them, just as surely as He will judge His people (*Amos 1, 2*). As for those who know that they “sin” and yet refuse to recognize it as such, but say that they have not sinned, God promises that He will make His case against them (*Jer. 2:35*).—*T-BSG** 119-120.^{†‡§}

Genesis 20:11: Abraham answered, “I thought that there would be no one here who has reverence for God and that they would kill me to get my wife.”—*Good News Bible-TEV.** [See also **Amos 1-2.**][‡]

Distractions and Temptations

7. The stories of Samson’s problems, his temptations, and his falls, are well known as described in Judges 14-16. While we may not be like Samson in many ways, there are lessons to learn from his story.

[BSG:] Samson fell because he thought he was strong. He depended on his own strength to overcome temptations. Every day, each of us faces battles with sin as the enemy of souls tries to weaken and destroy our relationship with God. He knows our weaknesses and zeroes in on them in order to dull our relationship with God and to bring guilt and a sense of unworthiness upon us, all of which tend to drive us away from God. The devil [*sic*] works to shift our thinking, our intentions, and our actions in order to gain a stronghold in some part of our lives. But remember: our faith will help us to stand, and faith comes by hearing the Word of God.—*BSG** for Sunday, May 24.[‡] [See Romans 10:17.][‡]

[BSG:] The great controversy is real, and we are all involved in it. The cosmic battle that began in heaven is now being played out in each of our own lives, as well. Satan knows that he has to pull out everything he’s got in the times that we’re living in, right before Jesus comes, to keep us from having a close relationship with God. Perhaps you’ve been **distracted with something that may not necessarily be wrong in itself but takes so much time and energy that there’s very little left for God.** [Would that make it a sin?] Maybe it’s work, social media, shopping, sports, or food. When we take a good hard look at ourselves, we’ll see that overconsumption and an imbalance of any of these things can allow for little time for God and others. The enemy knows each of our weaknesses and the kinds of things that distract us from spending time with God. We should remember to **seek God first** (*Matt. 6:33*) before rushing into our day and all that may come our way.—*BSG** for Sunday, May 24.^{†‡§}

Matthew 6:33: “Instead, be concerned above everything else with the Kingdom of God and with what he requires of you, and he will provide you with all these other things.”—*Good News Bible-TEV.**

8. ***What are the temptations that pressure us the most? What is the most successful way to overcome temptation? Jesus knew that the only safety for Him was regular and consistent times of prayer with His Father. What is our worst sin? Is it being “lukewarm” like the Laodiceans? (Revelation 3:14-22) And what is the treatment?***

9. **As you look at your own life, what struggles are the biggest problems for you? How can Bible study and prayer help resolve them?**

[T-BSG:] **Sin as a Distortion.** The Hebrew word for sin *kḥt'* means literally “missing the mark.” “Sin” is understood as a “deviation,” or a “distortion,” from the original “straight” way. Ecclesiastes describes the human condition as tragically “crooked”; it is irreparable: “What is crooked cannot be made straight” (*Eccles. 1:15, NKJV*). For this reason, the act of committing “sin” is connected with the problem of “forgetting,” referring to a past situation that is irredeemable, lost as it is to the passage of time. Hence, the existence of numerous biblical passages wherein **the prophet urges God’s people not to forget, lest they fall into sin unawares** (*Deut. 6:12, Deut. 32:18; compare with James 1:24*).—*T-BSG** 120.†‡§

Deuteronomy 6:12: “Make certain that you do not forget the LORD who rescued you from Egypt, where you were slaves.”—*Good News Bible-TEV.**

Deuteronomy 32:18: “They forgot their God, their mighty savior, the one who had given them life.”—*Good News Bible-TEV.**

James 1:24: They take a good look at themselves [in the mirror] and then go away and at once forget what they look like.—*Good News Bible-TEV.*†*

10. The ancient people of Israel **regarded sins as actions directly against God’s will**. This often included **idolatry**, or **someti just plain disobedience**. See Deuteronomy 9:16 and Deuteronomy 1:41.

11. Two of our greatest heroes from the Bible had interesting temptations and experiences. **Joseph resisted** the lustful overtures of Potiphar’s wife and said that he could not sin against the LORD by doing what she wanted him to do. (Genesis 39:9)

12. By contrast, **David committed** adultery against Bathsheba and had her husband, Uriah the Hittite, killed. Later, he was very sorry for what he had done. (See 2 Samuel 12:13.) Although **David was forgiven, his family suffered for generations** because of that sin.

13. There are many examples in the New Testament of the problem of those who think they can stand strong. See 1 Corinthians 10:12 and Matthew 6:2.

14. What did Jesus say about sexual desires and adultery?

Matthew 5:28-29: ²⁸ “But now I tell you: anyone who looks at a woman and wants to possess her is guilty of committing adultery with her in his heart. [Can a thought kept to oneself really be a sin?] ²⁹ So if your right eye causes you to sin, take it out and throw it away! It is much better for you to lose a part of your body than to have your whole body thrown into hell.”—*Good News Bible-TEV.*†* [Was Jesus literally suggesting body mutilation?][‡]

15. Jesus considered these sins as very serious. He said similar things in Mark 9:42-48.

[BSG:] To cut off your hand or foot or to pluck out your eye because it’s causing you to sin is extreme. It was supposed to be. But this is how seriously Jesus sees sin and its impact in our lives. How seriously are you taking it?—*BSG** for Monday, May 25.† [Jesus did not want this to be done!][‡]

16. We must do whatever it takes to avoid falling into this trap. Jesus also mentioned the problem of judging others. He said that we should love our enemies. (Matthew 5:44)

[T-BSG:] In Old Testament history, the prophets confronted nations and Israel for committing violent crimes and unethical acts that harmed others (*Amos 1:11, Amos 2:6–8*). **Micah even goes so far as to emphasize the superiority of the ethical duty over the religious ritual (*Mic. 6:6–8*).**—*T-BSG** 120-121.^{†‡§}

Micah 6:6-8: ⁶What shall I bring to the LORD, the God of heaven, when I come to worship him? Shall I bring the best calves to burn as offerings to him? ⁷Will the LORD be pleased if I bring him thousands of sheep or endless streams of olive oil? Shall I offer him my first-born child to pay for my sins? ⁸No, the LORD has told us what is good. **What he requires of us is this: to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God.**—*Good News Bible-TEV.*†*

17. A good exercise is to think about someone that you have trouble getting along with and make them a part of your prayers. **See how that changes your attitude over time.**
18. Jesus also warned against being upset or angry at a “brother.” (Matthew 5:22)
19. God hates sin because it destroys His children!
20. Jesus Himself wrote the Ten Commandments on two tables of stone for the children of Israel. See Exodus 20:2-17 and Deuteronomy 5:1-21. Jesus referred to those directions and commandments frequently.

[BSG:] **God’s words to the Israelites at Mount Sinai [Exodus 20:2-17 and Deuteronomy 5:1-21] and to us today (*Heb. 1:1, 2*) tell us that the law is all about relationships. God gave the law as a safeguard to protect our relationship with Him and with others.** However, Satan has distorted the beauty of God’s law so that some see it as a burden. Legalism rather than love and freedom is often attached to the law, even though the Bible tells us, “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” (*1 John 5:3, NKJV*).—*BSG** for Tuesday.^{†‡§} [God’s laws are descriptive laws, like the law of gravity!][‡]

Hebrews 1:1-2: ¹In the past God spoke to our ancestors many times and in many ways through the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us through his Son. He is the one through whom God created the universe, the one whom God has chosen to possess all things at the end.—*GNB-TEV.**

1 John 5:3-5: ³For our love for God means that we obey his commands. And his commands are not too hard for us, ⁴because every child of God is able to defeat the world. And **we win the victory over the world by means of our faith.** ⁵**Who can defeat the world? Only the person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.**—*Good News Bible-TEV.*†*

[BSG:] 1. On a scale of one to five, how precious is the Living Word (and the law, as a part of it) to me? [God’s laws mean love to God and love to man!]

2. When I keep God’s law, is it restricting me or strengthening me? How can I better understand the law if I think it is restricting me?

3. What might happen if God’s law of love for Him and others was brought into the center of my life, my family, and my church? What might change in

my life and my relationships?—*BSG** for Tuesday, May 26.‡

[T-*BSG*:] **For Reflection: Is Sin Ever Not Sin?**

A Christian man committed adultery. When his friends confronted him with his infidelity, he insisted that it was not sin because he loved the woman. Because God is love, the man argued that what he did was approved by God. Later, this man got involved with another woman, and then subsequent women after that. When his friends confronted him again on these latest developments and asked him whether God was still approving, the man responded that he did not believe in God anymore.—*T-BSG** 122.‡

21. Can you think of times in your own life or in the lives of others around you when sin seems to be justified in one way or another? How is sin regarded by our society in general?
22. Can you think of cases from the Bible, history, and current events in which the dismissal or decriminalization of a person's sin led to an increase in his or her misery?
23. Think of arguments you could use to help someone face the reality of his or her sin?

[T-*BSG*:] **For Reflection: Sin and Happiness.** On the basis of his work on the connection between ethics and happiness, psychiatrist Henri Baruk concluded, "One finds happiness in doing good to others. We are not happy when seeking our own happiness. The man who seeks happiness will never find it" (Henri Baruk, in *Shabbat Shalom*, December 1996).

Ask [friends] ... to give testimonies about the happiness they achieved from doing good to others. [Pointing out the sins of others does no good!]

Resolve to help someone in physical, financial, or spiritual need this week.—*T-BSG** 123.‡§

The Law and the Gospel

[*BSG*:] Jesus Himself explained very powerfully and succinctly what His relationship to the law was.

In Matthew 5:17, 18, what did Jesus say about the law?—*BSG** for Wednesday, May 27.‡

Matthew 5:17-18: ¹⁷ "Do not think that I have come to do away with the Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets. I have not come to do away with them, but to make their teachings come true. ¹⁸Remember that **as long as heaven and earth last, not the least point nor the smallest detail of the Law will be done away with**—not until the end of all things."—*GNB-TEV*.*†

[*BSG*:] In a similar way to how parents' boundaries for their child reveal what they value, God's law tells us about His character and what is important to Him. God gave us His law to protect our relationship with Him and with one another, knowing that His law would guide every aspect of our lives as we grow in Him. After all, who hasn't suffered the terrible consequences of what sin, a violation of the law, has caused to each of us?

Love for Jesus is at the very center of the law. Jesus said, " 'If you love me, you will obey my commandments' " (*John 14:15, NET*).—*BSG** for Wednesday, May 27.‡§

John 14:15: "If you love me, you will obey my commandments."—*GNB-TEV*.*

[BSG:] When we genuinely love Jesus, we will be naturally compelled to keep His law. When we see His law clearly, we will feel compelled to love Jesus more. And, even more important, always keeping before our eyes a vision of the Cross and Christ's substitutionary death for us is the best way to foster our love for God.—*BSG** for Wednesday, May 27.^{‡§} [What does that mean?][‡]

[BSG:] That's why the gospel goes hand in hand with the law. That is, however much we believe in the law and in the importance of keeping it, we must always remember that in terms of our legal standing before God, **the law only condemns**. The law never forgives, never justifies, and never atones. On the contrary, **it points out why we need to be forgiven, why we need to be justified, and why we need atonement**. That's why along with the law—even foundational to our understanding of the law—is the gospel, Christ's death on our behalf, which does for us what the law can never do: justify us before God.—*BSG** for Wednesday, May 27.^{‡†} [Is that what we need? To be admitted to heaven, **we must be changed!**][‡]

24. As we know, the Pharisees, Sadducees, and the scribes in the times of Jesus became legalistic followers of the law. They not only quoted “the law,” but also, they found all kinds of ways to avoid keeping it strictly. Paul wrote repeatedly about the relationship among sin, faith, and keeping the law. See Romans 3:28; 4:13-16; Galatians 2:16; 3:13; and Philippians 3:9.

[BSG:] In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus talks a lot about relationships—with Him and with one another. He says something very poignant toward the end of His message.—*BSG** for Thursday, May 28.[‡]

Matthew 7:21: “Not everyone who calls me ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but only those who do what my Father in heaven wants them to do.”—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†}

[BSG:] Jesus explains that some will call out to Him and clearly know *about* Him without really *knowing* Him. Of course, seeking knowledge is important, and the Bible tells us that God's people could be destroyed because of a lack of knowledge of God and because they have rejected their knowledge of Him (*Hos. 4:1, 6, 10*). We should never downplay the importance of timeless biblical truth. **But if such knowledge doesn't change us and deepen our commitment and our walk with God, it's of no use.**—*BSG** for Thursday, May 28.^{‡§}

25. We know that the children of Israel had a lot of problems following God. Notice these words from Hosea.

Hosea 4:1,6,10: ¹The LORD has an accusation to bring against the people who live in this land. Listen, Israel, to what he says: “There is no faithfulness or love in the land, and the people do not acknowledge me as God....

⁶ “My people are doomed because they do not acknowledge me. You priests have refused to acknowledge me and have rejected my teaching, and so I reject you and will not acknowledge your sons as my priests....

¹⁰ “You will eat your share of the sacrifices, but still be hungry. You will

worship the fertility gods, but still have no children, **because you have turned away from me to follow other gods.**”—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*†

[BSG:] “ ‘And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent’ ” (*John 17:3, NKJV*). Jesus stated that the prerequisite of entering heaven is to do the will of God and ultimately to know God—for we can’t do His will without knowing Him. This is the defining factor and a very reasonable expectation. If your children say they love you and usually do what you ask, their actions reveal the depth of their love and respect for you. In the same way, when we love God, we’ll want to do His will, because we know there is nothing better for us to do! Our response to Him, and, ultimately, our obedience to Him as an overflow of our love, show the true nature of our relationship with Him.—*BSG** for Thursday, May 28.†§

26. As we have noted above ***faith is a word we use to describe our relationship with God.*** (See Item #4 above.) Without that relationship, we cannot be saved. (Acts 16:31)
27. Jesus concluded the Sermon on the Mount by leaving His listeners with a poignant final challenge. What was it?

Matthew 7:24-29: ²⁴ “So then, anyone who hears these words of mine and obeys them is like a wise man who built his house on rock. ²⁵The rain poured down, the rivers flowed over, and the wind blew hard against that house. But **it did not fall, because it was built on rock.**

²⁶ **“But anyone who hears these words of mine and does not obey them is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.** ²⁷The rain poured down, the rivers flooded over, the wind blew hard against that house, and it fell. And what a terrible fall that was!”

[The Authority of Jesus]

²⁸ When Jesus finished saying these things, the crowd was amazed at the way he taught. ²⁹He wasn’t like the teachers of the Law; instead, **he taught with authority.**—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*†‡ [What gave Him authority?]*‡

[BSG:] When we really hear Jesus’ messages, we can’t help being challenged and changed. But, first of all, our ears must be opened and our hearts receptive so that the blueprint for living in a close relationship with God can be etched upon our very souls with every breath we take. Our lives can be built upon the Rock and God’s perfect plan for us.

This blueprint of a close relationship is no secret. It’s revealed in the pages of God’s inspired Word, and He offers it to every person. It’s each one’s personal choice to accept it by faith, to claim the perfect righteousness of Christ, and then to live out that righteousness.—*BSG** for Thursday.‡

28. ***In the days of Jesus, the people who believed they were fastidiously keeping the law of God managed to kill Jesus in God’s name! Today, would that be us?***
29. Unfortunately, many of them felt that Jesus had come to do away with the law. However, that could not have been further from the truth.

[BSG:] It shouldn’t surprise us that the topic of the law can be such a twisted and misunderstood one, given that Satan’s ultimate challenge against God

was about His law.—BSG* for Friday, May 29.‡

30. Read again **Matthew 5:17-18** as quoted in Item #23 above.

[EGW:] The writings of Moses were taught by Joshua to all Israel.... Had this counsel been heeded through the centuries that followed, how different would have been Israel's history! **Only as a reverence for God's Holy Word was cherished in the hearts of the people, could they hope to fulfill the divine purpose. It was regard for the law of God that gave Israel strength during the reign of David and the earlier years of Solomon's rule; it was through faith in the living word that reformation was wrought in the days of Elijah and of Josiah. And it was to these same Scriptures of truth, Israel's richest heritage, that Jeremiah appealed in his efforts toward reform.** Wherever he ministered he met the people with the earnest plea, "Hear ye the words of this covenant," words which would bring them a full understanding of God's purpose to extend to all nations a knowledge of saving truth. Jeremiah 11:2.—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings** 465.1-466.0.†‡

[<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p88.2075&index=0>]‡

[BSG:] **Discussion Questions: How does popular culture view sin? How should our church respond?**—BSG* for Friday, May 29.‡

31. One of the most popular and award-winning movies today is called "Sinners"! Another recent popular play and movie is "Wicked"!

[BSG:] **When have you seen firsthand how sin destroys relationships with God and with others?**

Has obedience to God's law been easy or hard in your life? What factors have contributed to this?

How can we as Seventh-day Adventists, whose very name shows how seriously we take the law, avoid the trap of legalism, of depending on our law-keeping to save us? (Do a thought experiment: On the day of judgment, what are you going to rely on as your every sin is brought before a holy and perfect God in judgment? Your law-keeping? Or Jesus' perfect righteousness in your stead?)

How can knowledge (or the lack of knowledge) impact someone's relationship with God? (Read Prov. 24:3, 13, 14.)—BSG* for Friday.‡§

[BSG:] **Summary: Our lives are infected with sin, which separates us from God. However, God invites us to know and love Him with all of our mind, heart, soul, and strength. When we do this, we'll naturally have more love for others. Such love for God and others is captured in God's law, which was given to protect and preserve our relationships with Him and those around us. God's law is a beautiful reflection of His character, and when we understand His law, our relationship with Him will grow stronger.**—BSG* for Friday, May 29.†‡

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