

**Hidden Sins Within Our Hearts**

Passages: As listed in the lesson.

*Memory Verse*

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

| <b>Knowledge of God’s Will<br/>[God’s Word]</b>   | <b>Knowledge of God<br/>[God’s Divine Nature]</b>   | <b>Good Works<br/>[Behavior]</b>  |
|---|---|---|
| God does not want us to hide the hidden sins of our heart, but to acknowledge and repent of them. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. God is truth, and He wants us to be truthful.</li><li>2. God is merciful, and He wants us to repent of our sins.</li><li>3. God is holy, and He wants us to be holy.</li></ol> | Determine to leave the bondage of sin through self-examination that leads to confession, repentance, and a desire for holiness. |

*Overview*

**Events and Spiritual Teachings**

- A. The Consequence of Sin
- B. How to Face Our Hidden Sins
- C. Hidden Sins in the Bible
- D. Be Truthful, Repent, and Be Holy
- E. Lust, Pride, and Idolatry

**Life Application**

1. Self-Examination, Acknowledgement, and Confession
2. Repent of Hidden Sins
3. Have a Strong Desire for Holiness

**Memory Verse**

**Conclusion:** If we do not perceive our hidden sins and take the necessary steps to root them out, we may suffer serious consequences, the worst of which is eternal death.

## *Spiritual Teachings*

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### **Introduction**

In its simplest terms, we can define sin as missing the mark or making a mistake. As humans, none of us can ever be perfect. We all make mistakes. But what we tend to forget is that our very thoughts may be considered a sin. And sometimes, we may think that our sins that have been committed in secret, out of sight, are not considered sins. But Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin” (Jn 8:34). This includes the hidden sins in our lives. If we have hidden sin in our life, we are a slave of death. But Jesus wants us to be set free (Jn 8:31–32).

### **A. The Consequence of Sin**

There are two types of “hidden sin.” The first type is the secret sin, the thoughts that we have and the actions that we have done, with none but the Lord to witness. The most dangerous mistakes that we can make are hidden within our hearts and minds. Our inner emotions and secret desires can produce sinful thoughts, unseen by any except God (Jas 1:14–15). The second type is sin done in ignorance, when we have sinned but do not even realize it because of our own ignorance of God’s will. This includes dangerous mistakes where we believe that we are doing the right thing but, in reality, are not. Even we ourselves may fail to see our own hidden sins, which is what makes them so dangerous.

We all make mistakes. Some may not hurt us that much in the long run, but other mistakes have the potential to turn disastrous, maybe even life-threatening. For example, if you make a small mistake in a test, you may still pass the test. But if a driver mistakenly drives through a red traffic light, they could lose their lives. In short, there are some mistakes that we simply cannot afford to make. And like some mistakes, hidden sins can have serious consequences, many that we cannot undo.

The most serious consequence of sin is separation from God (Isa 59:2). If we are separated from God, we ultimately cannot receive His blessings, including the grace of salvation that He offers. The Bible clearly tells us that sin leads us to death (Rom 6:23). A life of hidden sin—whether committed knowingly or unknowingly—is a life that leads to death.

### **B. How to Face Our Hidden Sins**

Facing and repenting of our hidden sins is challenging because we often cannot see our own mistakes clearly. If we don’t realize what’s wrong with our inner thoughts, we will likely continue with them, unaware that we should turn away. Or perhaps, despite knowing we’re wrong, our heart is unwilling to turn back because it’s already controlled by our sinful desires, like a slave.

#### **1. God sees our hidden sins**

The first thing the Bible teaches us is that sin cannot be hidden from God. After Adam and Eve broke God’s command, they tried to hide. But God knew what they had done (Gen 3:10–11). Ecclesiastes 12:14 teaches: “For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.”

People that sin against God over and over again may think that they have “gotten away with it,” while others believe themselves righteous, free of sin. But they are only deceiving themselves. The Bible says, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 Jn 1:8). We might be able to deceive others—even ourselves—but we can never deceive God, because God looks at our hearts (1 Sam 16:7).

Psalm 69:5 says, “O God, You know my foolishness; and my sins are not hidden from You.” Instead of trying to hide our sins, we should face our own mistakes, acknowledge our sins, and confess them before God. And not only because we know that we cannot hide them from Him, but also because God loves a humble heart that is willing to confess (1 Jn 1:9; Lev 26:40–45).

## 2. Repenting of our hidden sins

We can only repent of mistakes that we have acknowledged (Ps 19:12). After David sinned, he confessed to God, saying, “For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight” (Ps 51:3–4).

Beyond confession, repentance is very important. Unless we truly turn away from our sin, we will just return to our sinful ways. Proverbs 28:13 says, “He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.” Repentance isn’t simply an apology. It means striving to set aside our sin and turn away from it entirely.

## C. Hidden Sins in the Bible

Let’s look at some biblical examples of those who have struggled with hidden sin and learn from the serious consequences they faced.

### 1. Achan’s hidden sin

Do you remember the story of Jericho and Achan’s sin? Before Jericho fell, the Lord commanded that the Israelites refrain from taking any of its treasures. But Achan disobeyed and took some for himself, hiding it in his tent after the battle. Let’s read Joshua 7:11–18. As much as Achan tried to hide it, his sin was seen by the Lord, and the consequence far greater than he likely would have imagined. He failed God’s first test of faith, and he and his household, in addition to the Israelites slain by the people of Ai, suffered the consequences.

Achan’s story teaches us about the serious consequences of hidden sin. It may not only affect us, but also those we love. Although Achan received several chances to confess his sin, he did not admit it until later. But by then, it was too late, and, his confession could not void the consequences of his actions. The same is true for us. Sometimes, we cannot avoid the consequences of our sin, even if we confess it before the Lord. For this reason, it’s best to deal with our hidden sin before we face any irreversible consequences. Achan’s story is a warning for us to take hidden sin seriously.

### 2. David’s hidden sin

When David killed Uriah to hide his sin of sleeping with Bathsheba, he seemingly had no qualms about his own actions, either of adultery or of using his power to murder Uriah. His lack of perception was such that when the prophet Nathan confronted David with a story, he could not even understand that it was about him. Let’s read 2 Samuel 12:1–15.

No one knew of David’s hidden sin, but God knew. As a result, David would always face bloodshed to the end of his days, and his children brought adversity to him as they fought each other. Further, true to God’s word, his first child by Bathsheba died. David’s story again reminds us about the serious consequences of our sin. Even if it is hidden, our sin has the potential to affect both ourselves and those around us, including those we love most.

We may wonder, why does God allow us to suffer the devastating consequences of sin? Why do others have to suffer if they were not the ones who sinned? If God never allowed His people to live through the

consequences of their sin, no one would realize its danger. Receiving such punishment is an important lesson from God: we must do our best to cleanse ourselves of it.

#### **D. Be Truthful, Repent, and Be Holy**

God's divine character is all-knowing, merciful, and holy. Knowing this helps us understand why God wants us to be honest, repentant, and holy in our own character.

##### **1. God is truth, and He wants us to be truthful**

Most people find it normal to hide things, even our own character. Many wear masks of deception, acting as one person at home but another in public. We, too, may act differently, presenting a more "holy" face while we're in church but acting more worldly the moment we arrive at home. We may also sin at times and attempt to hide it, either by lying or concealing our actions behind closed doors or in the dark. But the Bible teaches us that "[lying] lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who deal truthfully are His delight" (Prov 12:22).

When we try to hide our sins, we are lying both to ourselves and to God. But God is all-knowing and sees everything we do and think. In Jeremiah 16:17, God says, "For My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face, nor is their iniquity hidden from My eyes." There is no purpose in lying to God, and if we respect and revere Him, we will be an honest and true person before Him (Josh 24:14; Ps 15:1–2). Paul encourages us, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15). We should strive to make decisions that we never need to be ashamed of.

##### **2. God is merciful, and He wants us to repent**

When Adam and Eve sinned, God returned to the garden and called out, "Where are you?", and "Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" (Gen 3:9, 11). Later, after Cain murdered Abel, God asked Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" (Gen 4:9). God knows all things. He didn't need to ask these questions. For each situation, He was not asking for knowledge. Rather, each question was a chance that He was freely giving to them, an opportunity to choose to come forward. However, their answers were not what He was hoping for. They blamed others, feigned ignorance, and showed no remorse.

People today often blame their mistakes on things other than themselves. People sometimes even blame their genetics or their environment. When people say things like this, it means they want to continue living a sinful, unrepentant lifestyle. They don't want to take responsibility for, or even acknowledge, their own mistakes. But if we remain stubbornly unrepentant, the Bible says we are storing up punishment for "the day of wrath" (Rom 2:4–5). On the other hand, James wrote, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up" (Jas 4:10).

David understood God's desire for repentance. He said, "For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise" (Ps 51:16–17). God may already know of our sins, but He wants us to repent. This is because when we make the choice to acknowledge our sins, we are humbling our hearts and being honest with both God and ourselves. And just as with Adam, Eve, and Cain, He will always give us a window of time to seek mercy. We must always try to repent before that time is over (Mt 22:11–14).

##### **3. God is holy, and He wants us to be holy**

God is holy, and He wants His people to be holy (Lev 11:44; 1 Pet 1:15–16). To be holy means to

be separated from what is unclean and become more like God. Jesus once said, “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden” (Mt 5:14). When we stop letting our hidden sin control our lives, we will start to shine the light of glory that God wants us to shine in the world. In other words, to be holy means to separate ourselves from the sinful world and shine the glory of God’s character. It means developing an inner desire to be clean before God.

David knew that God’s desire for His people was for them to live holy lives, set apart for Him. When our hearts are filled with hidden sin, anything we offer to God is unclean (Mt 15:16–20). This is because holiness is both inward and outward: it is in our actions and also in our hearts. David knew this, so he prayed, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, [...] and my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness” (Ps 51:10, 14). Only after we repent and are cleansed of our sins can we then begin to live a renewed life of holiness and service for God.

### **E. Lust, Pride, and Idolatry**

The Bible says, “For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world” (1 Jn 2:16). It also says, “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col 3:5). From these verses, we can group the sin of the world under three general categories: lust, pride, and idolatry.

Whatever the shape or form of the hidden sins within our hearts, lust, pride, and idolatry often lie at the root of them. Jesus Himself was tempted by Satan with these sins (Mt 4:1–11). Let’s briefly go over each:

- Lust of the flesh is when we let our passions and desires control our actions in an ungodly way (e.g., watching pornography or ungodly media). Lust of the eyes is covetousness, or materialism (e.g., excessive shopping, greed, or the urgent need to have the latest electronics). These sins come from our physical desires, and when we yearn for things of this world.
- Pride is self-importance. It is when we place ourselves over others (e.g., when we despise or look down on others, either in our hearts or in our speech). Wanting to be better than someone, to be admired, or to be needed more than others are all forms of pride.
- Idolatry is when we love someone or something above God (e.g., when we pursue material wealth, pleasures, or money more than God). Lust and pride often lead to idolatry, but idolatry can also creep into our hearts when we admire someone, or when we place more faith in religious icons rather than God Himself.

Lust, pride, and idolatry can work together and hide secretly within our heart. They are easily hidden from human eyes. For example, a brother or sister may habitually watch a variety of ungodly things on the Internet, but at church they exhibit no signs of such behavior. We may seem very humble outwardly, but inwardly, we may believe that we’re so much better than others. We may sing about putting Jesus first in our lives, but when we’re back at home, we pursue money, success, or pleasure. It can be surprisingly easy for our sins to remain hidden, even from ourselves.

### **Overcoming Sin**

Satan’s role is to tempt, attack, and deceive God’s children. But the Scriptures teach us how to overcome sin and, in doing so, overcome Satan and death. Let’s read Revelation 12:11. “And [the saints]

overcame [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.” Three things are mentioned in this verse to help us overcome sin. Let’s examine them.

1. We received salvation not because of our actions, but because the Lord loved us so much that He willingly suffered the death we deserved (Rom 3:24–25; 1 Jn 4:10). But the referral to the “blood of the Lamb” does not only refer to our baptism. The “blood of the Lamb” is also a reminder of Jesus’ love (Rev 1:5). Jesus’ love should compel us to give up our sin and selfish desires and instead, “live no longer for [ourselves], but for Him who died for [us] and rose again” (2 Cor 5:14–15).
2. The word of “their testimony” refers to the practice of God’s word in their lives. The life of Jesus testifies of His full obedience to God (Jn 6:38; Phil 2:8). Even His words were of God and the Holy Spirit (Rev 19:10). He never spoke of His own will (Jn 14:10). As Jesus taught us, we must “[let our] light shine before men, that they may see [our] good works and glorify [our] Father in heaven” (Mt 5:16). If we live according to God’s word, then our lives will testify of Him.
3. “They did not love their lives to the death” means that they were willing to suffer for Christ even in the face of death, evidence of their selfless love towards God (cf. Rev 2:10). Many early Christians suffered and died for Christ under serious persecution. Yet, despite the sufferings they faced, they refused to give up their faith. We can overcome sin by loving God more than anything, including our own lives.

### Check for Understanding

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1. **What are two types of hidden sins?** The first is the secret sin, the thoughts that we have and the actions that we have done with none but the Lord to witness. The second is sin done out of ignorance, when we have sinned but do not even realize it because of ignorance of God’s will.
2. **What are three things God desires from His people after they sin?** God wants us to be truthful, to repent, and to be holy.
3. **Why does God want us to confess our sins?** When we make the choice to acknowledge our sins, we are humbling our hearts and being honest with both God and ourselves.
4. **What three things often lie at the root of the hidden sins in our hearts?** Lust, pride, and idolatry.
5. **How can we overcome Satan according to Revelation 12:11?** By remembering the blood that Jesus shed, by living according to God’s word so that our lives testify of Him, and by loving God more than anything, including our own lives.

### Life Application

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The power of hidden sin is that it remains unacknowledged and hidden. But, with God’s help and a determination to change, we can free ourselves from the bondage of sin. Let’s now focus on three practical steps to help us overcome our hidden sins.

#### 1. Self-Examination, Acknowledgement, and Confession

*“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)*

We can’t remove our hidden sins if they remain unacknowledged. It’s important to confess our sins to begin the process of healing. Some share or confess their sins to another person, such as a trusted friend or godly mentor. Ideally, this person should be able to give us godly counsel and not just make us feel better. Others prefer to confess their sins privately before God. If we do this, it’s important to be open

to hearing what God tells us. We can also do both. However we prefer to do it, the most important thing is that we confess to God what we have done. Acknowledging our sins requires honesty, self-examination, an understanding of God's word, and prayer (Ps 139:23–24). Many times, our biggest obstacle is ourselves and our own sense of pride. Quite often, we're too proud to admit our mistakes, much less confess our weaknesses before others.

## 2. Repent of Hidden Sins

*"For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." (Mt 9:13)*

Christians often talk about repentance but don't understand what it means. Repentance means we change our mind and determine to turn away from our sin. For example, if we're addicted to games or doing other meaningless activities on our phone, we could easily justify our actions and continue in them unless we truly change our minds about them. Change cannot happen when there's no desire for change. Only when we acknowledge that we've fallen prey to sin, can we then begin to change our minds about it. Meaningful change and true repentance come from changing our mindset.

## 3. Have a Strong Desire for Holiness

*"Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You." (Ps 119:11)*

Very often we get caught up in our hidden sins because we are bound by our sinful desires, which control our sinful actions. We can break through this invisible wall with God's word, which helps us overcome ungodly desires. Instead of allowing sin to hide within our hearts and control us, we should hide God's word in our heart. When we meditate on the truth of God's word, we expose every sinful desire in the light. The Bible says, "How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word" (Ps 119:9). The Bible also says, "Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim 2:22).

After his sin, David wrote Psalm 51. If we read it, we will realize one important thing about David. Although David sinned greatly, his inner heart was always filled with a strong desire to be holy and blameless before God. Today, we need this same strong desire. If we do, we will naturally set aside the things of this world and seek out God's strength and deliverance from sin.

### Memory Verse

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"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

### Meaning

This verse explains the importance of confessing our sins. Satan has convinced many that God would never forgive them of their sins. But this verse tells us the opposite. The "He" refers to God, who is faithful and wants to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. However, for God to bring healing, He first wants us to acknowledge and confess our sins before Him.

### Conclusion

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God wants us to confess and repent of our hidden sins honestly. If we constantly examine ourselves to see if any sin secretly lives within our heart, with the help of God's word, we will be able to perceive it and take the necessary steps to root it out. Otherwise, we may suffer the serious consequences of hidden sin, the worst of which is eternal death.

Lesson 12 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What must we do for forgiveness of our sins?  
*We must first confess and acknowledge our own sin.*
2. What is the most serious consequence of sin? What does this lead to?  
*It separates us from God (Isa 59:2). This means we cannot receive God's blessings, including the grace of salvation. A life of sin leads to death.*
3. Why does God want us to confess our sin even though He already knows of it?  
*God wants us to confess our sin because we know that we cannot hide it from Him. But more importantly, God loves a humble heart that is willing to confess.*
4. "And they \_\_\_\_\_ him by the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ and by the \_\_\_\_\_ of their \_\_\_\_\_, and they did not \_\_\_\_\_ their lives to the \_\_\_\_\_." (Revelation 12:11)  
*overcame, blood, Lamb, word, testimony, love, death*
5. Spend some time examining yourself. What hidden sin do you have in your heart? How can you turn away from this sin?  
*Personal answers.*