



Two Records

*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in
him we might become the righteousness of God.
2 Corinthians 5:21*

YOUR RECORD

- ◆ Sinful Thoughts
- ◆ Sinful Attitudes
- ◆ Sinful Speech
- ◆ Sinful Action
- ◆ Sinful Motives

JESUS' RECORD

- ◆ Sinless
- ◆ Perfect
- ◆ True Human Being
- ◆ The Son of God
- ◆ The Substitute

Rexford J. Clark

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Acknowledgement

A number of the key concepts and illustrations in this book are from the teaching of Pastor Al Edwards, who labored faithfully among us at RMCC for 13 years. Al endeavored to show us (and to enable us to show others) the foundational truths of the gospel in a clear, concise manner. For this we are eternally grateful.

A Ministry of
Rocky Mountain Community Church
2832 Broadwater Avenue
Billings, Montana 59102
(406) 259-7811

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Is it important to you that others have a good opinion of you? Do you yearn to make a good impression on others so that they will accept you? Most of us do.

But what about *God's* opinion of you? What about the impression you make on God? Are you good enough to be accepted by Him? What does it take? How good do you have to be?

TWO QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Have you come to the point where you can say for sure that when you die you will go to heaven? (Check the box that is closest to your answer.)

- I'm sure I will go to heaven.
- I'm sure I will go to the other place.
- I'm sure there is no judgment.
- I'm sure there is no afterlife.
- I'm not sure.
- _____

What will you say when you stand before God and He asks you why He should let you into heaven?

- This couldn't be happening.
- I've lived a pretty good life compared to most people.
- I've always tried to do what is right.
- I've kept the Ten Commandments.
- I have no hope. I have nothing to say.
- _____

HOW GOOD IS YOUR RECORD?

Do you know that everyone has a record? The Bible says that on the day of judgment the books will be opened. You will be judged according to what you have done as recorded in the books.

How good is your record?

- Top notch
- Better than most
- OK
- Not so good
- Rotten

How much sin is on your record? How many times do you think you sin in a day? Before answering, remember that sin is doing what God says you shouldn't do and also, not doing what He says you should do. Consider the following quotes from the Bible:

God cares about your thoughts, not just your actions:

- “Anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.” *Matthew. 5:22*
- “Whoever looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”
Matthew. 5:28

He cares about your attitudes:

- “Do not be anxious about anything...”
Philippians 4:6
- “Do everything without complaining or arguing...”
Philippians 2:14
- “Consider others better than yourselves...”
Philippians 2:3
- “Give thanks in all circumstances...”
1 Thessalonians. 5:16
- “Rejoice always...” *Philippians 4:4*
- “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...” *Matthew 5:44*

He cares about what you say:

- “Do not swear at all...Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’;” *Matthew 5:34, 37*
- “Men will give an account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.”
Matthew 12:36

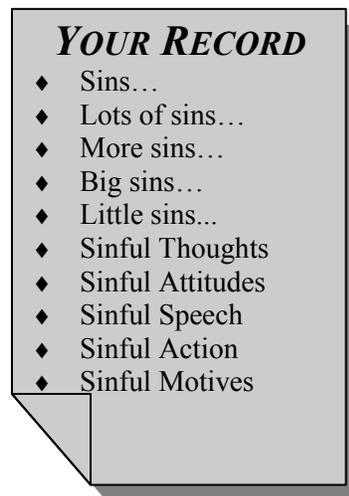
He cares about your motives:

- “When you give to the needy, do not announce it...to be honored by men.” *Matthew 6.2*
- “All a man’s ways seem right to him, but the Lord weighs the heart” *Proverbs 21:2; 16:2*

Now, once more, how many times do you sin in a day?

- Not at all
- A few times
- Many times
- Almost all the time

Now, let’s see what your record looks like:



Now think about the most virtuous person you know.

Considering the scriptures above, how many times do you think he or she sins in a day?

- Three times
- Ten times
- One Hundred times
- Almost all the time

Suppose this person only sinned three times a day. How many sins would that be on his or her record in a year? Over a thousand, right? ($3 \times 365 = 1095$) How many sins would be on his or her record in 30 years? ($30 \times 1000 = 30,000$) So even the best of people would have a long record of sins.

HOW GOOD MUST YOUR RECORD BE?

How good does your record have to be in order to receive God's approval? How good does God say it has to be?

He says it has to be perfect! That's right...perfect. "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." *Mt. 5:48*

Let's put it another way. How bad a sin does it take to earn God's condemnation?

- Really bad sins: Murder, kidnapping or rape
- Only premeditated, intentional sins
- Anything worse than normal "slips," "mistakes" and "misjudgments"
- Any sin

The truth is that even the smallest sin earns God's condemnation:

- "The wages of sin is death..." *Rom. 6:23* (Notice, it doesn't say how much sin, just "sin.")
- "Cursed is *everyone* who does not *continue* to do *everything* written in the book of the law." *Gal. 3:10*
- "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it." *James 2:10*
- "Whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much." *Luke 16:10*

You see, the wages of sin (what you deserve to be paid) is death. By your sin, you have forfeited the right to live.

WHY IS SIN SO SERIOUS?

But why is a sin against God so serious? Because the greater the authority, the more serious the offense. A threat against the governor of your state is a more serious offense than a threat against your neighbor. What about a threat against the President of the United States? You can see that even a "small" offense against God, who is immeasurably great, earns an immeasurably great penalty.

Is God unfair to set such a high standard? Should we ask God to be less than perfectly good or perfectly fair? Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne! It is because God is *perfectly good* that He cannot be satisfied with anything less than good. It is because God is *perfectly fair* that He must condemn the “smallest” sin wherever he sees it. The Lord hates the acquitting of the guilty as well as he hates the condemning of the innocent. If he looks at your record and sees that you are guilty...He must declare that you have forfeited the right to live.

Furthermore, although you may think that some of your sins are trivial, they are just the tip of the iceberg. Your sins are a result of a much deeper problem. *The root problem with your sin is your failure to love God.*

Jesus said that if you love God, you will keep His commandments. But what does it mean to love God? What does it mean to know God?

- 1] First, God wants you to enjoy Him and delight in Him. He wants you to find great delight, lasting joy and deep satisfaction in Him. He wants you to center your life around Him. But instead you have centered your life around something else, very likely yourself. Perhaps, you are self-centered instead of God-centered.
- 2] Second, God wants you to know Him as he really is...to pursue Him, to search Him out, to discover what He is really like. He wants you to grasp something of the breadth and depth of His character.
 - To know how wide and long and high and deep is His love.
 - To marvel at His immensity and His intensity and His integrity.
 - To recognize Him as trustworthy, full of integrity and full of purpose.But you hardly know Him at all. You ignore Him. You even hide from Him.
- 3] Third, God wants you to know His purpose and he wants His purpose to be your purpose. But you don't even know your own purpose, let alone His purpose.
- 4] Fourth, God wants you to rest in Him. But you try to work to improve your own record so that you can be accepted, instead of resting in Christ's record. You look to yourself for righteousness. In

this sense, you are self-righteous. But what else can you do? Where else can you look for righteousness?

WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT YOUR BAD RECORD?

You see, a bad record is a big problem for you. It is depressing and embarrassing. It results in guilt, shame and fear. So you may try to *cover it up* by putting on a false front, by trying to impress others, or by trying to appear righteous. You can pretend before men, but your hypocrisy is clear to God. Jesus referred to some men who appeared to be righteous as whitewashed tombs: beautiful on the outside, but dead and decaying on the inside.

You may try to *dress up* your record with good deeds. You may try to *unsin*, in other words, to *make up* for the sin on your record. You may work very hard to improve your record, to be a better person. But any “make up” you do (being good, kind and loving) is required anyway. Remember, the only acceptable record is a perfect record.

You may try to *hide* from your bad record by means of drugs, alcohol, overwork, hedonism, etc. It doesn't work for long. You can't hide from God.

You may *turn to “religion.”* Much of religion is only an attempt to cover up and make up for a sinful record. A certain standard or set of rules is established that you can meet if you really try. If you meet them, you can feel good about yourself and look down on others who don't meet them. Then you can tell others that if they are good enough (if they can meet the standard) they too can feel good about themselves.

Unfortunately, in order to meet God's standard, you have to either lower it to one you can meet, or you have to deceive yourself and others about your own goodness. If you understand the holiness of God, you know that His standard is perfection. If you understand yourself and are honest with yourself, you know how terribly far you are from meeting His standard.

JESUS' RECORD

So how is it possible for anyone to go to heaven? The Bible says that “The wages of sin is death, *but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*”

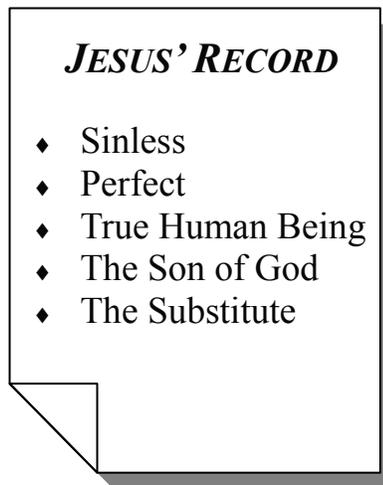
So the answer must be in Jesus. We have talked about *your* record. Now let's consider *Jesus'* record.

According to the Bible, he was a *true human being*. He ate, slept, walked, got tired and was tempted just as we are.

He was a true human, yet he also claimed to be *the Son of God*. The Jews understood this as a claim to be equal to God. Your biological father and you are both of the same nature, the same essence, i.e., human. When the Bible calls Jesus God's only begotten Son, it means that he is of the same nature and essence as God.

The Bible also says that he was *sinless*. Even Jesus' closest friends who lived with Him for three years attested to this. And they were Jews who had always been taught that all men are sinners.

So, let's see what Jesus' record looks like:



THE EXCHANGE OF RECORDS

Now here is the *key idea*. Listen carefully. Suppose God provided a substitute with whom you could exchange records? Suppose that you could exchange records with Jesus! What, then, would happen?

- 1] Jesus would get your sinful record. How then do you think he would be treated? He would be treated like a sinner and receive the wages of sin — death. That is what the Bible says happened to Jesus.

- “He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him.” *Isaiah 53:5*

2] You would get His perfect record. How would this affect you? You would be treated as if you were perfectly righteous and would receive life! And that, too, is what God promises to do for all who believe in him.

- “Through the obedience of the one man, the many will be made righteous.” *Romans 5:19*
- “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”
2 Corinthians 5:21
- “For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.” *1 Peter 3:18*

Jesus, the God-man, is the biggest gift of the Father’s love. On the cross Jesus suffered all the torments of hell as a substitute for His people. He was legally condemned by God as their representative, making full payment for their sinful records.

- Because Jesus is a true human being, he is able to be a substitute for you.
- Because he is God, and therefore more valuable than all His creation, he can be a substitute for many.
- Because he has a perfect record, His record is fully acceptable to God.

Suppose that on the day when you stand before God, you had Jesus’ perfect record credited to you. God would look at you and see Jesus’ perfect record. Now that would be good news!

COME AND REST

How can you get Jesus’ record? How can it be credited to you?

Through faith...

But what is faith?

Jesus said, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” *Matthew 11:28*

Faith is responding to Jesus' call to come...and surrender...when you are finally weary from the burden of covering up, making up, and hiding...and being centered on yourself.

Faith is *coming* to Christ and *resting* in Him alone, *trusting* Him: For rescue from condemnation and death...and for the gift of eternal life which is knowing Him.

Are you willing to:

- *Turn* in sorrow from your sins? *Isaiah 55:7*
- *Trust* in Christ alone for rescue from death and for the gift of life? *Acts 16:31*

Are you willing to agree with God on the following? (Check the ones that apply to you.)

- I see that my thoughts, attitudes, speech and motives have worked together with my actions to create a sinful record.
- I now see that my record has thousands of sins and that any one of them is enough to earn me the wages of sin — death.
- I now see that there is no way in the world that my sinful record could ever receive God's approval.
- I also see that I have a deeper problem that is at the foundation of my sinful record. It is my failure to love God as he deserves to be loved. I have selfishly centered my life around something other than God. I have ignored Him and hidden from Him so that I hardly know who He is. I have remained ignorant of His purpose. I have been proud and self-righteous in trying to cover up my record, make up for it and hide from it.
- I see that only Jesus has a perfect record and that my only hope is in exchanging records with Him.

Are you willing to speak like this to the Lord as simply and as honestly as you can?

- I now turn from my sins and trust you, alone, Lord Jesus to save me.
- Lord, take my sinful record and so rescue me from condemnation and death.
- By your generous goodness which I clearly don't deserve, give me your perfect record of righteousness so that I may have life that is really life — eternal life.

If you agree with the Lord in this way, embrace what Jesus has done for sinners and trust him to put you right with God, *he will do it*.

One day in the future when you stand before God and He asks you why He should let you into heaven, what will your answer be?

- This couldn't be happening.
- I've lived a pretty good life compared to most people.
- I've always tried to do what is right.
- I've kept the Ten Commandments.
- I have no hope. I have nothing to say.
- I have no hope in my own goodness or my own record. I trust in Christ alone who is my substitute and has given me his perfect record. He is my only hope.

MY NEW RECORD

***JESUS' RECORD IS
MY NEW RECORD***

In Christ I am:

- ◆ Perfectly Righteous
- ◆ Perfectly Forgiven
- ◆ Perfectly Accepted

May I share with you Jesus' promise to those who have turned from their sins and believed on him?

Jesus said: "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." *John 5:24*

Isn't that good news?! And there is more!

FOUR MORE GIFTS THAT JESUS GIVES ALONG WITH A NEW RECORD

1] **A New Heart:**

When Jesus gave you a new record he also gave you a *new heart*. That means that you have a whole new mindset. Although you will still have sinful tendencies that have become practiced habits over a lifetime (and you will want to struggle to change these), you now have a whole new motivation, love, thanksgiving and joy in Christ — a new desire to do what is right.

2] **A New Master:**

Risen from the dead, Jesus now lives to give you Himself as your new master. You are no longer enslaved to sin. You now have a whole new freedom to obey that you did not have before.

The risen Lord will lead you to:

Pray constantly... Prayer is talking to God simply, honestly and directly. Keep doing it at all times. Include praise, thanksgiving, confession of sins, petitions for others and requests for help.

Worship with others... Meet with a church where the Bible is taught and obeyed and where Jesus Christ is honored as Lord and Savior. Seek support from other Christians in your new life.

Reach out to others... Tell your friends what Christ has done for you — and wants to do for them. Be tactful and back up your words by continuing to change the way you live as you learn more about Christ.

3] **A New Name:**

Jesus said that those who believe in him will receive His Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit gives us a new identity, a new name. We are now called “sons and daughters of God.”

We are now children of God, so the apostle John says, “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” *1 John 3:1*

As children of God, the Holy Spirit is sent into our hearts helping us cry out to God now as our heavenly Father, *Galatians 4:4-7*. We are able to pray “Abba, Father.” The word “Abba” is an Aramaic term of affection that can be translated “Dad.”

Our own earthly fathers may not have been very good fathers. But our heavenly Father is always good, loving, holy and true. He always has our best interests at heart. That is why Jesus taught us to pray with confidence to him. We are to pray with this promise in mind: “If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!” *Matthew 7:11*

4] **A New Family:**

Finally, as children of God, we now have a new family — the household of God, *Ephesians 2:19; 1 Timothy 3:15*. Jesus promised not to leave us alone as orphans. When he makes us children of God he puts us together with God’s other children. And he does that through his churches.

The local church of believers becomes our new family. Here we are joined with other believers through baptism into Christ. Here we are given elders who teach us God’s word. As in a healthy family, a good church is like a greenhouse.

It is God’s place to help you grow and mature in your new life with Jesus Christ. In the church we gather together to worship God, study his word, pray for each other, and be equipped to reach out to others. In this way, those who do not yet know Christ may also, like you, find a new record, get a new heart, and be given a new identity that will last forever and ever!

*If you have any questions about this material, or want to know more
about Jesus and the gift of salvation, contact us at:*

*Rocky Mountain Community Church
2832 Broadwater Avenue
Billings, Montana 59102
1 (406) 259-7811
info@rmccmontana.org*

NOTES:

