

The Gospel Way Catechism

Question 19:
How does God respond to sin?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
When you hear the phrase "the wrath of God," what image or emotion comes to mind? How is God's anger different from human anger?

If a human judge let a guilty criminal go completely free without any penalty simply because the judge "felt loving," would we consider that a good judge? Why or why not?

How can God be completely loving and completely just at the exact same time when dealing with human sin?

QUESTION 19: How does God respond to sin?

ANSWER: God is not a permissive grandfather who winks at sin, but a perfect Father of fiery love. He hates sin because it defies his righteous character, disrupts our fellowship with him, and defaces us- his beloved image-bearers.

I. God Is Not a Permissive Grandfather Who Winks at Sin
God's love is not soft, indulgent, or indifferent to evil. God's holiness requires Him to actively oppose all unrighteousness.

- **Sin Cannot Be Overlooked**: God does not sweep rebellion under the rug or pretend it does not matter.
    - Habakkuk 1:13 – *"You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong..."*
    - Nahum 1:3 – *"The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, and the Lord will by no means clear the guilty."*
- **Exact and Proportional Justice**: Because God is a righteous Judge and Father, every sin carries a real, exact penalty rather than a passing shrug.
    - Romans 6:23 – *"For the wages of sin is death..."*
    - Luke 12:47–48 – God's justice is exact and proportional to the truth a person was given and rejected.

II. He Hates Sin Because It Defies His Righteous Character
God's wrath is His intense moral hatred of all sin, while others describe it as a settled, righteous indignation. God's anger is never a loss of temper—it is the natural clash between His pure light and our darkness.

- **God Loves the Good, So He Hates the Evil**: Because God is the ultimate standard of goodness, anything that opposes His character is an attack on what is right and true.
    - Psalm 5:4–5 – *"For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you."*

- Romans 1:18 – *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth."*

III. He Hates Sin Because It Disrupts Our Fellowship with Him

Sin is relational treason. It builds a wall between a loving Creator and the people He made to walk with Him.

- **Separation from God's Presence**: Left unaddressed, sin alienates us from the source of life and joy.
  - Isaiah 59:2 – *"But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear."*
  - 2 Thessalonians 1:9 – Final judgment is described as being *"away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might."*
- **Active Abandonment vs. Patient Restraint**: God responds to rebellion by "handing people over" to the distance they chose (Romans 1:24, 26, 28). God patiently delays final judgment to draw us back into fellowship (Romans 2:4).

IV. He Hates Sin Because It Defaces Us—His Beloved Image-Bearers

Sin is not merely a legal infraction; it is a vandalizing force. God hates sin because it destroys the people He loves and distorts His image in us.

- **The Ruin of God's Image**: Human beings were created to reflect God's glory (Genesis 1:27), yet sin corrupts our minds, desires, and bodies, leading to misery and death.
  - Romans 3:23 – *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*
  - John 8:34 – *"Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin."*

V. The Rescue of a Perfect Father of Fiery Love

Because God's love is fiery and fierce, He refuses to compromise His justice or abandon His image-bearers. At the cross, His wrath against sin and His love for sinners meet.

- **Propitiation—Wrath Satisfied by Love**: God sent Jesus as a *propitiation*—a sacrifice that absorbs God's righteous wrath completely so He can welcome us back as His children.
  - 1 John 4:10 – *"In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."*
  - Romans 3:25–26 – God put Christ forward to satisfy His justice so *"that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."*
- **Restoring the Image**: Through Christ, God removes our guilt and begins restoring His image in us (2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 8:29).

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

When you feel convicted of sin, do you tend to view God as an angry judge trying to push you away, or as a Father of fiery love trying to rescue you from what is ruining you? How would seeing Him as a loving Father change the way you confess your sin?

Where in your life are you tempted to treat sin lightly—as if God is a "permissive grandfather" who winks at it? How does remembering that sin *defaces* God's image in you change your view of that compromise?

Knowing that Jesus absorbed the full weight of God's wrath on the cross, how does that truth give you both a deeper hatred for sin and a deeper peace about your standing with God today?