

# MEMBERSHIP VOW # 1

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*Do you acknowledge yourself (yourselves) to be (a) sinners in the sight of God, justly deserving His displeasure, and without hope save in His sovereign mercy?*

**SCRIPTURE:** Psalm 51:1-7

**THEME:** “My Predicament”

## INTRODUCTION



1. The outline for our studies (5) will be the five vows affirmed when we become members of the Presbyterian Church in America.
  - a. Read All
  - b. This session, we will consider the first.
2. The lack of commitment (or lack of depth of commitment) which sometimes evidences itself, exposes a need for such a study.
3. Title: “What did I say?”
  - a. It may be that some of us don’t remember what we said;
  - b. Or, it may be that even though we remember what we said, we don’t remember **what it really meant**...perhaps we really never have understood what it meant.
4. When we take a vow before God, He takes it seriously.
  - a. Numbers 30:2- “If a man vows a vow to the Lord, or swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge; he shall not break his word. He shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.”
  - b. Matthew 12:36-37- “I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned..”
  - c. Psalm 116:18- “I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people...”
5. The first vow...listed above.

I. **A SINNER**

A. Yourself...

1. It doesn't take a person of great intelligence to recognize that sin is rampant in the world.
  - a. T.V., newspapers, on the streets.
  - b. Not only present; is rampant
2. The scripture says that the whole world "lieth in wickedness."
  - a. Satan the god of this "present evil world;"
  - b. Broad ways leads to destruction.


B. Yourself...

1. The scripture indicates further that we are all involved.
2. But, "we're respectable"- don't steal, drink, curse- They're the sinners.
  - a. Romans 3:23- "all have sinned."
  - b. Romans 3:10- "None is righteous, no, not one."
  - c. Everybody
3. That includes us, so that we have to take it personally
  - a. The Psalmist did: (Psalm 51:5) - "I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."
  - b. That is our PREDICAMENT too...
    -  Born with a sinful nature
    -  Born in sin

C. It sometimes leads to some awful depths, and if not dealt with, it has a tendency to lead a person ever downward.

1. It lead the Prodigal son to a hog-pen where he wallowed in the mire and ate the slop that the hogs ate.
2. Romans 1, beginning with verse 18, describes the progression:
  - a. Given over to a reprobate mind...
  - b. Having pleasure in things that invite the judgment of God
  - c. Not even wanting to retain God in their knowledge
  - d. Have their "conscience seared with a hot iron" (calloused)

D. But, what is sin?

1. Catechism, Q. 14- "Sin is any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God."
  - a. Any want of conformity unto: missing the mark, not measuring up.
  - b. Transgression of: stepping over the line.
2. Types
  - a. Commission & Omission
    -  Commission- Things we **do** that God has said we shouldn't do

## WHAT DID I SAY WHEN I JOINED THE CHURCH?

- Breaking the Ten Commandments;
- Doing things we know to be contrary to God's Word and Will
- ✚ Omission- Things we **don't do** that God has said we should do
  - Matthew 25: 14-30 – Parable of Talents
  - Jonah
  - Examples: witness, pray, study, tithe, worship
  - James 4:17 – “Whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.”

THUS: You don't have to be in the hog pen to be a sinner!

### b. Flesh & Spirit

- ✚ Flesh- What we do with our bodies
  - Stealing
  - Adultery
  - Drunkenness...etc.
- ✚ Spirit- Matter of attitude
  - Toward God
  - Toward each other
    - Pride (first sin?)
    - Hatred, greed, covetousness, jealousy, anger, lust

✚ In light of this, which one of us could face God and say, “I'm not a sinner?”

E. Response: I'm not very bad, so when you talk about sinners, you're surely not including me.

1. The law of God convicts us somewhere; none is exempt (Romans 3:19-23)

- a. God knows
- b. Can't “con” God

2. How many sins does it take to make a person a sinner? (Only one)

- a. It only takes one law broken to make us a law-breaker
- b. Break one rung in a ladder and the ladder is broken

✚ Dr. Gutzke: Law of God like a guard rail

✚ I think like the center line

✚ Not one of us but who has gotten in the wrong lane somewhere

- c. We have ALL sinned and come short of His glory

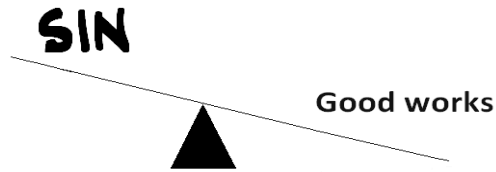
F. But, I've done a lot more good things than bad things...doesn't that count for something?

1. No matter how we may try to “counter-balance” our sinfulness, we are still sinners.

- a. So, we've done ten good things and one bad thing

- b. But, the bad thing...that sin...is still there...and the stench of it is nauseous to the nostrils of God:

✚ Example: See-Saw (Romans 3:20)



(Elevates our sin even higher under the nose of God. God says, "It stinks!")

✚ Even our righteousness is as "polluted garment" in His sight. (Isaiah 64:6)

- Whitewashed tombs (Matthew 23:27)
- Look good on the outside, but inside, full of dead men's bones

G. The real problem is not sins...but sinfulness

1. A person doesn't have measles because he has spots...
  - a. He has spots because he has measles.
  - b. The spots are simply evidence of the disease that's on the inside.
2. A person isn't a sinner because he sins;
  - a. He sins because he is a sinner.
  - b. The sins on the outside are simply evidence of the disease and corruption that is part of the nature of the person who's on the inside.

H. Sin is like a disease...

1. We're born with it...inherited from our very first parents
  - a. Adam and Eve...rebellion..."Thou shalt not"...and they DID
  - b. Irony...they wanted to be like God!
    - ✚ Corrupted the image of God
    - ✚ Became corrupt in their nature
2. This sin was passed into the bloodstream of the whole human race.
  - a. See it appear immediately as Adam began to lie...make excuses (for being less than God created him to be).
  - b. See it appear in his children...Cain killed Abel
  - c. Genesis 6:5 - "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."
    - ✚ It's a heart problem!
    - ✚ Matthew 15:19 - "out of the heart." [read verbatim]

3. This is why we hear God saying in Ezekiel 36:26 – “I will give you a new heart...”  
(SPIRITUAL SURGERY)
  - a. Israel...God’s chosen people...God accuses them of spiritual adultery...idolatry.
  - b. I “will cleanse you...”
    - ✚ Give you a new heart
    - ✚ Give you a new spirit
      - That Spirit who was going to be the “spirit of His Son”
      - The Spirit of that One who was “obedient unto death”
      - ...who was in all things tempted like as we are, “yet without sin.” “Holy, harmless, undefiled...”
  - c. I will put MY spirit within you
4. Result: The NEW BIRTH
  - a. A new person...with a new heart
  - b. A “new creature”
    - ✚ The old things pass away
    - ✚ All things new
5. That’s the only way that we can be freed from this disease and its consequences: “Except a man be born again...”

## II. WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN?

- A. The immediate results:
  1. Fellowship with God is broken
    - a. Garden of Eden...driven from Garden
    - b. Revelation 22...driven from the city of God
    - c. Driven from His presence
      - ✚ Sin hinders communion and fellowship (Isaiah 59:2)
      - ✚ Separates eternally
        - Psalm 6:8 – “Depart from me, all you workers of evil”
        - Matthew 7:23 – [Read]
  2. Fellowship between man and man is broken (Cain killed Abel immediately after the first sin)
    - a. Hatred
    - b. Distrust
    - c. Cain and Abel... I John 3:12
- B. The ultimate result is death
  1. Spiritual

- a. In Garden... "You shall surely die"... (Romans 5:12)
- b. Ephesians 2:1-7 – Describes the condition of spiritual death
  - ✚ Unresponsive toward God
  - ✚ Incapable of doing anything about his condition
- 2. Eternal
  - a. Ezekiel 18:4 – “the soul who sins shall die” (not just body)
  - b. Romans 6:23
  - c. This is a death that leaves out all hopes of life – we call it Hell
  - d. Luke 16:19-31... a great gulf fixed
- C. That's our Predicament... We're sinners... separated from God... under a penalty of death because of our sin...
  - 1. That's the condition of every person in the world.
  - 2. That would be his condition for eternity were it not for the **“Sovereign Mercy of God.”**

### III. GOD'S NATURE

- A. Explain the “Plan of Salvation”
  - 1. The Wages of sin is death... but the GIFT OF GOD...
    - a. Wages = what we have earned, what we deserve
    - b. Gift = not earned, not deserved
  - 2. How can He do that?...
    - a. He's holy
    - b. He's just
  - 3. But, He's also a God of love.
  - 4. In His love... Made a way to satisfy His holiness, His justice, and His love... all at once
    - a. Entered this world in the person of Jesus Christ... the perfect God man... never sinned like we do
    - b. But, He dies for sin... not His... never committed any...
    - c. He died for OUR sins... took our place... so that we who deserve death might have life
      - ✚ God “made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (II Corinthians 5:21)
      - ✚ All we like sheep have gone astray... We have turned every one to His own way... and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

[EXAMPLE- Johnny] – See Appendix A

5. That's God's Provision...that's God's Mercy...He has made a way for the sinner to be saved...(Ephesians 2:4-7)
- B. His SOVEREIGN mercy
1. II Thessalonians 2:12-14
  2. John 6:44 – “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.”
  3. Consider...
    - a. Election...and
    - b. Predestination – Chosen in Him from before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4)

**CONCLUSION:**

1. God in His sovereignty has declared that we must respond... “ACKNOWLEDGE”
  - a. No one is saved who is not willing to admit that he is lost.
  - b. No one is healed who will not admit that he is sick.
    - ✚ Jesus came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.
    - ✚ Repentance = “Hating and forsaking SIN because it is displeasing to God”
2. It is taking it to the cross and leaving it there
  - a. God has already made the provision...
  - b. Says that “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (I John 1:9)
    - ✚ Bound by His justice
    - ✚ No double jeopardy
3. This is what the Psalmist is doing in Psalm 51
4. God says, “I will”...Psalm 103:12 – “as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us, to be remembered no more.”