

Sins vs Mistakes
Outline – Mike Baird

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Much of this is taken from an article by Elder Dallin H Oaks "Sins and Mistakes, Ensign Oct 1996,
(<https://www.lds.org/ensign/1996/10/sins-and-mistakes?lang=eng>)

Lord differentiates between sin and mistakes

- D&C 20:80
"Any member of the church of Christ transgressing, or being overtaken in a fault, shall be dealt with as the scriptures direct"
 - Implies that different to transgress than to "be overtaken with fault"
 - In either case we deal with as the scriptures direct

What do the scriptures direct members should be dealt with?

"Erred it might be made known"

- D&C 1:24-25
"Behold, I am God and have spoken it; these commandments are of me, and were given unto my servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding.
And inasmuch as they erred it might be made known;"

"sinned they might be chastened"

- D&C 1:27
"And inasmuch as they sinned they might be chastened, that they might repent;"
- For purposes of this discussion
 - sin & transgression mean the same
 - "to err" or "be at fault" mean the same thing

What is the difference between sins and mistakes?

- Dallin H Oaks
"I would say that a deliberately wrong choice in the contest between what is clearly good and what is clearly bad is a sin, but a poor choice among things that are good, better, and best is merely a mistake" (*"Sins and Mistakes," Ensign, Oct. 1996, 62*)
- Both may hurt us and both require attention

Sin

- Sin is the violation of a commandment of God
- Require chastening and repentance

Mistakes

- Mistakes are usually a result of poor judgment on our part
 - Mistake to step in front of a speeding car
 - Suffer consequences of our mistakes
- Mistakes are not sins
- We should not require repentance for mistakes

Application

- Important to distinguish in several areas

Teaching children

- Little children before 8
 - Mistakes not sin
 - Our responsibility to teach them right from wrong
- Shouldn't require repentance for mistakes
- Teach them to repent of sins
- Sometimes the first time is a mistake – we correct and then if repeated is sin

Ignorance of the law or not accountable

- Ignorant then it is a mistake and not a sin
- Still may need to suffer from mistakes
 - Someone who smokes

Mistakes can lead to sin

- violating of limits
 - curfew or family rules
 - mission rules
- Discussion of mistakes
 - Careful in discussion of mistakes and correction
 - Wrath can lead to sin

Mistake can be as much or more serious than sin

- Almost all sins can be corrected through repentance
- Some mistakes can not be corrected
 - Stepping out in front of an automobile

Mistakes are part of life

- Dallin H Oaks
"We should seek to avoid mistakes, since some mistakes have very painful consequences. But we do not seek to avoid mistakes at all costs. Mistakes are inevitable in the process of growth in mortality. To avoid all possibility of error is to avoid all possibility of growth." ("Sins and Mistakes," *Ensign*, Oct. 1996, 62)
 - Parable of talents – person with one talent

Take comfort from the Lord in Mistakes

- Lord suffered the pains and afflictions of his people
 - [Alma 7:11](#); [D&C 18:11](#); [D&C 33:53](#)
- Afflictions consecrated for our gain
 - [2 Ne. 2:2](#); [D&C 98:3](#)