

LESSON FOUR: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHRISTIAN SINS

SESSION ONE

TO THE LEADER/FACILITATOR

To help you be more effective in leading your small-group discipleship study, we have prepared the **General Leadership Guide** to help steer you through the basics of facilitating a small-group study. If you have not already done so, please read the Guide.

ABOUT THIS SESSION

This is the first of three sessions dealing with sin in the life of the Christian. Coming to faith in Christ provides forgiveness and restoration with our Holy God for our sins, but it does not give us license to sin. Since none of us can claim perfection, and we all struggle with the reality of sin this side of Heaven, Pastor Rogers will explore what the Bible teaches about sin in the life of a Christian.

PREPARING TO LEAD/FACILITATE THIS SESSION

Read through the **Session Guide**, and watch the video in advance of the session. Review the **Additional Scripture to Study** at the end of the **Guide**, along with the suggested **Personal Application**. Make sure you print out enough copies of the **Student Handout** which mirrors this **Leader's Guide**.

CONDUCTING THE SESSION

At the beginning of the session, read the **Introduction** to your group, then open discussion by asking the **Reflection Questions** before viewing the video segment. After viewing the video together, you may want to ask for comments before next leading your group through the **Amplification and Discussion** section. Feel free to add your own commentary if needed, but be cognizant of time and do not personally dominate the session. As you read through the **Amplification** section, engage your group by using the provided **Discussion Questions** to stimulate additional dialogue.

As you prepare to conclude the session, review the **Personal Application** for the week and encourage participants to engage in the suggested activity, as well as to read and study the **Additional Scriptures to Study** section. The **Additional Scriptures to Study** section contains questions or reflections intended to guide participants in their respective personal studies. This is best presented as a positive activity designed to help everyone in the group to grow spiritually through the week (as opposed to being presented as homework).

Allow participants to share prayer requests and lead your group in prayer using any of the suggested formats in the **General Leadership Guide**. Remember to provide an atmosphere of confidentiality within the group as participants share.

LESSON FOUR | SESSION ONE

INTRODUCTION

The previous topics in this series of sessions explained how we know the Bible is the Word of God, how we can have assurance of our salvation, and how God's salvation is eternally secure. This next series of sessions from Pastor Rogers will explore what the Bible teaches about sin in the life of the Christian. As much as we would all like to be "perfected" at the moment of our salvation, that just is not reality this side of Heaven. However, the Bible does have much to say about the consequences of sin in the life of the believer, as well as about how to be cleansed from those sins. In this and the next session, Pastor Rogers focuses on what the Bible teaches about sin's consequences in the life of true believers.

OUR KEY PASSAGES

Psalm 51:1-4 "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever

before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight—that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge.”

Psalm 51:8 “Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which You have broken may rejoice.”

Psalm 51:12 “Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with Your generous Spirit.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What do you think are some of the consequences of sin in the life of a believer?
- What do you think believers can do to avoid, and/or be cleansed from current or future sins?

PRESENTATION OF VIDEO CLIP OF: “What Happens When a Christian Sins”

AMPLIFICATION AND DISCUSSION

The most miserable person on earth is not a lost person, but a saved person out of fellowship with God. —**Adrian Rogers**

Amplification: There is a false belief based on a perverted interpretation of the doctrine of the security of the believer that suggests once people are saved they can continue to sin with impunity. Nothing could be further from the truth. A person who has genuinely encountered the living Christ may sometimes fail because of human weakness, but the difference between a saved and a lost person is that the saved person **does not want to** sin. Sin brings with it consequences, and for the believer the consequences are more severe than simple situational consequences. For example, if a believer and a non-believer were each to steal something, there is the situational consequence of them both being arrested and possibly going to jail. But the Christian in that circumstance faces the additional consequence of disappointing God and suffering through the Lord’s chastisement.

For Discussion: How would you define sin?

Amplification: Sadly, we often form our concept of God based on our human fathers. That might be acceptable if all fathers displayed the love, forgiveness, correction and mercy of our heavenly Father. Too often our earthly fathers fail to provide those things in their proper proportion. One human characteristic transcends even the worst of fatherly relationships, and that is the innate desire to have our father’s approval. The pain of disapproval can be devastating in a son’s or daughter’s life, leading to a myriad of behavioral disorders. In the same way for a Christian, to feel the weight of God’s disapproval brings a myriad of spiritual maladies in addition to whatever situational consequences come with the offense.

For Discussion: How can we as Christians, live in such a way as to diminish the power and effect of sin in our lives?

Amplification: In our session today, we learned how sin dirties the soul, dominates the mind, disgraces the Lord, and depresses the heart. These are only the first four of seven spiritual consequences detailed in Psalm 51 that believers face when they harbor unconfessed and unrepented sin in their lives. The other three consequences will be addressed in the next session. What is important to remember is that David, “who was a man after God’s own heart,” tried to hide and cover up his initial sin with Bathsheba, which only led to deeper sin. After being confronted by Nathan the prophet, David wrote this Psalm of confession describing the inner agony he had been experiencing while hiding from the Lord. His behavior is reminiscent of Adam in the Garden of Eden who, after he had sinned, tried to cover his sin and hide from God. The

lesson to learn from both is that we cannot hide from God. Speaking of true believers, Jesus warns us in Mark 4:22 and again in Luke 8:17, that whatever has been kept secret or hidden will come to light.

For Discussion: Why do you think sin has such a deep and damaging effect in the life of a believer?

Amplification: Termites are nearly invisible creatures that will gnaw away at the foundation of a structure, and in time will eat away at everything except the thinnest outer shell of a building. From the outside, an untrained eye may not be able to detect anything wrong until a finger pushes against the outer wall. Then it will be discovered that the wall has been hollowed out and is no longer solid, but a useless outline of what used to be. So it is with unchecked sin in our lives.

For Discussion: Was there a time when sin seemed to have no effect on your life, when it just seemed to be the “normal” thing to do? Share with your group how that has changed.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

This week in your personal devotions, meditate on those times before coming to Christ when sin had little or no impact on your life, and compare it to how sin affects you now. Spend time praising God for how He has provided the Holy Spirit to bring conviction when we stray from Him.

GROUP PRAYER REQUESTS

Suggested group prayer – “Lord, we are grateful for the ability to feel pain, both physically and spiritually, that warns us when something is wrong. Let Your Word be a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths!

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES TO STUDY

As you read the two verses, consider why it is that God always considers our sins as having been committed against Him, even though they were perpetrated against another?

Numbers 32:23b “...you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out.”

Psalms 51:4 “Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight—that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge.”

Have you ever experienced the Lord’s correction or chastisement (not just situational consequences), for something you did wrong? If so, take time to recount those incidents and to thank Him and praise Him for His love. If not, you may need to reexamine your relationship with Him.

Proverbs 3:12 “For whom the LORD loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights.”

People tend to live their lives as though God never really sees what they do. Consider, He not only sees behind closed doors, but He also looks deep into our hearts.

Mark 4:22 (see also Luke 8:17) “For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light.”

Contemplate the depth of meaning in this verse, that while our sin made us unlovely and repulsive to our Holy God, He still loved us enough to humble Himself by taking on human form to suffer a cruel and demeaning death to accept the penalty of our sins.

Romans 5:8 “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

ADDITIONAL READING RESOURCES

- C. H. Spurgeon, “The Treasury of David,” (Hendrickson Publishers, 1876)
- Lewis Sperry Chafer, “Grace; An Exposition of God’s Marvelous Gift,” (Kregel, 2007)
- R. A. Torrey, ed., “The Fundamentals; A Testimony of Truth,” (Bible Institute, 1917)

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For Discussion: How can we as Christians, live in such a way as to diminish the power and effect of sin in our lives?

For Discussion: Why do you think sin has such a deep and damaging effect in the life of a believer?

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