



Doctrine Discussion Guide

Week 12 | Sin

Ice Breaker

When you think of a villain, what comes to mind? What are the attributes of a good villain?

Theological Truths

What is Sin?

Personal Sin. "As it is written: 'There is none righteous, no, not one';... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (**Rom 3:10 & 23**)

Inherited Sin. "When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned." (**Romans 5:12**)

Sin interrupts our fellowship with God and others (**1 John 1:3, 6-7; Psalm 66:18**)

Sin causes a loss of joy (**John 15:11; Galatians 5:22**)

Sin causes the believer to walk in darkness (**1 John 1:6; 2:10; Ephesians 5:8**)

Sin brings a lack of confidence in prayer (**1 John 3:19-22; Psalm 66:18**).

Persistent sin brings about God's chastisement (**Hebrews 12:5-11; 1 Corinthians 11:30**)

It can result in Church discipline - ex-communication (**1 Corinthians 5; Matthew 18:17**)

Persistent sin can even result in physical death - the "sin unto death" (**Hebrews 11:30; 1 John 5:16**).

Tim Keller in The Reason for God describes sin this way: "According to the Bible, the primary way to define sin is not just the doing of bad things, but the making of good things into ultimate things. It is seeking to establish a sense of self by making something else more central to your significance, purpose and happiness than your relationship with God."

Simone Weil wrote, "All sins are attempts to fill voids. Because we cannot stand the God-shaped hole inside of us, we try stuffing it full of all sorts of things, but only God may fill it."

Passages for Study

Read through these passages, most from Romans, as an overview of a biblical understanding of sin.

Romans 3:9b-18 *For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are*

under sin, as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one. Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips. Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Romans 3:23 "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God..."

Romans 4:25

"He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification."

Romans 5:8, NIV

"But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 6:6

"For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin."

Romans 7:24-25, The Message

"I've tried everything and nothing helps. I'm at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? Isn't that the real question? The answer, thank God, is that Jesus Christ can and does. He acted to set things right in this life of contradictions where I want to serve God with all my heart and mind, but am pulled by the influence of sin to do something totally different."

Romans 7:18

"For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out."

1 John 1:9, CEV

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Questions about these passages

- How is sin defined?
- What is the result of sin?
- Who does this apply to?
- What is the answer for sin?

Discussion questions

- What are some euphemisms people use today for sin (e.g. "white lies")? Why do you think people use them? Do you ever hear the word "sin" used outside of the Church?
- How have you seen the effects and/or consequences of sin in your own life or in your family history?
- What thoughts/ideas/images first come to mind when you hear the word "repent?"
- Share a time in your life when you remember making a conscious decision to turn away from something you knew was wrong and you choosing a different way instead.
- Few of us find "guilt" or "fear of punishment" to be very good motivators for anything. What could be a different motivator for us to stop making choices that lead to sin?