

Confirmation Lesson 31 - "What Is Sin?"

Lesson Preparation

Purpose: To give the class a basic understanding of sin as a **relational** reality in our lives that produces behavior symptoms and how the Christian faith understands the reality of sin.

Core Teaching: Sin is a universal human reality. All of us fall short of what we want to be, of what God wants us to be. We fail to trust God and wind up putting our trust in untrustworthy things: ourselves, wealth, power, popularity. These things make a very poor God.. In the language of the Bible, these are our "idols".

Small Group Resources: **Newsprint, tape, & colored marker** for each group (for collage). **A stack of newspapers & magazines, copies of "The Word On Sin"** and **copies of "The Illness"** for each class member.

Preparation: Have volunteers (*teachers or class members*) prepare to present the **opening skit**. Have **two video tapes** available: *Apollo 13* and *Tape 1* from the *Disciple One Bible Study*. **TV/VCR**, Optional Opening: **TV mock up, skit participants, velcro dart board & balls**.

Scripture: **Genesis 2:15-3:13**

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die." Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken." Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed. Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were

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opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves. They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate."

Romans 7:15-24

I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law (of God) is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. . . . I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. . . . So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?

Large Group

Singing: Music team sings 2-3 high energy songs.

Offering: Two students bring the offering collection box to the leader.

Doxology: Sing Doxology

Affirmation of Faith: Have the class join together in reciting the "Apostle's Creed".

Introduction to the lesson: 1) **Three Situations Depicting "Problems"**

A) "Houston, We Have A Problem!" (Video Clip)

Show the **video clip from the movie "Apollo 13"**. You will want to show the clip leading up to and just beyond the statement: *"Houston, we have a problem"*

After showing the clip, **ask** the class:

- 1) *What are the "symptoms" that make the astronauts think they have a problem? - i.e., vibration, spin, venting, debris*
- 2) *What is the **real problem**? - i.e., explosion & damage to fuel cells (oxygen)*
- 3) *What happens if you only treat the symptoms and not the real problem?*

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B) "Eden, We Have A Problem" (Video Clip)

Show the video clip from the Disciple One Bible study where Dr. Bill Power narrates the Adam and Eve story as the camera focuses on a tapestry. (*Video tape #1, Session #3*).

After showing the tape, **ask** the class:

- 1) *Is this story familiar?*
- 2) *Where does it come from? (Garden of Eden in Genesis 2 & 3)*
- 3) *Remember last week's video? (Dr. Bill Power narrating the story or creation)*
- 4) *What did God want? (Trust me! God wanted a relationship based on trust)*
- 5) *What happened? (Trust and relationship were broken.)*
- 6) *What did Dr. Power say the word "dead" can mean in the bible? - be **alone, afraid, & vulnerable** (naked)*
- 7) *In this sense, did Adam and Eve "die"?*

C) "Dallas, We Have A Problem" (Skit)

Create a skit in which two friends have a fight. Both say things they shouldn't say, then they separate and walk away from each other in anger. One turns to the class, and in a cameo, says that she (or he) is willing to forgive and forget. This person goes back to the other person and tries to repair the relationship. The second person keeps his/her back turned and is unwilling to reconcile. The skit ends with the first person turning back to the class again and asking: "*What am I to do?*"

After the skit, ask the class:

- 1) *What are problems here?*
- 2) *What is the real problem*
- 3) *What would it take to solve the problem?*

Tell the class that today we will explore how our faith understands the human "problem" called 'sin'.

OPTIONAL OPENING: "Missing The Mark"

The following skit and activity gives you an alternative introduction. The point in the skit and activity is that we are all 'sinners' and all of us 'sin'. This is just a part of what it means to be human. We all fall short, miss the mark, fail to trust God.

A) Skit

TV Watcher: Let see what's on TV this morning. **Click**

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Large Group

TV: . . . so the big event is on! We're here on Wrestle Mania, where the Monster Man goes up against Crusher Cronin! This match is going to be A-W-E-S-O-M-E--- Awesome baby!

TV Watcher: Click

TV: , , ,and picking up from last week's show we're going to look at planting petunias. Thanks for joining us this morning on Gardening for Goodness. Our special guest on today's show has won 'Planter of the Year' two years in a row.

TV Watcher: Click

TV: ... you're absolutely right, the inside game for Connecticut simply out matched Ohio State. I don't think I've seen 5 guys play better this entire tournament and Duke is going to have to be careful or we'll have another Cinderella story on our hands...

TV Watcher: Click

TV: . . . at the hand of the Devil! SIN!! That's right, Sin is everywhere! And don't you dare change that channel that's right you (*point your finger at the TV Watcher*) with the changer. You - Are - A - Sinner! You we're born a sinner, you live as a sinner, and you will die a sinner!

TV Watcher: Hey wait a minute!... I'm *not* a sinner..

TV: Don't try to deny it!

TV Watcher: No, really! I do what my mom and dad ask me. I pray to God. I try my hardest at school. I've even stopped hitting my little brother.

TV: Don't you play games with me young lady/man. Sin is everywhere! The temptations of the Devil are everywhere! YOU ARE A SINNER!

TV Watcher: CLICK!. .. (*turns to the class*) But I'm not a bad person. I'm kind and loving. How can a bad person who does bad things. How can I be a sinner?

Lead Teacher: Who's right? Is she a sinner? Is she a bad person? *Let the class respond. Read the cards filled out before class & let the class respond. After discussion say: Both are right! But how can this be? Just what is sin?*

The Video: Share with the class:

Today we will be looking at a story, a story found at the very beginning of the Bible, a story about Adam and Eve and about what the Bible and our faith mean by sin.

Show the video clip from Session #4 of the Disciple One video, where Dr. Bill Power narrates the story of Adam and Eve with the Medieval tapestry in the background.

- Ask:**
- 1) *So how do we deal with sin?*
 - 2) *How do we get closer to GOD?*

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Large Group

Say: Think back to last week's class. God is looking for a relationship with trust. The farther we get away from trusting God, (putting our trust for faith in money, ourselves, powerful people or things) the farther we get away from the bull's eye. In your small groups talk about what you think sin is and how we can deal with it:

- 1) *What are different kinds of sin?*
- 2) *How do we deal with the fact that all of us are sinners by the very fact that we are human and imperfect?*
- 3) *In what ways do we get away from God & His will?*
- 4) *What can we do in our relationship with GOD to help us as we deal with specific sins in our lives?*
- 5) *How is sin like a disease with symptoms?*

You can read "The Illness" to help you with this.

Prayer: Large group leader closes with prayer.

Dismiss to small group: Students follow small group leaders to their respective locations.

Small Group

Opening Prayer: Begin the small group session with a prayer. You may want to do a sentence completion prayer, a "build a prayer", or ask for a volunteer to pray. The main idea is for the youth themselves to pray. This is how they learn and how they become comfortable with prayer.

Discussion: **If you think of this as trying to do God's will everyday, who could hit the bulls eye every time? (GOD, Jesus) Are there any human's who can hit the bull's eye every time?**

Sin is 'missing the mark'... not hitting the bull's eye ... not being perfect. But it is more than that. It is missing the mark because we fail to trust God as God and try to do things our own way.

As humans, are any of us perfect? Do all of us always trust God? Then, by definition, we are sinners. Does that make sense? Yes our TV watcher is kind, does what his/her mom & dad asks, and doesn't even bit his/her little brother. But is she perfect? Does she always trust God and base his or her life on God? Can she always do GOD's will? She is great person, but still human, still imperfect, still a sinner. No matter how good he/she is, he/she will never be GOD.

Build A Collage: What's Wrong With the World?

Place the stack of magazines and newspapers in the center of them group. Have your group members build a collage of **what's wrong with the world** using pictures, stories, headlines and words from the magazines and newspapers. Have them glue or tape these to the newsprint. They can also write down other topics of words that occur to them.

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Small Group

When they have finished,
ask the group:

- 1) *Which of these things are caused by people?*
- 2) *Why do we do these things?*
- 3) *If we really trusted God, how might things be different?*

(i.e., if we went by the 10 commandments)

**Mini-presentation on
"Sin"**

Give a mini-presentation on sin. Hand out copies of "The Word On Sin". Read the statements round robin style. Go around the circle and have different readers read each statement. Have a new reader at each paragraph. Briefly discuss it. Do they have any questions?

The "Illness"

Ask the group what happens when someone is brought in to a hospital with a serious illness.

Have a volunteers read the story "The Illness" to the group. You might want to use a different reader for each paragraph. This is found in your curriculum and will be in your resource kit. You will have a copy for each group member. Ask the group what they think about this understanding of 'sin'.

Scripture Study:

Have your group read over today's two scripture lessons.. The first passage from Romans is one that most of us can readily relate to. We used this passage last week, so they are already familiar with it. The second passage from Genesis has already been used in the video last week and in one of the skits today it's given here more as background

Have someone read the passages out loud.

Ask: *How many of you have ever felt this way?*

Briefly discuss

how the group relates to Paul's insight that even when we know what is right, we still do what is wrong.

Re-read

Paul's last question.

Tell the group

next week we will be exploring God's answer or solution to his problem.

Joys & Concerns:

Ask students to share any Joys & Concerns for the week.

Lord's Prayer:

Lead the small group in the Lord's Prayer.

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Large Group Closing

Announcements/Birthdays:

Sing “Sanctuary”: Have the class form a circle and link arms (right over left) before singing.

UMYF Benediction: Lead the group in the UMYF Benediction.

The Word On "Sin"

"Sin" - that yuck word. Everybody's against 'sin'.. But what - *exactly* - does the Bible and our faith mean by the world "sin".

We know what comes to mind - bad stuff, things we do that we shouldn't, like breaking the commandments, or breaking the law, or getting in trouble. But, surprisingly, that is not primarily what the Bible means by sin.

For a start, there is a difference between "Sin" and "sins". "Sin" is the big issue. Sin is what the two movie clips and the skit was about.

Sin is not about what we do. It is about relationships - about breaking relationships.

God wants to be in relationship with us. God wants us to be in healthy relationships with each other. And God wants us to trust God. That's what the story of the Garden of Eden is really about. That's what faith is really about - trusting God.

When we don't trust God as God we commit Sin (with a big "S").

Not trusting God is the first sin, the "original sin", Sin with a capital S. We call this the sin of "unfaith" (not trusting)

Now, being human, we must trust something. If we don't trust God, we will trust something else. This is that the Bible means by "idolatry".

Idolatry is trusting something other than God as *God* -as the basis for your life. There are really two possibilities if you are not going to trust God and place your ultimate trust in something other than God.

You either put ultimate trust in yourself (this is the sin of "pride") or in something other than yourself or God (this is the sin of "lust").

The sin of pride means that I make myself the center of the universe. I think I can do it all. The problem is that we make a lousy "God." We make great people, but God we are not.

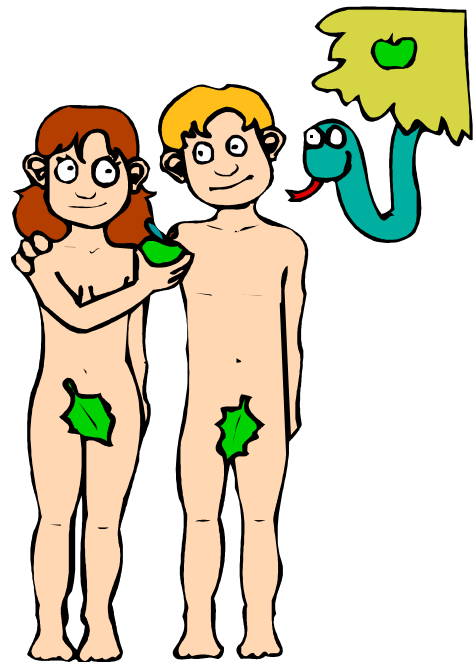
Many people think that the word "lust" has to with sex. It may, but it's much broader than that. "Lust" means **to desire**.

In the Bible it means to desire something else as the center of your life. In this sense we can "lust" after many things: power, wealth, prestige, fame, the list is endless.

None of these things are bad in and of themselves; its just that if we try to base our lives on these things (make them our "God"), we're in trouble.

That brings us to the issue of "sins". Sins are the things we do because of our not trusting God and trying to base our lives on something else - either ourselves or something other than God or ourselves.

It's kind of like Sin is the disease and sins are the symptoms - but we're getting ahead of ourselves. We'll get back to that in a few minutes.





The Illness

A person who has a serious, potentially life-threatening disease, is brought to a hospital emergency room. A bacteria has invaded the person's body. The person has many symptoms: headache, high fever, dizziness, upset stomach.

We can treat all of the symptoms. We have medicines for each of the symptoms. We can treat the fever. We can treat the headache. We treat the dizziness and the upset stomach.

The problem is that we can treat all of the symptoms and still have the patient die. Unless we treat the real problem - the disease itself - we cannot cure the illness. But if we successfully cure the illness, the symptoms - fever, headache, etc. will go away. It's not that the symptoms are unimportant. It's just that, as bad as they are, they are not the real problem.

Nearly 2000 years ago a very wise Christian who understood the Bible said that Sin is like a disease. The real problem, the real disease or illness in human life, is that we don't trust God. We try to trust something else and base our lives on something other than God. We trust money, or power, or popularity, or our own talents. We build our lives on these things. It's not that any of these things are bad in themselves. It's just that they make lousy Gods - we can't base our lives on them.

When we have the illness of not trusting God as God, we also have symptoms. We see these in the news everyday. We have the symptoms of hatred and prejudice, of insensitivity & cruelty, of greed, of violence.

We can treat all the symptoms and still have the disease. Our Christian faith calls the disease "Sin" - the basic sin of unfaith (or not trusting God) and trusting other things as a basis for our lives. The symptoms are "sins" - things that we do wrong because we don't trust God or what God asks us to do (and not do). Sin is really about relationship - our relationship with God and with others, and how these relationships can be broken. Sins are about the symptoms or consequences of our broken relationship