



## Aim

To help students understand that sin separates them from God and the only way they can be saved from it is by a living faith in the Lord Jesus. This was always the plan from the beginning.

## Bible background

References in the chart on the students' books, Romans 3:9-11,23; 7:7-11, Matthew 5.

## Preparation required

Check how previous lessons have covered what happened in the garden of Eden, to avoid repetition.

Find out or remember what was taught in lesson 5 and decide how much to revise or elaborate on. Think through the examples mentioned in the students' books.

## Outline of lesson

### What is sin?

Ask the students to discuss with each other what they think sin is so that they can be prepared to have a go at volunteering an answer. Put all their definitions on a flip chart or large piece of paper. Try to get the students to realise that it's more than just doing wrong things.

At the most fundamental level, sin is the transgression of God's command but even if we spent a whole day (which we may well do sometimes) without doing something bad, we would still be sinful people because our thoughts and desires are unworthy of the Lord Jesus.

### Romans 3:9-12; 7:15

Perhaps the best definition of sin is what Paul says Romans 3:23 - that sin is 'falling short of the glory of God'. The students could try to put this in their own words in the box in the students' books.

### Where it all started

Remind the class, if necessary, what happened in the garden of Eden. Point out that Eve could only have known about God's command from Adam but that she was still held responsible.

Make sure the students are clear about the distinction between sin and temptation. God gave us all free will and it is not wrong to consider our options (right or wrong). It only becomes sin when we give in to the wrong ones. Jesus was tempted but did not sin.

### The consequences

Sin brings consequences. It separates us from God (Isaiah 59:1-2<sup>1</sup>), and ultimately it leads to death.

Ask the students to think of examples of sin in the Bible and the consequences.

- Adam and Eve eating the fruit
- Cain killing Abel
- David committing adultery and later murder
- Jonah running away from God

References to these incidents are in the students' books in case they need reminding of them.

Spend a little time on David's example. Although God forgave him when he repented of the sin of adultery and murder, David's child became ill and although David pleaded with God to spare him, the child died. Note how David accepted this as God's decision.

All the problems David had with his children were not punishments from God but were probably caused either because his children knew what he had done or David's own feelings of guilt stopped him from correcting his children.

<sup>1</sup> In Isaiah 59:2, note that our sins hide God's face from us - not the other way round.

The students need to realise that all their actions have consequences. God will forgive them their sins but he does not necessarily remove unpleasant consequences – we have to learn to live with them. In fact, the unpleasant consequences can be beneficial in making us realise that what we did was wrong, and teaching us not to make the same mistake again.

There are, of course, occasions when God uses sinful people to achieve his purpose. For instance, Joseph's brothers selling him into Egypt prepared the stage for the Israelites to be saved from the famine and ultimately brought out of Egypt; Saul's persecution of believers caused them to be scattered and to spread the gospel; the wickedness of men in crucifying the Lord Jesus played its part in God's plan of salvation.

## **The ultimate consequence**

Quite often it seems as though people are not punished in any way for their sins but we should remember what God told Adam and Eve in the garden. We all die as a consequence of our sin and our human nature - even if we were able to live our lives without breaking any of God's commandments, we would still have the human nature that leads us to sin, and we would still need to be saved. Jesus not only did not sin, but he conquered his human nature (Hebrews 2:14).

Get the class to complete the 'Bad News' box in their books and talk about whether there is any good news. Romans 3:23 tells us that despite what we are, God will give us eternal life through Jesus if we believe.

This is through God's grace. We will never deserve it. We need to have faith in Jesus Christ and to let that faith work in our lives so that we try to please God in the way we live..

## **Relevance to our lives**

Without Christ we are sinners before God and unacceptable to him (Habakkuk 1:13). Make sure you get this message across. The result is our death forever. Only in Christ can we escape these consequences and have eternal life. Although God will forgive anyone who truly repents of their sin, he doesn't necessarily remove the consequences of their actions.

Encourage the students to take time to reflect on their sins and temptations and to ask God in prayer to help and guide them as they make decisions and to protect them from the consequences of their actions..

## **Extension activities**

- It may be useful to consider the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 as this highlights our motives and attitudes and not just our actions. We cannot be perfect as Christ commands in v48<sup>1</sup> but we rely on God's grace in providing a path to him despite our sin, through the sacrifice of his Son.
- You might like to discuss Romans 1:19-20 to show that God considers everyone accountable and that the students present at the lesson are by definition knowledgeable enough to be held accountable.

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<sup>1</sup> The word translated 'perfect' in Matthew 5:48 really means 'complete'. If the young people are enjoying using a concordance they can discover that 'perfect' (Greek 'teleios', Strong's 5046) comes from 'telos' (Strong's 5056), and it means to reach the end of a journey.