

God's Love and Our Sin

(God's love deals with our sin)

~Lesson Two~

Before sin came into the world, everything was perfect! Adam and Eve got along with God perfectly. They got along with each other perfectly. The world was a perfect place. I don't think we can begin to imagine the world in its perfect state, since the effects of sin have spoiled it greatly. God knows all things, even the "what ifs", so He knew our state of perfection would be fleeting. He knew before He created us that we would rebel against Him. He knew Adam and Eve would choose what a tree had to offer instead of Him (Genesis 2:16-17). He also knew His love for us would find its strongest avenue through a tree, the cross. This week we will study how we became God's enemies and why He needed to become our Sacrifice.

Day One Sin and Its Consequences

Since God created all of us in His image, we have a free will. This freedom gave us the choice to be in a relationship with God or not. He gave us a free will so we could freely choose to love and obey Him! Don't you want people to choose to love you, not be made to? Sadly, Adam and Eve chose to use God's incredible gift of freedom to disobey Him.

Their disobedience of His one command brought the concept of sin into our world and put us in bondage to it. (Sin is disobedience against God.) Their choice also brought evil/bad into world. (Let me remind you, before Adam and Eve chose to disobey God there was only good in the world.) Bad is defined as the opposite of good and is explained by various words. These words are: ugly, hurtful, painful, unhappy, inferior, wrong, hideous, confusion, fearful, unfruitful, insecure, mean, and evil. Have you ever thought about how very different things would be without evil/bad in the world?

Their sin brought death into the world as God told them it would. Ephesians 2:1-3 explains that sin puts us in a state of death and rebellion towards God.

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. (NASB)

What saddens me the most, is that Adam and Eve chose to trust in or rely on themselves and the talking serpent, who was actually Satan (Revelation 12:9). They did this instead of trusting in God, who had just created them to love them (Ephesians 1:4). Throughout history many people have doubted God and His existence, but Adam and Eve had a face to face relationship with Him. There was absolutely no excuse for them to doubt God. An important concept to remember is: You either trust in God, or you are trusting in yourself or something else, which is sin. Satan is always at the root of *not* trusting God.

1. **Read Genesis 2:16-17 and Genesis 3:1-15.** Write down any insights and applications the Spirit is giving you from these verses.
 2. Adam's and Eve's perfect relationship with God, who created and loved them, was shattered. They were now in a state of death because they chose to be. They were now imprisoned by their sinful desires. They had rebelled against God and were now His enemies. They had lost their freedom of choice - whether to sin or not, because they were enslaved to sin. (Our freedom of choice whether to sin or not, is given back to us through trusting in Jesus Christ. This is because Jesus Christ redeems us from being enslaved to sin.) **Read Romans 3:21-24, 5:6-12, 6:5-7 and Ephesians 2:1-7.**
 3. From Genesis 3:1-13, why did Adam and Eve choose to disobey God? Remember Adam and Eve did not have a sinful nature until after they chose to disobey God.
 4. From Genesis 1 and 2, what type of world did God want us to live in? From Genesis 3, what type of world did we end up with because of sin? How did Adam's and Eve's relationship with God change? How does God want our relationship towards Him to be?

5. Before we become Christians, there is no way we can obey God, because we are held captive by our sinful nature. When we become a Christian, we are set free from the power of our sinful nature so we can choose to obey God. However, as Christians we can still wrestle greatly with disobeying God because our sinful nature is still with us. If you are a Christian, what helps you to choose to obey God? If you are not a Christian, this would be a good time to become one!

Day Two We are All Sinners

God's Word teaches us that we all are sinners just like Adam and Eve. This is because we are born with a nature that can only sin. A sinner is someone who disobeys God. Romans 3:10-18 says,

...as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one. Their throat is an open grave, with their tongues they keep deceiving, the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood, destruction and misery are in their paths, and the path of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes." (NASB)

King David said, in Psalm 51:5,

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. (NASB)

It surely is reasonable to think that it is unfair that what Adam and Eve did thousands of years ago affects us today. The sad truth is, from Romans 3 - we all would have eaten from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil! As a Christian, I would dare say, the number of times I sin in a day far outnumbers Eve's sins in Genesis 3. Ouch!

Even one sin can be life changing. Sin tends to take control and alter our lives for the worse. Remember one sin brought death and changed the entire human race (Romans 5:12). James 2:10 teaches us that if we obey God completely, then disobey Him just once, we are guilty of all sin before God.

For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. (NASB)

For some reason, some people think God doesn't see their sin if they hide it. I guess trying to hide our sin is part of our sinful nature because Adam and Eve tried it as well. Are you hiding from God like Adam and Eve were (minus the fig leaves)? The fact is, God knows when you sin whether you think so, or not. He knows everything. This is a good time for us to learn about how God knows everything, and how He is always present.

*God is Omniscient, in other word, He knows all things.
God is Omnipresent, or He is always present.*

From Psalm 139 it is clear that God knows everything about us. He knows every thought and motive we have (1 Corinthians 4:5). God is always present no matter where we are or what we are doing. We can't hide from God! He has seen you at your best, and He has seen you at your worst, and still He loves you so very much!

1. **Read about God's knowing all things and always being present from Exodus 32:1-9, Psalm 139:1-10, Jeremiah 23:23-24, and Matthew 28:20.**
Write down any insights and applications that the Spirit is giving you from these verses.

2. What does the knowledge that God is all knowing and always with you mean to you? Use a Bible verse in your answer if you can. (Examples: When I am ashamed about what I've done, shouldn't I call upon God Who knows everything about me, but loves and forgives me anyway? (1 John 4:10) When I am alone and afraid shouldn't I seek after the God who is always with me? (Psalm 139:7))

3. **Read Genesis 4** – this chapter shows us clearly that sin passed onto future generations along with its awful consequences. How do you think Adam and Eve felt about what happened in this chapter? Remember they were living with the knowledge that their sin would affect all future generations.

Day Three Adam and Eve Chose Death Instead of Life

Adam's and Eve's rebellion against God brought death just as God said it would. Death doesn't mean "extinction" as you might think, but more "a separation from" (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9). Their fall into sin caused a separation with God, which is spiritual death. This break in relationship with God was immediately evidenced by Adam's and Eve's hiding from Him, and blaming Him and each other for their sin. As soon as they sinned, their bodies also began to age. The outcome of this aging would be physical death (separation from our physical body.)

If you think about it, we seem to live in a world that highlights physical and spiritual death. Just turn on our news, and you hear how full of senseless violence and death our world is. Just this year, one guy killed 32 people without any emotion or apparent conscience. Human relationships, in general, seem to gravitate more towards separation rather than harmony and peace. Just read the statistics on divorce. Just study history, it turns out to be a study on wars. Most bodies, on the average, have a few good decades, after which the effects of age and disease start becoming apparent. Just print "anti-aging" on something and it will sell. Just talk to anyone and they will have a health problem or know someone who does.

God never wanted us to live this way! He created Adam and Eve to live in a world that was without death. He made them to have eternal life, but they chose eternal death. God wants us to have eternal life as well, but we choose eternal death too. Did you know we choose death every time we sin, because the result of sin is death? 1 Corinthians 15:56a says, "...*the sting of death is sin.*" A world with no sin is a world without death. I know it doesn't make any sense to me why Adam and Eve chose death over life, but we do the same. I think this would be a good time to learn about God being the source of life.

God is the source of all life

1. **Read about God being the source of life from John 1:1-4, 3:16-18, 14:6, Romans 6:23, 1 John 4:9-10, and Revelation 22:1.** Write down any insights and applications that the Spirit is giving you from these verses.

2. What does God being the source of life mean to you? Use a Bible verse in your answer if you can. (Example: When physical death seems to be everywhere; I need to remember that God didn't choose death for us but wants us to have life. (Romans 6:23))

Do you remember that death means separation not extinction? Why did death bring separation with God? It's because God is holy; He is completely separated from sin and evil. He can have nothing to do with sin. Frankly, God's holiness cannot tolerate sin, which means He can do nothing less than punish it. It is very important we remember God is holy, so let's learn about God being holy.

God is Holy which means He is completely separate from sin

1. **Read about God's holiness from Leviticus 10:1-3, Psalm 5:4, Isaiah 6:1-7, 43:3a, 59:1-2 and Revelation 4:8b.** Write down any insights and applications that the Spirit is giving you from these verses.
2. What does God being holy mean to you? Use a Bible verse in your answer if you can. (Example: When I am tempted to sin, I need to be fearful about committing it, because it separates me from God who loves me. (Isaiah 59:2).)

3. We can *only* be holy through a relationship with Jesus Christ, but never on our own. **Read 1 Peter 1:16, Ephesians 4:20-24 and Colossians 1:19-22, 3:12-14.** Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to live a holy life!

Day Four Sin Brings Punishment

Sin brings punishment and consequences because we are disobeying God's laws and rebelling against Him. The punishment for sin is death and eternal punishment. Romans 6:23 says,

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (NASB)

The meaning of death in this verse is both physical death and spiritual death. We all know what physical death is, because physical death is so ever-present around us. However, I think the idea of spiritual death is confusing to most people. This is because it is something we can't see in a concrete sense, but God sure can. Spiritual death means eternal separation from God. Because of the sinful nature we were born with, sin permeates our whole life. God can have nothing to do with sin because He is holy, so we are separated from Him. God still wants to be a part of our lives but He can't be because holiness can have nothing to do with sin. Holiness and sin are exact opposites. Oh yes, sin presents an awful problem because God loves you and wants to be with you!

Eternal punishment takes place in a place the Bible calls hell or other related names. We either have eternal life through Jesus or we face eternal destruction after we die in hell. There is no middle ground! Do you know that God didn't create hell for us? In Matthew 25:41 Jesus states that hell was prepared for the Devil and his angels. The Apostle Paul explains eternal punishment in 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9,

... dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power... (NASB)

God never wanted to punish us! Instead He wants to pour His love upon us. You might be wondering why God does punish us. We know God is God, and that He has the power to do anything He wants to do. Does this mean He really wants to punish us? No! The Bible says that God told Adam and Eve *not* to eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He did not want them, or us to die! He created us to be with Him, not to be dead to Him. However, since justice and righteousness are His characteristics, He has to fairly and rightly deal with all

disobedience. If He did not He wouldn't be just or righteous. God is also unchanging, so His righteousness and justice do not change. Let's look at God's righteous and just nature.

God is Righteous – He does exactly what is right; He has no lawlessness in Him

God is Just – He is perfectly fair; He rewards righteousness and punishes sin

Have you ever been unfairly treated? Have you ever done something right but no one seemed to care? Remember, God knows the situation and sees everything. He rewards righteousness because He is just. However, because He is just, He must punish unrighteousness which is sin. If you are still questioning why God punishes sin, look at it this way. Since God doesn't want to punish you for your sin, He came down from heaven to take the punishment for your sin upon Himself when He died on the cross. He did this so you can have His righteousness, and to satisfy His just anger against your sin. What fairness! What love! 2 Corinthians 5:21 says,

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (NASB)

1. **Read about God's righteousness and justice from Exodus 34:6-7, Deuteronomy 32:3-4, and Micah 6:7-8.** Write down any insights and applications that the Spirit is giving you from these verses.

2. What does God being righteous and just mean to you? Use a Bible verse in your answer if you can. (Examples: When I have sinned, shouldn't I call upon the God who knew no sin, but became sin on my behalf so I could be forgiven and have His righteousness? (2 Corinthians 5:21) When no one will give me justice, I need to go to the God who is always just in all His decisions. (Deuteronomy 32:3-4))

3. We can only be righteous and truly just through a relationship with Jesus Christ! So as a Christian we can be just and do righteousness. **Read Romans 3:21-26 and Philippians 1:9-11** and ask the Spirit to show you how to live a just and righteous life.

Here's another thought from a human perspective, why punishing wrong behavior is positive. If you have studied sociology, you will notice that all societies do punish their perception of wrong. Societies have found people's behaviors, whether good or bad, do influence. This has led them to make laws and punish certain behaviors a certain way. I think all would agree lawless behavior in a society, tends to mushroom and bring about devastating consequences. Just think about how hard it is to live in a neighborhood full of crime. However, sometimes the justice in societies is un-just from God's perspective. God's justice is always right, and it is never corrupted, distorted or unfair like human justice can be.

Day Five God Solved the Problem of Sin Through Jesus Christ's Sacrifice

I think by now you understand how destructive sin is in our lives! It is pretty clear something had to be done about it, and that something had to come from God. Beginning in Genesis 3:15, God revealed His loving plan to deliver people from their sin.

In Exodus, God revealed to the Jews it was necessary for them to shed the blood of innocent animals to cover their sins. This is called atonement. In Leviticus, the ideas of expiation (to make amends for) and propitiation for our sin (to soothe or win over; appease) became clearly seen in the word atonement. The sacrificial blood was the means of atonement. Moses, who wrote Leviticus said in Leviticus 17:11,

For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.'(NASB)

Shedding of someone or something's blood means taking the life from them, because life is in the blood. It took death to pay for even one sin, so God chose sacrificial blood as payment for a person's life. This allowed us to have a substitute die for us.

God knew animal sacrifices would never bring complete forgiveness for people's sins, since the blood of animals had no power to take away their sinful nature, and intentional sins (Leviticus 4 and Numbers 15:22-31). The only blood that has the power to take away all of our sins is the blood of Jesus Christ. This is because He is the One True God.

God accomplished reconciliation with us through the blood of Jesus. This is because the punishment we deserved, Jesus took on Himself, when He shed His blood by dying on the cross. He is our substitute. He died in our place. His sacrifice made amends for our sins and satisfied God's just anger, so we could have our sins completely forgiven and be in a close relationship with God. What sacrificial love!

1. These animal sacrifices allowed people to be able to clearly see their need for the One and Only sufficient sacrifice for their sins, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. **Read Numbers 15:22-31 also John 1:29, Hebrews 9:19-28, 10:1-4, 10-20 and 1 John 2:1-2, 4:9-10** and summarize what you learned about Jesus' sacrifice for us. How does Jesus' sacrifice show you He loves you? Take some time and thank God for solving your sin problem through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

God's Word tells us that He never changes, which means His sacrifice for our sins will always take away our sins. Its effectiveness to completely take away our sins will never change because God and His promises are unchanging. I know it is hard for us to understand Someone that never changes! We live in a world, a society that seems to constantly change. One moment our government is talking about this law, and that we have to follow it. Then we hear they are doing something completely different. Your parents tell you one thing, and get upset when you do the thing they told you to do. Your friend told you he would meet you on Wednesday, but he didn't show up, and never bothered to call. Even your church leaders sometimes say one thing and end up doing another. I don't know about you, but it certainly is hard on me to navigate through a world that is almost completely governed by whims of change.

God is faithful in all ways, so we can trust in Him to save us from our sins (1 Timothy 1:15). He knows how important it is to our psychological health to be around people who are faithful so we can trust. This makes sense because God created us to trust, in order that we will want to trust Him. The more we can truly

trust people, the less our lives will be governed by fear, insecurity, worry, and anxiety. If our environment is secure, we have peace of mind. If our environment is insecure, it can cause great stress. Now is a good time to learn about how we can trust God, because He is faithful and unchanging.

God is Faithful-what He says, He does! He keeps His promises and is trustworthy!

God is unchangeable, immutable which means He is always the same

1. Read about God being unchangeable and faithful from Numbers 23:19, Malachi 3:6, 2 Timothy 2:13, Hebrews 13:8 and James 1:17. Write down any insights and applications the Spirit is giving you from these verses.
 2. What does God being unchangeable and faithful mean to you? Use a Bible verse in your answer if you can. (Examples: When I am wondering about what I can trust in because everything always changes, shouldn't I trust in the God Who is always the same? (Malachi 3:6) When no one is faithful to his word, I need to trust in God's Word because He is always faithful. (James 1:17))
 3. Because God is unchanging, His love for you will never change! What does this mean to you? Have you ever loved someone but they were unfaithful to you? How did it feel? I hope you can feel secure in the knowledge God will never be unfaithful to you!

4. If you are a Christian you should be asking the Holy Spirit to keep you faithful. We can be faithful by keeping God's Word, and by saying and doing exactly what we mean. **Read Matthew 23:23, Galatians 5:22–23 and James 5:12.** Now write a prayer asking God to help you be faithful. If you are faithful, you will be as unchanging as you can be.

End of the lesson application: Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to your mind one thing you learned from this lesson that He wants you to remember and make a part of your life. Be quiet before God and wait on Him to tell you. Write it down and ask Him to help you to do it!

This is going to sound odd, but get a newspaper and skim over some headline news and circle each story that hints of sin. Sin is anything that is not in God's will. The point of this activity is to give you a better understanding of sin's grip on the world. (It would be a good thing to pray for the people in these articles, if you have time.) If you are doing this study in a group setting, bring the newspaper to class and share your insights on sin.

Bibliography

Many of my ideas on atonement, bad and evil, and death that I share in this lesson were obtained from the following sources.

Atonement

John F. Walvoord & Roy B. Zuck, **The Bible Knowledge Commentary – Old Testament Edition**, p 174-175, 199.

Bad/Evil

Warren Baker, **The Complete Word Study Old Testament**, definition of *Ra*, the Hebrew word meaning bad, wicked, evil, etc.

Death

John F. Walvoord & Roy B. Zuck, **The Bible Knowledge Commentary – New Testament Edition**, p 461.

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