

Midweek Heads Up

Wednesday, November 30th - 2022

Night's Flow -> Eat 6:10 -> Announce/Challenge
6:50 -> Worship 7:00 ->
Lesson/Small Groups 7:20

01

Big Ideas for the Night

Wk 2B- DEALING W/ THE FALL EVEN TODAY

What might navigating sin look like in our lives today?

Who decides & what guides?

Teaching Time

Darkroom Faith Video #4

Heading up to small groups straight from Worship to watch video and discuss in small groups*

VIDEO HERE:

<https://darkroomfaith.com/episodes/ep-04-sin/#>

Synopsis: A young girl grapples with the reality of sin and how a Christian might struggle while navigating life and the reality of sin. Engaging larger quandaries like what is morality? Who decides? and what should be our guide? Also considering how it impacts relationships among peers.

A Word about the video: It is meant to prompt discussion, encourage thinking and help students connect everyday life with principles or themes we're talking about/teaching elsewhere. It does not represent the breadth & depth of what we think, know and believe about Sin as a body. :)

Leader & Study Guide Attached or find here -> <http://bit.ly/3gFcv5G>

Looking mostly just for some ?'s to ask
-> Leader Guide

Looking for questions to ask AND some commentary/background on ways to think about responding to these lines of questioning & some supporting scriptures
-> Study Guide

02

Tasks we're trying to tackle:

<-Wrap our minds around what any Christmas activities might look like as leaders.

<-Start communicating about Spring Break Serve (Mid-March) & CIY Move Conference Summer of 23' and anyone ready to potentially commit before Christmas Break.

04

SMALL GROUPS

Basic Questions on back or see guides spoken of in "Teaching Time"

05

Student Announce

- Spring Break Serve
- CIY Move Interest

06 Handouts/Resources

- Spring Break Serve & CIY Move Interest Take home card

07

Week's ahead...

CURRENT SERIES:

- The Story of God - (We might only make through one more... possibly.) Promise / Redemption / Restoration
- Small Group Christmas Gatherings December 21st, Need to work out what we want to do that continues to help our small groups sense they are known and know each other.

SMALL GROUP

Midweek Heads Up
Wednesday, November 30th 2022

Icebreakers (any that you want to run after or if you really need them)

- Have you ever found yourself in Sophie's shoes? What happened?
- Do you consider yourself more of a rule follower or fun first kind of person? or something different?

Up for Discussion

- What makes something a sin? Who defines what is right and what is wrong? (anything from a couple weeks back popping up in your head?)
- Why shouldn't each of us just follow his or her own heart; do whatever feels right?
- I get that we have to share the world with each other, but what if my choice, my sin, doesn't hurt anyone else? (or is this even possible?)
- Is there a connection between things that we should do and not do, to God's love for us?
- How can taking some things away actually make me more free? How is that even possible? (know an example?)
- How do we discuss sin in a culture that not longer believes in it? How do I not offend my friends who believe there are no bad ideas?
- Do you think Sophie was too soft at the end? How might you have done something differently?
- BONUS: Can you split up in a few smaller groups, imagine/think-up/change real details, on a scenario where a crowd of your peers are confronted with something sinful and the other group in the room gets to decide and practice how to respond....

Video 4 Resources can be found in a folder here to: <http://bit.ly/3gFcv5G>



“SIN” Session Leader Guide

DARKROOM
LEADER
TOOLS

This Leader Session Guide outlines a meeting & discussion format for a 45-60 minute lesson.

Pre-session (about 1-hour prep):

- Download the Sin video to your computer at <https://vimeo.com/662154148>
- Test the video on the TV or projector you will be using for the lesson. Good speakers always make a bigger impact. Arrange seating to best facilitate discussion.
- Watch the video at least 2-3 times before the learning session. The 1st time consider the big picture. The 2nd time identify key questions raised and any unresolved issues.
- Review the Leader Study Guide for this episode and note any material you hope to share with your students, either during the learning session or later.
- Personalize the opening introduction and presentation to help facilitate the discussion and key messages.
- Determine **one key concept** you want to leave your students with from this session.

Opening (5-10 Minutes): Introduce the topic by reading the short summary of the video and any background you think is important to the topic.

In the “Sin” episode Sophie explores morality--what is considered right, what is considered wrong, and how do we *know*? By whose standards is morality measured?

Sophie’s friends throw a party without her – at an apartment where one of the friends is dog sitting. Things get out of hand, but no one seems to think it’s a big deal, except for Sophie. Should she listen to her friends and stop being the “fun police”? Or can she be a good friend to them while still standing up for what she feels is right?

Video (10 Minutes) Turn out the lights, the darker the room the better. Play the video and pay attention to your students as they watch. Notice what *they* notice. Take your cues for discussion from their responses.



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Discussion (20-30 Minutes) If you have a large group consider breaking into groups of 8-10.

- What makes something a sin? Who defines what is right and what is wrong?
- Why shouldn't each of us just follow his or her own heart; do whatever feels right?
- I get that we have to share the world with each other, but what if my choice, my sin, doesn't hurt anyone else?
- Is there a connection between things that we should do and not do, to God's love for us?
- How can taking some things away actually make me more free? How is that even possible?
- How do we discuss sin in a culture that not longer believes in it? How do I not offend by friends who believe there are no bad ideas?

Promise to send additional “deeper dive” resources/info to students about this week's subject on a certain day of the following week. Offer to discuss any of the questions raised with students individually. Announce next week's lesson topic and dismiss. You can reference the “Post-Session Messages” document for suggestions.

Prayer (5 Minutes) Pray as you would for your group.



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DARKROOM SIN EPISODE: “Sophie Kills the Vibe”

In “Sin”, Sophie and her friends explore the concept of morality--what is considered right, what is considered wrong, and how do we *know*? By whose standards is morality measured?

Sophie’s friends throw a party without her – at an apartment where one of the friends is dog sitting. Things get out of hand, but no one seems to think it’s a big deal, except for Sophie. Should she listen to her friends and stop being the “fun police”? Or can she be a good friend to them while still standing up for what she feels is right?

Key Message: We long for joy but we settle for pleasure to fulfill a particular moment in time, and choose far less than what is best. “To be a Christian is to acknowledge your utter moral failure and to throw yourself on the mercy of the only truly good man who ever lived.” - Rebecca McLaughlin

Discussion Questions:

1 | What makes something a sin? Who defines what is right and what is wrong?

“Is it wrong to kill your dog and eat it?” A group of high school students hear this question posed in a psychology class and they’re predictably grossed out by it. *Who would do such a thing*, they wonder? But *why* do they all agree this would be wrong? By what standard or authority are they making their judgment? How do they *know* this shouldn’t happen--or that other things should or should not happen?

The answers to questions about sin and morality rest on *value* and *purpose*. On how things were made, and why. Christians believe this world and everything in it--including every person who has ever lived--has been created by God. He is the maker, the designer of it all. He brought everything that exists into being and has called it good. And the Bible tells us he created persons--men and women--in his own image. That means God literally looked to himself as the blueprint for mankind!



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The God of Christianity is not a random, impersonal force who created stuff willy-nilly, or a super powerful being who made us and then left us to fend for ourselves. He is a morally perfect and loving being with the capacity and desire to interact with those he has made. His very nature is love, and he bestows that love on his creation. The fact that he made us gives us inherent value. The fact that he loves us gives us purpose and worth. We are to steward his creation in a manner that reflects his character, employing the attributes he has given us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Any destruction, demeaning, devaluing, or misappropriating of what God has made, is sin. As creator, God defines what is right and what is wrong. The “maker” makes the rules. God has intentions for how everything should function—including us. In the same way that $2 + 2$ equals 4 and not 5, something either is, or is not in line with God’s moral nature. And because we are made in his image, we have a moral nature too, and a sense of whether certain things are morally wrong or right. No one needs to tell us that genocide is wrong; that we shouldn’t take what belongs to someone else; that destroying God’s creation is not right. We’re aware of this, even though our moral nature has been affected by sin and is imperfect.

Consequences for sin or wrongdoing are woven into the fabric of creation, too. That is part of God’s design. That is why the Bible says “the wages of sin is death.”¹ Moral failings lead to separation or estrangement from God, ourselves, others and creation itself, leaving us in need of God’s rescue, forgiveness and grace.

2 | Why shouldn’t each of us just follow his or her own heart; do whatever feels right?

In fact, individual autonomy has been pretty popular since Adam and Eve first introduced it in the Garden of Eden! But in a world in which there are limited resources, conflicting interests, unequal power to defend ourselves or attain our desires and no *ultimate moral authority*—everyone doing what he or she feels is right is a sure recipe for chaos.

In a chapter in his book *Mere Christianity* called “The Three Parts of Morality,” C. S. Lewis compares mankind to a fleet of ships sailing in formation. He explains, “The Voyage will be a success only, in the first place, if the ships do not collide and get in one

¹ Romans 6:23



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

another’s way; and, secondly, if each ship is seaworthy and has her engines in good order. As a matter of fact, you cannot have either of these two things without the other.”² Lewis goes on to add that the third part of morality is the agreed-upon destination of the fleet, saying, “...however well the fleet sailed, its voyage would be a failure if it were meant to reach New York and actually arrived at Calcutta.”³

Imagine what would happen if the captain of every ship in humanity’s fleet “followed its own compass” or took whatever course “felt right” to him or her in the moment. Some ships would likely imperil their own captain and crew; many would certainly collide with others, too. And if there were no common, mutually agreed upon destination, the collective voyage would certainly be a failure.

In the same way, living in a world where right and wrong are determined by the feelings of individuals would be like trying to navigate through a forest using a compass in which the coordinates North, South, East and West switched places every time you took a step. It would be impossible to get your bearings, or to arrive at your destination. Feelings are subject to change from moment to moment and situation to situation. So, a feelings-based moral compass would be useless in navigating our way through the various and often complex moral decisions we face throughout life.

Morality that is based on how we feel is a very unreliable guide for living. As much as we might applaud “following your heart” in principle—it can break down very quickly in reality. Imagine the mother of a young child who decides she doesn’t “feel” like caring for her son or daughter—so she leaves them with a friend or relative and never returns. Even if the mother “felt good” about her choice, would it be right?

Life just operates better when our choices are informed by a morality “outside ourselves,” and not when morality is defined by our personal preferences. We aren’t the best candidates for determining what is right or wrong—but God is. A never-changing, morally perfect, loving, all knowing, and all-powerful God is in a far better position than we are to prescribe what is right for us and for the world He created.

² C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, “The Three Parts of Morality”

³ Ibid.



3 | What if my sin doesn't hurt anyone else?

How can you be sure that it won't?

“Whatever I do is okay as long as it does not hurt anyone else,” is a rationalization often invoked regarding moral choices. Whether the issue is smoking, drinking, drugs, gambling, bingeing, purging, starving, cutting or even suicide—we somehow have the idea that if we're the only victim of our actions, well then, no harm, no foul.

The idea that morality is a personal, private issue might be true if we each lived on our own uninhabited island like Tom Hanks in the movie *Castaway*, with no company but a volleyball named Wilson. But that's not how the world works. We're relational beings just as God is relational in himself (existing as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), and as a result, any time we choose to defy God's boundaries our choice may be made in private, but its repercussions will never be completely private.

Our lives inevitably intertwine with others and our circles of engagement are complex and varied. Do you truly believe that your personal moral choices have no relational effect? Tell that to the mother of a son whose addictions are destroying him, or the grieving best friend of a suicide victim, or the parents of a teenager killed by a drunk driver. None of us sins in a vacuum. We're just not made that way.

Every day, we choose our actions as free moral agents, but we do not have the power to keep our poor choices from “spilling over” into the lives of others. One man can live on a desert island and do as he wishes within the limits of nature; but as soon as another person comes to live on the island, if they are to live in peace, they cannot both simply do as they please.

Jen Wilkin writes, “The ancient god of individualism whispers that some sins are just between God and me. If there are consequences, they will impact only me. And this is simply not true. The consistent message of the Bible is this: Personal sin yields collateral suffering, without fail.”⁴ But here's the good news: personal holiness is equally difficult to contain, and when it overflows, it becomes a blessing to others. When love,

⁴ “Want to Love Your Neighbor? Start by Fighting Your Own Sin,” by Jen Wilkin. *Christianity Today*, June 22, 2020. <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2020/july-august/jen-wilkin-personal-holiness-sin-common-good.html>



joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness gentleness and self-control⁵ direct our lives, collateral blessing--not collateral suffering--is the result.

4 | Is there any connection between God’s love and his moral law?

There is. God’s commands are always given for our good, for our flourishing--never to diminish or limit us. Because he made us, loves us, and knows what is best for us, God give us moral parameters. Our freedom is “restricted” in the same way a toddler’s freedom is restricted when his parents will not allow him to play in a busy street. Those boundaries are for the child’s well-being and thriving, not to limit his or her enjoyment, or ability to have fun.

God does not force us into moral perfection by depriving us of freedom. Rather, God instructs us on how to properly use our freedom in accordance with the moral standard He has setⁱ. While there are many different and often conflicting ideas on what love is, we can look to God’s word for clarity. The second of Jesus’ love commands, “...love your neighbor as yourself” presupposes that we have a concept of what it means to love ourselves. The Apostle Paul says “Do everything in love”ⁱⁱ. Everything means everything including how we treat ourselves. Our choices, behaviors, habits, thoughts about ourselves, relationships, etc. should reflect the God kind of love we are called to live out. Love, as exemplified by Christ and defined in God’s word, is our moral compass.

Read the words of Psalm 19 and observe the “results” of applying God’s moral law. The good things that come from attention and obedience to God’s law--refreshment, wisdom, joy, light-- sound a lot like the kinds of things any loving father would want for his children:

The law of the LORD is perfect,
refreshing the soul.
The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.
The precepts of the LORD are right,
giving joy to the heart.
The commands of the LORD are radiant,
giving light to the eyes.
The fear of the LORD is pure,

⁵ Galatians 5: 22-23



enduring forever.

The decrees of the LORD are firm,
and all of them are righteous.

They are more precious than gold,
than much pure gold;
they are sweeter than honey,
than honey from the honeycomb.
By them your servant is warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.⁶

Behind every law of God, we can be sure we will find his love.

5 | Could boundaries actually contribute to our freedom? How?

It seems counterintuitive, but the boundaries of God’s moral law actually *can* contribute to our freedom. We are free to love God and others through our obedience, humility, empathy, patience, kindness, etc. We may say we want the freedom to “be ourselves,” but what we really want when we choose sin is autonomy—the same thing Adam and Eve wanted in the Garden. They wanted to disregard God’s commands and make their own choices, period.

We resist limits or boundaries because we see them as restrictive, but in truth, it is *sin* that restricts and limits us. When we sin, our vision narrows to self. Tim Keller explains: “Sin makes us operate on this principle: ‘Your life for *me*. I’m going to make you sacrifice for me, for my interests, for my self-image. You must sacrifice your needs to serve mine.’ But Jesus Christ came into the world saying, ‘My life for *you*. My life to serve you. My life poured out for you. I sacrifice for you.’ ... Those are the two ways you can live your life, and every single day—every hour—you decide to operate on one of those principles.”⁷

We can choose obedience just like we make “healthy” choices in other areas of life. We choose exercise to be fit and healthy; we choose to eat good foods for the same reason. We choose to protect the environment, to invest our time and resources wisely,

⁶ Psalm 19: 7-11

⁷ Tim Keller, “Your Main Problem Is Not Other People,” [thegospelcoalition.org](https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/main-problem-other-people/), May 5, 2019.



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to support causes we believe in. Obedience isn't a drag on fun or a restriction to personal freedom—it's a way to personal and corporate flourishing that is good for us and for those around us as well.

When our lives are lived in accordance with God's moral law, we are in a better position to enjoy the world as he intended. We are **free to** pursue a relationship with God and positive, fulfilling relationships with others. We are **free to** focus on endeavors that encourage, bless and edify the larger community. We are also **free from** the kinds of things that ensnare and destroy us. And we are **free for** God's glory, and for the good works he has designed for us to do. "It is for freedom that Christ set us free," the apostle Paul wrote. "Do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."⁸

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

6

How do we discuss sin in a culture that no longer believes in it? How do I not offend my friends who believe there are no bad ideas?

It is hard to discuss sin in a culture that considers tolerance the highest virtue and intolerance perhaps the *only* remaining evil. And what's more, when we equate our individual choices with our *identity*, disagreements about behavior can quickly be seen as personal rejection. That's how we arrive at cancel culture! All of a sudden, a clash of ideas becomes a war between individuals, and disagreements over right and wrong, good and evil, become hopelessly alienating. Life is seen as a struggle not between good ideas and bad ideas, but between good people and evil people, hindering any possibility of shared public values.

To agree with God about sin—and to say so—is often viewed as unloving. Author and pastor James Emery White captures the tension simmering beneath today's unblinking embrace of tolerance: "As Christians we hold dearly that truth matters. Yet one of the reasons *truth* is being so readily abandoned in our day is because of the belief that

⁸ Galatians 5:1



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something else matters more: love. It seems strange, but because we do not understand the interplay of truth and love, we are abandoning truth in the name of love.”

Jesus did neither. Even those he called out for their immoral choices felt his deep compassion and love. He pursued sinners! Ate with them, walked with them, talked with them. But he never lied to them about the reality of sin to prove his love, or to win theirs. He demonstrated that love can't be separated from truth. You can't have love without the truth, or the truth without love. No expression of love (if it's truly love) can ignore the truth. If you feel that love is calling you to turn a blind eye to truth, then you're misunderstanding what it really means to love someone.

God's moral law was given for our protection. It turns out lies destroy trust and are harmful to our relationships. Idolatry tricks us into trading real security for a false sense of security. And sexual immorality robs us--and others--of the sacredness of intimacy. These aren't character judgments or personal rejections. They are the very real consequences of choosing to go against God's design for a beautifully ordered world. Jesus was fully obedient to God, and full of love for others. The apostle John described him as “full of grace and truth,” not as the sin police.

Oh, and one more thing. Your friends don't believe there are no bad ideas. (Nobody thinks it's cool to eat their dog.) They just choose to believe their ideas aren't bad, and that yours--if they're different--are intolerant, and therefore, unloving.

But theologian John Stott once put it this way: “Our love grows soft if it is not strengthened by truth, and our truth grows hard if it is not softened by love.”



Supporting Scripture

Mark 7: 20-23 “What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person’s heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person.”

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

Colossians 3:5-6 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

James 4:17 If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them

1 John 1:8-10 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

Isaiah 55:8-9 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.



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Episode Excerpts:

Opening on the Rooftop - (0:00 – 0:40) "When your dog dies - how do you know to bury it in the backyard instead of bbq-ing and eating it?" Seriously? Gross. That's what I'm saying - Those are the twisted questions they're asking us in psychology class! We're talking about morality. Right and wrong. Stuff can be personally wrong, morally wrong, or even culturally wrong but legally ok. I guess there are things we are born knowing are wrong... Killing people. Eating your dog. Wearing low-rise jeans... Stuff like that. What I want to know is - can I drink on my family vacation to Canada? The legal drinking age is lower there."

Animated dog - Rules for living - (2:35 – 3:46) "Good dog." That's what they called me. If I'm so "good" - why do I have all these rules to follow? I peed behind the couch last week...boom! Here's the rules I follow. One, follow your heart. Two, live your truth. Three. Do whatever feels right, as long as it's not hurting someone else. Listen, I had four puppies last month, and you know what? After taking care of them for a few weeks I realized... I didn't "feel" like doing it anymore. My vibe was getting really cramped by them - So I gave them to the animal shelter. A great family picked them up! Now, I'm back to living my best life, and I feel super good about my choice. Actually, I'm just messing with you. That was all a lie - I would be a pretty messed up dog mom to act like that. But seriously - a lot of people think like that! To God, we are all inherently valuable. So, whether we're talking about vaping, drinking, gambling, purging, cutting, or even suicide – the idea that if we're the only victim of our actions it's all OK, is something none of us would call good. Woof."

Black Oreos everywhere (1:17 – 2:35) I legit never want to see another Oreo again. Brooklyn thought that was super funny when she told me, but yeah. Skylar, Mackenzie, and Ash were being all "secretive" because they threw a party at an apartment Ash was pet-sitting at. I don't know if I told you that, but that's where they were. They were like, "Oh yes, she has the apartment to herself." They got the vodka from this kid. I have no idea who he is - but he's cute. And he goes to some other school... I think he might have gotten it from his brother or something. And Skylar – we were eating Oreos, and then she had eight shots, which is so many. Of course - pretty soon - they're throwing up. Throwing up black because of the Oreos. Ha-ha.O-M-G. Black smoothie was everywhere, on my hair, my shoes, the dog....First of all, I wasn't invited. Just kidding. I was but - I wouldn't have gone anyway. Do you have any Advil? I am like super hungover. Like how was I so naïve to that? I don't know. I feel like most people usually look up to your friends, so I was just kinda - shocked to hear what went down, ya know?



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EPISODE EXCERPTS

Universal Moral Code (4:46 - 5:46) When it comes to morality, why do we believe strongly that certain things are just wrong like cannibalism, rape, eating your dog - while others are right, like generosity, patience, and kindness? Interestingly, the idea of a universal moral code really only makes sense if a higher authority outside ourselves is the source of it. We are otherwise left with "opinions" that change based on the humans, cultures, and societies that come up with them. Christianity claims God is the standard, and that he gives the moral law for what is good. If the Bible isn't true and there isn't a God who made us in His image and told us to love our neighbors as ourselves, we have no basis for saying racism is wrong. We have no basis for saying babies shouldn't be left outside to die. Because if there's no God, these things are just our preferences and opinions. Humans aren't the best candidates for determining what is right or wrong – but a never-changing, morally perfect, all-knowing, and loving God is.

Good boundaries help us flourish (6:36 - 7:16) We all want to be free. Free to make our own choices. Freedom is good, but we can't be truly free without boundaries. Having full-on individual freedom would make this world an impossible place to live in. Imagine your favorite beach... If everyone felt free to leave their trash everywhere, or burn tires, and not clean up after their dogs - it would no longer be an enjoyable sanctuary, but a depressing dump. In our hearts, we question, does God really want what is best for me? Boundaries that are rooted in love—like those given to us by the God who made us – allow for freedom to flourish as we were designed.

Rules police (5:50- 6:35) I'm sick of being the "rules police." Seriously - I feel like as a Christian I'm constantly having to turn a blind eye or tell people what they're doing is messed up. Well, all your friends are starting to think of you, and God and Jesus in general as a cop. So -congratulations! God's not some Karen, ok? He knows and loves you. He wants our best. Doubt it. (7:16 - 8:03) Hey - I'm sorry. Genuinely. I haven't been a good friend tonight. I just think that - I don't know. It's hard to explain - I want to get better at explaining it. But this isn't just a silly conversation from psychology class to me. When I talk about my faith I always come across like I'm telling people they have to be perfect. Argh! I wish I could do this over again...

Notable Quotes

- “To the culture, intolerance is the only sin left, and tolerance is the only virtue left.”
Daniel Taylor



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QUOTES

- “Christianity, claims that the God who created the stars and galaxies also created us for special relationship with him, and calls us to the kind of radical, self-giving love that overflows from his own heart. Faith in a loving, rational God, who created humans in his image and calls us to love both our neighbor and our enemy, is not only the historical source of our beliefs about human equality but also their best justification. And yet Christians can make no claim to innate moral superiority. To be a Christian is to acknowledge your utter moral failure and to throw yourself on the mercy of the only truly good man who ever lived.” Rebecca McLaughlin, *Confronting Christianity*
- “Badness is always the pursuit of some good thing—whether it be money or sex or power—in an inappropriate or excessive way. Unlike goodness, badness doesn’t exist on its own...it can only be understood as the absence of goodness, or the distortion of something good.” C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*
- “If good is a fixed point, it is at least possible that we should get nearer and nearer to it; but if the terminus is as mobile as the train, how can the train progress to it?” C. S. Lewis, “The Poison of Subjectivism”
- “The language of human rights is perhaps the closest we have come to a universal understanding of morality. But what legitimizes human rights? Is it the majority opinion? Is it natural law? If human rights are simply a construction by the majority or based on intuitions, they have no true basis because they are rooted in an opinion that is liable to change and reverse.” Timothy Keller
- “Christians can make no claim to innate moral superiority. To be a Christian is to acknowledge your utter moral failure and to throw yourself on the mercy of the only truly good man who ever lived.” Rebecca McLaughlin
- “Sin is a fundamental relationship; it is not wrong doing, it is wrong being, deliberate and emphatic independence of God.” Oswald Chambers
- “Sin is rejecting or ignoring God in the world he created, rebelling against him by living without reference to him, not being or doing what he requires in his law—resulting in our death and the disintegration of all creation.” The New City Catechism, “What Is Sin?”



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- “The root of all sinning is...a heart that prefers anything above God, a heart that does not treasure God over all other persons and all other things.” John Piper, “What Is Sin? The Essence and Root of All Sinning,” 2005 Desiring God Pastors’ Conference

Additional Resources to Explore

1. “Want to Love Your Neighbor? Start by Fighting Your Own Sin,” by Jen Wilken, christianitytoday.org <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2020/july-august/jen-wilkin-personal-holiness-sin-common-good.html>
2. Cornelius Plantinga, *Not the Way It’s Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William C. Eerdmans Publishing), 1995.
3. “Sin is Expensive. Here Are Six Costs,” by William Boekestein, thegospelcoalition.org., <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/6-costs-sin/>
4. “Russell Moore on Spiritual Maturity and the Seduction of Sin,” TGC Podcast, May 14, 2021 <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/podcasts/tgc-podcast/russell-moore-on-spiritual-maturity-and-the-seduction-of-sin/>
5. “Talking Sin to a Culture That Doesn’t Believe in It,” by Becky Pippert, gospelcoalition.org <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/talking-about-sin/>
6. Jerry Bridges, *Respectable Sins* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2017).
7. The Bible Project, “Khata/Sin,” <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/khata-sin/>
8. <https://undeceptions.com/philosophy/5-minute-jesus-the-pursuit-of-happiness/>
9. <https://www.churchandculture.org/blog/2021/12/13/abandoning-truth-in-the-name-of-love>
10. <https://www.crossway.org/articles/whats-the-difference-between-tolerance-and-recognition/>

ⁱ Galatians 5:13

ⁱⁱ 1 Corinthians 16:14