

After watching the video, what stood out to you about what the word "sin" means in the Bible?

GENESIS 4:3-24 NAS

3 So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground. 4 Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering; 5 but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. 6 Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."

8 Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. 9 Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" And he said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" 10 He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground. 11 Now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 When you cultivate the ground, it will no longer yield its strength to you; you will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth." 13 Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is too great to bear! 14 Behold, You have driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Your face I will be hidden, and I will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me."

5 So the Lord said to him, "Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold." And the Lord appointed a sign for Cain, so that no one finding him would slay him. 16 Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden. 17 Cain had relations with his wife and she conceived, and gave birth to Enoch; and he built a city, and called the name of the city Enoch, after the name of his son. 18 Now to Enoch was born Irad, and Irad became the father of Mehujael, and Mehujael became the father of Methushael, and Methushael became the father of Lamech.

19 Lamech took to himself two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other, Zillah. 20 Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. 21 His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. 22 As for Zillah, she also gave birth to Tubal-cain, the forger of all implements of bronze and iron; and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

23

Lamech said to his wives, "Adah and Zillah,

Listen to my voice,
You wives of Lamech,
Give heed to my speech,
For I have killed a man for wounding me;
And a boy for striking me;

24

If Cain is avenged sevenfold,
Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold."

This is the first time the word "sin" appears in the Bible. Notice that sin is depicted as a powerful, animal-like entity that is luring Cain to let his jealous anger turn into violence against his brother. It's not just that Cain committed a sin, though that's true. It's that he gives himself over to the power of another story about human dignity—one that does not value the life of his brother. In Cain's story, sin is a power that leads to a distorted view of ourselves and others. This distortion spreads to his family and community, illustrated in the story of his violent descendant Lamech. This is a profound portrait of sin that has immense potential to help us understand the power of sin in our own lives, families, and communities.

QUESTION 1

Re-read verse 10. What is it that God supposedly hears in this story, and what does that say about him?

QUESTION 2

Reflect on the idea that sin is a power that leads to a distorted view of ourselves and others. What kind of distorted views of self and others do you find yourself or others around you struggling with the most?

PSALM 51 NAS

For the choir director. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

1 Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of your compassion blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me.

4 Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified when you speak and blameless when you judge.

5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.

6 Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, and in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.

8 Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let the bones which you have broken rejoice.

9 Hide Your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

11 Do not cast me away from Your presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit.

13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will be converted to You.

14 Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation; then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness.

15 O Lord, open my lips, that my mouth may declare Your praise.

16 For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; you are not pleased with burnt offering.

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

18 By Your favor do good to Zion; build the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices, In burnt offering and whole burnt offering; then young bulls will be offered on Your altar.

In this poem we hear King David's confession after committing the heinous crimes of adultery and murder against his own people. He uses powerful imagery to describe how distorted his character has become--stained, broken, guilty--but he also paints a contrasting portrait of God's generous mercy towards his failed human creatures. God is willing to clean and wash, to repair and recreate, to offer forgiveness. Notice that David doesn't look for hope in his own power and ability to reform himself. Rather, he looks to God's compassion and power to create a new humanity, one that lives by God's will and love.

QUESTION 1

Before you read, reflect on the ways you have failed to love God or others around you. Then read this psalm out loud, making it your own prayer to God.

QUESTION 2

Re-read verses 16-17. What is your natural response or reaction when you read these verses?

1 JOHN 1:5-2:2 NAS

Chapter 1

5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

Chapter 2

1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; 2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

Here John invites people who live in the darkness of moral compromise to step into the divine light of God's truth and love. He encourages honesty so that we will stop trying to hide our failures (remember, that's what "sin" means) and instead bring them into the open. That's what it means to walk in the light! And we are open about our sin not because we think we can do better but because we trust that God's love has already moved toward us in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. It's by focusing on the eternal love of God that we find the motivation for true confession and hope.

QUESTION 1

Re-read 1 John 1:9. What does God promise he will do if we bring our sins into the light? What emotions or thoughts does this bring up for you?

QUESTION 2

It can be difficult to be honest with ourselves and others about our failures. Take a moment to reflect on anything you need to bring out into the light, whether it's something you have done, struggle with, or have felt ashamed about. Then think of a person you trust who you can share this with this week. You can trust that God will be faithful to forgive and cleanse you.