

THE WAY



BIG IDEA

Sin is the way that leads to death.

BIBLE

Genesis 3:1-6, Isaiah 53:6, Romans 6:23, Ephesians 2:4-5, James 5:16

ABOUT THIS WEEK

This week, we'll examine how the Bible describes sin and its consequences. Unfortunately, many of us think about sin like it's not that big of a deal, but Scripture is clear that sin puts all of humanity in a hopeless state, desperately in need of a savior. Scripture is clear that **sin is the way that leads to death**, showing us that since we are all sinners, we are in desperate need of someone to put us on a new path.

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

HOOK – Have you ever been lost?

- Have you ever gotten lost before? Maybe you took a wrong turn while driving, wandered too far from your group at an amusement park, or even gotten lost in a video game and had no idea how to get back on track.
- It's a *frustrating* and sometimes *scary* feeling, right?
- Life can feel that way sometimes, too. Maybe you've made choices that led to hurt, regret, or broken relationships, and you wonder, *How did I end up here?*
- The truth is, the *whole world* is lost. But how did we get here?

Sin is the reason the world is broken.

- The Bible tells us that sin is when we *choose our own way over God's way*.
- From the very beginning, humanity has struggled with this.

Genesis 3:1-6 – The First Sin

- This passage tells the story of Adam and Eve, the first humans. God gave them everything they needed and just one rule—not to eat from a specific tree.
- But Satan, in the form of a serpent, tempted them. He made them question God's goodness:
 - *"Did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden?"* (v.1)
 - Satan twisted God's words and made them doubt God's plan.
 - Eve looked at the fruit, *thought it looked good*, and took a bite. Adam followed.
- This one act of disobedience changed everything. Sin entered the world.

Isaiah 53:6 – We’ve All Gone Our Own Way

- “We all, like sheep, have gone astray; each of us has turned to our own way...”
- Isaiah compares us to sheep—animals that *wander off easily* and get lost.
- We all think *our way* is better, but it leads us away from God.

Romans 6:23 – Sin Leads to Death

- “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- This verse shows us two things:
 1. **Sin has consequences** – Just like a job pays you wages, sin has a *cost*, and that cost is spiritual death—separation from God.
 2. **But there’s hope!** – God gives us a *free gift* through Jesus: eternal life.

Illustration: "The Wrong Path"

- Imagine using Google Maps to get somewhere, but instead of following the directions, you *ignore* them and just go wherever you feel like.
- You’d probably end up lost, right?
- That’s what sin does—it takes us *away* from God and into brokenness.

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

We can’t fix the problem on our own.

- At this point, you might be thinking:
"Okay, I get it—sin is bad. It leads to death. But what does that really mean for me?"
- Let’s break it down...

Sin Separates Us from God

- Think of it like a **broken friendship**. Have you ever had a huge fight with a best friend? Maybe you said something hurtful, or they did something that made you feel betrayed. Suddenly, things aren’t the same anymore. There’s distance. Awkwardness. You don’t text as much.
- That’s what sin does between us and God. It creates distance. Except, unlike a friend fight where both people might be at fault, in our case, **we’re the ones who walked away from God**.

Sin Affects More Than Just You

- Sin doesn’t just impact your relationship with God—it messes up every part of life. It causes broken friendships, family struggles, guilt, shame, and pain.
- Think of a time when someone’s **selfish decision hurt you**—maybe a friend lied, someone spread a rumor, or a family member let you down.
- Now flip it—have *you* ever made a choice that hurt someone else?
- Sin is never *just* about you. It always has ripple effects.

Romans 6:23 – Sin Has a Cost

- This verse says, *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*
- The word **wages** means something you earn—like getting paid for a job. If you work 10 hours at a coffee shop, you earn money.
- The Bible says that what we *earn* for sin isn’t money—it’s **death**.
- This means **spiritual death**—separation from God forever. That’s the default setting.
- BUT—*there’s a second half of the verse!* *"... but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*
 - Sin earns death, but **God gives us life—for free**.
 - You don’t earn a gift, you just receive it.

We Try to Fix It... But We Can’t

Have you ever **tried to fix something, only to make it worse?**

- Maybe you spilled something on a white shirt, and instead of dabbing it with water, you rubbed it in—and now the stain is even bigger.
- Or maybe you broke something at home, like a chair, and tried to “fix” it with duct tape, but it just kept falling apart.

That’s what happens when we try to fix sin **on our own**.

- We **try to be good enough**—but we still mess up.
- We **try to hide our sin**—but it just piles up.
- We **try to ignore it**—but the guilt doesn’t go away.

Ephesians 2:4-5 – God Steps In

- "But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved."
- This verse is amazing because it shows:
 1. **We were spiritually dead** – Dead people can't bring themselves back to life. We need *someone else* to save us.
 2. **God's love is greater than our sin** – Even though we deserve separation from Him, God *loved us too much* to leave us there.

Illustration: "Drowning Rescue"

- Imagine someone is drowning in the ocean. They can't swim, and they're going under. They thrash around, trying to save themselves, but it only makes things worse.
- What do they need? **A lifeguard.** Someone strong enough to pull them out of the water.
- That's what Jesus does for us—**we can't save ourselves, but He rescues us.**

Jesus Offers a New Way

- Jesus didn't just come to **give us rules** or **shame us for sin**—He came to rescue us from the mess we got ourselves into.
- He's saying, "*You don't have to stay lost. I have a way out. Follow me.*"

NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

A Personal Challenge: Where Are You?

Think about your life for a moment. Ask yourself:

- Have I been ignoring God's way and choosing my own path?
- Have I been trying to "fix" my sin on my own?
- Do I actually believe that Jesus offers a way out?

As we prepare for Easter, we need to understand *why* Jesus came. The first step is recognizing our need for Him.

James 5:16 – The Power of Confession

- "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed."
- Confession isn't about shaming yourself—it's about bringing sin *into the light* so it can be dealt with.

Here are three steps we can take today:

1. **PRAY AND REFLECT:**
 - Take a moment to ask God to show you the areas in your life where you've been going your own way instead of His.
 - Sometimes we don't even realize the ways we've turned away from God until we slow down and ask Him to show us.
 2. **REPENT:**
 - *Repentance* means to turn around. If sin is turning our backs on God, repentance is deciding to turn *back* toward Him.
 - It's more than just saying, "I'm sorry." It's choosing to follow God's way instead of our own.
 3. **CONFESS TO A TRUSTED LEADER:**
 - James 5:16 says we find *healing* when we confess our sins.
 - Who in your life can you be honest with? Maybe it's a youth leader, a mentor, or a Christian friend.
- **Stop pretending:** Admit to yourself and to God that sin has real consequences.
 - **Receive His grace.** Instead of trying to *earn* your way to God, accept His free gift.
 - **Turn toward Him:** If sin is choosing our own way, then repentance means choosing God's way instead.

Response Activity: "Turning Back to God"

- Take a moment to pray and think about an area where you need to turn back to God.

Closing

- We were lost → but Jesus came to find us.
 - We were spiritually dead → but Jesus gives us new life.
 - We couldn't fix our sin → but Jesus already did on the cross.
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Next week, we'll talk about how Jesus *took on the punishment that we deserved so that we could be made right with God.*

PRAYER:

- Lead students in a prayer, asking God to help them recognize their sin, turn back to Him, and trust in His mercy.
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