

THE
DISCIPLESHIP
PLACE

Practicing Wesleyan-Holiness
Spiritual Formation



SESSION 4
Devastated by Sin

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Devastated by Sin

SESSION OVERVIEW

The Origin and Reality of Sin

Words for Sin in the Scriptures

Application

Exam

Discussion Guide for Mentor and Participant

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you should:

- understand the biblical and Christian doctrine of sin, especially its significance for spiritual formation and holy living
- embrace the Christian doctrine of sin, especially the insight that no spiritual development can occur by mere human effort
- acknowledge the devastation of sin in your past, confess and forsake any known sin of the present, and praise God for His deliverance thus far

Devastated by Sin



INTRODUCTION

THE TIGER AND THE GOATS

Out of ancient India comes a fable about a motherless tiger cub. The orphaned beast was adopted by goats that taught him to bleat and eat grass. Indeed, the cub thought he was a goat. One day a king tiger came along. The goats scattered in fear.

The cub, fascinated by the tiger, stayed behind, afraid, yet not afraid. The tiger asked the cub why in the world he was acting like a goat. The confused cub could only bleat nervously—he couldn't even talk tiger—and continued to nibble grass. The king tiger picked up the cub and carried him to the edge of a clear lake. He made the cub look at their two images reflected in the water. The tiger thought the little fellow would make his own correct conclusions, but the cub just kept on bleating like a goat.

Next, the king tiger made the cub eat raw meat. At first he couldn't stand it, but as he ate more and felt it warming his blood, the truth about what he really was became clear to him. Lashing his tail and digging his claws into the earth, the young beast raised his head high, and the jungle trembled at his exultant roar.

In India, the tiger represents all that is strong, graceful, and noble in life. Humans were created for the noble, lofty, and holy life—but because of sin we live like goats. Alienated from our best selves we struggle along failing and falling even when we aim high.

God has planted His image within us. It guides, goads, and woos us toward God and good. If one never discovers his or her tigerhood, it becomes easier to be content with goathood. But as God would have it, "In the juvenescence of the year comes Christ the Tiger."

Once we have discovered the tiger within or encountered "Christ the Tiger" our goathood becomes a problem. How can you live as a goat in the light of God's blazing holiness?

Some goats crucify the Tiger to escape His gaze and call. Others claim that tigerhood is just an illusion, forget it. The best we can do is to become a well adjusted goat. Others advise us not to think about our goatness. If the smell gets bad, just air out the place. Stay busy, work two jobs, and keep the TV blaring. Don't give yourself a chance to contemplate your goathood. Moralists try to housebreak the goat. Make it a good moral goat. This kind of "grass" also fails to fill the aching spiritual void within.

We were created in the image of God, to serve Him and one another in love. Yet we have crowned self as god. Like Adam we have all lost paradise, but we carry paradise around inside as a longing for a blessedness that is no more but that can, we hope, someday be again. But our sin-damaged lives show that we cannot save ourselves. Only Jesus Christ has the power to turn goats into tigers.

This story of "The Tiger and the Goats" is a living classic. It can be found in many places including the following sources: The Magnificent Defeat by Frederick Buechner (Harper & Row, 1985), 90-95; Herald of Holiness, April, 1996,2; Reflecting God, Wes Tracy, et al. (Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City,2000), 32-33.

THE ORIGIN AND REALITY OF SIN



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We, the very ones intended to reflect God's image in this world, so often end up unholy and unhappy. Me? God's work of art? God's poem? Surely you jest. Mirror God to the world? Are you kidding? I am so lost I wonder if I will ever find my way. The more I try, the worse I get. I am ashamed of what I do and even more ashamed of what I want to do.

"Aglow with the Spirit?" (Rom. 12:11, RSV). Peaceful? Calm? My heart is more like a traffic jam on a hot day. If I am supposed to reflect the image of God, if I was meant for a holy, intimate walk with God, something has gone terribly wrong. You are right. Something has gone wrong with the human enterprise. This session will look at something we all have firsthand knowledge of—sin.

"The fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom" (Gen. 3:6). The first eleven chapters of the Bible apply the ancient wisdom to the great human questions:

- Where did we come from?
- Who are we?
- Why are we here?
- Why is there so much sin and misery in the world?

Genesis 3 answers the question, "Why is there so much sin and misery in the world?" Adam and Eve, our first parents, were deceived in the Garden of Eden where they lived in holy and happy relationship with God, each other, and creation. But the serpent convinced them that God was handing out commands, "Don't touch that tree!" because He was maliciously reserving certain beneficial things for himself. The deprived pair took steps (or bites) to grab their fair share. They yearned to be like God, and they crowned themselves gods (Rom. 5:12-14).

That first sin plunged humanity into sin. Adam and Eve bequeathed to all their descendants a tainted world, a fragmented nature, and a propensity to follow selfishness rather than God and good. Since that day we no longer experience God, creation, and others as friends. Something holy and sacred was surely lost.

The living portrait of sin emerges from that ancient and yet ever so modern story. The problem began with unbelief. That is to say, with distrust or no faith in God's goodness. How could God really have my best interest at heart and deprive me of that fine fruit that is so good for food, so pleasing to the eye, and so desirable for gaining wisdom? (Gen. 3:6).


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Pride or egocentricity also struts like a drum major through the story of the first sin. Eager to claim everything that God had, they exalted themselves to the control tower of their own beings. Egocentricity expressed as self-idolatry is the very nature of sin—theirs and ours. Sinful selfishness is crowned king of the heart. Self-gratification prowls the slums of the soul, dragging what was meant to be holy into the dens of sin and sensuality.

The third intrinsic element in sin is disobedience. Eve and Adam put their distrust and egocentric longings into action and deliberately disobeyed God. They destroyed their relationship with God, creation, and each other. From that day until the most recent tick of the clock on your wall, sin has hounded human life on earth.

How strangely up-to-date is this description from John Wesley more than 200 years ago: “Open your eyes! Look around you! See darkness that may be felt; see ignorance and error; see vice in ten thousand forms; see . . . guilt, fear, sorrow, shame, remorse, covering the face of the earth! See misery the daughter of sin. See on every side, sickness and pain . . . driving on the poor, helpless sons of men, in every age, to the gates of death.”

IS THAT FAIR?

“We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way” (Isa. 53:6). It doesn’t seem fair that I should suffer because of the dumb mistakes of Adam and Eve back at the dawn of human history. I mean, I wasn’t even there. How can I be held responsible for their antics?

Ever since (and even before) Pelagius and Augustine squared off about this subject, theologians have debated the whys and wherefores of sin that universally imprisons every generation. Not all the issues have been settled. Before you start pointing fingers and protesting too loudly, remember one thing. The story of Adam and Eve is your story. It’s my story too. They not only preceded us, they represented us. You and I have repeated the exact sins of Adam and Eve.

You and I have destroyed our intended destiny of holiness and happiness in close relationship with God. Unbelief, distrust, pride, selfishness, disobedience—every one of them have lounged at your table and laughed at your jokes. You have often ordered them to stay out of sight in the basement of your heart. But the gang downstairs is a disorderly bunch. They threaten to make a scene at any moment.

Don’t you wish you could control them? Some days you wonder if they actually may be in charge of your whole house. Sinners can quickly become like the demoniac of Gadera (Mark 5) who was controlled by forces stronger than he.


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Ask anyone who has fought addiction to alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or sexual perversion. Sexual appetites, John Wesley observed, “lead [a person] captive: they drag him to and fro, in spite of his boasted reason, good breeding, and other accomplishments [the man] has no preeminence over the goat.” *From Sermons on Several Occasions (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, n.d.), 629.*

Morris Weigelt declares that the sinful self is not only unwilling to submit to the rule of God but also incapable of submitting to the will of God. The harder we try, the more we fail. John Wesley wrote, “But though he strive with all his might he cannot conquer, sin is mightier than he . . . He resolves against it, but yet sins on: He sees the snare and abhors [it] and runs into it!” *From, The Upward Call, 30.*

I’ll call her Marcia. She has a husband and a one-year old son at home. But that did not stop her from going on a three-day binge just 13 days ago. She ran out of money after a day or so of drinking and shooting up, so she sold her engagement and wedding rings in order to buy one more packet of cocaine. Before the weekend was over she landed in police custody. On Monday she sat between her husband and her mother as they drove her to the Johnson County, Kansas, detox unit. Marcia cried and cried. Over and over she kept saying the same thing, “I don’t want to be this way, Mama. I don’t want to be this way.” *From Sermons on Several Occasions, 115.*

Sin touches every part of our being. That prompts theologians to talk about total depravity. An ancient Yoruba (Nigerian) proverbial greeting goes, “May your secret never be discovered.” But our secret is out, yours and mine. We have destroyed our relationship with others, with creation, with God, and with our own best self through sin—not Adam’s sin, ours.

The Bible tells our secret: our foolish hearts are darkened (Rom. 1:21), our minds corrupted, and we have made God our enemy (1 Tim. 6:5; Rom. 8:7-8). Jesus tells our secret too. He said that we love darkness better than light. We are drawn to the Light—not to embrace it, but to smash it, to kill it for the Light exposes our wickedness. St. Paul describes the pervasiveness of sin:

“They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God’s . . . decree . . . they . . . continue to do these very things . . .” (Rom. 1:29-31).

Some say that universal sin is the most empirically verifiable of all the Christian doctrines. What dominant solidarity or commonality do we all share—sin!

WORDS FOR SIN IN THE SCRIPTURES



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Examine the following Hebrew and Greek Bible words for sin and their meanings. Take a few minutes and do the following exercises:

- Read the references given.
- Read the definition in place of the word. For example: “Wash away all my iniquity (avon-twisted, bent, crooked, distorted, perverse) and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions (*pasha*-rebellion, revolt transgress, disobedience, perversity) and my sin (*chataah*-missing the mark or path, failure, falling short) is ever before me” (Ps. 51:2-3). One could say that David knew all the dimensions of sin.

HEBREW (OLD TESTAMENT) WORDS FOR SIN TERM MEANING REFERENCES

- *Chata, chataath*: Missing the mark or path, failure, falling short (Gen. 4:7; Ex. 10:16-17)
- *Pesha*: Rebel, revolt transgress, disobey, perversity (Ps. 5:10; Prov. 28:13; Isa. 44:22; Amos 5:12)
- *Avon*: Twisted, bent, crooked, distorted, perverse (Ps. 106:43; Jer. 31:30, 34; Isa. 13:11)
- *Shagah*: To err, go astray, mistake (Lev. 4:13; Isa. 28:7; Ezek. 34:6, Prov. 19:27)

GREEK (NEW TESTAMENT) WORDS FOR SIN TERM MEANING REFERENCES

- *Hamartia*: To miss the mark (Matt. 1:21; Luke 5:21; Rom. 3:23; 1 Pet. 3:18)
- *Adikia*: Unrighteousness, injustice, injury (Rom. 2:8; 1 John 5:17; 2 Pet. 2:13)
- *Parabasis*: Transgress, trespass (Rom. 2:23; Heb. 9:15)
- *Paraptoma*: Transgress, trespass, offense (Rom. 5:15-20; Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:13)
- *Anomia*: Lawlessness, indifference to God’s law or ignoring it (1 Cor. 9:21; Heb. 1:9; Mark 15:28)


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SIN AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION

The native Alaskans have two dozen words for snow. Falling snow, new snow, dry snow, drifting snow, blowing snow—each type of snow has its own word. If you are from a faith tradition such as Calvinism, you need only one word for sin. Any deviation from perfect adherence and performance of God’s perfect will is sin. One word fits all. Your intention meant nothing; you fell short thus you are guilty as—well, as guilty as sin.

If you find yourself in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition, you need many words for sin—just as the Bible does. In the Wesleyan tradition a sin of surprise, falling short because of ignorance, is a lot different from a deliberate sin of rebellion. John Wesley taught that sin “properly so-called” was a willful transgression of a known law of God.

WHY THE DOCTRINE OF SIN IS IMPORTANT FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION

The way some write and speak on the topic of spiritual formation you would think they are not aware of the devastating consequences of sin. They seem to teach that with the right effort and skills one can cultivate the soul and move from the unholy to the holy.

In *Whistling in the Dark*, Frederick Buechner says that some people act as if mastery of the Christian life “is something we can make happen any time we want to, like fudge, if we only follow the recipe.” You can’t put God in your pocket like a cell phone. And we cannot make the first step toward wholeness or holiness except by grace.

Singers like Mariah Carey in her song, “Hero,” assure us that we will find a hero within, a savior within ourselves, if we just look hard enough. But the Bible tells us, “By grace you have been saved, through faith; and that *not of yourselves, it is the gift of God*” (Eph. 2:8, NASB, emphasis added). *From Christianity Today, Sept. 24, 1990, 27.*

Shallow talk of spiritual growth and spiritual potential flourishes today like wisteria on the sunny side of the barn. “The term ‘spiritual,’ ” writes Steve Turner, “can refer to anything that cannot either be tested in a laboratory or bolted to the floor.” When spiritual is defined without recognition of sin, destructive confusion results. “Christian conversion is not a case of fanning that little spiritual spark in the human soul into a flame. It is the case of invading a dark and doomed soul with spiritual life from above.” *From The Upward Call, 26-27.*


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The contamination of sin must be taken seriously. Morris Weigelt compares sin to massive contamination of oil spills, chemical dumping, and radioactive accidents that create irreversible damage. Even more lethal, he says, is sin that floods the spiritual environment with fatal contaminants. He quotes Walter Brueggemann's, *Then Comes the Poet*: "The poison of guilt is at least as damaging as nuclear waste. It must be put away where it cannot destroy or contaminate." *H. Ray Dunning*, *Grace, Faith, and Holiness*, 278-283.

The image of God in humankind included four freedoms. All these freedoms were lost in the Fall:

- freedom for God
- freedom for others
- freedom from the earth or the world
- freedom from self-domination

Does John Wesley go too far? He declares that in the Fall of Genesis 3 the human race, "lost the life of God . . . the love of [for] God was extinguished . . . he lost . . . the knowledge . . . of God . . . he was deprived . . . and became unholy and unhappy. . . He sunk into pride and self-will, the very image of the devil; and into sensual appetites and desires, the image of the beasts." *From Works*, 6:67-68.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT THE HUMAN HEART

- "What is man, that he could be pure . . . [he] is vile and corrupt, [he] drinks up evil like water" (Job 15:14, 16).
- "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me" (Ps. 51:5).
- "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9, KJV).
- "This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19).

WHAT DOES HUMAN SINFULNESS MEAN TO ME?

Which of the following do you believe are accurate statements?

- Adam and Eve not only preceded us, but also represented us, the whole race.
- Our first parents bequeathed to their descendants just what they had to pass on: a broken relationship with God, fragmented natures, and a propensity to sin.


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- We do not understand how sinfulness is passed on, we just know that sin imprisons each and every generation.
- Like Adam and Eve, we are “able to stand, but free to fall” and we face the same temptations they did.
- Though Adam and Eve passed on a terrible legacy, we must admit that their story is our story. Just like them, each one of us chose disbelief, disobedience, and selfish pride.

I’M A SINNER—SO WHAT?

Read the scriptures below and respond to the questions that follow.

“Evil will slay the wicked; the foes of the righteous will be condemned” (Ps. 34:21)

“For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, ‘They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways.’ So I declared on oath in my anger ‘They shall never enter my rest’” (Ps. 95:10-11).

“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28)

“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’” “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life” (Matt. 25:41, 46).

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

“The sins of some men are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them” (1 Tim. 5:24).

Which one(s) of these passages say that sin will destroy the sinner?

- Which one(s) show that sin’s payday is death?
- Which one(s) describe hell as everlasting destruction and separation from the presence of the Lord?
- Which passage describes hell as eternal fire reserved for the devil, his angels, and sinners?
- Which passage(s) shows that God takes sin very seriously?



FROM GRIM TO GRACIOUS

Though sin and death entered this world through the failure of the first Adam, a Second Adam came to the rescue. Jesus Christ, the Second Adam, was sinless. Thus He reversed the evil that the first Adam brought on us. In the long run, considering this life and the next, Jesus Christ restores all that was lost in the Fall, even more.

Study these passages. Note the key concepts.

- John 1:10-13
- Isa. 53:4-6
- 1 John 1:9

How would you complete the sentence: The doctrine of sin is important to spiritual formation and holy living because. . .

SIN IS AN INSIDE JOB

From our study of the Bible words for sin, you know that some sins are acts. That is, sometimes sin is something we do. Sin is also what we are. Sin is an inside job. The problem is the enemy within our own hearts.

Start with a clean white sheet of paper. Mark or smudge it with a pencil. This is how we often think of sin—an external soiling or marring of a clean soul. Take another sheet of white paper and crumple it into a ball. Now, try to straighten it out. Now the imperfections are not the work of an external element. The wrinkles and creases are part of the condition of the paper itself. You can make improvements by straightening out the paper and trying to press out the wrinkles, but the damage will not disappear. The same is true of sin. It is not a foreign infection; it is our condition.

Know that sin does not exist all by itself. It has no life apart from human motives and actions. Sin is not some external defect or flaw. It is not some chunk of toxic material that pollutes our body and soul. It is not something that can be spit out or have removed by surgery. No, sin is what fills that spiritual vacuum created by the loss of right relationship to God. *From Lawrenz, The Dynamics of Spiritual Formation, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 51-52.*


NOTES

Mel Lawrenz writes, “Sin is not an alien power or an infecting germ. . . Sin is the way we are. . . [Sin] is not . . . something imposed on us; it is our very condition which has affected every faculty. Only a dramatic divine work of spiritual formation will help bent people become straight.” *From Reflecting God*, 33.

Picture a medieval castle . . . tall stone walls, strategically placed parapets, strong swordsmen guarding the gate. The castle is surrounded by a deep moat. Safe and secure, right? But what if there is an enemy within the castle who in the still of the night keeps letting down the drawbridge so the enemy can attack. The sinful human heart is like that. Sin keeps betraying our lofty aspirations, our firmest resolutions, and our most energetic effort to walk in righteousness with God.

This we have learned about sin: We were created to live like the noble tiger, but we have lived like smelly goats.

- The essence of sin is unbelief or unfaith pride or egocentricity disobedience. Our first parents acted out these sinful traits and we have repeated them—every one of us.
- The sinful nature is both unwilling and unable to submit to God.
- Sin is an abusive master.
- Sin touches every part of our being.
- The strongest human common denominator is sin—we all share sin!
- Sin, in the Bible, is a complex matter and has shades of meaning that include mistakes, error, omission, missing the mark, being twisted and bent, going astray, trespass, transgression, rebellion, lawlessness, and indifference to God’s law and will.
- Sin is not a problem that can be solved by mere human effort. Divine intervention is required.

CLOSING THOUGHT

He belonged to a gang called the Wreckers. They were known for their violence, hatred, and a sick sense of humor. By his own admission, he was a thief, a pleasure slave, a fornicator, and an adulterer. He took a mistress for ten years and fathered an illegitimate son. Though raised by a devout Christian mother named Monica, he practiced a non-Christian religion that did not frown at the sensual pleasures that he loved. He studied communication and got the equivalent of a Ph.D. in the subject and became a teacher of speech and rhetoric. His sinful escapades continued.

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Then one day he read the Epistle to the Romans and encountered Christ. His life was transformed. He gave himself to God's service and became one of the most influential saints in history. He lived AD 354-430.

His name was Aurelius Augustine, St. Augustine to us. To most Protestants he is regarded as the father of orthodox theology. The Eastern Orthodox think of him as the greatest of all the Church fathers. The Catholics call Augustine the patron saint of theologians. Philosophers see in him the greatest thinker between Plotinus (3rd century) and Aquinas (12th century).

His many writings are still studied by Christians. Perhaps the most familiar is his *Confessions*, a true classic in spirituality that any believer should read. The redeemed Aurelius still reflects God's redeeming love after all these centuries.

APPLICATION



NOTES

1. Write a working definition of sin based on your Bible study. Share this definition with your mentor the next time you meet. Ask him/her for their working definition of sin.
2. Consider the following questions and record your response. Discuss your responses with your mentor when you meet.

Consider these representative views on human nature. Which one describes humanity as you know it? Which best represents the Christian faith?

- Human beings are born totally depraved, incapable of one good deed or one good thought.
 - Human beings are born good.
 - Human beings are born neutral, like a blank sheet of paper. Society or environment makes them good or evil or both. No one should be praised or blamed.
 - There is no such thing as sin or good or evil. What we perceive as evil or good are illusions.
 - We are born with a powerful inclination to evil. But this is somewhat countered by the image of God within and by prevenient grace whereby we are given the ability to choose God and good if we will.
3. Study the following passages and list all you learn about the nature and person of God.
 - 1 Pet. 1:16
 - 2 Cor. 1:3-5
 - 1 John 4:16, 19
 - 2 Cor. 13:14
 - Col. 1:16
 - Gen. 17:1
 - Rev. 22:17
 - John 3:16



JOURNALING

Note: Throughout your work in this module, it is suggested you keep a journal. This is an important tool in the study of spiritual formation. Journaling is a tool to help you slow down in your studies and listen to your heart, soul, mind, and most importantly to God.

Three key words to make part of your journal experience this week:

- *Acknowledge* that sin has had devastating effects in your own life, family, and world.
- *Confess* any known sins in your present life—and forsake them at once.
- *Praise God* for past and present forgiveness for sin and for cleansing your heart.

REFLECT

Reflect on John Wesley's classic description of sin. Note these aspects of sin. Which have you battled most fiercely?

- “darkness that may be felt”
- “ignorance and error”
- “vice in ten thousand forms”
- “guilt, fear, sorrow, shame, remorse”
- “misery the daughter of sin”
- “sickness and pain . . . death”

Lift your hands to God in praise for every item on the list from which He has delivered you. If you can't think of a proper prayer, try Psalm 124:6-8: “Praise be to the Lord . . . We have escaped like a bird out of the fowler's snare; the snare has been broken, and we have escaped.” Our help is in the name of the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. If you could not lift a prayer of praise for deliverance from sin but are still lost in darkness that may be felt, take heart. Let this account of a sinner worse than you turn you to the Lord in hope of deliverance.

SUGGESTED READING

- H. Ray Dunning, *Grace, Faith, and Holiness* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1988), 275-301.

NOTES

- Mel Lawrenz, *The Dynamics of Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), chapter 3: “War Against the Soul: Sin as Deformation,” 47-55.
- Morris Weigelt, et al., *The Upward Call* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994), chapter 2: “Sabotaged by Sin,” 25-33.
- Wesley Tracy, et al., *Reflecting God* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and Christian Holiness Partnership, 2000), chapter 4, “What Went Wrong, Anyway?” 31-37.
- Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God Workbook*, 23-29.
- Lauren Winner, “Real Sex,” Grand Rapids, Brazos Press, 2005.

EXAM

**NOTES**

1. The first sin plunged only Adam and Eve into sin.
 - A. True
 - B. False

2. We were created in the image of God, to serve Him and one another in love.
 - A. True
 - B. False

3. Sinful self is incapable of submitting to the will of God.
 - A. True
 - B. False

4. The story of Adam and Eve is my story.
 - A. True
 - B. False

5. The contamination of sin must be taken seriously.
 - A. True
 - B. False

6. In the Wesleyan tradition a sin of surprise, falling short because of ignorance, is much different from a deliberate sin of rebellion.
 - A. True
 - B. False

7. Sin only destroyed Adam and Eve's relationship with God.
 - A. True
 - B. False

8. Which of the following is an adequate response to universal sin?
 - A. I wasn't even there.
 - B. How can I be held responsible for their antics?
 - C. Why should the sin of others affect me?
 - D. The story of Adam and Eve is my story.

 NOTES

9. Which of the following is **not** an intrinsic element of sin?
- A. pride
 - B. self-esteem
 - C. egocentricity
 - D. self-idolatry
 - E. disobedience
10. John Wesley taught that sin “properly so-called” was _____.
- A. any deviation from perfection
 - B. a mistake
 - C. a willful transgression of a known law of God
 - D. something you did in thought, word and deed every day
 - E. a small concern
11. The image of God in humankind includes four freedoms, which of the following is **not** one of them?
- A. freedom from restrictions
 - B. freedom for God
 - C. freedom for others
 - D. freedom from the earth or the world
 - E. freedom from self-domination
12. The best definition for *Hamartia* is _____.
- A. injury
 - B. to miss the mark
 - C. transgress
 - D. trespass
 - E. offense

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR MENTOR AND PARTICIPANT



NOTES

Be prepared to discuss the following with your mentor.

1. Share the working definition of sin you created. Ask your mentor for his or her working definition of sin.
2. Discuss the following views on human nature with your mentor.
 - Human beings are born totally depraved, incapable of one good deed or one good thought.
 - Human beings are born good.
 - Human beings are born neutral, like a blank sheet of paper. Society or environment makes them good or evil or both. No one should be praised or blamed.
 - There is no such thing as sin or good or evil. What we perceive as evil or good are illusions.
 - We are born with a powerful inclination to evil. But this is somewhat countered by the image of God within and by prevenient grace whereby we are given the ability to choose God and good if we will.
3. Study the following passages and list all you learn about the nature and person of God. Share your findings with your mentor.
 - 1 Pet. 1:16
 - 2 Cor. 1:3-5
 - 1 John 4:16, 19
 - 2 Cor. 13:14
 - Col. 1:16
 - Gen. 17:1
 - Rev. 22:17
 - John 3:16