

Sin, the Worst Deal in Town

Big Idea: We sin because . . .

- it's in our nature to sin.
- we program ourselves with sinful habits.
- we have blind spots in areas where truth would be uncomfortable.

Repentance means deciding to change direction; it's a decision of the will that requires dependence upon the Holy Spirit to carry out. We can help each other in this process by being open about our own weaknesses and providing a safe environment for confession.

Remember the incident with Raz and the swimsuit issue? That wasn't just an isolated event; it's "just the tip of the iceberg," as Raz says in this session. Raz is frustrated that habits like a taste for pornography don't just melt away when we commit ourselves to Christ. Instead, they hang on like leeches, sucking us dry. This session will attempt to answer these questions:

- Why do we keep sinning when it's the worst deal in town?
- What do *confession* and *repentance* really mean?
- If sin is so powerful, how can we not sin?



1. According to the video, what are the three reasons that we sin?

1. It is our nature to sin.
2. We program ourselves with sinful habits.
3. We have blind spots in areas where truth would be uncomfortable.

2. What did Raz learn about sin in this segment?

- The three reasons we sin continue to grip him.
- He is not the only one struggling with sin. Knowing we are not alone is an enormous encouragement.
- Bill could say Raz was honestly making progress.



3. What did Raz learn about repentance in Steve's appointment example?

It is up to us to stop; God won't do it for us.

There is no shame in asking for help. In fact, not asking for help is arrogant and foolish.

Admission of sin is essential.

God never condemns those in Christ. He is thrilled when we admit it and happy to help us turn around. But we have to

actually turn around, not just think about turning around or wish we could turn around. We mess up frequently, and doing so shouldn't discourage us, but we need to keep deciding again to turn around.

4. Romans 6:13 says, "do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires... rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life." In practical terms, what would it look like for Raz to offer himself to God and not let sin reign in him?

Terminate his magazine subscription.

Agree to let Steve hold him accountable regarding pornography and sexual immorality.

"Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness."

Romans 6:13

5. Raz had a hard time telling his friends about his struggle with pornography. Why do you think he didn't share his struggle with Bill or Gerry?

He was embarrassed and ashamed. He was afraid they might not accept him or they might condemn him.

6. Why do you think Steve made Raz feel he could share his struggle with him?

Wisdom, Lack of condemnation, Acceptance, Understanding of the Scriptures

7. Why was it so important for Raz to know "there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"?

To understand he is completely forgiven by God, totally accepted and unconditionally loved.

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death."

Romans 8:1, 2

8. What is an area in your life that you have struggled with in the past five years?

Repentance is not an emotion. It is not feeling sorry for your sins. It is a decision. It is deciding that you have been wrong in supposing that you could manage your own life and be your own god; it is deciding that you were wrong in thinking that you had, or could get, the strength, education and training to make it on your own; it is deciding that you have been told a pack of lies about yourself and your neighbor and your world. And it is deciding that God in Jesus Christ is telling you the truth. Repentance is a realization that what God wants from you and what you want from God are not going to be achieved by doing the same old things, thinking the same old thoughts...

Whenever we say no to one way of life that we have long been used to, there is pain. But when the way of life is, in fact, a way of death, a way of war, the quicker we leave it the better.¹

NOTE

1. Eugene H. Petersen, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction* (Downers Grove, Ill.; InterVarsity Press, 1980.) p. 25.

Suggested Additional Reading:

Read chapter 7 of *Lifestyle Discipleship*