

Victory Over Sin



Collegiate Quarterly

Teacher's Guide

Surveying the Source

Romans 6; 1 John 1:8–2:10.

Plotting the Course

The students will:

- ▶ Acknowledge and examine their own propensity to sin.
- ▶ Review the nature and effects of sin, and the solution offered by Christ.
- ▶ Intentionally decide to more closely model the sinless One.

Preparing to Lead

It shouldn't be unsettling to Christians, but here and there Paul's words in Romans 6 appear to be confusing. Especially key words like *died* and *death*. So let's try to be clear. When we are baptized in Him, we are baptized into His death. We die to our sinful life as we go under the water; and when we arise from the water, we begin a new life of transformation in Him.

Even more so is the effect on us when

Christ was crucified. As surely as Christ was raised from death to a new life, so are we, since He died for us, rather than for Himself.

Paul, in fact, says our old selves died with Him on the cross. That death meant we're no longer sin slaves. Instead, Paul says, we're now slaves to God and the law of grace, rather than to death and the law of sin.

Getting Started

A. Start the study with a brief and well-planned story of an encounter you've had with someone who has a very different view of sin from yours. Follow the story with a forecast of the major issues you feel should be covered today.

B. Begin with a brief true-false quiz. Here are some sample questions:

1. *True or False:* Though sin is sin, not all sins are equally significant.
2. *True or False:* Grace is the bridge between our sins and God's acceptance of us as we are.
3. *True or False:* It's not up to Christ to guard us from sinning.

Delving Into the Word

A. Distribute individual cards, one to each member, with single texts—not the content—on each card selected from 1 John 1:8 through 2:10. Select two additional members to read aloud the content of those texts. (The readers should read

alternate texts in readers' theatre style.) Now ask card holders to respond to their text after it is read. Perhaps they can respond by citing why the text is so, how the text is so, or what it means to the Christian life. This may generate wider

Materials

pens or pencils; individual note cards (see Delving Into the Word, part A)

discussion from the group.

B. Organize the study around allegations you bring to the class. (These allegations don't claim to be right or wrong.) Here are suggestions for your class to discuss:

1. Some sins are more consequential than others.
2. Sin and sinning are matters chiefly

of attitude.

3. Grace is the bridge between our sins and God's acceptance of us.
4. One's goal is not sinless perfection.
5. The sole role/value of forgiveness is to reestablish rapport with the offended one.

Next, distribute the reproducible activity on page 37.

Discussing the Ideas

1. What is the orderly process of dealing with sin?
2. Why do we and others hang on to secret sins?
3. Think about the time the members of the ministerial council forced the adulteress into Christ's presence (John 8). Why did He forgive her but apparently not them?

4. What could we say to the notion that sin and sinning are a matter of attitudes and decisions, rather than behaviors?

5. What does Roman 6:14 mean when it asserts that "you are not under law but under grace"? What law?

6. How do you respond to the following statement? "God can forgive your sins, but your nervous system never will."

Closing the Activity

Consider telling a story, personal or otherwise, that clearly affirms Christ's willingness and power to deal with sin.

This story could lead to several pointed and brief conclusions you've drawn from today's study, and/or lead to steps that you, the facilitator, have every intention of implementing.

Or ask members what point they found

most compelling and useful from today's study. Follow that with a final point of your own and/or following quote: "In men whom men condemn as ill / I find so much of goodness still. / In men whom men pronounce divine / I find so much of sin and blot / I do not dare to draw a line / between the two, where God has not."*

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*Joaquin Miller. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia (accessed January 25, 2010).

Draw a model or scheme of the process of salvation (sinning, forgiveness, and righteousness). Once drawn, explain your model or scheme to the class.