



The Human Condition

Small Group Work Sheet
October 3, 2010

Part 1 - Ice Breaker

- What are some of the sins your friends struggle with?
- What are the sins your friends struggle with which they are blind to?

Part 2 - Review the sermon

- Pastor Kurt talked about the difference between sins of omission and commission. Before this sermon, did you think of the sin of omission? How does that change the way you feel about your own sinfulness?
- Pastor Kurt talked about the violation of conscience as an act of sin (*But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. Romans 14:23 ESV*). This means what is sinful for some people, is not sinful for others. Share an instance where violating your conscience was sinful for you but not for others? Why is this important to understand?
- What is the difference between *utter* depravity and *total* depravity?
- Pastor Kurt mentioned some sinful view of sin. Which of the sinful views of sin was most meaningful to you? Can you think of other sinful views of sin that Pastor Kurt did not mention?
- Pastor Kurt talked about sinful responses to sin. The examples he gave were blame shifting, partial confession, worldly sorrow, victimization, and mere confession. Share a real life example where you saw these take place.

Part 3 - Digg deeper ...*get the rest of the story.*

The worst day of the human race - Read Genesis 3

While Genesis 3 is a familiar story, the closer we look at it, the more insightful it becomes. *Carefully* read Genesis 3 and create a list of observations. Here are a few to get you started.

“Now the Serpent” - We read about the serpent in Genesis 3. In Revelation 12:9 and 20:2, we learn the serpent was Satan. The Bible doesn't record the details of the fall of Satan and the demons but we know Satan is a powerful

angel who didn't want to worship God. He became proud in his heart. Isaiah and Ezekiel say he was cast out of heaven. Jesus says a third of the angels were cast down with him.

“The serpent was more crafty” - Some of you think you are pretty smart. Some of you are very smart. Most of us are way too confident in our own ability, experience and intelligence to fight sin and avoid evil. The serpent is crafty. He is smarter than we are. He is more clever. He is more nuanced. He has been around for a long time and he knows what temptations work. He's seen a lot more. He has deceived and destroyed people far more competent than any of us. Be careful to take Satan and his schemes seriously. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you strength to turn away from them and wisdom to see them.

“Did God actually say, you shall not eat of any tree in the garden?” – Is that what God said? Check out Genesis 2:17. They could eat of any tree in the garden, but one. Satan changed and manipulated God's word. It took changing one word from what God said for Satan to get Adam and Eve to begin questioning God's goodness. Watch out for subtly changing God's Word to twist its meaning, that is how Satan works.

“The woman said to the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, God said, you shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.” – Eve also twisted God's word. God didn't say they couldn't touch it, he said not to eat it.

“She took its fruit. She also gave some to her husband.” – Where was Adam? What was he doing? He was there doing nothing! What was Adam doing when Satan was lying about God, tempting Eve? Absolutely nothing. This is one of the worst things men can do. Sit around and do nothing rather than protecting their family and leading their home. Adam said nothing. He did nothing. Some men abuse their authority and are harsh. Other men avoid responsibility. They don't want to get a job, they will avoid all conflicts and take no responsibility. They are cowards and traitors. Too many men think they are good guys because they don't commit sins of commission but they are guilty of sins of omission. They are not busy rebuking Satan. They are not protecting their family, training their children and loving their wife. The Bible uses the term *head* to describe the role of men. One of the greatest problems in the world is men who are silent, passive, and cowardly and fail to lead in their family and church.

“The eyes of both were opened and they knew they were naked.” - Rather than sin making life better, it made life worse. Rather than intimacy between Adam, Eve and God becoming better; there is separation, isolation and fear. Sin

always ruins life. We may think it will make life better and more fulfilling, that was Satan's promise, it was a lie. No matter what promises sin makes, know it will always lead to ruin, separation and isolation.

“The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate it.” - Adam immediately blame shifts to Eve. Implicitly, he also blame shifts to God, who gave him his wife. Adam was using the victim mentality to handle his sin rather than facing his responsibility. (Maybe he wanted a tax break or government funded education?)

“And your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you.” - It says your desire shall be for your husband. The word *desire* here means *desire for his position*. Rather than being a help mate for her husband, she would challenge and undermine his leadership. When it says he will *rule* over you, that word *rule* means heavy-handed leadership. Rather than loving his wife, he would become demeaning and abusive toward her. This is how sin affects marriage relationships. In Ephesians 5, Paul tells us that through Christ, these marital roles are restored to their original purpose.

“Cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat it all the days of your life” - Sin didn't just influence Adam and Eve in their intellect, emotions, mind and body. All of creation was affected through sin. This is why work is hard. This is why work is often not enjoyable. Rather than creation supporting us, it fights against us.

What happens when a Christian sins?

Our legal standing before God is unchanged. We are still forgiven, *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”* Romans 8:1. Salvation is not based on our merits, but is a free gift of God, Romans 6:23. Christ died for *all* of our sins, 1 Corinthians 15:3. Even though God does not cease to love us, he is displeased with us when we sin. Paul tells us it is possible for Christians to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, Ephesians 4:30. The author of Hebrews reminds us that *“the Lord disciplines him whom he loves,”* Hebrews 12:6. When we disobey, God the father is grieved, much as an earthly father is grieved with his children's disobedience, and he disciplines us.

The Westminster confession of Faith, chapter 11, sec. 5 says it well,

Although they never can fall from the state of justification, yet they may, by their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure and not have the light of his countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.

When we sin as Christians, it is not only our personal relationship with God that is disrupted, our Christian life and fruitfulness in ministry are also damaged. Paul says that Christians who yield to sin, increasingly become slaves to sin, Romans 6:16. To give in to such desires, to harbor and cherish them in our hearts, is to give food, shelter, and welcome to the enemy's troops. If we yield to our sinful desires, we will inevitably feel some loss of spiritual strength, some diminution of spiritual power, some loss of effectiveness in the work of God's kingdom.

Moreover, when we sin as Christians, we suffer a loss of heavenly reward, see 2 Corinthians 5:10. Paul implies there are degrees of reward in heaven, and that sin has negative consequences in terms of loss of heavenly reward.