

Questions for Growth Group Discussion and Personal Reflection
Romans 3:9-20

“Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.”

Psalm 51:4

1. Think back to your childhood and share a story about a time when you were caught doing something wrong or when you tried to escape punishment for a wrong that you or someone else had done. How did you feel?
2. What would you say is at the very core of a human being? Are we primarily bent toward the good, primarily bent toward the bad, or is there some middle ground?
3. In verse 9 Paul summarizes by saying “all people...are under the power of sin.” If this is true, then all people are held in bondage to sin (are slaves to sin, must obey sin). Read Romans 3:10-18. List what is said regarding human thought, direction, speech and action. How does this list make you feel?
4. On a scale of one to ten (with one being unaware and ten being very aware) what level of awareness do you have when it comes to sin’s influence on your life?
5. When did you first sense the depth of your sin and your need for God? What motivated you to turn to the Lord?
6. Verse 20 describes God’s law as being descriptive (like a doctor’s thermometer) more than prescriptive (like medicine given to a sick patient). How would you feel about yourself if this letter ended with verse 20? How would you feel about God?

Closing Exercise: (Allow 35-40 minutes)

Scripture teaches that, apart from Christ, all are in bondage to sin so the crucial spiritual question is this: Who or what masters you? The sin that we see in a person’s life is just the manifestation of what is already within the human heart. Use the remaining time to grow in your awareness of the deeper currents of your heart by practicing the following exercise.

Ten Minutes:

As a group, take ten minutes to review and offer a brief definition for each of the Seven Deadly Sins (wrath, greed, sloth, pride, lust, envy, and gluttony).

Fifteen Minutes:

Then quietly and on your own, ask the Lord to search your heart and reveal what you need to know about the things that influence you. Then, one by one, slowly review the seven sins listed looking for evidence of these in your heart. Write down the thoughts or memories that come to mind. There is no need to probe too long. Just sit a little while before a topic. If nothing surfaces, move on. If something does surface, follow it as far as you easily can. Along the way seek to gently identify it and probe what may trigger its appearance. Remember, you’re goal is to identify, not judge or punish.

With the time remaining: Gather as a group to share your experience. Have someone read Romans 8:1-4. Close in group prayer as the Spirit leads.

For Next Week:

Adapt the above exercise to help unearth the attitudes of your heart. Memorize the Seven Deadly Sins list and practice this several times in the coming week. You could also examine the heart by slowly reviewing other lists, like the Fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22), the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) or The Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5). Once you have become familiar with the traits that should or should not be present in your heart, then begin reviewing any interaction you have had with anyone during the week (especially with those in your family). Keep a journal of your musings and prayers.

Read Romans 3:21-31

Memorize Romans 3:20-22

Points to Ponder:

Are you in trouble?

How did you get in trouble?

If you are in trouble, have you sought help?

If you did, did help come?

If it did, did you accept it?

“If we do not understand ourselves to be sick, we will not see a need to call for the Good Physician.”

“Sin is simply putting ourselves before God”