

S E R I E S C O M P A N I O N

L I F E

BEYOND THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

L I F E



LIFE BEYOND SIN

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me – Galatians 2:20

The gospel is the good news of salvation in Jesus. We're saved from our sins by the death of Jesus in our place. It's wonderful news! Central to the gospel is the idea of GRACE – that we're saved by God's free gift to us in Jesus, not on our own merit or the goodness of our works.

However, if we're honest, there are times after someone becomes a Christian when it feels like there's a bit of a disconnect between that gospel of grace and the New Testament's strong call to live a different life. How does that fit with God's 'free gift'? Why do I find it so hard to change and what happens if I don't change enough? Often we end up believing in two opposite things at once: God's grace to us; and the need to be good enough. We can settle back into a belief that God's grace saved us, but now we need to be good enough to stay saved. We can end up slogging away fearfully or feeling comfortably proud of ourselves.

The problem comes from seeing salvation as just being saved from being punished for sin. Actually, Jesus died for more than that – he died to save us out of the life of sin itself. The Bible reveals sin as something ugly and destructive, and dishonouring to God. It's poison, its own punishment. Grace saves us from God's judgement, but also from the poison of a sinful life. In Galatians 2:20 we read that when we trust in Jesus our old sinful natures are actually counted as having been put to death on the cross of Jesus. That's how we're forgiven. But we're then given new life, the life of God's Spirit who transforms us. Although we're going to be looking at sin this term, seven of them specifically, we want to focus not just on our sin, but on how the gospel of Jesus moves us beyond them to a new life with God.

A key image we're using in this series is that of a growing, fruit-bearing plant. More specifically, that our old sinful natures are like a dead, diseased plant which has been uprooted and replaced with the healthy plant of God's Spirit who is the life in us.

THE UGLY AND THE BEAUTIFUL

Thomas Chalmers, a Scottish preacher who lived in the 18th and 19th centuries, wrote about 'the expulsive power of a new affection'. He said:

Christians overcome the world by seeing the beauty and excellence of Christ. They overcome the world by seeing something more attractive than the world: Christ.

A key idea we're looking at in this series is that transformation never comes simply through dutifully slogging at rules. Instead it comes when, by God's Spirit, we see both the ugliness, destructiveness, and pain of the life of sin, and the beauty of Jesus and his self-giving love, as something attractive that we're drawn to. Ultimately it isn't morality that will change us, but delighting in the gospel of Jesus as the best thing there is. The good news of the gospel is that we're forgiven for the ugly ways of life we lived in rebellion to God. But beyond not being punished for them, part of being forgiven is God's pulling us out of that ugly, destructive life, and his gift of something wonderful to be a part of, and the power to be a part of it, all by his grace.

WHY THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS?

In thinking about life beyond sin, this term we're focusing on seven sins in particular, and what life beyond them looks like. The seven sins are what have long been called the 'seven deadly sins': pride, anger, envy, lust, gluttony, sloth (also called laziness), and greed.

Why these seven? Categorising these sins together as the 'Deadly Sins' has been a way of thinking about them from early in church history. Regardless of how different parts of the church have thought about these sins at different times, we're not singling these sins out as being worse than any others, or suggesting they're the only ones that are deadly. The reason the early church grouped these seven together is because they're sins in a person's heart that stand behind all the other sins which we commit in action. These are the driving sins of our hearts that the gospel confronts.

Although there is a neat list of seven sins here, in reality these sins don't separate into seven distinct boxes. They tend to bleed into each other. Sometimes one is the cause of another, sometimes they intertwine with each other or overlap. None of them ever stand completely alone. However, when we keep that in mind, it's also helpful to look at each in turn to clarify what's going on in our hearts, and begin to work on them.

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

After talking about change as not coming through morality or rule keeping, it might seem a bit contradictory to talk about discipline as an important part of the Christian life. Spiritual disciplines are practices that the church has historically seen as useful in personal transformation. They've been treated suspiciously by a number of Christians for a long time, precisely because they so often have become a set of rules that are kept dutifully, and because at times the church has listed a set number as if these practices themselves had some power to change our hearts.

To understand the usefulness of spiritual disciplines it's important to understand the place of habits in our lives. Often when we experience a recurring sin in our life we don't realise that there's a reason for it... we've made a habit of it! Our hearts, rebelling against God's rule, lead us to rebel against God so continually that rebellion becomes a habit. We develop habits in the way we think, believe, and feel, and habits of actions. The new life of the Spirit involves undoing those habits we've learnt and developing new habits through disciplines of living like Jesus until they become natural. We develop habits of thinking and habits of actions, and these feed into, and strengthen, each other. What makes a discipline 'spiritual' isn't anything special about the action itself – any discipline of action is a spiritual discipline if it is both fed by, and feeding, a belief and delight in Jesus. That only comes from the power of God's Spirit in us. As such these studies don't prescribe disciplines, but give some examples to prod some thought on what disciplines might be helpful for you.

Finally, disciplines tend to be misunderstood as individual things we do alone. They should rather be understood as habits we develop together in community with each other.

HOW TO USE THESE STUDIES

The studies are fairly short and simple. The point of this isn't to lead to short discussions – just the opposite! Hopefully they provide space for discussion beyond the scope of the questions themselves. The studies follow the movement of salvation in Galatians 2:20:

Firstly, they look at the 'old' way of life of sin from a particular passage. Secondly, the way Jesus' self-giving love at the cross shows us and calls us into a different way of life. Finally, a couple of questions discuss what the new life of the Spirit might look like. These 'New' questions are broad and the same each week. They're intended to generate discussion about what old habits might be driving your actions, and what new habits you could develop, but without being prescriptive. To help this discussion, the 'new' section begins with some thoughts about the deadly sin in question and some suggestions for ways forward. It's hoped these will be helpful and will give direction without limiting discussion.

SERIES OBJECTIVES

1. To understand that God has moved us from the old life to the new by putting our sin to death on the cross, and giving his Spirit; it isn't something we achieve ourselves.
2. To understand that the Spirit grows this new life in us as we make a habit of walking in step with him.
3. To grow an appreciation of the ugliness of sin and the beauty and attractiveness of Jesus.
4. To begin, in community, to identify old habits and begin to develop new habits of life that foster the new life of the Spirit in us.

1 DYING & RISING WITH
JESUS

2 WALKING WITH
JESUS

3 LIFE BEYOND
PRIDE

4 LIFE BEYOND
ANGER

5 LIFE BEYOND
ENVY

6 LIFE BEYOND
LUST

7 LIFE BEYOND
GLUTTONY

8 LIFE BEYOND
SLOTH

9 LIFE BEYOND
GREED

BIG IDEA

Real life is about growing the loving character of Jesus, the sinful life is ugly and selfish. In Jesus' death and resurrection we die to selfishness and rise to new life in Jesus' Spirit.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Galatians 2:20
and 5:13-26

KEY VERSE

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

OLD + NEW

Read Galatians 5:16-6:10

1. How does Paul describe 'indulging in the flesh' in these verses?
2. How do you see these ways of living and relating to others play out in our world today?
3. How does Paul describe the new way of life of the Christian in these verses?
4. If God has forgiven a Christian, why do you think it matters how we live?

DYING + RISING

Read Galatians 2:20-3:1-6

5. What place does the *cross* have in bringing us from the old way of life to the new?
6. What place does the *Spirit* have in bringing us from the old way of life to the new?

7. What place does *obeying religious laws* have in bringing us from the old way of life to the new?

THE NEW

What's driving the decisions you make in life? Do you simply make choices, or is something shaping them below the surface?

Christian ethicist Stanley Hauerwas suggests that who we are is shaped by pictures, metaphors, and symbols we carry in our hearts; images that depict who we think we are and what the world is like. Therefore changing our lives won't happen through sheer willpower but through carrying the right story, the right pictures and images of our lives, in our hearts. The pictures we (often unconsciously) carry in our hearts of our world and our lives shape who we become and how we live.

Our world is constantly telling us a story about what the world is really like, and who we really are, and it gives us pictures of that through things like the media. We take these ideas into ourselves often without thinking about it and are shaped by them.

However the Bible is full of alternative pictures of who we are because of the cross of Jesus. The main one we're drawing on in this series is that of the dead plant of our old natures, uprooted and replaced with the new, healthy, fruit producing plant of God's Spirit – but there are many more as well. As we take this kind of story image of ourselves into our heart it'll shape our outlook on ourselves, our world, and our lives.

8. Can you think of what story and images have been shaping your life so far? More importantly, discuss some ways together you can develop new, biblical pictures of yourself in your heart.

PRAYER

PRAY FOR
YOUR CROSS
CULTURAL
CONNECT
PARTNER

BIG IDEA

Because of sin we are like dead trees growing rotten fruit. Jesus makes us living trees which begin to grow good fruit.

ACTIVITY

Go to your fridge, your garden (or even your bin or school bag). What is lurking in the vegetable crisper, or in the containers at the back of the fridge? What is in your garden under a rock? Look for something rotten.



Smell it.

How does that make you feel? Disgusting? Gross, icky, yuck? Get it away from me!

Now find something good to eat, like a crunchy fresh apple, or a soft ripe banana, or a fresh glass of milk. How much better is it? It is so much better when it doesn't make your stomach turn over.

READ THE BIBLE

Galatians 5:19-26

DISCUSSION

Jesus does the impossible. He takes something that is rotten, and makes it fresh. Remember the rotten thing you smelled? Imagine if you could make it fresh and good to eat? Sounds crazy – but that's what the Bible says Jesus does with us. He loved us so much that he wanted to make us new and fresh. He died to make this happen.

In Galatians it says that Jesus lives in us. When we believe in Jesus, his spirit lives within us. Like a friend that is always there. Helping us to bear the good fruit of the Spirit in our lives, not the rotten fruit of sin.

PRAYER IDEA

Thank God for sending his son Jesus to die and help us become new and fresh. Pray that we can show God's love through our actions and words this week.

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DYING & RISING WITH
JESUS

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WALKING WITH
JESUS

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LIFE BEYOND
PRIDE

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LIFE BEYOND
GREED

BIG IDEA

Real life grows good fruit as we walk with Jesus by his Spirit; the sinful life grows bad fruit as we walk away from Jesus. Through Jesus' death and resurrection we die to bad fruit and rise to the fruit of the Spirit.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Galatians
5:16-6:10

KEY VERSE

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

THE OLD

Read Galatians 5:16-6:10

1. How does this passage depict the bad fruit of the sinful life?
2. What place does Paul give to obeying rules in the Christian life?
3. What in our hearts keep us from living according to the Spirit and pulls us towards living by the sinful nature?

DYING + RISING

Read Galatians 5:24-26

4. How do we move from an old life to the new life?

THE NEW

Last week we thought about how carrying images in our heart shape how we live in the world. But what does that look like in real life? Author Dallas Willard has made an acronym 'VIM' to stand for the principles of spiritual transformation:

V is for Vision (mind)

I is for Intention (will/heart)

M is for Means (body)

The gospel gives us a Vision for life – that is, it gives us a story, imagined through images, of God’s work in Jesus for us. That vision calls for a radical change in our Intention – what our heart or will is set on. That is, if God’s vision for us is good and beautiful, then our will and heart will pursue that vision. The things we do by the power of God’s Spirit are the Means of the gospel vision that is changing our whole selves

We are habitual creatures. We tend to think of sin as just something we are compelled to do against our will. Actually, when we sin repeatedly it’s because we’ve built up habits of belief (Intention) and action (Means), because we’ve been carrying a wrong picture of what life is or should be (Vision). To make God’s vision for us our own requires new habits of behaviour and patterns of thought, that correct our wrong or disordered loves. Spiritual disciplines are patterns of thought, belief and action that are set on God’s Vision for life rather than the world’s.

5. *What picture of life is built up by the ‘fruit of the Spirit’ in verses 22-23?*

6. *In Galatians 5:13-15 and 6:1-10, what are some ways this new life can be lived out together in practical ways?*

7. *How might developing new habits help us to ‘keep in step with the Spirit’?*

PRAYER

PRAY FOR
YOUR CROSS
CULTURAL
CONNECT
PARTNER

BIG IDEA

When you walk with Jesus you grow good fruit. When you walk away from Jesus you grow bad fruit.

ACTIVITY

Search on YouTube for “bible theatre Galatians fruit of the spirit”.

Watch the video together as a



family or growth group.

READ THE BIBLE

Galatians 5:22-23

DISCUSSION

Did you notice this about the fruit of the spirit list from the video?

One syllable – love, joy, peace.

Two syllables – patience, kindness, goodness.

Three syllables – gentleness, faithfulness, self-control.

This may make the bible verse easier to remember.

HOWEVER, the ‘fruit of the spirit’ is not a checklist to achieve one at a time. The Holy Spirit helps us develop ALL of the fruit ALL of the time. All the characteristics above are the one fruit of the Holy Spirit. It’s really hard to have patience without love, faithfulness without joy, peace without gentleness. They all work together. As we walk with Jesus through life, his spirit helps us grow in all these characteristics.

Talk about how these characteristics might work together in each your lives.

PRAYER IDEA

Use popcorn prayers (one quick sentence – jump up and say it) to ask God for help to develop all the fruit of the spirit.

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DYING & RISING WITH
JESUS

2

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LIFE BEYOND
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BIG IDEA

Real life is about putting God and his Son first and myself last; pride is thinking that life is all about me, and that others exist for me. Through Jesus' death and resurrection we die to pride and rise to humility.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Genesis 2:15-17
and 3:1-19

KEY VERSE

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,

Philippians 2:3

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

THE OLD

Read Genesis 3

The word 'knowing' here probably carries the sense of determining what is good and evil

1. How does this story depict pride in Adam and Eve's hearts?
2. How does their pride reveal itself in their actions and the consequences?

DYING + RISING

Read Philippians 2:5-11

3. How did Jesus embody an entirely opposite way of life to Adam and Eve?
4. How do you feel about Jesus' way of life here? Is there anything beautiful or unappealing about it?

NEW LIFE

Pride is an attitude of the heart that has a different Vision for life to God's Vision. Pride's vision is "I am at the top of the ladder above God and others". The proud heart sees this picture as a good life, but sees a life where "I am under God and serving" as bad and unfulfilling. But this vision isn't static; the proud heart continually feeds and enforces it with patterns of belief – what they say to themselves about themselves and others; and patterns of behaviour that promote themselves to others and put themselves forward. When we consider the beautiful vision of Jesus the servant king in Philippians 2:5-11, we can move towards being changed by that vision as we develop new ways of speaking to ourselves and new ways of behaving that are humble. For example, we can develop a habit of proactively saying positive things about others which mightn't come naturally; and we can develop a habit of serving others 'behind the scenes', or in ways we know won't make us look good to others. As we work at that over time they will become more and more habitual.

5. Have there been any old habits that have been feeding pride in your heart?

6. What new habits could you develop to help you keep in step with your new life in the Spirit?

PRAYER

PRAY FOR
YOUR CROSS
CULTURAL
CONNECT
PARTNER

BIG IDEA

Pride is when I think life is about me, but Jesus shows us that real life is all about God and what he wants, not me and what I want.



ACTIVITY

As a family or growth group get each person to think of a time you were upset because you weren't first in something, or you didn't get your own way. If someone struggles to think of something I am sure their family will be able to help.

READ THE BIBLE

Philippians 2:3-11

DISCUSSION

Pride is when we think things in life are about me, not about God and what he wants for me and others. In the Philippians passage we see that Jesus was the ultimate example of being humble. Instead

of being proud and selfish, he gave up everything to die for us. What humility!

We are encouraged to do the same - look to our saviour Jesus and value others more than ourselves.

Work out something you can do to value others right now. You could encourage them by writing them a card or sending them a message or photo. Do it together as a family or growth group.

PRAYER IDEA

Ask God to forgive you for times you have been too proud.

Ask God to help you be humble instead, just like Jesus.

Pray for each of the people you have just done something for.

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JESUS

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BIG IDEA

Real life is found in the forgiveness and patience of Jesus, shown at the cross. Anger is about forcing our own way. Through his death and resurrection we die to anger and rise to forbearance.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Genesis 4:1-16

KEY VERSE

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Ephesians 4:31-32

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

THE OLD

Read Genesis 4:1-16

1. Why is Cain angry; that is, what in his heart is sitting behind his anger?
2. How does his anger lead Cain to destructive consequences for himself and others?

DYING + RISING

Read Ephesians 4:31-5:2

3. What about Jesus' death on the cross is different to Cain's way of life?
4. Paul commands us to live the same way. How does your heart respond to Paul's command?

NEW LIFE

Use the feelings chart on the next page to help you identify if you are angry and the intensity of your anger. One important aspect about anger is that it is often what is called a second order emotion. In other words, anger will nearly always have another feeling below it, connected to fear or shame. Anger becomes a habitual – and ineffective – way of dealing with that emotion. When you're angry

| | JOY / HAPPINESS | LOVED / LOVING | SADNESS | ANGER | FEAR | SHAME / DISGUST |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Relatively High Emotional Intensity | Elated Overjoyed Thrilled Exuberant Ecstatic Empowered Optimistic Delighted Amazed | Loved Loving Accepted Blessed Attracted Enchanted Fascinated Passionate Adoration Devoted | Despairing Devastated Depressed In agony Anguish Hurt Dejected Hopeless Distressed | Enraged / Outraged Furious Violent Hating Mad Angry Exasperated Aggressive | Terrified Petrified Panic Shocked Frightened Frantic Threatened Paranoid | Worthless Mortified Disgraced Guilty Dis-honoured Remorseful Unworthy Rejected Disgusted |
| Medium Emotional Intensity | Cheerful Thankful Pleased Relieved Satisfied Loved / Loving Energetic Excited | Trusting Encouraged Moved Tender Caring Connected Appreciated Empathy Compassion Supported | Alone Miserable Sorrowful Heartbroken Lost Grieving Sick Misunderstood Loss | Frustrated Annoyed Hostile Jealous Defiant Exploited Intolerant Provoked | Fearful Insecure Intimidated Anxious Helpless Suspicious Confused Disturbed Unsafe | Sorry Embarrassed Apologetic Sneaky Regretful Stupid Ashamed |

this week, this is an opportunity to work out what is really going on below the surface and begin to deal with that in Christ and in the community of Christ. There are lots of positive habits we can begin to develop that redirect anger constructively, especially talking to someone, developing a discipline of being vulnerable.

Share what you've learned with someone you trust who will spend time asking you about how anger works in your life and how you can develop new habits to deal with the real issue underlying the presenting problem. Ask others to pray for you.

5. Have there been any old habits that have been feeding anger in your heart?
6. What new habits could you develop to help you keep in step with your new life in the spirit?

PRAYER

PRAY FOR
YOUR CROSS
CULTURAL
CONNECT
PARTNER

BIG IDEA

Anger is when we try to force our own way no matter what. But Jesus shows us how to be patient with others instead.



YOU WILL NEED

A sheet of paper for each family or growth group member
Colour pencils or felt pens

BIBLE PASSAGE

Ephesians 4:29-32

ALL AGES ACTIVITY

We all get angry sometimes, but not always for the same reasons.

Maybe it's because of a common trigger like being hungry, lonely or tired.

Have each family or group member think about their most common way they get angry and draw an emoji to represent this.

Take turns for each group member to show their anger emoji and

explain the way they get angry.

Are any of these the same as in the bible passage? Discuss the meaning of any other ways of being angry from the passage.

DISCUSSION

God doesn't want us to let our anger take over. He wants us to be kind and forgive each other like He forgave us through Jesus. When you feel yourself starting to get angry, try to stop and take the time to express your anger to God, then pray about the best way to react.

PRAYER IDEA

Dear Lord, Thank you for forgiving us and sending Jesus to save us from our sins. Help us to turn to you first when we are angry so your Holy Spirit can guide us to react in a better way.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

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DYING & RISING WITH
JESUS

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BIG IDEA

Real life is found in giving ourselves up for the good of others.

Envy is when we hate someone for what they have and wish them harm. In Jesus' death and resurrection we die to envy and rise to kindness.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Genesis 37:1-36

KEY VERSE

At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

Titus 3:3-5

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

NEW LIFE

Envy has the same vision for life as pride: it longs to be at the top of the ladder above everyone else. However envy sees someone else above them or with more than them, feels ashamed, and hates the other person for it. It's less the longing for what someone else has and is more the longing that 'if I can't have it neither should they'. It's fed by bitter and resentful thoughts towards someone else and actions that seek to wound the other person and ruin the good things they have. And because envy by definition is ashamed of itself, it masks itself behind a front of being proud. A lot of self-righteousness is actually envy. When we consider the beautiful kindness of Jesus in Titus 3:3-5 we can begin to develop new patterns of thought, feeling and action that undermine envy. For example, when bitter thoughts arise, you could decide to make a list of things in your life you can be thankful for and thank God for them. You could also develop a discipline of kindness; looking for ways to intentionally do things that will give joy to others... and seeing a delight in their good begin to develop.

5. Have there been any old habits that have been feeding envy in your heart?

6. What new habits could you develop to help you keep in step with your new life in the spirit?

PRAYER

PRAY FOR
YOUR CROSS
CULTURAL
CONNECT
PARTNER



BIG IDEA

Envy is when you want to take or wreck what someone else has and makes you hate them. Jesus died because of envy and gives us everything so we can have joy and show kindness.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Titus 3:3-5a

ALL AGES ACTIVITY

Sometimes it's easier to see envy in others than in us, so let's look at envy and its effects in some well-known Disney movies. Think about the envy these movie characters felt:

| Movie | What did they envy? | What did they do? |
|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| The Lion King | Scar | |
| Snow White | The Queen | |
| The Little Mermaid | Ursula the Witch | |

Now think about someone you envy. What do you envy about them? When does it make you start to hate them? Have you ever done anything because of that envy?

Did you realise that other people may be envying you? What are some things you have that others might envy? Are you happy or thankful to have these things?

DISCUSSION

God is the giver of all things, so we should be thankful for what we have and also for what others have. God's wants us to find joy in what He has given each of us because His mercy has saved us from our envy and hatred of others through the ultimate kindness and love of our Saviour Jesus.

PRAYER

Dear Lord, Thank you for showing us mercy and giving us many other things to be thankful for. Help us to find joy in your gifts to us and to others instead of being envious.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

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BIG IDEA

Real life is about intimacy with God, enabling us to see others as those we love and those we are loved by, lust is when we want someone we shouldn't have by forgetting all we do have. In Jesus' death and resurrection we die to lust and rise to love and intimacy.

BIBLE PASSAGE

2 Samuel 11

KEY VERSE

Then I acknowledged
my sin to you and
did not cover up my
iniquity.

I said, "I will confess
my transgressions to
the Lord."

And you forgave
the guilt of my sin

Psalms 32:5

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

THE OLD

Read 2 Samuel 11

It's important to note that the passage gives no reason to think Bathsheba is guilty of anything, but is the victim of a peeping Tom and of coercion by a person in power

1. How does this story reveal ugliness in David's heart?

2. How does this ugliness spill out to affect his actions and the lives of those around him?

DYING + RISING

Read Luke 7:36-50

A 'sinful life' here is referring to a lifestyle that involved sexual sin of some kind. It's important to understand this woman as both someone who is guilty of sexual sin, as well as being the victim of the sexual objectification of others.

3. How is Jesus' treatment of this woman so different to David's and to that of the other men in the room?

4. What might the tender love of Jesus for us, on view here, give us a new heart towards sex and the people we're tempted to use sexually?

NEW LIFE

Lust is a deadly sin attached to our physiological and biological natures. We can use that fact to justify the belief 'this is just the way I am'. However lust is driven by habits, values and beliefs. For example, it's now known that habitual use of pornography changes the picture someone has in their hearts of sex and of women and men into something that isn't natural or the way we're 'wired' – and these beliefs enforce returning to (and exaggerating) the behaviours that feed them.

Although lust is connected to chemical processes in the brain which are hard to resist once begun, those processes are 'triggered' by habits and beliefs. If you develop a habit of lusting when you sit at your laptop alone at 3am, then every time you do that your brain will begin to switch on 'lust' automatically. Changing that habitual behaviour before you're tempted can be a part of a solution. However behind all that are beliefs in our hearts that drive lust, eg. 'I need this'. 'I deserve this'. 'I can't resist if images are put in front of my face', 'I feel so ashamed and I need this to make me feel better' etc. A positive discipline of belief is to speak to yourself about the beautiful love of Jesus for us proactively before lust is triggered. Be intentional about removing yourself from situations that tempt you to use someone for your gratification and develop a discipline of looking for opportunities to give yourself to serve others for their good. Work at positive beliefs and new habits of behaviour that give those beliefs space to grow.

5. Have there been any old habits that have been feeding lust in your heart?

6. What new habits could you develop to help you keep in step with your new life in the spirit?

PRAYER

PRAY FOR
YOUR CROSS
CULTURAL
CONNECT
PARTNER

BIG IDEA

Lust is seeing people we shouldn't have and acting like we need them. Jesus shows us what real love is, and he really loves us.

ACTIVITY

YouTube search for "bible theater David Bathsheba" and watch.

READ THE BIBLE

Read 2 Samuel 11

DISCUSSION

In the video we see King David who was overwhelmed by lust for Bathsheba. Lust is a very strong feeling where you intensely want an object or person for yourself. His feelings of lust for Bathsheba were so strong that David forgot about God, he forgot about what is right, and he had her husband killed to satisfy his desires. Nathan the prophet was able to help David realise his terrible sin. David did say sorry but God still punished him and his first son with Bathsheba died.

A feeling of lust can happen at any time. How do we know if it is lust? One of the ways to tell, is to notice what happens because of the feeling of wanting something. If we want an object very badly (e.g. a phone) and we find ourselves lying, cheating,

whining and creating family fights and havoc to get it, the desire for that phone has turned into lust.

If we want a certain friend very badly and we have to be nasty to others, gossip, tell lies or hurt someone's feelings then we know that the desire for that person is lust.

Acting out a feeling of lust always has hurtful consequences.

So what can we do? We are fortunate to have Jesus to turn to – he is a king who does not give an example of lust as David did, but a king that shows us what real love is. His real love serves and builds up others and does not leave a trail of hurt or tears. When we have strong feelings we can always check whether we are acting in a way that is hurtful or loving to those around us.

PRAYER IDEA

Dear God. There are so many things that attract our attention each day. When our desires are really strong please help us avoid lust. Help us from doing or saying bad or hurtful things to get what we want. Please help us to act instead with real love as you would. Amen



1 DYING & RISING WITH
JESUS

2 WALKING WITH
JESUS

3 LIFE BEYOND
PRIDE

4 LIFE BEYOND
ANGER

5 LIFE BEYOND
ENVY

6 LIFE BEYOND
LUST

7 LIFE BEYOND
GLUTTONY

8 LIFE BEYOND
SLOTH

9 LIFE BEYOND
GREED

BIG IDEA

Real life is about satisfying our spiritual hunger in God alone. Gluttony is trying to satisfy our spiritual hunger outside of God. In Jesus' death and resurrection we die to gluttony and rise to self-control (a God-controlled self).

BIBLE PASSAGE

Amos 6:1-7

KEY VERSE

For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things.

Philippians 3:18-19

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

PRAYER

PRAY FOR
YOUR CROSS
CULTURAL
CONNECT
PARTNER

BIG IDEA

Gluttony is when we hunger for created things rather than being hungry for God and what he wants. Jesus fills our hunger.

YOU WILL NEED

Some tempting sweets, snacks or dessert

READ THE BIBLE

Philippians 3:17-21

ACTIVITY

If you have some treats available put them in the middle of your group to eat. Discuss what foods tempt you most.

Each person check the list below, and share if there is one thing on the list that they can't get enough of or have a weakness for.

- Chocolate
- Lollies
- Potato chips
- Soft drink
- Food in general
- Toys
- Computer games
- Phone/device
- Collecting things
- YouTube videos
- Social media
- TV or Netflix
- Internet surfing
- Books/magazines
- Photos/images
- Exercise or Sport
- Shopping
- Clothes or shoes
- A hobby or craft
- For adults – alcohol
- For adults – tobacco products
- For adults – coffee or tea
- Other - if not listed above

DISCUSSION

We are thinking about one of the 7 deadly sins called gluttony. Gluttony can almost be summed up by the saying "TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING". When we think of gluttony we usually think of excessive eating or drinking, but the definition can extend further to other things where we just can't get enough of something and continually want more.

There is nothing wrong or bad about food or most of the other things in the list above, but when we hunger for them, crave them too much we are worshipping ourselves. When we try to satisfy our spiritual hunger with lots of worldly things, we get bloated with food or distracted away from good relationships and from God.

There is one place we can find rest from the ongoing craving and that is in Jesus. In the reading today we read that Jesus has the power to bring everything under control, including our bodies. If we find that a craving or hunger has become excessive or distracting we can take our need to Jesus who is the one who can satisfy and fill us. He can help us enjoy all the good things in the list above in moderation.

PRAYER IDEA

Dear Jesus. Thanks you that we can come to you knowing that you understand. Please fill our hunger and give us rest from continually indulging in things of this world. In your name we pray. Amen

1 DYING & RISING WITH
JESUS

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BIG IDEA

Real life involves work, rest, and play as part of God's kingdom. There are two ways to be lazy: the 'just plain lazy' way (not doing anything), or the 'just plain busy' way (too lazy to set priorities). In Jesus' death and resurrection we die to sloth and rise to zeal for God's Kingdom.

BIBLE PASSAGE

2 Thessalonians 3:1-15

KEY VERSE

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

1 Corinthians 15:58

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

THE OLD

Read 2 Thessalonians 3:1-17

1. What is so damaging about the lazy lifestyle described in this passage?
2. How does Paul describe the opposite kind of life in verses 1-5 and 7-9? Is it simply to have a strong work ethic and to keep busy, or is it something more?

DYING + RISING

Read 1 Corinthians 15:54-58

3. How does Jesus' death and resurrection put to death the life of laziness?
4. What is the new life he raises us to?

NEW LIFE

The concern the New Testament has with laziness is laziness towards the gospel. That could look like a slothful life or being actively busy with anything other than the cause of the gospel. Pay attention to when you feel lazy in spiritual things – reading God’s word, prayer, preparation for Growth Group, attending church, serving others. What are the thoughts that accompany the laziness? What goal or Vision are you labouring (or not labouring!) for?

Zeal for the gospel could be developed through the habit of serving, as well as the habit of resting well to be recharged to serve. It could be helpful to develop these habits in relationship with others, for example, your Growth Group.

5. Have there been any old habits that have been feeding laziness in your heart?

6. What new habits could you develop to help you keep in step with your new life in the Spirit?

PRAYER

PRAY FOR
YOUR CROSS
CULTURAL
CONNECT
PARTNER

BIG IDEA

Sloth is when we're too lazy or too busy to live as a part of God's kingdom. Jesus shows us how to faithfully work, rest, and play.

YOU WILL NEED

Things to make up a star chart (paper, pens, etc.). Or you can use an electronic star chart on the computer (www.kidrewards.org) or an app (irewardchart).

READ THE BIBLE

1 Corinthians 15:58

DISCUSSION

We can all get lazy and not do the most important things. We can also get busy and not do the most important things. Both are sloth. Both are not getting the priorities right. The verse today encourages us to give ourselves fully to the work of the Lord. We do this because our work for the Lord is not worthless.

ACTIVITY

Spend some time as a family or growth group brainstorming what are the most important things as we live in God's kingdom. Some of the important things for us as followers of Jesus might be church, growth group, serving others, reading your

bible, praying together, time with your family, time to study/work, time to rest, play time.

Once you have your full list pick out the ones you each struggle to give enough time to. Then make up a star chart to encourage each person to do them.

Track it during the next week and give each person a star when they make time to do the most important things.

In all this it is hard to remain strong by ourselves. We need the help of God. And we need each other to encourage us along. Take some time to pray for each other that God will help us make time for the most important things.

PRAYER IDEA

Dear Jesus, Thank you for making us part of your family. Help us to not be too lazy or too busy to do the most important things. Help us give ourselves fully to your work. Help us spend time with you and with your family. And help us be a part of inviting others to become part of your family. In the name of Jesus and by his Spirit, Amen



SERIES COMPANION FEEDBACK SURVEY

Your feedback is valuable to help improve this and future series.

Feedback is anonymous and compiled statistically to identify areas for improvement.

Please tick one response per question and return the completed questionnaire to your leader or lodge in the survey box at church.

I am a:

- Growth Group Coach
- Growth Group Leader
- Growth Group Member

| Question | 1 <i>Strongly Disagree</i> | 2 <i>Disagree</i> | 3 <i>No Opinion</i> | 4 <i>Agree</i> | 5 <i>Strongly Agree</i> |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| The series companion assisted my relationship with Jesus to grow | | | | | |
| The introductory material to the series contributed to the weekly study | | | | | |
| The questions in this series assisted group discussion of the Big Idea | | | | | |
| The quantity of questions was right for our growth group allotted time | | | | | |
| The learning objectives of this series (as stated in the series introduction) was met by the series questions and activities | | | | | |
| My leader was equipped for group questions | | | | | |
| This series & activities contributed to my growth group relationships and care for each other | | | | | |

Please add any other comments that will help us understand your responses above.

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.....

List 3 things that was helpful in this series (optional)

1.
2.
3.

1 DYING & RISING WITH
JESUS

2 WALKING WITH
JESUS

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GREED

BIG IDEA

Real life is about serving God with our money, greed is about serving money as our god. In Jesus' death and resurrection we die to greed and rise to generosity.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 19:1-10

KEY VERSE

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

2 Corinthians 8:9

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

THE OLD

Read Luke 19:1-10

1. What have been the destructive consequences of Zacchaeus' greedy lifestyle to this point?
2. Zacchaeus had everything he'd sought after. What possible reason/s are there that Zacchaeus was so desperate to see Jesus?

DYING + RISING

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-9

3. How can Jesus' death for us call us to put greed to death and rise to being generous people?
4. How do you feel about taking on the kind of generosity Jesus showed in his life and why?

NEW LIFE

Greed is another sin that is so natural to us we're often unaware that we're doing it. We can identify it when we compare the way we live our lives to the beautiful picture of Jesus' generosity we have in the cross. Where is greed evident in your life? What are you collecting or accumulating that represents an uncontrolled love of something or an expression of distrust toward God's goodness in Christ?

How can you practice the grace of generosity in a way that undercuts the way greed is represented in your own situation? Some examples could be: If you are a collector of books give a special one away, if its money make an act of generosity that no one can trace back to you.

5. Have there been any old habits that have been feeding greed in your heart?

6. What new habits could you develop to help you keep in step with your new life in the Spirit?

PRAYER

PRAY FOR
YOUR CROSS
CULTURAL
CONNECT
PARTNER



BIG IDEA

Greed is when we live like money and stuff is our god, when we really should be serving God with our money and stuff. Jesus shows us how to live a generous life.

READ THE BIBLE

2 Corinthians 8:1-9

DISCUSSION

The love of money is a great temptation. We feel with more money we will get more stuff, and we will be happier. But we are never really satisfied. The more we have we more we want. When we keep dreaming about money and things we give into greed, and we treat money and stuff like our god.

Instead we should put God as number one, and then our money and stuff can be used to serve God. With money and stuff in its right place, we can live generous lives instead of greedy lives. In the Bible passage the Macedonian churches gave money generously, even though they were poor. We should look to their example. Giving money away to serve God helps us not to be controlled by money and greed. Instead we can be generous. And there was no one more generous than Jesus who gave up

everything at the cross so we can have the true eternal riches of being part of God's family.

ACTIVITY

As a family or growth group write out how much money each person gets every week. And then write down how much each person gives to God's work. Is it enough? Is it generous? Is it honouring God who gives us all the money in the first place?

Maybe it is time to reassess how much you give back to God.

Alternatively as a family or growth group you might like to setup a money box or jar to collect some of your money. Or in this age of electronic money you might want to setup a direct debit or giving to church or some other charity that advances God's work.

Set a target and date you want to work towards. Be generous

PRAYER IDEA

Dear God, Thank you for being generous and giving us your son Jesus. We thank you that Jesus became poor so we can become so rich in being part of your family. Help us to not be greedy, but be generous like you. Help us give our money away so it doesn't control us. And help us live a generous life.

In the name of Jesus and by his Spirit,

Amen



At Creek Road we love Jesus. We want to reach the city and reach the world with the good news about who Jesus is. We'd love to help you meet Jesus as we explore the Bible together at our Sunday Services.

We want every person to have a chance to connect with Jesus, to grow to be more like Jesus and to serve Jesus. So we try to make everything we do clear and easy to understand.

If you've got any questions, we'd love to answer them. If there is anything you need, we'd love to help.

You don't need to be good, religious, or have it all together to join us on a Sunday. Jesus is for everyone — people of all stages, ages, and places. So is our church.

Everyone is welcome. Seriously.

SERIES COMPANION TEAM

Ryan Dehnert
Dave Thurston
Vicki Meehan
Nathan Campbell
Marie Heneghan
Tim Hewlett
Brad Cole
Emily Andrews

FAMILY GROWTH TEAM

Hayley Alexander
Patrice Ramsay
Catriona Pine
Tom Fittell
Chris Pine

Life Beyond the Seven Deadly Sins

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