

Main Passage: Romans 7:13-20, Romans 8:1-2

Secondary Passages: 1 John 3:6, Romans 6:1, 15-18

Purpose: To understand that a disciple of Jesus will struggle with sin but will not continue to live in sin.

Session Snapshot: It's hard to live a Gospel-centered life. Even Paul struggled with sin, but it is not our sin that defines us as disciples. We are defined by our desire to do what is right and our surrender to living our lives centered around the Gospel.

GETTING STARTED

Kick off your time together by reviewing what you did in the last session or checking in with your group.

FIRST, remind your group that this is the final week of their video series on what it means to surrender to a Gospel-centered life, part of the larger *Be Disciples* curriculum line. If you're continuing in another five-session series next week, remind your group of the next series you'll be doing.

THEN, if you want to start with asking men for prayer requests, checking in on how their weeks have gone, or any other housekeeping tasks, do so.

FINALLY, if there are no questions or other input, transition into the *Digging In* section of your leader's guide.

DIGGING IN

Jump into the session by watching this week's video.

FIRST, play the video. You can access the video by logging into your Iron Hill Press account.

THEN, when the video is over, lead men in a short discussion based on what Rick covered. Feel free to come up with your own questions, or consider asking some similar to those below:

- **What is your version of "Never compromise the Gospel?"**
- **What frustrations can come from finding yourself in a position similar to what Rick described at the beginning of the video? You desire to surrender to a Gospel-centered life, but there always seems to be a barrier to fruitfulness?**
- **How can those frustrations drive us away from surrendering to a life lived on mission for God?**
- **How does God's grace drive us towards a life of repentance versus a life of continual sin?**
- **How can we change the mindset of seeing redemption as the "end of the story" when it's really the beginning?**

FINALLY, transition into the *Opening the Word* portion of your time together by saying something like the following:

- **God's Word promises us that we will face trials as we pursue a life surrendered to the Gospel. It also encourages us through those trials as we are sanctified to be more like Christ.**

OPENING THE WORD

Spend time going deeper into a specific concept Rick introduced in the video.

FIRST, explain that you're going to take a more in-depth look at Romans 7 and some additional Scripture. As Rick alluded to in the video, when a hero of the faith, such as Paul, struggled with sin, we should expect to face challenges as well. These passages will help us examine what that looks like.

We must make sure your people have a good understanding of the context of the passage you'll be studying. Provide the context for the passage using the following bullet points:

- **Author:** Paul is the author of Romans.
- **Time frame:** Romans was probably written from Corinth in the winter of 56-57 AD.
- **Purpose:** Since the church in Rome had not received comprehensive theological teaching on salvation and other implications of following Christ, Paul wrote Romans to ensure a good understanding of such things. In addition, since many Jewish Christians were rejecting some of the new Gentile converts, it was essential that a level playing field be given to all Believers. This is what Paul was advocating for in Romans.

THEN you or a volunteer read Romans 7:13-20. Lead the group in a brief discussion. Ask something like:

- **In some circles, the Mosaic Law is presented as having produced sin and death. So that raises the question is the Law itself sinful? What do you think?**
 - Answers will vary. Here we see that Paul argues that the fault lies with sin, not with the Law. Through the Law, sin is revealed in all its hideousness, and the Law is vindicated as good. The Law defines sin and also provokes sin. Confronted by the Law, sin takes on the character of rebellion so that people enjoy transgressing commands in order to demonstrate their independence.
- **How does this knowledge help us confront our own, "For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate"?**
 - Answers will vary. Consider reading 1 John 1:8-9 and/or Galatians 5:17. Christians still struggle with sin throughout their whole lives. Although Christians are free from the condemnation of the Law, sin nonetheless continues to dwell within, and all genuine Christians (along with Paul!) should be profoundly aware of how far they fall short of God's absolute standard of righteousness.

NEXT, you or a volunteer read Romans 8:1-2 and ask something like:

- **If we are destined to continue sinning, what hope do we have?**
 - Answers will vary. There is "no condemnation" for the Christian because God has condemned sin in the flesh by sending His own Son to pay the penalty for sin through His death on the cross. (If you have time, read Romans 8:4-11 to show that indwelling sin is overcome through the power of the indwelling Spirit)

THEN, say something like, "So it seems like we have a pass, right? We are no longer condemned because of Christ's work on the cross, so our sin isn't a big deal. Not so fast. Read 1 John 3:6, and Romans 6:1, 15-18.

- **How does our decision to pursue a Gospel-centered life keep us from continuing “in sin so that grace may abound?”**
 - Answers will vary. Moral decisions still matter for Christians. Giving in to sin causes people to increasingly become obedient slaves to sin. This doesn’t imply that genuine believers can lose their salvation, but that sinning leads them in the direction of death away from full enjoyment of life with Christ. True Christians, however, will never live as slaves to sin, for God has transformed their hearts at conversion so that they will now grow in their love of righteousness and in living according to God's Word. True followers of Christ do not recklessly and habitually violate what their anointing has planted within them.

FINALLY, begin to close by saying something like this:

- **Sin is easy. Sin is convenient. Sin is self-gratifying. Living a Gospel-centered life is not easy. Living a Gospel-centered life can be inconvenient. Living a Gospel-centered life is selfless. Surrendering to a Gospel-centered life and being bought in, as Rick stated in his video, is a never-ending decision to die daily to yourself. When we put Jesus at the center of our life and start living for Him, people will take note. Your wife will notice. Your kids will notice. Your coworkers will notice. The people who care about you will notice. When we live in such a way, through the help of the Holy Spirit, that we make much of Him and less of ourselves, then we can begin to make a difference in those around us.**

Ask if there are any questions and if there are none, transition into *Accepting the Challenge*.

ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE

Focus your group’s attention on the takeaways from your time together.

FIRST, explain that you want to challenge the group to focus on one main takeaway from this session. Say something like:

- **Whenever we're faced with a concept like we have been studying today, it forces us to evaluate. As we wrap up our time here, there are three different questions we can ask to evaluate ourselves:**
 - 1) **After listening to Rick and studying these passages of Scripture, some of us need to ask ourselves, “What side of this am I on? Is my desire to do what is right? Or am I ok doing what I know to be wrong? Is my sin more important to me than Jesus?”**
 - 2) **For others of us, the evaluation we need to engage in is figuring out how we live our lives.**
 - a. Some of us need to ask, "Am I bought in? If I asked my family, those that know me best, what or who is at the center of my life, what would they say? Am I pointing others to Jesus by the way I live?"
 - 3) **Some of us need to evaluate how we're embracing our purpose.**
 - a. We need to ask, "I know my desire is for Jesus. Where do I still need work? What areas in my life still need Jesus at the center and not me?"

Allow the group to consider where they find themselves on this spectrum of evaluation. If it feels appropriate, allow some discussion about the kind of evaluation they find themselves considering.

FINALLY, encourage men to process these questions in the week to come. Challenge them to listen to what God is trying to tell them and respond accordingly. If there are no more questions or input, close your time together in prayer.