

SESSION GOALS

Life Change: To confess our sin and trust God's ways over ours.

SESSION'S QUESTION AND ANSWER

Instead of trusting that God had their good in mind, the first humans trusted their own judgment and disobeyed God, bringing pain, destruction, and death into the human experience. We, their children, carry on their sinful legacy with our own rebellion against God, bringing suffering to ourselves and others and separating us from unity with God.

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In our last session, we celebrated the uniqueness of humans and how God created us in his image for the purpose of a loving relationship with him. Before diving into today's session, let's discuss the Deeper Walk exercises you chose. **Which exercise did you choose to work through? What insights have you gained from that practice?**

Think of the last severe weather event in our area. **When a natural disaster is looming, are you a prepper, a gawker, a monitor, or other? How do you respond?**

Humans have a varied approach to natural disasters. Some of us hear tornado sirens and go outside to look at the sky, while others crowd into a basement or bathroom for protection. Hurricanes might prompt a party, or an evacuation. No matter how we respond, the destruction will happen, and we will have to pick up the pieces afterward. Like a flash flood or wildfire, sin destroys everything, leaving anyone in its path worse off than before. In this session, Francis explores how—after a perfect beginning—things went terribly wrong for humanity, and he explains what draws us to sin rather than to God.

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Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Francis Chan's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions.

What consequences resulted from the first sin of Eve and Adam?

Whose word should we be trusting for the truth about sin?

Show Session 3: *What Went Wrong?* (15 minutes).

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In our last session, we marveled at God creating us for relationship with him, to receive his love and to love him back. But as life shows each of us, the beautiful world of Eden, where the first humans worked and lived in perfection, did not last. Francis mentioned just a few of the unpredictable tragedies, illnesses, and sufferings we could endure at any time. **Where do you see evidence that the world is not as it should be? In what ways has sin impacted your everyday life?**

God called his creation “very good.” So, what went wrong? When God created the world, he gave humans the choice of whether to trust him or rebel against him. Read Genesis 2:15–17. The man and woman had the freedom to choose God’s way or a different way. We have the same choice. **Are you surprised that God built choice into his relationship with people? Why, or why not?**

Now read Genesis 3:1–7. The woman joined the man, and Eden was complete. But a “cunning” creature deceived the woman into doubting God’s goodness. Revelation 12:9 tells us this serpent was “the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray.” As Francis said, we have an enemy. **How often do you think about evil spiritual forces affecting you personally? To what degree is Satan real to you?**

The serpent dangled what looked like a good thing in front of the woman. Genesis 3:6 tells us this fruit was “good for food and delightful to look at.” But because God prohibited it, the fruit was lethal. We face choices in life that seem good to us but are forbidden by God, and we must decide whom to trust. **What common actions, desires,**

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or things can you identify that seem good but are not godly? What draws you toward those corrupt desires?

The woman also saw that the fruit was “desirable for obtaining wisdom”—the very thing the serpent said God was withholding from her. She doubted God’s goodness in that moment. Knowledge is good, but not enough. Sometimes we allow tangible, immediate desires to overwhelm what we know about God. **What reasons, big or small, cause you to doubt God’s goodness?**

The serpent distorted God’s words and motives. To mislead the woman, he added to what God said. If we are not familiar with God’s Word, we will be more easily led astray. **What are you doing to grow in your knowledge of Scripture? How can knowing God’s Word protect you from wrong teaching?**

The woman rebelled, then her husband joined her, and in Francis’s words, “Something died in them. That’s when death entered the world.” The serpent’s words came true—they did gain knowledge of good and evil. They knew shame for what they’d done and hid. **How do you feel inside, and how do you respond outwardly, when you’re caught doing wrong?**

Francis described a typical pattern of sin that we see in Genesis 3 and in our lives today: Wondering if what God says is really true, then questioning if he is really good, then deciding that something he forbids isn’t really that bad, then rationalizing our way into disobedience. **When have you seen this process of rationalization play out in your life? What other steps toward sin have you experienced?**

The man and woman knew shame, and they hid from one another and God. But he knew, and he was ready. Read Genesis 3:14–19. The consequences of sin would affect the world forever. Instead of an ideal home with intimacy between them and God, humans would experience pain, separation, conflict, and death. As we live in our fallen world, we experience the same consequences, both inflicting them and suffering from them. **Without giving away anyone’s identity, what sins have caused you pain either directly or indirectly? Thinking beyond personal hurts between individuals, how do you see the selfishness of humans impacting the world around us?**

Francis acknowledged that everyone has opinions about what makes right and wrong. But, he said, as Christians we are to hold the Word of God as holy and sacred and full of truth. Instead of listening to others’ voices (like Adam and Eve did), we should be listening to what the Bible says about God’s view of evil. Read Romans 1:18–32.

In verses 18–23, the apostle Paul considers how God can be known if we pay attention to the world he created. Creation itself shows us his eternal power and divine nature, and we have no excuse for doing evil. Yet we choose evil anyway. **In what ways have you grappled with the idea that God has made himself knowable to his creation? As you consider creation, what evidences of God do you see? Why is it wrong to neglect worshipping the Creator?**

To help remember how God has shown himself to us, see Practice 1 in the Deeper Walk section at the end of this session.

In verses 24–32, Paul offers a list of relational sins that have plagued humanity since Adam and Eve sinned. When we refuse to trust God, our self-centered hearts will lead us to unrighteous actions. We will purposely suppress the truth if it doesn't fit our desires. **When have you wanted something so badly that you ignored warning signs and pursued it anyway? How did it turn out? How do you tend to rationalize decisions that you know in your heart are wrong?**

A Peek at the Greek

The word for sin in Greek (the original language of the New Testament) is *harmartia*, meaning a moral violation, act of wrongdoing, transgression of divine command, or the state of guilt that results from sin and wrongdoing. Every human is born into a state of guilt and engages in sinful acts. In Romans 6:6–7, *hamartia* is described as a personified power that ruled and enslaved humankind before Christ. Faith in Christ frees believers from the power and bondage of sin.

No one escapes the curse of sin—we hurt others and we are hurt by them. We're all guilty, according to Romans 3:23, “. . . all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” And because we live in community, we can become victims of others' selfish choices. **How do you tend to respond when you are faced with the reality of your own sinfulness? What sort of response do you think would be most healthy?**

To learn how to respond when we sin, see Practice 2 in the Deeper Walk section at the end of this session.

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The Bible forces us to face our sinful nature. But it also gives us hope and the ability to resist temptation. Read John 8:31–32; 14:15. When we love God, we desire to do his will instead of our own. We trust him even if we don't understand him. And we believe he is good and that his ways lead to life. We won't do it perfectly, but we will keep returning to him with every temptation and every decision. **To what extent do you engage with the Bible? What patterns of reading and studying it have you developed? In what ways does it help you resist temptation or refute lies you've believed?**

From the first humans until now, sin has brought pain and suffering to our lives. We've trusted our gut, our own wisdom, and others' voices—anyone but God's—to our detriment. Thankfully, God continues to love us through our rebellion and offers us a path to life, which we will explore in future sessions. **What can it look like for you to wrestle with your selfishness and sin in a healthy way? Which mature believers could be a help to you?**

Exploring what went wrong is not an easy task. We do not naturally want to think about our rebellious hearts toward God, or the way we've hurt people, or how we've been hurt. Sin has permeated our world so that we see it as normal. But God's plan for us is so much better. Instead of living separated from him, we have a way to come near to him. He intended us for relationship with him and has made it possible once again, through Christ—whom we'll talk about in the next session.

To accept God's grace and forgiveness, we must be aware of our sin and how it separates us from him. Spend time in self-reflection and be honest with yourself about the ways you've rebelled against God. Consider how you've hurt others. If it helps, ask a trusted friend to talk through it with you.

What went wrong?

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

The Deeper Walk section is designed to help you practice different ways to interact with God and reflect on what you've learned in this session. Pick at least one activity to try before the next session.

Memorize Romans 3:23, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Spend time praying, admitting to God your selfishness and rebellion against his leadership over your life. Be honest with him—he already knows, more than you do, where you’ve gone astray. Confession will help you see yourself more clearly.

Reflecting honestly on the effects of sin in our lives is more effective with someone else. Find a trustworthy friend, mentor, or spiritual leader to meet with regularly—a mature person you can trust to keep your conversations confidential and who loves the Lord. You may want to confess sin, dialogue through questions you have, or explore what Scripture says about your struggles.

Read and meditate on Psalm 51. This psalm of David was written after he was confronted by the prophet Nathan for his sin against Bathsheba and Uriah (see 2 Samuel 11:1–12:15 for the whole story). Consider the way David approaches God, owns his sin, seeks forgiveness in humility, and anticipates restoration.

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What Is a Christian? STUDY GUIDE

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Written by Kelley Mathews.

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McKinney, Texas 75070

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