

Εἰ οὖν συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ,

Since then you have been raised with Christ,

τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε,

set your hearts on things above,

οὗ ὃ Χριστός ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ καθήμενος·

where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε, μὴ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

dying and rising with Christ

8 studies on Christian living

before you begin...

Read the introduction pages at the start of your first study together. That way we will all be on the same page! Then do *the study*. Ensure there is time enough to dig into the *interact* section of the study. If people in your group prepare it will make light work of these parts. Make sure there's still plenty of time to *pray* at the end! Sounds like a lot of work... don't worry—it's a great thing to be spending our time on!

Here are a few tips to help your small group grow together:

Pray... prayer is the place to start for our groups and we should do it even when we are not meeting together. We should pray that under God's strength our group would grow in its love for God and each other. Pray for the relationships within the group and the witness of the group to the church family and to those outside the church.

Participate... it's so great when people feel comfortable discussing their faith with other believers. Don't feel like you don't know enough to say something, all input is great for group life and the group is a great place to get your questions answered. Likewise, make sure you allow space for other people to participate in the group, especially quieter members! Sometimes silence feels painful and we feel like we need to fill it—but maybe if the more talkative among us wait—somebody might fill that silence for us.

Prioritize... did you know it's really important to meet together with other Christians regularly, listening to God's word, praying together and sharing our lives? Not only is it the sort of thing we want to prioritize to ensure we're standing firm in our faith—but turning up each week is a huge encouragement to others too.

Prepare... This will make the study a more fruitful experience for everyone. You'll know the questions you need answered and you might be able to share some new insight you've had with the group. It doesn't take long—but it can make a big difference to the life of the group.



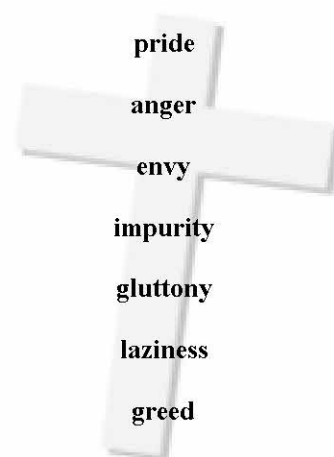
the seven deadly sins...



It's really a marketing ploy to call the series 'the seven deadly sins'. The idea of there being seven *deadly* sins really goes back to the 4th Century AD where the notion developed that there were 'head sins' from which all other sin developed. The Catholic church formally recognized seven of these sins: pride, anger, envy, impurity, gluttony, laziness and greed. Today (at least in our church!), we do not think of all of our sin as flowing from these sins, or being undergirded by these sins.

As we will see in the first study, the heart of all of our sin is not case-by-case moral decisions, but the much larger decision to live as though God does not matter. No matter how much we get on top of our lust or greed or whatever, our underlying problem is the righteous anger God holds over those who have lived like he does not matter. We could never deal with God's anger toward us by somehow getting on top of each of the seven deadly sins. Apart from the fact that none of us can completely stop sinning, how would we ever pay for past sins committed? Our only hope is the hope of the gospel: that Christ would satisfy God's righteous anger on the cross, and that he would rise to defeat death. It is the death and resurrection of Christ alone that is the basis of our salvation—not our moral choices.

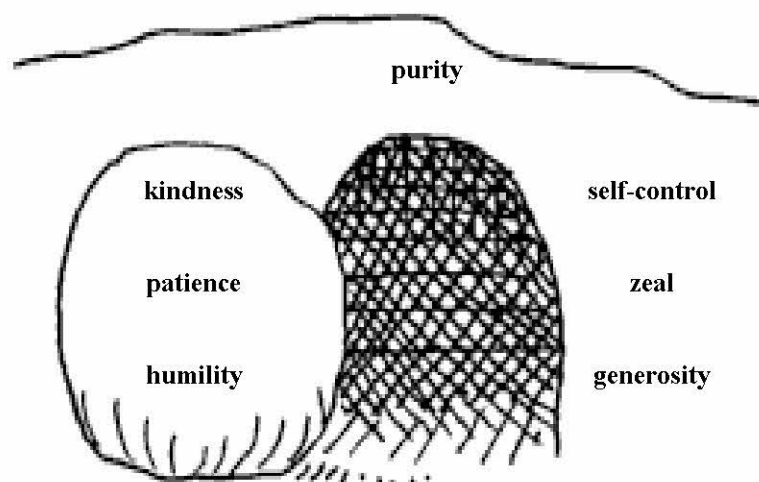
However, having been saved, it makes no sense to continue to live as though God does not matter. It is not that our moral choices can save us, but when we are saved we should strive to live like God matters. So we work on the sin in our life. We try to die to the sin in our life. We try to live God's way. A better name for this series is 'Dying and Rising with Christ'. That is what we'll be hoping to help each other do as we study God's word together over the next couple of months.



We are going to spend some time in the first week understanding what sin, in its essence, is. In the following weeks we will try to help each other knead out particular areas of sin we need to die to and nurture particular areas of Godliness we need to rise to.

The 8 studies are:

- 1. sin: an introduction**
- 2. dying to pride—rising to humility**
- 3. dying to anger—rising to patience**
- 4. dying to envy—rising to kindness**
- 5. dying to impurity—rising to purity**
- 6. dying to gluttony—rising to self-control**
- 7. dying to laziness—rising to zeal**
- 8. dying to greed—rising to generosity**



1 Sin: an introduction



When we come to faith in Christ we should no longer live for sin. We should die to sin and rise to live God's way.



warm-up

"God forgives me for all sins I do, so I don't need to bother turning away from sin". Discuss.



study

Read Colossians 3:1-14

1. According to verses 1 to 4, what process happens to those who believe? Explain how this should shift the direction of our thinking...
2. According to verses 5 to 11, what do we need to rid ourselves of and why?
3. According to verses 12 to 14, is it okay for Christians to go on sinning? Broadly describe the way of life we are called to (notice the catalyst for it in v 13b).

Read Romans 6:1-14

4. What process happens in the life of the believer according to this passage?
5. Describe the change that should take place in our lives according to verses 11 to 14.

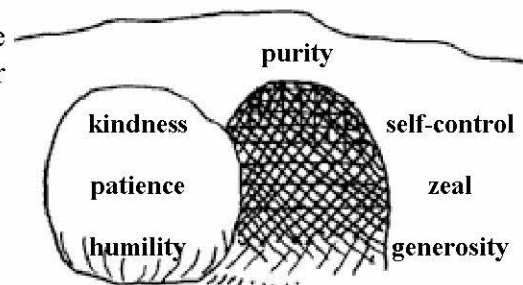


6. How well does the list of sins on the cross sum up all sin? What would you add?



7. Which of these sins do you expect the studies will most challenge you to turn away from?

8. How well do the seven virtues around the tomb sum up the Christ-like, loving character the Spirit is working to produce in us?



9. Which of these virtues do you most hope to be challenged to pursue?

10. As these studies help us build each other up in Christ, what are the implications for us as a church?



What can we pray in response to what we have learned?

What can we pray for each other?

What can we pray for our community?

What can we pray for our world?

2 dying to pride—rising to humility



the point

Pride costs our relationships dearly, but following Christ's humility leads to relationships that last.



warm-up

Why would anyone in Australia ever come to think that pride is ok?



study

Read Proverbs 16:5; 16:18; 26:12

1. Why do you think the Bible makes such strong statements about pride?

Read Genesis 2:15-17 & 3:1-19

2. What is the focus of the serpent's temptation in 3:5?
3. What does the sin of Adam and Eve tell us about the nature of all sin? Is it just wrong action or is it relational as well? Why?
4. What are the consequences of sin in our relationships (with God and each other)?

Read Philippians 2:1-11

5. How does Jesus reverse what Adam did? How does he expose the folly of our pride?
6. If we are Christ-like in character, what should replace our pride? Why?

Read Philippians 2:12-18a

7. What does Paul say a church that seeks to be like Christ, will look like in the world?



8. We have seen that Jesus' death both saves us from sin and sets us an example how to turn from sin. Is your view of Jesus' death this big? Why/Why not?

9. If sin started with doubting God's word, what part will God's word play in turning from sin?

10. In what ways do you struggle with pride? How does it impact your relationships?

11. In seeking to be a community of humility how can our church be different to the society around us?



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3 dying to anger—rising to patience



the point

Anger destroys relationships. Patience makes relationships last. We should follow Christ's example and be patient.



warm-up

Why might we be tempted to think that anger is ok?



study

Read Psalm 37:8; Proverbs 29:8 & 11; Matthew 5:21-22; James 1:19-20

1. Why do you think the Bible makes such strong statements about anger?

Read Genesis 4:1-16

2. What does this episode show us about the spread of sin?
3. *Not only is Cain's anger unjustified, but he doesn't listen to God in how he deals with it. He acts on his anger: taking matters into his own hands.* What do we learn here about anger as an aspect of our sinful nature?
4. What are the consequences of anger in our relationships (with God and each other)?

Read Luke 23:14-34

5. How is Jesus' behavior in this passage different to that of Cain?
6. What insight does Jesus' dying words give us to God's character and the way we can be forgiven for our sin (including anger)?

Read 1 Peter 2:21-25

7. What example has Christ left for the church?



8. If we are 'Christ-like' rather than 'Cain-like' in character, what will replace our anger? Why?

9. In Cain's sin, we again see humanity not listening to God. So, what part will God's Word play in turning us from sin? What changes does this mean you will need to make to your life?

10. In what ways do you struggle with anger? How has this study helped you in turning from anger?

11. In seeking to be a community of patience, how will our church be different to the society around us?



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4 dying to envy—rising to kindness



Envy destroys relationships, but kindness is at the heart of how relationships work. We need to follow Christ's example and be kind.



Why might we be tempted to think that envy is okay?



Read Psalm 49:16-17; Proverbs 14:30 & 27:4; Galatians 5:26 ; James 3:16

1. Why do you think the Bible makes such strong statements about envy?

Read Genesis 37:1-36

2. What does this episode show us about the spread of sin (from Adam and Eve, then Cain, to now)?
3. *The attempted murder of Joseph by his brothers is a lot like the sin of Cain. But now the motive is not just anger but envy (or jealousy). Discuss what we learn about the sin of envy from the actions of Joseph and his brothers.*
4. What are the consequences of envy in our relationships (with God and each other)?

Read Mark 15:1-15

5. How was the sin of envy at work in the death of Jesus?
6. How, as with Joseph, is God using envy to bring about his saving purposes (Acts 2:22-24)?

Read 1 John 3:16-18

7. What does John say are the consequences for a church seeking to follow Christ's example? How is this the opposite of envying each other?



interact

8. Why do you think envy is such a powerful and destructive aspect of our sinful nature?
9. Why is the death of Jesus even more powerful—in turning us from envy?
10. In what ways do you struggle with envy? How can you turn from it?
11. In seeking to be a community of kindness, how should our church be different to the society around us?



prayer

What can we pray in response to what we have learned?

What can we pray for each other?

What can we pray for our community?

What can we pray for our world?

5 dying to impurity—rising to purity



the point

Impurity destroys relationships, but purity is what our relationships require. We need to follow Christ's example and be pure.



warm-up

Why might we be tempted to think that impurity is okay?



study

Read Proverbs 6:25-26 & 32; Colossians 3:5-6; 1 John 2:16-17

1. Why do you think the Bible makes such strong statements about impurity and lust (maybe throw Isaiah 6:1-5 into the mix as you consider your answer)?

Read Genesis 38

2. What does this episode show us about the spread of sin (from Adam and Eve, to Cain's anger, to Joseph's brothers' envy, to now)?
3. Discuss the hypocrisy of Judah. What do we learn about impurity as an aspect of our sinful nature?

Read 2 Samuel 11-12:13

4. What do we learn here about the sin of impurity? What impact does it have on our relationships?
5. What promise is David given in 12:13?

Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

6. How does God deal with our impurity? Why should this turn us from impurity today?

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

7. What does Paul say are the consequences for a church regarding impurity?



8. If we are Christ-like in character, what will replace impurity? Why?

9. In what ways do you struggle with impurity? How will these parts of the Bible help you turn from it?

10. In practice, what will it mean for you to have a pure life? What changes will you need to make in your life?

11. In seeking to be a community of purity, how will our church be different to the society around us?



What can we pray in response to what we have learned?

What can we pray for each other?

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What can we pray for our world?

6 dying to gluttony—rising to self-control



Gluttony destroys relationships, but self-control guards relationships from destruction. We need to follow Christ's example and be self-controlled.



Why might we be tempted to think that gluttony is okay?



Read Proverbs 23:1-5; Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 6:28-34

1. Why do you think the Bible makes such strong statements about gluttony?

Read Amos 6:1-7

2. So far we have been tracing the spread of sin through Genesis—and then on to King David. What does this episode in Amos show us about the spread of sin (leading to the exile of God's people)?
3. What do we learn here about gluttony as an aspect of our sinful nature?
4. What are the consequences of gluttony in our relationships (with God and each other)?

Read Luke 15:11-31

5. What did the son see as the 'good life'?
6. What does this episode show us about our sin? About God's mercy?

Read Philippians 3:12-21

7. How is gluttony opposed to the cross of Christ?
8. What motivation do we have to turn from such sin?



interact

9. As we respond to what Christ has done for us, what will replace gluttony? Why?
10. In what ways do you struggle with gluttony? How will these parts of the Bible help you turn from it?
11. In turning from gluttony, what changes will you need to make in your life?
12. In seeking to be a community of self-control, how will our church be different to the society around us?



prayer

What can we pray in response to what we have learned?

What can we pray for each other?

What can we pray for our community?

What can we pray for our world?

7 dying to laziness—rising to zeal



Laziness destroys relationships, but zeal enables relationships to work. We need to follow Christ's example and work hard in our relationships.



Why might we be tempted to think that laziness is okay?

warm-up



Read Proverbs 19:15; 21:25, 26:15; Hebrews 6:9-12; 1 Timothy 5:13

1. Why do you think the Bible makers such strong statements about laziness?

study

Read Matthew 25:14-30

2. What does this parable teach us about the sin of laziness?

3. Why is the servant rebuked? What is the challenge for us?

4. Instead of laziness, what attitude should God's people have towards service of our Master?

Read 2 Thessalonians 3:1-14

5. Why should Christians be busy people and not busybodies?

6. What was Paul busy doing? So... what should we be busy praying for?

Read Romans 12:1-11

7. What is our primary motive for getting on with living transformed lives for Christ?

8. Instead of laziness, what will characterize Christ's people?



9. In what ways do you struggle with laziness? How will these parts of the Bible help you turn from it?

10. The Romans and the Thessalonians passages suggest the team nature of turning from sin. Why?

11. In seeking to be a community of zeal (serving the Lord), how will our church be different to the society around us?



What can we pray in response to what we have learned?

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What can we pray for our community?

What can we pray for our world?

8 dying to greed—rising to generosity



Greed destroys relationships, but generosity is what makes our relationships work. We need to follow Christ's example and be generous.



Why might we be tempted to think that greed is okay?



Read Proverbs 15:27; 28:25; 29:4; 1 Peter 5:2; Colossians 3:5; Ephesians 5:5

1. Why do you think the Bible makes such strong statements about greed?

Read Ezekiel 33:21-33

2. What does this passage show us about the sin of God's people and God's response?

3. What is at the very heart of their sin according to v 31?

4. What are the consequences of greed in our relationships (with God and each other)?

Read Luke 12:13-21

5. What does Jesus say life is not about? What is it about? Why?

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

6. Why should people who belong to God be generous? What is our motivation?



interact

7. In what ways do you struggle with greed? How do these parts of the Bible help you turn from it?
8. The Ezekiel passage challenged the hypocrisy of listening to God's Word but not changing—especially in remaining greedy. How should God's word impact our lives?
9. In turning from greed to generosity, what changes do you need to make to your life?
10. In seeking to be a community of generosity, how will our church be different to the society around us?



prayer

What can we pray in response to what we have learned?

What can we pray for each other?

What can we pray for our community?

What can we pray for our world?