



## WHEN SINNERS SAY 'I DO'

### Session #1

#### A. INTRODUCTION

1. The Crisis of Culture and the damaging effects on the family.
2. The importance of sound doctrine for healthy Christian marriages.

#### **Dave Harvey**

*"How a husband and wife build their marriage day-by-day and year-by-year is fundamentally shaped by their theology. It governs how you think, what you say, and how you act. Your theology governs your entire life. And it determines how you live your marriage."*

- Applying the doctrine of sin in our marriages.

#### **J.I Packer**

*"The subject of sin is vital knowledge. To say that our first need in life is to learn about sin may sound strange, but in the sense intended it is profoundly true. If you have not learned about sin, you cannot understand yourself, or your fellow men, or the world you live in, or the Christian faith. And you will not be able to make head or tail of the Bible. For the Bible is an exposition of God's answer to the problem of human sin, and unless you have that problem clearly before you, you will keep missing the point of what it says."*

## **B. THE DIMINISHING DOCTRINE OF SIN**

### **Cornelius Plantinga**

*“In this book I am trying to retrieve an old awareness that has slipped and changed in recent decades. The awareness of sin used to be our shadow. Christians hated sin; feared it; fled from it; grieved over it. Some of our grandparents agonised over their sins. But the shadow has diminished. Nowadays the accusation, “You have sinned” is often said with a tone that signifies an inside joke. At one time this accusation had the power to jolt people. As a child growing up in the 50’s, among Calvinists, I think I heard as many sermons on sin as it is about grace. The assumption in those days seemed to be that you couldn’t understand either without understanding both. Many Christians might recall sermons in which preachers got visibly angry over a congregation’s sin. When preachers were in full cry they would make red-faced, finger-pointing accusations, “You are sinners. Filthy, guilty, miserable sinners.” Of course the old preachers sometimes appeared to forget that their congregations included sincere, mature believers, and such preachers were capable of self-righteousness. But still, you were never in any doubt what these preachers were talking about. They were talking about sin. In today’s group confessionals it is harder to tell. The newer language fudges, “Let us confess our problem with human relational dynamics, especially our feebleness to network.” Or, “I’d just like to share that I need to target holiness as a growth area.” In the modern church, where sin is concerned, people mumble now.”*

### **John MacArthur**

*“The potential impact of a such a drift is frightening. Remove the reality of sin, and you take away the possibility of repentance. Abolish the doctrine of human depravity and you void the divine plan of salvation. Erase the notion of personal guilt and you eliminate the need for a Saviour.”*

### **Anthony Hoekema**

*“In today’s world there is little emphasis on the biblical doctrine of sin. But a person with a shallow sense of sin and of the wrath of God against our sin will neither feel the need for nor understand the biblical doctrine of justification. When sin is ignored, minimized or redefined we no longer live aware of our desperate need for Jesus Christ nor appreciative of what he has accomplished on the cross for us.”*

## **C. WHAT IS SIN?**

### **Wayne Grudem**

*“Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude or nature.”*

### **Cornelius Platinga**

*“Sin is any disposition or act - any thought, desire, emotion, word or deed - or its absence, that displeases God and deserves blame. It is a culpable and personal affront to a personal God.”*

## **1. Sin and the Christian**

- The PENALTY for sin.
- The POWER of sin.
- The PARTITION of sin.
- The PRESENCE of sin.

## **2. Sin is our greatest enemy**

### **Kris Lungaard**

*“In what sense has Christ defeated sin in the believer? The answer is that he has overthrown its rule, weakened its power, and even killed its root so that it cannot bear the fruit of eternal death in a believer. Still - and this is amazing but true - sin is sin; its nature and purpose remain unchanged; its force and success still grab us by the throat.”*

### **2 Corinthians 5:17**

*“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”*

### **Galatians 5:17**

*“For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.”*

### **John Owen**

*“Every unclean thought or glance would be adultery if it could; every covetous desire would be oppression, every thought of unbelief would be atheism, might it grow to its head. Men may come to that, that sin may not be heard speaking a scandalous word in their hearts – that is, provoking to any great sin with scandal in its mouth; but yet every rise of lust, might it have its course, would come to the height of villainy; it is like the grave, in that it is never satisfied.”*

### 3. Sin seeks to deceive us

#### **Jeremiah 17:9**

*“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?”*

- The excuses of sin:
  - It was minor, it’s not important.
  - I don’t have time for this!
  - It wasn’t really sin, that’s just the way I am!
  - No one else seemed concerned by it.
  - They weren’t really offended by what I say/did.
  - They’ve not gone through what I’m going through.
  - It wasn’t a “BIG” sin, so don’t worry about it!
  - It’s not besetting, just occasional.
  - It’s not a sin, just a personality weakness.
  - It’s not sin, it’s a sickness/problem/disease.
  - You just did what anyone else would do in that situation.

### D. GOD’S PROVISION FOR SIN

- The story of Scripture?
  
- The gospel

#### **Dave Harvey**

*“The gospel is the heart of the Bible. Everything in Scripture is either preparation for the gospel, presentation of the gospel or participation in the gospel. In the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, the gospel provides an ultimate solution for our sin - for today, tomorrow, for the day we stand before God, and forever.”*

### E. WHEN SINNERS SAY ‘I DO’

#### **1 Timothy 1:15**

*“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.”*

1. **Promote an understanding of our sin being first and foremost against God.**

**Jerry Bridges**

*“Sin is wrong, not because of what it does to me, or my spouse, or child, or neighbour, but because it is an act of rebellion against the infinitely holy and majestic God.”*

**Psalm 51:3-4**

*“For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.”*

**2. Produce a healthy self-reflection which 1<sup>st</sup> examines our own heart.**

**3. Cultivate a heart that willingly forgives your spouse when they sin against you.**

- Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matt 18:21-35)

**4. Develop a regular habit of repenting and confessing our sins to God & our spouse.**

**1 John 1:8-10**

*“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

**5. Protect us from the error of thinking that circumstances & situations cause us to sin.**

- Mark 7:14-23
- Sponge illustration

**6. All marriage problems, however large or small are first, foremost and fundamentally a SIN problem.**

**7. Bring forth deep gratitude and joy for God’s amazing grace towards us!**

- Luke 7:36-50

**8. Drive us to the gospel as the only hope for our marriage.**

- Titus 2:11-15
  
- Salvation has appeared...BUT...Sin remains...
  
- The promise of grace

**Dave Harvey**

*“Sanctifying grace meets us right where we are with the goal of taking us to where God wants us to be. Grace meets us in the depravity of our desires and has as its intent to make us want what God wants for us. It is a persistent grace to run the race.”*

- Grace trains us in 2 ways
  - i. To renounce ungodliness and worldly passions.
  
  - ii. To live self-controlled, upright and godly lives

**Cornelius Plantinga**

*“Human sin is stubborn but not as stubborn as the grace of God, and not half as persistent, not half so ready to suffer to win its way.”*