

THE BASICS OF THE FAITH

#3 – “People”

Although men & women are the crowning achievement of all God’s creation - beings created for incredible dignity and purpose - our individual and collective stories all point to the reality that something has gone wrong, and we are not as we should be. This third study in the “*Basics of the Faith*” series will help familiarize us with what the Bible *claims* about humankind’s unique origin and intended purpose. It will also help us understand the problem of our sin; the devastating consequences that have resulted from it; and God’s gracious remedy for it. Thus the three major goals of this study are:

1. **Information:** To learn what the Bible says about God’s *original intent* for human kind.
2. **Understanding:** To understand *what went wrong*, the resulting consequences, and God’s gracious solution.
3. **Application:** To accept the reality of *our own brokenness*, and to recognize *our need* for a Savior.



We Are Uniquely Created By God

(Psalm 8)

We are created for incredible *dignity* and *purpose*. We are the crowning achievement of God’s creation. We are made just “a little lower” than the heavenly beings (vs. 5). We are *not* just another species of animal. Instead, we were created to rule over the animals and the earth.

(Genesis 1:26-27)

We are uniquely made in the “*image*” of God. This cannot be said about any other living things that God created. The animal kingdom is governed by “*instinct*” (ex. Only the strongest survive because they kill the weak and eat them). But, people are created with a “*moral nature*” (ex. We know we should protect the weak, not kill and eat them). We are made to mirror God’s character in terms of compassion, graciousness, love, goodness, etc.

(1 Peter 1:14-16)

We are to be “*holy*” just as God is holy! This sums up everything He intended for us. God is our *standard* for life and conduct, and no other - (see diagram below)*



We Have Not Lived As God Intended

(Romans 3:23)

We have all sinned and “fallen short” of the standard for which we were created. The word “Sin” in the original New Testament Greek is the term “*Hamartia*” - a word used in archery to describe someone who takes aim at a target, but completely misses the mark. God is our standard, and sin is anything that falls short of, or misses that mark!

(Psalm 36:1-2)

We tend to measure ourselves by the wrong standard. We say things like, “*I’m basically a good person. I don’t steal or kill or do really bad things like some other people do.*” The error of such statements is that God is to be our standard for comparison, not other people! We are created to reflect His image, not the image of other human beings.

(Galatians 5:19-21)

Some things are just “*obviously wrong*”. This includes things like *sexual immorality* (vs. 19), *fits of rage* (vs. 20), *envy*, *drunkenness*, ...and the like (vs. 21). The Bible is clear that those who live like this will not enter the Kingdom of God!

(Matt. 5:21-22 and 27)

Ultimately, sin is a “*heart issue*”. In God’s eyes, murder and adultery are not just physical acts, but thoughts and desires arising in our hearts. - (see *Mark 7:20-23*)*

(James 1:13-16)

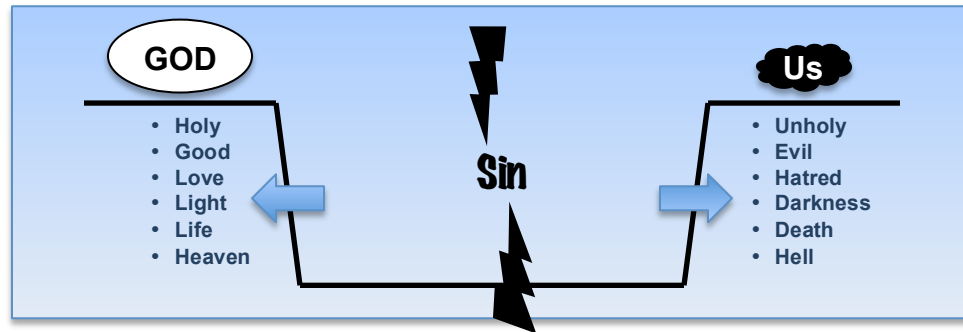
We cannot blame God for our sin! He does not tempt us. We’re led astray by our *own* desires.



Our Sin Has Serious Consequences!

(Isaiah 59:1-2)

Our sins have “separated” us from God. Our failure to live up to the standard for which we were made has resulted in *broken relationship* and a vast *separation* between humankind and our Creator. Like the “*Grand Canyon*,” the distance separating us is vast and far beyond our ability to bridge on our own. - (see *Genesis 3*)*



(Isaiah 64:6)

Our “best efforts” at right living fail miserably. Our most righteous acts are like “*filthy rags*” compared to the holiness of God. Because of our sin and brokenness, trying to “*measure up*” to what we were created to be like (*i.e. the “image” of God*) is about as impossible as trying to jump from one side of the Grand Canyon to the other. The very “*best*” we’ve got (*i.e. the world record in the “moral long jump”*) doesn’t even come close!

(Romans 6:23)

The wages of our sin is “death”. A wage is what you are paid for what you do. When we sin, we justly earn death. This is not just *the end of our physical life*. Nor is it “*going to sleep*” or “*ceasing to exist*”. It is separation from God forever. See (*2 Thessalonians 1:6-10*) and (*Revelation 20:11-15*)*. **But God does not want it to be this way! That is why He sent Jesus...**



Jesus Has Made A Way Of Salvation!

(Romans 5:6-8)

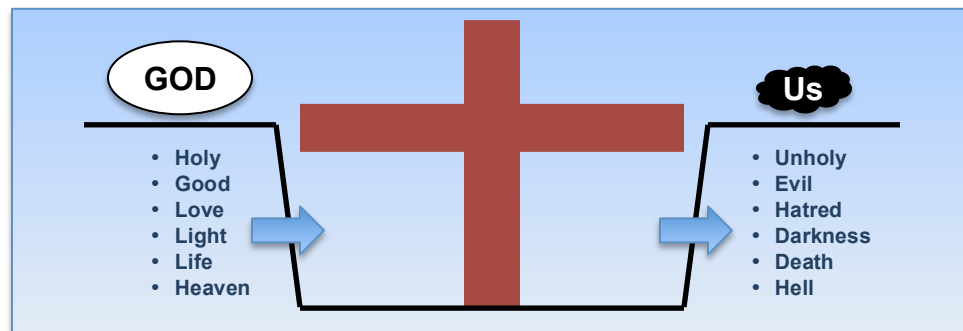
When we were powerless to save ourselves, Jesus died for us! A parent might sacrifice themselves for their child, or a soldier for his fellow soldiers. But God demonstrates His incredible love for us in that *Jesus died for us when we were still sinners!*

(1 Peter 2:24)

Jesus took the “death penalty” we deserve! He bore our sins in His body on the cross. It is by His wounds that we are healed. – (see *Isaiah 53:4-6*)*

(1 Timothy 2:5-6)

Christ is the “mediator” between God and man! Jesus gave Himself as a ransom for us all.



Getting Practical: What You Can Do!

Important Questions:

- *What have you learned about God’s original intent for us as His creations?*
- *Do you understand our sin, the consequences of it, and the need for Jesus death?*
- *Do you see your own sin and your need for a Savior? Be assured, we will learn more about this Savior, Jesus Christ, in our next study!*