

FAITH FOUNDATIONS

The Problem of Sin // Isaiah 59:1-13

THE POINT: We are sinners, and on our own, we can do nothing about it.**THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE**

We are born with the inclination toward living pridefully and doing the things we want. The truth is that we just don't like being told what to do, and this goes beyond our relationship with our parents. We also reject God's authority by saying no to His instructions and commands. This is called sin, and we are born with a nature that leads us to sin. Saying "no" to our parents often leads to punishment, and the same is true when we say "no" to God's commands. No amount of good on our part will cancel out that punishment, but thankfully, God did not leave us in this state.

► **When have you been in trouble for saying "no"?**

ISAIAH 59:1-5

Sin is what we do when we place ourselves and our desires above God. By eating what God said not to eat, Adam and Eve placed themselves ahead of God. We do the same thing when we disobey Him, and to place anything ahead of God, no matter how small it seems, is rebellion. No one can justify his or her sin by saying, "At least I'm not as bad as that person." Disobedience is disobedience. Sin is sin. And we have all offended God's standards and deserve punishment for our sin. God certainly desires to save us, but we must understand that, as Isaiah proclaimed to Israel, our iniquities are separating us from God.

► **What evidence do you see in this world that everyone has sinned?**

► **How did you become aware of your own sin?**

ISAIAH 59:6-8

We can't cover up our sinful works because, on our own, we're completely unable to repair the damage our sin does. Our works are sinful works and our thoughts are sinful thoughts. Even the "good" we attempt in order to make up for our weaknesses is marred with sin! Though many believe that if we just do enough good things to outweigh the bad, then we'll be alright, but it simply doesn't work this way. The truth is that we cannot make right the wrongs we've committed. The picture Isaiah painted goes against how most people view themselves. Most will admit that they've made mistakes and done things they shouldn't have. However, many people see themselves as basically good people. Isaiah is clear in verse 8—we have made our own roads crooked. In the ways we've lived, we've laid the road we walk on, and there's nothing we can do to straighten it!

► **Why are good works not the answer to the problem of our sinfulness?**

► **What are the consequences for refusing to acknowledge the sin in our lives?**

ISAIAH 59:9-13

Isaiah was writing to people who were spiritually dead, given over completely to their addiction to sin. Neither Isaiah nor Paul paints a pretty picture of humanity and the world around us. We are terminally ill with sin, sick without any hope of getting better on our own. We can't do a thing in the world to revive our hard, dead hearts. But this is not the end of the story! A few verses later, Isaiah said that God saw the people's plight and "his own arm brought salvation" (Isa. 59:16). Jesus, through His death on the cross, paid the price for our sins and made us alive when we could do nothing for ourselves. When we were absolutely powerless, it was God who took the first step toward us. It was God who delivered a way for us to be free of the debt of our sin. It was God who made it so that our relationship with Him could be repaired. Without salvation from sin, we are completely dead and without hope. But through His intervening on our behalf, Jesus brought hope and life into our dismal condition.

► **How have you experienced the futility of trying to deal with your sin by yourself?**

► **Where do you see hope or good news in Isaiah 59:1-13?**



LIVE IT OUT

Unit 1 // Session 3

> CHRIST

For us to experience salvation in Jesus, we must confess our sins. Confess means to agree with God about what's true, and it's true that we've all sinned.

> **Pray to God and admit that you are a sinner who has fallen short of God's standard. Confess your sin to Him and ask for forgiveness. He is faithful to forgive when we are humble.**

> **Evaluate where you are most prone to give into temptation. Being tempted is not sin, but it can easily lead to sin. Write a brief list of steps you will take to resist temptation.**

> COMMUNITY

One of the best ways to deal with the sins we struggle with is to invite a trusted friend to help by holding us accountable. Reach out to one or two trusted friends (of the same gender), and talk through areas in which you are tempted to sin. Ask your friends to:

> **Pray for you.**

> **Hold you accountable to live in obedience to God.**

> **Keep you encouraged as you seek to follow Jesus.**

> CULTURE

The ways we deal with the sin in our lives has a powerful impact on the non-believers around us. When Christians don't live rightly, we're accused of being hypocrites, and we bring dishonor to Jesus.

Read the following questions and journal your response:

> **How have your sins impacted your testimony among lost friends?**

> **What changes will you commit to making so that your life honors God among non-believers?**