Introduction: Challenge the group to see the real-life significance of the session.

Write this quote on the board: “The beginning and end of man's rebellion against God was, and is, the lack of a thankful heart.”

Allow group members a few minutes to think about this quote and then ask them to share their own insights. Permit time for 2-3 responses.


Point 1: Engage your group with poetry.

Call for a volunteer to read the following poem, “Earth’s Groaning.” When the volunteer finishes, ask your group members to give their insights as to how the title “Earth’s Groaning” relates to Christ’s sacrifice for us on the cross:

Staring downward from the wood
Into faces of defiance,
Christ drank evil for our good,
Arms extended in compliance.

Deep beneath the jeering crowd,
After pardoning their mocking,
He knew silently out loud
Earth in mournful moans was talking ...

“Master, free us from the curse!”
“Our Creator, don’t forsake us!”
He could feel the rocks rehearse,
“Break the bondage now! Awake us!”

Grief was twisting out its toil
As His holy flesh was ripping,
Underneath, reluctant soil
Soaked up precious crimson dripping.

Then protesting storm clouds came. 
Restless ground rebelled and trembled. 
Earthquake rumbles roared His name: 
Fear gripped souls of those assembled.

But He cried a final word,  
As His soul breathed out His spirit ...  
“It is finished!” people heard,  
And the stones could also hear it.

Listen gently, friend or foe  
Of the God-Man, Christ the Savior.  
Feel Earth’s groaning down below,  
Under humankind’s behavior.

Listen, hear all Nature’s plea  
For the sons of men to follow,  
To possess their liberty  
From the sins in which they wallow.

Hear Earth’s moaning as it longs  
For deliverance from frustration.  
We alone must sing the songs  
That precede a freed creation.


**Point 2: Engage with a classic hymn.**

The main precept we focus on in this section is that the Son of God humbled Himself to make the dead alive. Play the song “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” (4 minutes, 20 seconds):  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tkx8WAycYAc
Before group members listen, instruct them to write down 1-2 ideas that they glean from the song about Christ’s death. Once the song ends, ask for 2-3 volunteers to share their insights.

**Point 3: Check for understanding using the “Think-Pair-Share” technique.**

The main precept in this section is God’s declaring sinners righteous. Read the following paragraph to your group:

The ministry of the New Covenant is *internal*. “I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts” (Heb. 8:10). This work is done by the Holy Spirit of God (2 Cor. 3:1-3). But the Spirit could not dwell within us if Jesus Christ had not paid for our sins. Cleansing our consciences cannot be done by some external ceremony; it demands an internal power. Because Jesus Christ is “without spot [blemish]” He was able to offer the perfect sacrifice.

**Think-Pair-Share:** Ask, the following questions: “Why do many people, including some Christians, try to cleanse their consciences apart from God? How do they do this?” Then say something like the following to your group members: “**Think** for 30 seconds about this. Now I want you to discuss this in **pairs** with a person on your left or right who is not your spouse.” (Pause for 60 seconds.) Finally, call on 3-4 pairs to **share** one idea.


**Conclusion: Challenge for application.**

Sin spreads like a pandemic if left unchecked. This is even true in the life of a believer. Ask group members to spend a few minutes with God asking the question, “Am I spreading sin or stopping its spread?” Inform them that if they cannot choose the answer “stopping its spread,” they need to spend time with the Lord confessing and forsaking this sin and pursuing obedience to God as a means to greater joy and satisfaction.