

WHERE ARE YOU?

MAIN POINT.

God shows us **mercy** in our **shame**.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Even in Adam and Eve's transgression, God's grace was evident. God promised to provide a descendant, Jesus, who would crush the head of the serpent, defeating sin and death and restoring people with God and one another (**Rom. 16:20**).



SHAME AND MERCY.

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. We encourage you to read all of the content on the timeline as you prepare to teach.

Genesis 3:7

Genesis 3:24

SIN LEADS TO SHAME AND SEPARATION

GENESIS 3:7-11

7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. 8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 So the Lord God called out to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 And he said, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid." 11 Then he asked, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

GENESIS 3:16-19

16 He said to the woman: "I will intensify your labor pains; you will bear children with painful effort. Your desire will be for your husband, yet he will rule over you." 17 And he said to the man, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'Do not eat from it': The ground is cursed because of you. You will eat from it by means of painful labor all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. 19 You will eat bread by the sweat of your brow until you return to the ground, since you were taken from it. For you are dust, and you will return to dust."

GOD SHOWS US MERCY WHEN WE SIN

GENESIS 3:20-24

20 The man named his wife Eve because she was the mother of all the living. 21 The Lord God made clothing from skins for the man and his wife, and he clothed them. 22 The Lord God said, "Since the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, he must not reach out, take from the tree of life, eat, and live forever." 23 So the Lord God sent him away from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. 24 He drove the man out and stationed the cherubim and the flaming, whirling sword east of the garden of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life.

BEFORE YOU TEACH

Leaders: Thank you for preparing to teach God’s Word. As you do, may He teach you new and wonderful truths (Ps. 119:18).

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

SIN LEADS TO SHAME AND SEPARATION

GENESIS 3:7

“Although their eyes were opened, they were rewarded only with seeing their nakedness and were burdened with human guilt and embarrassment (v. 7). Although they became like God in this one way, it was at an unexpected cost. They achieved isolation and fear. The couple was cut off as well from the possibility of life, the one feature of divinity for which otherwise they were destined. They obtained ‘wisdom’ in exchange for death.”⁸

GENESIS 3:8-10

“But not only was there shame; there was also guilt. Their relationship with God was broken. They fled from God’s presence out of fear: They hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Isn’t this amazing—hiding from the God who had the power to make them? But God came looking for them. The question, ‘Where are you?’ was a rhetorical question asked for their benefit. God, in his mercy, was giving them a chance to acknowledge their wrong.”⁹

GOD SHOWS US MERCY WHEN WE SIN

GENESIS 3:21

“Man’s nakedness had caused him shame and had forced him to seek a covering of his own creativity. God, in an act that appeared to require the death of an animal, provided garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. . . . But it is clear that God had concern and compassion for mankind. He provided them clothing but at the expense of life. . . . Man’s attempt to cover himself with fig leaves was appropriate but not adequate. . . . God expressed his grace in the face of sin and judgment.”¹⁰

GENESIS 3:22-24

“Apparently, if they had remained in the protective presence of God in the garden with all its supernatural provisions of life, they would have lived forever in that evil condition. And so God prevented that by expelling them from the garden so that death would take its decreed course and end the life of toil and trouble. So with severe mercy, the Lord drove them out of the garden.”¹¹

MAIN POINT.

God shows us **mercy** in
our **shame**.

CONTEXT

Genesis 3 is a pivotal part of the Biblical narrative. We see the fall of humankind; Adam and Eve’s response to sin; God’s merciful response; the consequences, which spill over onto the rest of humanity; and a glimmer of the gospel (Gen. 3:15). Why is all of this important? Because, **although sin led to shame and death, God showed Adam and Eve mercy**. Even in banishing them from Eden, God protected them from living forever (if they ate from the tree of life) in this separated state. Their exile was merciful in that their separation from God would one day end, and they would reunite with Him in heaven. We’ll see how this impacted the rest of humanity in coming chapters, but God has victory over sin, death, and shame through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

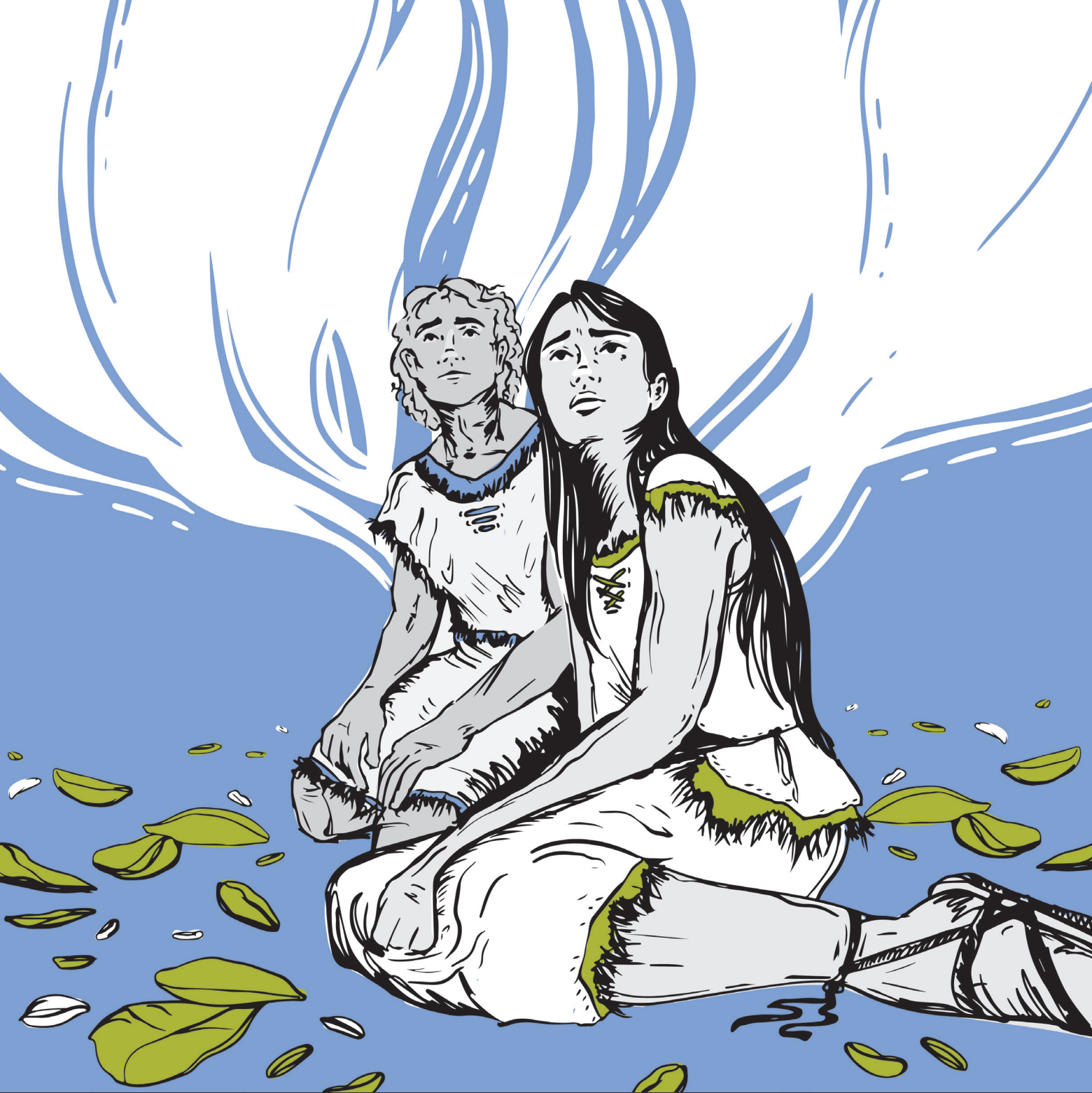
THEOLOGY CONNECTION

sin as missing the mark

One aspect of sin is missing the mark of God’s standards set for humanity. This missing of the mark is **not a simple mistake but a falling short of God’s glory through consciously choosing sin**. We may refer to sin as a failure on the part of humans to live according to God’s standards, but we must recognize **this failure is intentional**. We miss the mark when we deliberately choose to cast aside God’s intention for us.

PRAY

GOD, HELP US TO ACCEPT YOUR MERCY WHEN
WE FAIL INSTEAD OF RUNNING FROM YOU.
THANK YOU FOR FINDING US IN OUR SHAME.



KICK STARTER

♥ HEART CHECK

Let's check in on how you're doing spiritually. When did you struggle to obey God's Word this week? Did you walk in obedience? Why or why not?

instructions

These optional activities are designed to help your students interact. You'll find a Discussion Activity and a Cultural Connection, which touches on a relevant topic in today's teen culture. Each group is different, so adapt these activities to fit your group's needs. The goal is for students to connect more to the lesson as they connect to the topic and to one another.

1

GETTING CAUGHT

SUPPLIES LIST: NONE

Ask the following questions, allowing time for students to share responses:

- **HOW DOES IT FEEL TO GET CAUGHT DOING SOMETHING WRONG?**
- **WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO HANDLE A SITUATION LIKE THIS?**
- **DO YOU THINK GOD IS JUST WAITING TO CATCH US IN OUR SIN? WHY OR WHY NOT?**

It's hard to know what to do with our failures. When we sin, we naturally want to hide it from God and from others. We want to escape the feeling of being caught. But God knows us, and because He is omniscient, He knows everything we do. This doesn't have to force us into hiding. Because even though God knows, He loves us. He chooses to show us mercy when we bring our sin to Him in repentance.

2

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Your view of God will likely determine how you handle your sin. Culture often depicts God as a harsh and cranky old guy who enjoys catching us in our sin and punishing us. Here's the truth: God does hate sin. He doesn't hate you when you sin. God is holy, and He must oppose sin. But stop and consider that sin is what separates you from Him. God opposes the thing which comes between you and Him. In fact, God sent Christ to die so that sin would no longer separate you from Him if you place your faith in His Son. So why hide from the Lord? Why hide from the One who loved you enough to save you from eternity without Him? He isn't harsh or cranky. He's a good Father. He loves you, and He wants to restore you, not punish you. Sin has consequences, not because God is mean, but because He is completely just and good.

DISCUSSION

MAIN POINT.

God shows us **mercy** in our **shame**.

SIN LEADS TO SHAME AND SEPARATION

READ GENESIS 3:7-19



HOW DO YOU REACT WHEN YOU'RE CAUGHT DOING SOMETHING WRONG?

Think about times you've been caught. As a child, you may have run away or hidden to avoid consequences. Or maybe your strategy was to blame others. Adam and Eve handled their sin similarly: They hid from the One who made them. They felt guilty, and they felt afraid of God. This is what sin does to us. God created us for relationship with Him, but sin acts as a barrier to it. When we sin, we naturally feel guilt—even if we get really good at pushing it away. We naturally want to run and hide from God, fearing what He may do. But we can't hide from Him. In fact, **being found by God in our sin is mercy because He longs to restore our relationship with Him.**

WHAT DOES GOD'S RESPONSE TO ADAM AND EVE'S SIN REVEAL ABOUT HIS NATURE (V. 9)?

The couple ran from God, but He looked for them. And His first question for the couple wasn't "What have you done?" but "Where are you?" Some of us think God is waiting to strike us down the minute we mess up. **But God's response here shows His heart for drawing us out of hiding and into the light.** The Lord does this so that we can see our sin and confess it to Him. God's restores our broken relationship because He loves us (1 John 4:10). We don't have to hide from Him.

IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU TRY TO COVER UP OR MAKE EXCUSES FOR YOUR SIN?

Adam and Eve attempted to fix their shame by covering up with fig leaves. But this solution wouldn't last. Their attempt to fix their sin wasn't good enough. We often try to fix our sin with our own fig leaves. We try to conceal our mistakes by hiding behind church attendance or by doing good works. Maybe we even say all of the right words so that others will think we're following God. Or maybe we get baptized because we think it'll fix our sin problem. **Although these actions are good, they can ever fix our sin.** Instead, we have to confess our sin to God and repent of it, or turn from sin and turn to Christ. When God points out our sin and we confess it, we experience freedom from it.

GOD SHOWS US MERCY WHEN WE SIN

READ GENESIS 3:20-24

WHAT WOULD'VE HAPPENED IF ADAM AND EVE HAD EATEN FROM THE TREE OF LIFE? HOW WAS EXILE FROM EDEN ACTUALLY MERCIFUL?

Eating from the tree of life would enable the couple to live forever. Most of us may think this is awesome, but here's the problem: Adam and Eve would live forever in their fallen state without hope. They would be eternally stuck, separated from God. Some of us have read this account and thought God was really harsh to banish Adam and Eve from Eden after only one mistake. We couldn't be more wrong. **The ultimate consequence for even one sin is separation from God. Adam and Eve would've experienced this for eternity if they'd remained in Eden and eaten from the tree of life.** By removing them, God took away the possibility of them living forever separated from Him. He even placed angels with flaming swords at the entrance to ensure they couldn't return! Harsh? No. Merciful? Absolutely. By allowing them to one day experience physical death, God was also allowing them to live with Him for eternity if they placed their faith in Him.

WHEN HAVE YOU STRUGGLED WITH VIEWING THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN AS TOO HARSH?

Sometimes it's hard for us to understand why sin is such a big deal to God. **We've downplayed sin so much that we easily justify it.** But God is holy. And we can't enter His presence because of our sin. Sin demands sacrifice, and God allowed His own Son to be that sacrifice for us! When we take sin lightly, we make light of Jesus's death. But here's the gift: Jesus took all our punishment upon Him, and by His wounds and scars, we are healed (see Is. 53:5-6). **While our sin still has consequences here, we have hope knowing our eternity is secure in heaven.** If we place our faith in Christ, then we're spared from sin's final consequence.

WRAP-UP



HOW DOES GOD MAKING ADAM AND EVE'S CLOTHING WITH HIS OWN HANDS AFFECT YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF HIM?

God made clothing for Adam and Eve after He announced their consequences in verses 16-19. While they would certainly experience the effects of sin, they also experienced God's mercy in that moment. He got down in the mess with them, and He fashioned clothing to protect them from the new elements they'd encounter outside Eden. **He didn't leave them alone in their sin.** Some of us have a skewed view of Father God. He loves us—truly loves us. In the same way God clothed Adam and Eve, Jesus's blood covers us. **We have to get rid of this false view of God—a view that teaches that He is mean, harsh, or unreasonable when He allows us to experience the consequences of our sin.** God is loving. He sacrificed His Son on our behalf to fix our sin problem. He clothed us when we didn't deserve it.