

Separated

Recruiting (from 330 university campuses) our summer staff of 2,700 college athletes who love God and love kids is a great annual adventure that takes a team of forty plus directors of our twelve Christian sports camps across tens of thousands of miles of U.S. highways each winter. Our counselors are truly champions and the cream of the crop. Kids deserve nothing less.

In the early days of our marriage, my wife and I did the recruiting alone. Traveling with my Homecoming Queen was pure pleasure for me. After our first child was born, she traveled beside us. But the joy of those early days of Holiday Inns and suitcase living came to a screeching halt when our second, third and fourth children were born. Traveling without my most cherished companions for weeks at a time was honestly depressing. Chuck Swindoll knew my heart well when he said, "The older I get, the more I realize that happiness is seeing anything but home in the rear view mirror of my car." Fifty days out in January and February literally broke my heart each winter. The last day of the journey was always the best day. I'd often drive through the night just to catch a 3 a.m. glimpse of all four little tykes snuggled peacefully in their beds awaiting their daddy's long overdue homecoming and the surprises I'd bring them.

One trip home from my travels I'll never forget was the day I literally staggered into my house with an acute stomach virus I'd picked up on the last leg of my journey. I could barely get down our hillside walkway and into my house to rush to my bed in dizzy exhaustion. My youngest toddler, a joyful and effervescent one and a half year old named Cooper, saw me come in. He ran for his daddy's arms, but in my contagious sickness all I could do was close the bedroom door behind me and fall into bed. Cooper pounded on the door and cried out loud, "Daddy! Daddy open up! Pweeeeeeeze!" My heart shattered into pieces. The pain of our separation was far greater than the cramping in my abdomen. God's voice broke the silence as He spoke to my heart. "Joe, that's the same awful pain I felt when My Son was on the cross. He had to take your sins on His shoulders. In My holiness, I had to turn my back on Him. Your sin is a sickness that separated you from Me. Only in dying on your behalf could My Son become a 'curse' and atone for your sin." (Galatians 3:12) I'm sure His pain was a million times worse than mine!

"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The message of Scripture is simple and concise.

Sin is a sickness that separates man from a holy God. "All have sinned..." (Romans 3:23). All have fallen short. All have missed the mark. All have transgressed. Every

one of us. The door is closed. No amount of pounding on the door and pleading for God to unlock it can gain entrance into His holy presence because "the wages of sin is death". (Romans 6:23)

One day God would have to bring the sickness to a perfect, sacrificial Lamb. One day God would have to shut the door. One day God would have to turn His back. This time, this time, this final time the door would have to be closed to His Son. This time the sin virus would have to be claimed by Jesus.

Mark these Key Words:

Sin

God

Old Testament Viewpoint

Numbers 32:23; Psalms, 14:3; Exodus 20:20; Psalms, 97:10; Zechariah 8:17

Numbers 32:23 But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out.

Psalms, 14:3 There is no one who does good, not even one.

Exodus 20:20 Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin."

Psalms, 97:10 Hate evil, you who love the LORD, Who preserves the souls of His godly ones; He delivers them from the hand of the wicked.

Zechariah 8:17 "Also let none of you devise evil in your heart against another, and do not love perjury; for all these are what I hate," declares the LORD.

New Testament Viewpoint

1 John 3:9, 1 John 1:6-10, Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23

1 John 3:9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

1 John 1:6-10 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; But if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Romans 6:23 for the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

OBSERVATION: What is God saying?

1) Describe and define sin according to Scripture:

2) How does sin affect our relationships here on earth and our relationship with God?

3) If sin is "missing the bull's eye" of God's best for your life, how are you outside the target today?

4) What personal sin do you tend to rationalize?

5) What is God's remedy for our sin problem?

A) Our Past Sin _____

B) Our Present Sin _____

6) What is our responsibility in that solution?



PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS: *What else of significance do you see God saying in this passage?*



APPLICATION: *How does this passage relate to me today? What changes does it bring to my life?*

LOCKER ROOM:



How is "knowing Jesus" helping you with the sin issue?

MEMORY VERSE: Romans 3:23



For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.



My Prayers



Adoration: Father, today I praise You for...



Confession: Father, please forgive me for...



Thanksgiving: Father, today I'm thankful for...



Supplication: Father, the people & things that I wish to pray for today are...