

# I AM SIN

## Discussion Guide

**Everyone**

.....

**Everywhere**

.....

**Temptation**

.....

**Compromise**

.....

**Secrets**

.....

**Death**

# Introduction

To our audience,

This *I Am Sin* curriculum package is Igniter Media's first ever curriculum set. With that in mind, we would love to hear your feedback as you use this guide with your small group.

Our hope in creating a small group study focused on sin is to help spotlight the various traps we fall into when thinking about sin, its causes, effects, and consequences. As followers of Christ, we can forget we have an active enemy seeking to weave sin into our lives in a way that literally destroys us (**see EVERYONE**). As we become less naive about sin, we begin to see its effects all around us (**see EVERYWHERE**). Of course, we must not think that we are immune to sin and its deceits. Often, sin seduces us with what appear to be enticing offers (**see TEMPTATION**) or subtle attractions (**see COMPROMISE**), but we cannot forget that taking the bait of sin, if left unchecked, can foster negative character change. It doesn't take long before we feel trapped by our sin (**see SECRETS**), and we're reminded that we all can walk a path marked by death (**see DEATH**).

We hope that you can use these videos to start a genuine discussion on sin and its effects. Ideally, the *I Am Sin* discussion guide and videos can help the members of your small group open up about areas in their lives where they are struggling and in need of accountability. We also would encourage teachers (including pastors, youth ministers, etc.) to try to incorporate these videos into a message series, as we believe they provide a powerful personification of sin and its ability to rule our lives.

Thanks again for diving in with us. We hope this content is the catalyst for life change in your community.

Thanks,



Jeff Parker  
**Igniter Media**

# I AM SIN Everyone

**“There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins.”**  
– Ecclesiastes 7:20 (NASB)

## Summary

It's hard enough that we have to deal with our own fleshly desires, but there is also a real enemy that actively attacks us. His end goal is always sin and its consequences.

Young or old, spiritually mature or a new believer, no one is immune from sin. Even Christ had to fight against temptation. There is much to learn about overcoming sin from Matthew 4:

1. Jesus was prepared for the devil's attempts because He knew God's word (see Psalm 119:11).
2. If Satan quoted Scripture to Jesus, imagine the kinds of tricks he will use with us! Spending time in prayer with God and in community with his followers helps us develop discernment (see Proverbs 1:5).
3. The devil is persistent, but trust the Lord and stay strong in the truths you have learned (see Psalm 40:2).
4. “Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.” God will not leave you alone (see John 14:26-27).

In Matthew 26:41, Christ tells us, “Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” One of the worst mistakes a Christ follower can make is to think they won't commit a specific sin. When we think we are stronger than temptation, we forget to wholeheartedly seek the Lord, and then we are vulnerable to attacks. The enemy plays at our weaknesses and loves it when we forget to guard against him.

We can hold tight to the promise of victory over sin (1 Corinthians 15:55-58), but we are human and we will struggle. In those times, we can praise God for His Son who redeemed us and we can confess our sins while seeking grace.



# Prayer

*Father, I confess [my sin]. Please forgive me. Thank you for your grace. Help me to stay strong in your truth by seeking your wisdom and remembering your faithfulness. I look forward to the day when sin is not a struggle, but until then guard my heart and mind with your peace.*

# Questions

1. Take a few minutes to think about how you're doing with sin. Where are you seeing success? What areas can use some work?
2. Name some practical steps to help you guard against sin.
3. Is there a specific sin that you think you've conquered? Take some time to make sure you are still on the right track.
4. Are you able to accept grace when you struggle?

# I AM SIN Everywhere

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

– Romans 3:23 (NASB)

## Summary

In general, we prefer to do the right and moral action when we are faced with difficult situations. For most of us, our conscience kicks in and helps us desire to stand for righteousness. But our enemy and flesh still have a way of weaving sin into our lives when we least expect it.

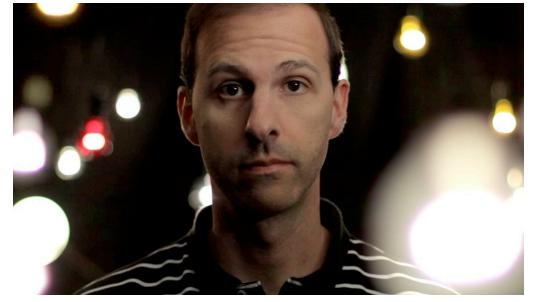
Since we all fall short of God’s standard of perfection, it should not surprise us that we can find the effects of sin everywhere. We can see the effects at work, home, and even church. There is no safe place to hide away from sin.

Being on the lookout for temptation and potential pitfalls is certainly a wise approach to life. However, we must also recognize that our enemy is deceptive and his goal is to entangle us in sin where our guard is down.

The bad news is, with sin ever-present in this world, we will fail. Time and time again, despite our best efforts, we will slip up and disappoint our friends, family, church, and God. The Bible is filled with Scripture that reminds us of our fallen nature and our propensity to sin. This propensity to sin is evident with the people we read about in the Bible. Though many of them (King David, Peter, and Samson, to name a few) walked closely with God, they each had moments in which they failed spectacularly.

The good news is that Scripture reminds us that our enemy will one day be defeated, and in the meantime, his tactics can be beaten. James 4:7 encourages us to obey God and stand up to the devil’s schemes. In doing so, the Bible promises us that the devil will flee.

Our calling is to live in obedience to God. His desire is to protect us from sin and its consequences. Thus, when we trust His promises and remember that His path leads to life, we can overcome Satan’s attacks and the deception of sin.



# Prayer

*Father, help me recognize and confess when sin enters my life. May I never be arrogant enough to think that I am beyond sin. Continually steer my heart back to yours so that I may be ultimately found faithful.*

## Questions

1. Do you see the effects of sin in all areas of life—at home, at work, at church?
2. What are some practical ways to be on the lookout for temptation?
3. Read through some of the Bible’s most prominent stories. Did the main character fall? How did God redeem them?
4. What does it look like to obey God? Do you obey with joy, knowing it is for your own protection? Or does obedience to God feel oppressive?

# I AM SIN Temptation

**“Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”**

– Hebrews 4:16 (NASB)

## Summary

Temptation is everywhere. From food to television, what starts as an innocent moment in which the Lord delights can quickly turn into an ugly cycle that is not of God. When we are surrounded by both obvious and subtle seduction, sin that once seemed unthinkable loses its sting and begins to feel comfortable. Advertisements that assault us with their less-than-modest images become so familiar that we don't even think to turn our heads. A means of nutrition can easily turn into a pattern of inappropriate proportions. Our senses are so overwhelmed from moment to moment that taking a step back to reconnect with God becomes less of a priority.

We know that Christ promises that we are not alone in temptation. In some circumstances we hold tight to that promise, but in others we make excuses. We say, “It's just too much. There is no where I can go without being tempted.”

The truth in 1 Corinthians 10:13 is encouraging: “No temptation has overtaken you, but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also so that you may be able to endure it.”

There is an escape from daily temptations and it is always available. Philippians 4:6-7 says that as we talk to Jesus, his peace will guard our hearts and minds. Each day we can ask for protection from our struggles and when we fall we can receive mercy and grace.



# Prayer

*Father, show me where I need to be on guard. Help me to see where sin has crept in, and please forgive me. I am thankful that I can always come back to you and that you promise peace. I pray that you will be glorified as I work to move away from temptation and closer to you.*

# Questions

1. What areas cause you to be tempted?
2. Do you make excuses for your sin, or are you able to confess it to God?
2. How can community help you guard against temptation?
3. What are some ways of escape that can help you endure a struggle?

# I AM SIN Compromise

**“But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy”**

– 1 Peter 1:15-16 (NASB)

## Summary

When you think about the word “sin,” what comes to mind? Often, we think of the big stuff, and with good reason. When celebrities, politicians, and even prominent church leaders are caught in scandals it’s because they’ve stolen money, used drugs, or cheated on their spouse. At church, we often focus on avoiding these “big sins” — adultery, addiction, sexual impurity, and any activity that could land us in jail. And let’s be clear, we absolutely should avoid these things. None of these destructive behaviors are consistent with the life God intends for us.

The only problem with focusing on this list is that it allows us to minimize other sins. We think the “little stuff” — a white lie or a lustful glance, for example — is OK every now and then, as long as we don’t go too far. When we rank sins in order of their seriousness, our little slip-ups don’t seem so bad in comparison. Obviously, this is a trap. Why? Because we’ve based our understanding of sin, character, and integrity on our culture’s sliding scale. Rather than pursuing God’s standard for our lives as portrayed in Scripture, we compare ourselves to others. We draw arbitrary lines signifying what is “good enough” and then we try to stay on the right side of the line. As the passage above from 1 Peter states, we’re called to lead lives that are holy in all we do.

In Ephesians 4:27, Paul the Apostle warns us not to “give the devil an opportunity.” As Paul teaches the church at Ephesus about following Christ, his implication is that seemingly minor lapses can be exploited by Satan. Satan desires distraction and destruction in our lives, so it’s wise to deny him even the slightest bit of leverage. Seemingly small compromises allow the devil to get his foot in the door of our lives. Therefore, as men and women who want to live fully surrendered to God and His kingdom, let us be wary of the temptation to compromise. When “little stuff” arises, let’s slam the door shut.



## Prayer

*Father, give me the strength, wisdom, and conviction to resist compromise. Show me areas of my life in which I've allowed "little stuff" to creep in so that I can confess and repent. Help me understand the consequences of my sin, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

## Questions

1. Are there times when it's difficult for you to acknowledge *all sin* as unacceptable?
2. What factors contribute to our willingness to compromise?
3. What are some strategies for avoiding compromise you can implement in your life?
4. What is the importance of accountability in combating compromise?

# I AM SIN Secrets

**“He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.”**

– Proverbs 28:13 (NASB)

## Summary

It's easy to believe that our sins are unique to only us. Pair that with the competing thought that we are the worst of all sinners, and we begin to feel trapped. A vicious cycle then ensues:

1. We continue to commit the sin.
2. We desire to stop committing the sin.
3. We feel like what we've done is unforgivable by God and/or people.
4. We hide our sin from others, spurning community and its healing accountability.
5. Repeat steps 1-4.

Sound familiar? There are many reasons that we become a slave to this cycle. Often, we become ensnared in consistent sin because we hope to avoid the consequences that we know we deserve. Or, we might be afraid to disappoint God, our friends, our family, and others. Even worse, sometimes we become content with our sin patterns and reach a point in which we don't desire change.

Proverbs 28:13 makes it clear—if we continue to hide our sins, we isolate ourselves and create a barrier between us and God. But, if we confess our sins, we receive mercy and healing.

Mercy and healing are truly what we least expect when we confess. We expect to be hated. We expect others to look down at us and be disappointed. We expect that others will never trust us again.

Yet, 1 John 1:9 promises us that if we confess our sins, God is faithful to forgive us. So when we expect judgment, we receive grace. People can surprise us, too. They are quick to love and forgive, and they desire to help us overcome our struggles.



To be realistic, confession doesn't mean we avoid any and all consequences. Often, our confession does bring about the consequences that we deserve (e.g., loss of responsibility, increased supervision and accountability, etc.). Hopefully, those consequences can aid you in your struggle and remind you of the pain that your decisions can bring.

Sometimes, with people, we get a response that is inconsistent with Proverbs 28:13. We can experience loss of friendship, permanent loss of trust, hatred, or resentment. In this situation, all we can do is ask for forgiveness and own our part of the reconciliation process. It's in the other person's court to respond in a Christ-like manner.

Whether people respond with grace or contempt, God's command is the same: confess. It's the only way to receive the mercy and healing that we desperately need.

On the flip side, if someone confesses to us, we should prayerfully consider our response and choose to extend mercy, love, and accountability in a God-honoring way.

## Prayer

***Father, help me to be bold in confessing where I'm in need of mercy and healing. May I not hide my sins one more day. Please forgive me for my [specific sin]. Thank you for your abundant grace. Help me display your mercy to others in their time of confession.***

## Questions

1. Have you ever found yourself in a cycle of sin? How did you get it out of it?
2. Have you ever tried to hide your sin? If so, why?
3. What's been your experience with confessing your sins to God and others? What kind of response did you receive?
4. Are you quick to forgive others?
5. How have you shown grace to others when they have seemingly deserved your judgment?

# I AM SIN Death

**“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert  
Your adversary, the devil, prowls  
around like a roaring lion, seeking  
someone to devour.”**  
– 1 Peter 5:8 (NASB)

## Summary

No one is immune to sin. The Bible states clearly in Romans 3:23 that all people have sinned and fall short of God's standard. There's no escaping that we all are imperfect.

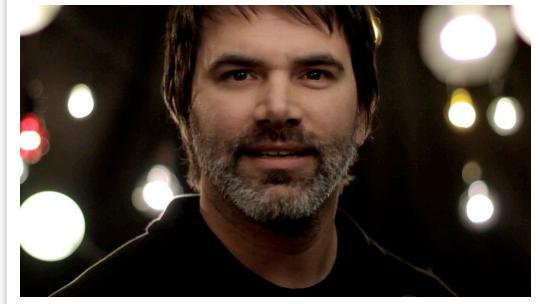
There's also no escaping the fact that we are susceptible to sin in two ways:

- (1) We have an enemy that is out to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10a); and
- (2) Our flesh is weak and is lured by the things of this world. (Matthew 26:41)

Separated from Christ, our defenses are too weak and we will succumb to our struggles. Separated from community, we are isolated and are unable to be sharpened by our fellow believers.

Thus, we must readily prepare our defenses. We must rely on God's strength, read God's Word, and participate in Christian community. We cannot live apart from these safeguards without falling victim to a life controlled by sin.

The second part of John 10:10 encourages us that Christ came to give us an abundant life. Even though we may not be immune to sin, we do not have to live in bondage to our sin. We can live as new creations as we daily renew our minds and are increasingly transformed into the likeness of Christ.



## Prayer

*Father, help me be aware of and prepared for the temptations of this world, the desires of my flesh, and the schemes of my enemy.*

## Questions

1. What do you think is the difference between struggling against your flesh and struggling against the enemy?
2. What “community” helps sharpen you?
3. How are you “preparing your defenses”? In what areas can you improve your defenses?
4. Do you feel you are living in the bondage of sin or the freedom of Christ?

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