

“Study Guide Number “6”

“Questions that keep People Away from Church”

“I’m a Good Person, why do I need Forgiveness?”

Story: A minister was asked to do the funeral of man he did not know. He went to the widow’s home to visit with her to offer comfort, and to learn things about the man’s life he might use at the funeral service. He asked questions to help better understand the man’s life. “Was your husband a Christian?” “No, he wasn’t a Christian, but he was a good man.” “Did you husband go to church?” “No, he never when to church, but he was a good man.” “Did your husband have any favorite Bible verses?” “No, he never read the Bible, but he was a good man.”

The implication was clear: “My husband never did any of the things associated with the God who created him, but he was a good man and deserves to go to heaven.”

A. It is the prevailing philosophy of the 21st century – “My goodness is good enough, I don’t need anything more.”

- 1. This is the attitude which expresses itself when over 90% of the people in the United States will tell you they are bound for Heaven even if they have no personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of their lives.**
- 2. We have been successful as a people at eliminating the need for the one who created us – we have bought in completely to the idea – “I did it my way.”**
- 3. We are striving to do everything our way and that includes our faith and our eternity.**
- 4. There has been an evaluation of the church as well as the people who go to church and the world says, “I don’t want anything to do with either one.”**
- 5. The foundational truths guiding this country for so many years have been replaced with “a more convenient” system that better suits a people in rebellion.**
- 6. There has been an all out attack on “Moral Absolutes.”**
- 7. The definition for “Truth” has been made “Relative.”**
- 8. Instead of “being made in the Image of The Creator,” the “creature is striving to make a Creator in their own image.”**
- 9. And people wonder why we are having problems!**

B. We are sacrificing the truths we need for the philosophies of a world lost in the darkness and perfectly content to be this way.

1. **“The New Morality,” is getting a lot of press in this dark age.”**
 - a. **Constraints have fallen and moral consensus has vanished.**
 - b. **Many are declaring that man has “come of age.”**
 - c. **Very plainly they are telling us that man has outgrown the outdated Judeo-Christian morality of the Bible.**
2. **“New Age Morality,” it focuses on rights but not responsibilities.**
3. **“Secular Humanism...”**
4. **“Nihilism...” -- ...man is purely a cosmic accident...”**
5. **“Atheistic Existentialism” – it is completely subjective in that it is to be judged by no standard outside of the chooser himself.**
6. **“Pantheism...”**

Francis Schaffer – “Modern man has both feet firmly planted in mid-air.”

R.C. Sproul -- “Modern man is betting his life that this is it, and that there is no judgment and that there is no eternity.”

1991 George Barna poll – “67% of the American people believe there is no such thing as absolute truth.”

Dr. Allen Bloom in his book “The Closing of the American Mind” stated: “...almost every student entering the university believes or says that he believes that truth is relative...”

Charles Colson says: “The Prevailing World-view: Dancing with Wolves in Sheep’s Clothing...”

- a. **The Prevailing World-view is Secular...**
 - 1.) **Secular – “of this world...”**
 - 2.) **An ideology that places all emphasis on the here and now.**

b. The Prevailing World-view is Antihistorical...

- 1.) **Deconstructionism is the battle cry.**
- 2.) **If there is no objective truth, there is no reason for objective interpretation of history, law, or politics.**
- 3.) **Deconstruction is literally the dismantling of language, texts, and discourse.**

c. The Prevailing World-view is Naturalistic...

- 1.) **The natural is supreme.**
- 2.) **All nature is equal and there is no longer a reason for humanity to be considered the center of the universe.**

d. The Prevailing World-view is Utopian...

Chuck Colson: “If we are basically good people how do we explain the wrongs we do? We can’t. So we simply deny that the wrongs are wrong – or else we blame them on sickness, or on someone else. Thus, we all become victims...”

“...In a culture where the tiresome vestiges of guilt still hang on, that’s the answer. If there is no one else to blame and you still feel bad, then just kill your conscience. You’ll feel so much better in the morning.”

e. The Prevailing World-view is Pragmatic...

- 1.) **“If it works, do it.”**
- 2.) **If it works for you, then go ahead and do it no matter who it hurts or how it looks.**

C. In the light of the above is it any wonder people are asking the question we have for this study?

“I’m a good person, why do I need forgiveness?”

The Apostle Peter said:

“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.” (1 Peter 3:15-16, NIV)

“How do I answer the question: “I’m a good person, why do I need forgiveness?”

1. I must establish the source of authority – who I will listen to concerning the need of forgiveness.

Abraham Kuyper said: “If everything that is, exists for the sake of God, then the whole creation must give glory to God.”

- a. The options we have are as wide open as the list of philosophies already stated.
- b. For many people today the source of their authority rests with them.
- c. For others the popular trends of the day decide how they will answer the question.
- d. Hollywood has become the Mecca for many who are striving to answer the question.
- e. T.V. talk shows dictate the way many will find their answer.
- f. Maybe we would never be willing to identify these as a source of our authority, but this is the way we live.

“In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.” (Judges 17:6, NIV)

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.” (Matthew 7:13-14, NIV)

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.” (Proverbs 14:12, NIV)

“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?” (Jeremiah 17:9, NIV)

- g. I believe if we are to correctly find the true source of authority we have to go beyond ourselves.

David Field wrote: “The moral standard is the character of God. We understand more about goodness as we learn more about Him. To know His will clearly we need the light of special revelation, but all men, by virtue of their creation, have His moral law ‘written on their hearts.’ If they try to argue its influence away, and follow a different code, they are automatically in the wrong. God’s will is not one option among many.”

- h. The fundamental truth of Scripture is that God has revealed himself.**
- i. The Bible, standing apart from all other literature, is the Word of God, the revelation of God.**

"The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever." (**Isaiah 40:8, NIV**)

"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." (**Hebrews 4:12, NIV**)

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." (**2 Timothy 3:16-17, NIV**)

- j. The foundation for all Biblical teaching on human conduct is the nature of God.**

"Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: 'Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.'" (Leviticus 19:2, NIV)

"As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." (1 Peter 1:14-16, NIV)

" Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord." (Hebrews 12:14, NIV)

David Field wrote: "many moralists urge, 'Do what I tell you.' A few would dare say, 'Do as I do.' But God goes further. He says, 'Be as I am.'"

Jerry Bridges, in the "Pursuit of Holiness" wrote: "God does not require a perfect, sinless life to have fellowship with Him, but He does require that we be serious about holiness, that we grieve over sin in our lives instead of justifying it, and that we earnestly pursue holiness, as a way of life."

"I must establish the source of authority – who will I listen to concern the need of forgiveness?"

2. I have to identify the reality – sin is an issue in our lives, we need forgiveness.

a. What is sin? Or how do we define sin?

- 1.) To stray from the way of God...**
- 2.) To violate the Will of God...**
- 3.) To act in a manner contrary to His nature...**
- 4.) Basically, sin means failure...**
- 5.) In the classical Greek it meant to “miss the mark...”**

b. The Apostle Paul used the word some 60 times to describe conduct that displeases God.

c. In the New Testament, sin describes a state of existence from which sinful actions come.

"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath." (Ephesians 2:1-3, NIV)

d. The Apostle John goes into great detail about the reality of sin and the effects it can have in our lives.

"Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness." (1 John 3:4, NIV)

"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives." (1 John 1:8-10, NIV)

"He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work." (1 John 3:8, NIV)

"This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother." (1 John 3:10, NIV)

e. Sin is an issue in the life of everyone who walks the earth.

"What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know." "There is no fear of God before their eyes." (Romans 3:9-18, NIV)

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," (Romans 3:23, NIV)

"What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?" (Romans 6:1-2, NIV)

- f. There was only one who escaped the harmful effects of sin and we had better be thankful that Jesus Christ remained true.**

"I need to identify the reality – sin is an issue in my life, I need forgiveness."

- 3. It becomes imperative that I examine the consequences of avoiding the subject of seeking forgiveness in my life.**

The early church father Chrysostom said: "I fear nothing but sin."

- a. Sin mars all the relationships people are involved in.**
- b. Our relationship with other people, with ourselves, and most importantly with God.**
- c. Sin causes suffering, disease, and death in the physical realm, as well as spiritual death – eternal separation from God.**
- d. Sin pollutes the sinner.**
- e. Sin is the only thing God hates.**
- f. Sin has affected everyone who has ever lived.**

"Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God." (Romans 3:19, NIV)

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," (Romans 3:23, NIV)

g. Sin kills everyone it infects.

"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—" **(Romans 5:12, NIV)**

h. Sin corrupts the mind, the will, and the affections.

i. Sin brings people under the control of Satan and makes them objects of God's wrath.

j. Sin robs people of peace and replaces it with misery.

k. As Christians we experience God's gracious forgiveness, sin still has serious consequences in our lives.

1.) Sin grieves the Holy Spirit...

"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." **(Ephesians 4:30, NIV)**

2.) Sin causes God not to answer our prayers.

"Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers." **(1 Peter 3:7, NIV)**

3.) Sin limits our ability to serve God.

"In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work." **(2 Timothy 2:20-21, NIV)**

4.) Sin even disqualifies some from Christian service.

"No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize." **(1 Corinthians 9:27, NIV)**

5.) Sin renders our worship hypocritical and unacceptable, causes God to withhold blessings, robs us of joy, subjects us to God's disciplining, hinders our spiritual growth, pollutes our fellowship with Him, and sin causes our lives to dishonor God.

"So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?" **(Romans 7:21-24, NIV)**

"It becomes imperative that I examine the consequences of avoiding the subject of seeking forgiveness in my own life."

4. I need to realize how much God hates sin, but how much more He loves sinners like you and me.

- a. Someone has said: "Sin takes you farther than you wanted to go, keeps you longer than you wanted to stay, and costs you more than you wanted to pay."**
- b. Satan lied to Adam and Eve in the Garden and he is still laying to you and me today.**
- c. He subtly says: "Go ahead, nobody will know."**
- d. Then after we have sinned he declares: "Everybody knows! How could you do such a thing! You are a real loser! God will never love you now!"**
- e. Where do we go when we realize the terrible situation we have gotten ourselves into?**

"What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin." (Romans 7:24-25, NIV)

" Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit." (Romans 8:1-4, NIV)

- f. How important is Jesus Christ in making our lives right with the Living God who created us?**

" But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus." (Romans 3:21-26, NIV)

"Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Corinthians 6:9-11, NIV)

" You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:26-29, NIV)

"For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant." (Colossians 1:13-23, NIV)

"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." (Hebrews 4:13-16, NIV)

"How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!" (Hebrews 9:14, NIV)

" Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him." (1 John 4:7-16, NIV)

"I need to realize how much God hates sin, but how much he loves sinner like you and me."

5. I can learn how to live in the freedom forgiveness of sin brings to all who earnestly repent and turn away from sin.

a. Freedom from sin does not mean the freedom to sin.

" What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness." (Romans 6:15-18, NIV)

b. Christ paid a debt He did not owe to free us from a debt we could not pay.

"So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us

the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:16-21, NIV)

"I can learn how to live in the freedom forgiveness of sin brings to all who earnestly repent and turn away from sin."

6. I must never forget that to seek forgiveness of my sin goes against the grain of popular opinion.

" But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them. They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these men oppose the truth—men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone." (2 Timothy 3:1-9, NIV)

"For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths." (2 Timothy 4:3-4, NIV)

"For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is

forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them." (**Romans 1:21-32, NIV**)

Do you remember the question: "I am a good person, why do I need forgiveness?"

"Do you know the answer for a question like this?"

