

Forgiving Lord, you are always more ready to forgive than we are to ask for your love and grace. We give you thanks that you sent your son, Jesus, that we might receive your mercy. Help us always to turn to the cross, where you give everything for us. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

*In this lesson, we'll be looking at the heart of the matter: how does God save humankind.*

### Part 1 Original Sin - Watch First Video Segment Before Answering Part 1

1. Read Genesis 3:1-7 (Genesis 2:15-17 might be helpful too)

- a. What did God command in Genesis 2:15-17?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. In Genesis 3:4-5, what was the reason the serpent gave for why God commanded them as he did?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- c. So, then, as we are looking at the origin of sin, what was at the heart of why Adam/Eve disregarded God's command?

2. Read Romans 5:12

- a. When and through whom does Paul say that sin entered the world?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. Why do you think Paul ignored Eve's role in this?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- c. Why, then according to Paul, are we a part of this sin when it is not ours?

### Part 2 Watch Second Video Segment Before Answering Part 2

3. Read Romans 3:21-28

- a. What does Paul say is the human condition of all people in verse 23?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. When Paul uses the word "justification/justified" he means that "people are 'made right/made holy'" with God. So then, regardless of our human condition, how do we stand in relation to God?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- c. According to verse 28 what can we do to earn that justification?

4. Read Galatians 2:15-21 – Paul, once again restates his central theology that we are saved by God’s grace alone, not through our works.
  - a. In verse 21 Paul argues that salvation/justification cannot come through deeds that we do. Why, in that verse, must that be true?
  
  - b. What does Paul mean by what it says in verse 21? Explain it in your own words.
  
5. Read John 7:53-8:11
  - a. Why is it that the scribes and Pharisees want to put the woman in this story to death?
  
  - b. As part of the story, Jesus (a little in Pauline fashion) points out the human condition in verse 7. What does Jesus say is the human condition?
  
  - c. What does this woman need to do in order to earn Jesus’ forgiveness?
  
6. Read Luke 23:29-42
  - a. The criminal hanging on the cross expresses the way in which he finds himself trapped in the human condition. What does he say about his condition in verse 41?
  
  - b. But in keeping with being justified through faith alone, what “faith” does the criminal express?

### Part 3 What Does This Have to Do With My Life?

7. In this lesson, we’ve referred to sin as our “human condition.” Namely, the idea is that this is not just the sinful actions or little peccadillos that we define as “sins.” Sin is the larger condition that we find ourselves in – it is the way we tend to “turn in on ourselves” and away from God and others. Sure, those people’s sins and peccadillos fit into that category, but sin itself is a bigger issue. Given that this lesson is all about grace, why is it important to distinguish between forgiveness of people’s sins and forgiveness of sin?
  
8. Can you think of someone in your life who needs to hear this message of grace through faith alone? Someone who maybe struggles and wonders “why me?” Someone who needs to hear love and welcome and acceptance given what is happening in their life? Share these stories with your group (don’t use names that would reveal their identity).