

Theoacademy

Form Your Faith. Anytime. Anywhere.

Lesson 2: Wicked Bad

Theocademy

A ministry of the
Synod of Mid-America

Written by
Jodi Craiglow

Edited by
James Gale
Landon Whitsitt

www.theocademy.com

Getting Started

Before watching the video, consider the following questions.

- Think about your best friend. What makes this relationship important to you?

- Think about a time your trust was betrayed. How did it make you feel? What was your response?

During the Video

As you watch the video, think about the following questions.

- How do our choices affect and shape the people we become?

- How do our choices affect the larger community and world around us?

- How are ***sin*** and ***evil*** different? How are they similar?

- What does it mean to ***renounce*** sin and evil?

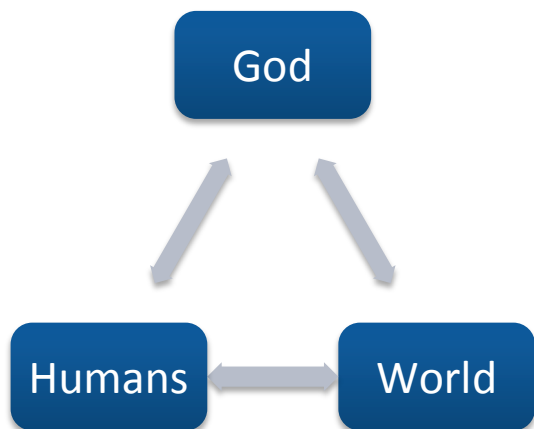
The Way Things Ought to Be

We as Christians can gain a firmer understanding of the importance of turning from sin when we have a clearer picture of just what sin warped and destroyed when it came into the world. In his book *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin*, theologian Cornelius Plantinga defines sin as the “**disruption of created harmony and then resistance to divine restoration of that harmony**” (p. 5). But what is that “harmony” that was disrupted? Plantinga goes on to paint a breathtaking picture of the order of the world as God intended it to be:

The webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in justice, fulfillment, and delight is what the Hebrew prophets call **shalom**. We call it peace, but it means far more than mere peace of mind or a cease-fire between enemies. In the Bible, shalom means **universal flourishing, wholeness, and delight**—a rich state of affairs in which natural needs are satisfied and natural gifts fruitfully employed, a state of affairs that inspires joyful wonder as its Creator and Savior opens doors and welcomes the creatures in whom [God] delights. Shalom, in other words, is the way things ought to be (p. 10).

Read through Genesis 1:26-31 and consider God’s intended **shalom** for the following relationships:

Genesis 1:26-31 Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." ²⁷ So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. ²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." ²⁹ God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. ³¹ God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.



God and Humans	
God and World	
Humans and World	
Humans and Other Humans	

The Way Things Ended Up

Unfortunately, though, that *shalom* didn't last. We humans decided that our way was better than God's way, and all those relationships were broken. Read through Genesis 3 and respond to the following questions (continued on the next page).

Genesis 3:1-24 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?"² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden;³ but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'"⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die;⁵ for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate.⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.⁸ They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?"¹⁰ He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself."¹¹ He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"¹² The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate."¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate."¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel."¹⁶ To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."¹⁷ And to the man he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life;¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.¹⁹ By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return."²⁰ The man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all living.²¹ And the LORD God made garments of skins for the man and for his wife, and clothed them.²² Then the LORD God said, "See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"--²³ therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken.²⁴ He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life.

- Why would "being like God" be such a tempting offer?

- The Hebrew word for “know” here is **yada**, which means more than just factual comprehension; it means to have a personal, experiential understanding of someone or something. What “knowledge” had God already given the man and woman (Adam and Eve)? What new “knowledge” would they gain by eating the fruit?

This breaking of *shalom* is not a one-time event, but rather a state of sin that humanity continues to live in. Paul’s reflections in Romans 7 demonstrate this ongoing struggle.

Romans 7:13-21 So did something good bring death to me? Absolutely not! But sin caused my death through something good so that sin would be exposed as sin. That way sin would become even more thoroughly sinful through the commandment. ¹⁴ We know that the Law is spiritual, but I’m made of flesh and blood, and I’m sold as a slave to sin. ¹⁵ I don’t know what I’m doing, because I don’t do what I want to do. Instead, I do the thing that I hate. ¹⁶ But if I’m doing the thing that I don’t want to do, I’m agreeing that the Law is right. ¹⁷ But now I’m not the one doing it anymore. Instead, it’s sin that lives in me. ¹⁸ I know that good doesn’t live in me—that is, in my body. The desire to do good is inside of me, but I can’t do it. ¹⁹ I don’t do the good that I want to do, but I do the evil that I don’t want to do. ²⁰ But if I do the very thing that I don’t want to do, then I’m not the one doing it anymore. Instead, it is sin that lives in me that is doing it. ²¹ So I find that, as a rule, when I want to do what is good, evil is right there with me. (Common English Bible)

- How in your life have you experienced the struggle Paul is talking about?
- Theologians have described our tendency toward sin as if we were children with dirty hands: even in our best intentions, the dirt from our hands spreads into all we do. Do you agree with this example? Why or why not?
- How did (and do) these examples of sin break each of the following relationships?

God and Humans	
God and World	
Humans and World	
Humans and Other Humans	

For Further Study

Heidelberg Catechism

- **Q. 4. What does the Law of God require of us?** A. Jesus Christ teaches this in a summary in Matthew 22:37–40: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.” (Cf. Luke 10:27.)
- **Q. 5. Can you keep all this perfectly?** A. No, for by nature I am prone to hate God and my neighbor.
- **Q. 6. Did God create man evil and perverse like this?** A. No. On the contrary, God created man good and in his image, that is, in true righteousness and holiness, so that he might rightly know God his Creator, love him with his whole heart, and live with him in eternal blessedness, praising and glorifying him.
- **Q. 7. Where, then, does this corruption of human nature come from?** A. From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in the Garden of Eden; whereby our human life is so poisoned that we are all conceived and born in the state of sin.

Second Helvetic Confession

- **Ch 8: SIN.** By sin we understand that innate corruption of man which has been derived or propagated in us all from our first parents, by which we, immersed in perverse desires and averse to all good, are inclined to all evil. Full of all wickedness, distrust, contempt and hatred of God, we are unable to do or even to think anything good of ourselves. Moreover, even as we grow older, so by wicked thoughts, words and deeds committed against God’s law, we bring forth corrupt fruit worthy of an evil tree (Matt. 12:33 ff.). For this reason by our own deserts, being subject to the wrath of God, we are liable to just punishment, so that all of us would have been cast away by God if Christ, the Deliverer, had not brought us back.
- **Ch. 14: WHAT IS REPENTANCE?** By repentance we understand (1) the recovery of a right mind in sinful man awakened by the Word of the Gospel and the Holy Spirit, and received by true faith, by which the sinner immediately acknowledges his innate corruption and all his sins accused by the Word of God; and (2) grieves for them from his heart, and not only bewails and frankly confesses them before God with a feeling of shame, but also (3) with indignation abominates them; and (4) now zealously considers the amendment of his ways and constantly strives for innocence and virtue in which conscientiously to exercise himself all the rest of his life.

Westminster Shorter Catechism

- **Q. 85. What doth God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse, due to us for sin?** A. To escape the wrath and curse of God, due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.

Confession of 1967

- **1.2: THE SIN OF MAN.** The reconciling act of God in Jesus Christ exposes the evil in men as sin in the sight of God. In sin, men claim mastery of their own lives, turn against God and their fellow men, and become exploiters and despoilers of the world. They lose their humanity in futile striving and are left in rebellion, despair, and isolation.... God's love never changes. Against all who oppose him, God expresses his love in wrath. In the same love, God took on himself judgment and shameful death in Jesus Christ, to bring men to repentance and new life.

Brief Statement of Faith

- We trust in God, whom Jesus called Abba, Father. In sovereign love God created the world good and makes everyone equally in God's image, male and female, of every race and people, to live as one community. But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator. Ignoring God's commandments, we violate the image of God in others and ourselves, accept lies as truth, exploit neighbor and nature, and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care. We deserve God's condemnation. Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation.