

RETHINKING SIN CULTURE

- God is good.
- Sin is bad.
- Following God brings good.

You will be tempted to believe differently.

Genesis 2:9-17 The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil... “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

Genesis 3:1-6 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

² The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

⁴ “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

We must have faith in the goodness of God

When God says sin is a bad thing, he has a good reason.

John 10:10 [Jesus said,] The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. NIV

When we don't see the harm of sin, can we trust God enough to give him the benefit of the doubt?

1 Corinthians 1:25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

Treat people with love.

Don't downplay the wrongness or the harmfulness of sin.

Isaiah 5:20a Woe to those who call evil good and good evil. NIV

Romans 1:32 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.

Call people into a new life.

(You can't/won't do that if you don't believe that following God brings good.)

Matthew 4:17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

Matthew 11:20 [Woe on Unrepentant Towns] Then Jesus began to denounce the towns in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent.

Luke 5:31-32 Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ³² I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Mark 6:12 [The Twelve] went out and preached that people should repent.

Luke 24:46-48 [The resurrected Jesus] told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.

Acts 2:38-40 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

⁴⁰ With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."

Appropriate responses vary, but always show mercy.

Jude 1:22-23 Be merciful to those who doubt; ²³ save others by snatching them from the fire; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.