

# Message Discussion Guide

## SIN IN THE CAMP (Part 1)

*The Church at Brook Hills Dr. David Platt February 3, 2008 Exodus 32:1-6*

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This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

### **Connect . . .**

*Use one of the activities below to help your group connect relationally in order to enhance participation in the coming Scripture discussion.*

#### **Option 1:**

Encourage each person in the group to respond to this question, keeping the mood light by sharing your own example first: **When you were in middle or high school, what's one thing you did that you now regret because of the consequences?** Examples should include emotional decisions they made, trouble they got into, or things they did to impress people. Once each person has shared, discuss these questions as a group:

- **How have you grown from the consequences you faced?**
- **On the whole, have those experiences changed your values? Why or why not?**
- **How can looking at the past help prevent you from making similar mistakes in the future?**

Explain that we're about to take a look back at a story in the Old Testament that had serious consequences for the people of Israel—in order to prevent us from making the same mistakes.

#### **Option 2:**

Share a time when impatience brought you in trouble, such as buying a car you couldn't afford, or speaking out of turn without knowing all the facts. After you've shared, discuss these questions as a group:

- **What things in life make you most impatient?**
- **How do you typically react to feelings of impatience?**
- **Does thinking of potential consequences of your impatience ever slow you down?**

After everyone has a chance to answer, remind the group that you're about to look back at a story in the Old Testament that had serious consequences for the people of Israel—in order to prevent you from making the same mistakes.

### **Review the Message . . .**

*Begin by reviewing the context and reading 1 Corinthians 10:1-7 and Exodus 32:1-10. Then, use the following questions to review the content of the message, and then apply the truth of Scripture to life.*

Review the context: 1 Corinthians 10 refers back to a time in the Old Testament when God's people were being led out of slavery in Egypt and into the Promised Land, but they were disobedient to Him and faced severe consequences. Point out that 1 Corinthians 10 tells us that "these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did." In light of that, explain that in Exodus 32, the people of Israel had been delivered out of Egypt, saved from slavery. They had come to Mt. Sinai where God revealed His glory to them and gave them His law. In Exodus 24 He confirmed His covenant with them. Then Moses went up on the mountain to meet with God as the people waited at the foot of the mountain. And while the people's representative was at the top of the mountain meeting with God on their behalf, this is what happened. Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-7 and Exodus 32:1-10.

### **Our Corporate Confession...**

**1. We have sought \_\_\_\_\_ leaders \_\_\_\_\_ without \_\_\_\_\_ conviction \_\_\_\_\_.**

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Emphasize that God's words to Moses in verse 7, "your people . . . have become corrupt," refer not to an individual's sin, but to the people's corporate sin. Ask someone to read Exodus 32:1-3. Then, discuss these questions:

- **Moses had only been up on the mountain 40 days when the people gave up on him. How did Aaron quickly prove he was a leader without conviction?** (*He gave in to the people's desire to make gods for themselves.*)
- **Why do you think Aaron did that?**
- **Why do you think they wanted to make these false gods?**
- **How was their sin even more grievous in light of their deliverance from slavery in Egypt just a couple of months earlier?**
- **Why do you think we forget God's deliverance so quickly?**

#### **Application . . .**

Remind your group of this point: **David said a leader commits the sin of Aaron today by standing in front of God's people and attempting to make them feel good about an idolatrous Christianity that loves money, sex, pride, possessions, sports, success and family more than we love God.** Then, continue with these questions:

- **What does it look like for a church leader to "commit the sin of Aaron" in the church today?**
- **David said, "We have created a church culture that revolves around what people want." How have you seen that as true?**
- **How would you generally describe the qualifications of a "successful" church leader? Do you think that list is more about drawing crowds, or leading people in God's truth? Why?**
- **As a church, where do you see us in this picture—desiring to see truth God's holiness and our brokenness, or desiring messages that make us feel good about our lives?**

## **2. We have devised \_\_\_\_\_ salvation \_\_\_\_\_ without \_\_\_\_\_ dedication \_\_\_\_\_.**

Point out that in Egypt, God's people had been surrounded by idolatry, including the worship of idols in the form of animals like this. Stress that God saved them from that, but upon their salvation, their deliverance, at the first opportunity they had, they ran back to their Egyptian gods. Emphasize this point: While indulging in their sin, they were celebrating their salvation. Ask someone to read verse 4. Then, discuss these questions:

- **If the people had been delivered from Egypt, including the slavery and oppression and abuse they faced, why do you think they returned to worshipping an Egyptian god?** (*They were free from slavery, but they still thought like slaves and didn't give God the credit He alone deserved.*)
- **Why would they claim salvation while indulging in sin?** (*They were using their salvation as justification to sin.*)
- **How would you explain to someone what it means to "devise salvation without dedication"?** (*To plan a way to experience salvation from bondage, but without paying the price of dedicating yourself to God in response.*)

#### **Application . . .**

Remind your group of this point: **When you trust in Christ for salvation, when you truly receive His free gift of grace, that gift involves a radically new heart.** Then, answer these questions as a group:

- **Why is it so tempting to think that praying the prayer of salvation means you can then live however you want? Why is that not true?**
- **At true salvation we experience the gift of a new, transformed heart. What does that new heart drive you to do?**
- **How have you experienced "Christ in you" leading and empowering you to live a new life of holiness that pleases God?**
- **As you spend time with God this week, how will this truth affect the things you pray for?**

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### 3. We have manufactured worship without humiliation.

Ask someone to read verse 5-6. Then, discuss these questions:

- **After committing a grievous sin, what does Aaron declare they will do the very next day?** (*Have a festival to the LORD.*)
- **The people were indeed worshipping, but what were they worshipping—God, or their own selfish desires? How do you know?** (*Their own selfish desires—they had taken God’s guidelines for worship and turned it into what they wanted, on their own terms. They were probably involved in sexual immorality and drunkenness in their worship, just like in Egypt. Worshipping with things that God condemned.*)
- **How do you see them doing what point 3 says, manufacturing worship without humiliation?**

#### **Application . . .**

- **How does the church today do the very same thing?**
- **How can our singing, praying, listening, and giving become about us instead of God? What does it look like when it does?**
- **Read Psalm 51:17, Isaiah 66:2, and 2 Chronicles 7:14. Why are brokenness and humility absolutely necessary for true worship?**
- **How can someone become more broken and contrite in spirit? How would you live differently this week if you were committed to these characteristics?**

### 4. We have created a god without retribution.

Stress that this was the beauty of the golden calf: They could set up their altar, give their offerings, and indulge in revelry, and nothing would happen to them. Share the following words of R. C. Sproul: In the words of R.C. Sproul: **“The cow gave no law and demanded no obedience. It had no wrath or justice or holiness to be feared. It was deaf, dumb, and impotent. But at least it could not intrude on their fun and call them to judgment. This was a religion designed by men, practiced by men, and ultimately useless for men.”** Then, discuss these questions:

- **How do you see Sproul’s words as true in this story?**
- **Why do you think the people were so tempted to give up on Moses and create such a disgraceful idol?**
- **Why do people want “a god without retribution”?**

#### **Application . . .**

- **How can the church today do the very same thing?**
- **Even though God truly is a God of love and compassion, why is He obligated to punish sin?** (*His holiness demands it*)
- **What other characteristics do you see people placing on God that tend to leave out His holiness and righteousness?**

Say: **The people ultimately could never please God on their own, but what they could not do, God did Himself through Jesus. He became our Savior who demonstrated both the compassion and holiness of God as he became our substitute and atoned for our sin.** Use this truth to move to a review of the final four points of hope we have because of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

#### **Our Corporate Celebration...**

- Jesus                      takes                      our retribution.

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- Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ exalts us \_\_\_\_\_ in our humiliation.
- Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ enables our dedication.
- Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ restores \_\_\_\_\_ our conviction.

Conclude your discussion time in prayer. Challenge the group to take these last four points and make them the focus of their praise as you close in prayer.