



EVERLASTING

JOHN 3:16

Everlasting: Broken

Large Group Talk 2

Objective: It's easy for students (and everyone) to become numb to sin. Sometimes we just get used to it, sometimes we justify it, and other times we compare our sins to someone else's "worse" sin. But the truth about sin is that it's actively and intentionally rebelling against God, placing ourselves and other things in a position of authority only God is qualified to occupy. All of our specific sins flow out of that rebellion. In this lesson, students will learn what sin is, how it breaks their relationships with God and other people, and how it fills them with guilt and shame.

Introduction

Say Something Like: *Have you ever broken something that belonged to someone else? How did you feel afterward? What did you do? How did they respond?*

Illustration: In this short clip from the movie *Kicking and Screaming*, Will Ferrell is waiting in the back of the line for coffee at a coffee shop. What starts as impatience, turns into yelling, lying, and eventually fighting. While this is a light hearted clip that shows an obvious example that people aren't perfect, it paves the way to see how broken people (and the world) really are. We are surrounded by reminders that things aren't right; from road rage, to bullying, gossip, and lying. A quick scroll through any social media newsfeed will give us all sorts of clues that the world is broken.
<http://www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/kicking-and-screaming/coffee-outrage?play=1>

After showing this humorous video, explain that this lesson will get into some dark, difficult topics. Encourage students to take sin seriously. Instead of avoiding our sin or letting it snowball, we should address it humbly and honestly.

Say Something Like: *All too often, when we break something, we try to cover it up or deny it. A chain reaction happens, and we can't undo what we've broken. It happened as far back as the Garden of Eden, and it continues to happen today.*

Read 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’?”

The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 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.’”

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

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.

Say Something Like: *When humanity sinned against God by listening to the lies of the serpent, we broke what God had made good. We still feel the effects of this today. Pretty much everyone would agree that the world isn't the way it should be. Pain, suffering, diseases, anger, frustration, anxiety, sadness—these things wouldn't make anyone's description of an ideal world. Brokenness distorts our view of how things really are. Sin fractured creation so that it no longer looks like the perfect garden God made. Everything is in pieces, fragmented, shattered.*

Illustration: Shattered. In November of 2015, a flight from Milan to New York City had to be diverted to London because of a shattered windshield. While the pilots weren't sure what cracked the windshield, they knew they could not see well enough to fly safely. The brokenness distorted the visibility and endangered all of the passengers, so the crew landed the plane in London and put the passengers on different flights to New York for their own safety. (abc7ny.com/news/flight-heading-to-jfk-from-milan-diverted-due-to-shattered-windshield-/1102562/)

Say Something Like: *If you've ever had a chipped windshield, you know that the chip spreads until the windshield is covered in cracks. Removing the original pebble won't make the cracked windshield any more usable—it must be replaced. That's what happened when sin entered the world.*

The worst consequence of sin was its effect on our relationship with God. During the last lesson, you learned that God created us for an important purpose: to seek him in relationship and glorify him in our work. By sinning, we rejected that purpose and shattered our relationship with our loving Father. We decided we didn't want to be a part of his kingdom and tried to build a kingdom of our own. But anyone who watches the news or gets into an argument on social media can

tell you that the kingdom we've built is far from good. So what exactly is sin and why did it do so much damage to our relationship with God? That's what you're about to find out.

Teaching: Broken

1. Sin is mutiny against God.

Say Something Like: *The word rebellion has been hijacked until it no longer holds the weight of what it really means. You may have heard it used to describe doing your own thing or just being a teenager. Perhaps a better word to describe sin would be mutiny. In a mutiny, people who were charged with following the orders of an authority figure decide to take matters into their own hands. They cease obeying their leader because they think their plan is better. Usually they attempt to overthrow the current person in authority and replace them with someone from the rebellion.*

Mutiny is such a serious offense in the military that it can result in the death penalty. A chain of command keeps things from breaking down, especially during wartime. If mutiny is such a big deal on a ship, imagine how much more devastating the consequences were when Adam and Eve committed mutiny against God by trying to become like him. Sin is not simply an expression of your freedom to choose; it is trying to replace your Creator as the most important authority in your life. It is telling God, "I don't care what you say is best. I know what's best for me." It may seem crazy to tell the all-knowing, all-powerful creator of the universe that we know better than him, but we each do it, often on a daily basis. And by trying to replace God as the leader of our lives, we cause a domino effect, just as a pebble striking a window causes cracks that spread until the window has to be replaced.

2. Sin breaks our relationships.

Say Something Like: *One of the primary ways you may see the effects of sin in the world around you is in your relationships. Maybe you've heard someone say something like, "Who cares what I do if it doesn't hurt anyone?" This kind of statement completely underestimates our ability to influence others. It's like we're stuck in an over-crowded car trying to readjust to get comfortable—none of us can do something without it affecting everyone else around us. Nobody sins in a vacuum. Sin causes a domino effect—toppling over the people around us and effecting everyone in its path.*

Illustration: There's a lot of crazy domino videos out there, a quick google search will show you many of them. Here's a short video of several giant domino structures. You can show just a few or all of them. Use this to illustrate the domino effect of sin.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZzRcGDJaxsU>

Say Something Like: *Its easy to see the domino effect of sin play out in our everyday lives. Think of it this way...you promise a friend to keep a secret, but then you share that with another friend. It goes full circle until you're confronted about it. You lie, saying you never gossiped, and then quickly have to find the friend you told so they can back up your lie.*

When God confronted Adam and Eve about their original sin (Gen. 3:8–13), they hid from him (a futile effort with someone who is all-knowing). They no longer trusted God enough to be honest with him. When they finally responded to God, Adam immediately blamed his wife for his own sins. Then she passed the blame on to the serpent. They cared more about protecting themselves than they did about each other. Their relationship, which God had created good, was fracturing already. Your sin does the same thing. Whether you talk behind someone's back, lie to their face, or take credit for something they did, your sin destroys your relationship with other people and with God.

3. Sin leads to guilt and shame.

Say Something Like: *Sin doesn't only impact our relationships with other people; it eats us up from the inside. Once we realize the weight and consequences of our sin, guilt and shame are quick to follow. That's why Adam and Eve hid from God—they knew they were guilty. This is the first time they were aware of their nakedness, and their guilt led them to experience shame for the first time in history. They wanted nothing more than to cover up what made them feel shameful, but their efforts didn't do any good.*

Guilt and shame only serve to drive the wedge in a broken relationship deeper. For example, you get caught in a lie, so you avoid the person you lied to and the person you lied about. But avoidance doesn't relieve guilt. It eats away at us until we become cold and calloused. God doesn't want us to feel shameful; he made us to be free and joyful. Yet when we try to replace him as the leader of our lives, we lose many of the good things he provides for us that we can't provide for ourselves: security, peace of mind, and true freedom. We lock ourselves in a cage of shame.

Illustration: The Weight of Guilt. Have a volunteer student join you up front. Ask them to do a series of simple tasks for you such as: 5 jumping jacks, standing on one foot while drinking out of a water bottle, tying their shoe, etc. Next give them a backpack stuffed full of books and have them repeat the same tasks (which will not be as easy). Lastly, fill their arms with bulky items (like a large box or a pile of blankets) and have them repeat the tasks. Each time the burden grew, the simple tasks became harder to do.

Say Something Like: *Guilt is like a heavy burden, weighing you down. Wherever you go, you carry it with you. It keeps you from enjoying your favorite*

things and makes the simplest things hard. Everything reminds you of your sin. You can't shake the burden no matter how hard you try.

Why does sin have such a damaging influence on how we see ourselves? Because it goes against how we were made to live. We don't need someone to always tell us we've done something wrong—we know in our hearts that we've gone against our created purpose.

Shame can make us feel like no one will ever want to be near us. Guilt caused Adam and Eve to hide from their Creator. But God didn't turn his back on them or leave them forever. He reached out to them. True, he still held them accountable for their actions. Their sin was truly off-putting (they basically told the One who had done everything for them and loved them completely that they didn't trust him or want anything to do with him), yet God took the first step to repair their relationship. And he does the same thing with each one of us.

Putting It All Together:

Say Something Like: *Because of sin, God's good creation was broken: our relationship with God, our relationships with others, and our own hearts. Fortunately God doesn't abandon us in our brokenness no matter how hard we try to hide from him. Our sins that cause us to feel so much shame are not news to him. They grieve him because he doesn't want to see us hurt others and ourselves or live outside what he knows is best for us. But they don't chase him away. If anything, our guilt and shame cause us to run away from him. Thankfully, God had a plan to reach out to us while we were still running from him, while we were still leading a mutiny against him. You'll learn about that plan in your next Large Group session.*

[Speaker note: The following questions will be discussed deeper in the small group lesson]

Question 1: What relationships in your life have been damaged or broken because of sin (yours or someone else's)?

Question 2: How has shame or guilt influenced your life and your relationships?

Looking Forward: Let the students know that the next lesson will look at God's plan to defeat sin and renew our relationship with him. Be sure to give them any instructions they might need to go from here.

**LeaderTreks recommends watching all video clips and visiting all websites in this lesson before sharing them with students. These links are optional and not required in order to lead an effective large group talk. Websites often change, and links may not always have the same result. LeaderTreks will do its best to*

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keep them updated and fresh; however, in the event that they do not function properly, we cannot retain responsibility.

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