

TODAY'S SCRIPTURES

Romans 1:25 • Proverbs
14:12 • Psalm 51:17

*(All Scripture CSB
unless otherwise noted)*

THE LESSON AT A GLANCE

We will explore how our worship of many things besides God leads to brokenness. Sin takes us farther away from God, and Satan convinces us that we do not need God. This life situation leads us to realize there is only one hope for our emptiness.

THE MAIN IDEA

Sin leads to a place of brokenness. This is evident in our world and our own lives. Life does not work as we think it should, and we find no peace when we try to figure it out and go our own way. Our hopeless brokenness leads to realizing a need for something greater.

QUESTION TO EXPLORE

What is the source of brokenness in a person's life?

SCRIPTURE IN CONTEXT

Romans 1:25. Paul addresses the Roman Christians because they started worshiping false gods. These people were rejecting the truth they knew about God (Romans 1:23). In turning from God, humanity became darkened in its thinking and spiraled headlong into worse and worse sin, openly admitting that it was worthy of death (Romans 1:32).

Proverbs 14:12. Proverbs are succinct sayings describing a general truth for godly living. This verse surveys the life journey of a person who chooses a path that promises happiness but, in reality, delivers death. Only by following God's plan to be restored can we be made right with God and have a meaningful life now and in eternity.

Psalm 51:17. David, the King of Israel, had taken another man's wife to lie with her. This sin prompted several other sins, including the murder of her husband. Nathan, the prophet, was sent by God to David to awaken David to his sin and call him to repentance. David cries out to God for mercy for his unspeakable sin and asks God to see his broken and contrite heart. David continues praying for restoration and asks God to create a clean heart in him.



START HERE

Think back to how frustrating it is when something you care about breaks. In most cases, these objects seem impossible to repair. We sometimes put in much effort to fix the broken pieces, but sometimes, we want to throw the object away because we have tried to put it back together with no luck.

Imagine how God feels when we have gone down a path of selfishly ignoring Him and seeing how this has led to our brokenness.

DISCUSS

Think of a time when you felt broken. Describe what actions led up to that feeling. (Possible answers: sinful acts, experiencing hurt from someone, personal expectations not being met, etc.)

INTRODUCTION

Teacher, hand out 3 Circles: Life Conversation Guide to anyone who did not have one from the previous week.

Last week, we learned how to help people experiencing brokenness be reconciled to the God who made them and begin to experience the full life He designed them to have, a life that starts now and goes on into eternity.

We are learning to share this good news using a helpful aid: a booklet entitled *LIFE: 3 Circles: Life Conversation Guide*.¹ If you need one, raise your hand.

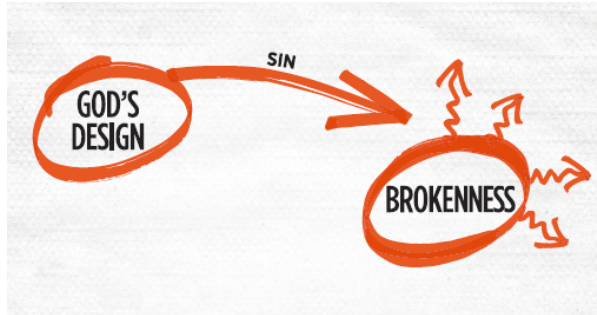
¹ (2014). *LIFE: 3 Circles Life Conversation Guide*. North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Used by permission.



DISCUSS

What do you think of this tool? What opportunities did God give you last week to use it to talk with people? (Possible answers: various responses.)

Open the booklet several pages until you see a diagram with two circles titled GOD'S DESIGN and BROKENNESS connected by an arrow (pgs. 8 and 9).



Teacher – read or have someone read pg. 8:

Sin leads to a place of brokenness. We see this all around us and in our own lives as well.

When we realize LIFE is not working, we begin to look for a way out. We tend to go in many directions, trying different things to figure it out on our own.

Brokenness leads to a place of realizing a need for something greater.

Turn in your Bibles to Romans 1:25.

REVIEW AND DISCUSS THE TEXT

1. OUR BROKENNESS DRIVES US TO LOOK FOR A WAY OUT

Romans 1:25

They exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served what has been created instead of the Creator, who is praised forever.

Unpacking Romans 1:25

The people Paul describes in this passage wanted to put their objects of worship into a box. They created tangible items that gave them an image of their idea of God (vs. 21-22). Each day, their sin of suppressing the truth of God caused them to sin deeper (v. 28).



Idols have no life, and as a result, those who worship them feel free to practice all kinds of sin without fear of punishment. But God does not ignore sin; he punishes them by leaving them to follow their sinful desires (v-24). As a result, they go further and further into sin, and in due course, they reap the fruit of their sinful behavior (v. 26-27).

The impact of sin is pervasive and taints every fiber of our being. Bible scholar Donald Fleming explains, "Sin is not limited to degrading sexual behavior. Its effects are seen in every part of the human character, corrupting people's inner feelings and spoiling their relationships. Even when people know their behavior is wrong, they persist in it and reassure themselves by approving of the wrongdoing of others."²

DISCUSS

How does tampering with sin in our lives lead to more serious and consequential sins? (Possible answers: We become deceived about what is true value; Satan takes over our mind to tempt us more, etc.)

It has been said that sin costs us more than we want to pay, takes us further than we want to go, and keeps us longer than we wish to stay, all the while returning far less than it promises. Sin leads us through a twisting maze of dead-ends as we try to figure out life on our own.

Turn in your Bibles to Proverbs 14:12.

2. OUR SIN LEADS US TO TRY TO FIGURE LIFE OUT ON OUR OWN.

PROVERBS 14:12

There is a way that seems right to a person, but its end is the way to death.

Unpacking Proverbs 14:12

Each of us is walking through the marketplace of life. Instead of following what we know is God's way, we compromise and allow our worldly wisdom to take charge. After God reveals Himself to us, as with Adam and Eve, we turn away and satisfy our desires instead. This shows that we genuinely do not respect and believe in God as we should. Throughout Scripture, God warns us that our reasoning and desire can easily lead to disaster. It is not that

² Fleming, D.C.(2005) *Fleming's Bridgeway Bible Commentary*. Retrieved January 15, 2025, from <https://www.studyLight.org/commentary/romans/1-25.html#verse-bbc>. StudyLight.org.



we shouldn't use reason or can never have the right desires. We are easily swayed by what we crave, not the truth in God's Word.

The Bible has many examples of people being deceived by Satan to choose their own way: the rich young ruler (Matt 19:16-22), the immature judge Samson (Jdg 13-16), wicked queen Jezebel (1 Kgs 16:31; 2 Kgs 9:7), the prodigal son (Lk 15:11-32), the reluctant prophet Jonah (Jnh 1:1-3), etc.

In Proverbs 3:7, Solomon wrote similar words in Proverbs 14:12: *"Don't be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and turn away from evil."* Most people tend to believe in situational ethics rather than absolute morality. They will make a personal decision based on the situation without having a constant standard of God to live by.

We can't be wise without guidance from God. I Corinthians 1:27-29 states that *"God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen what is weak in the world to shame the strong . . . so that no one may boast in his presence."* Instead of our own wisdom, He provides His very own: *"It is from him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom from God for us – our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."* We need to have God to make the right decisions to please Him. Otherwise, we will fail along the way if we rely on our own wisdom.

DISCUSS

What blind alleys of human wisdom do people go down to find answers to fix broken things in their lives? (Possible answers: intellectual arrogance, alcohol, drugs, sex, withdrawing from everyone, ignoring God, etc.)

Turn in your Bibles to Psalm 51, where we hear from a man who came to the end of himself and realized he needed to turn to God to fix his brokenness.

3. I MUST LOOK ELSEWHERE TO FIND ANSWERS.

PSALM 51:17

The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit. You will not despise a broken and humbled heart, God.

Unpacking Psalm 51:17

In this psalm, King David recognizes his wayward path after committing adultery with the wife of one of his most trusted warriors. He finally realizes that he has sinned against God: *"Against you—you alone—I have sinned and done this evil in your sight"* (v. 4). He has also sinned against Bathsheba, her husband, their families, his family, his kingdom, and his own body, but most of all, he has turned from God (2 Sam 11).



God was aware and present during these evil actions, and David was overcome with emotional and physical exhaustion during those days. His sin brought him no happiness. In the parallel Psalm 32 about his sin, David records:

- ³ *When I kept silent, my bones became brittle from my groaning all day long*
⁴ *For day and night your hand was heavy on me;
my strength was drained
as in the summer's heat. Selah*

DISCUSS

What are some examples of the anguish, pain, and harm that come from exploring our own avenues of happiness in life? (Possible answers: damaged relationships, broken families, loneliness, disease and damage to our bodies, enslavement to unhealthy habits and addictions, etc.)

No human actions could mend his broken heart. Brokenness results from trying to find answers for our guilt, emptiness, loss, and unrealized expectations in the wrong ways. To no avail, we try hard to solve the problems that sin has caused.

Finally, David humbled himself after the prophet Nathan revealed his sin (2 Sam 12). David then began to find answers when he confessed his sins and sought God's forgiveness: *"I am conscious of my rebellion, and my sin is always before me"* (v.3).

David realized that God desired truth on the inside first: *"Surely you desire integrity in the inner self, and you teach me wisdom deep within"* (v. 6). God wanted to work deep within David to address the sin of his heart. God desired a transformation in David all the way to his inner self. David did not cry out for a superficial reform but for something much more profound. He confessed without excuse, blame-shifting, or rationalizing. He asked God, *"Restore the joy of your salvation to me, and sustain me by giving me a willing spirit"* (v.12).

God did grant forgiveness, removing the king's grief and guilt and restoring David's broken fellowship with God. (2 Sam 12:13a). However, the earthly consequences of his sin would remain. His child would die (2 Sam 12:13b-18), and his family and kingdom would face dire consequences (2 Sam 12:10-12).

What is the solution for brokenness? The act of true repentance begins this process. David realized that God did not want a burnt offering, which had its place. God wanted first of all a broken spirit and a contrite heart (Ps 51:17).



The great British preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon said, "If you and I have a broken spirit, all ideas of our importance are gone. What is the use of a broken heart? Why, much the same as the use of a broken pot, or a broken jug, or a broken bottle!"³

God can use brokenness in our lives to help us sincerely desire a way out of the brokenness our sin has caused. That way out is learning about what God wants to do in our hearts to bring about a change.

REFLECT ON THE TEXT

DISCUSS

Reflect on your life and a time of brokenness before the Lord. How did you find God in this time? (Possible answers: A friend shared how Jesus had changed their life; God spoke to you through a message or while you were reading your Bible, etc.)

RESPOND TO THE TEXT

Have you experienced freedom from sin's brokenness, which comes only by believing in Jesus?

APPLY

God's rescue from brokenness impels us to listen to the message of those who, like us, are broken.

After we listen to people talk about their brokenness in everyday conversations, we must ask permission to share how God rescued us from our brokenness by leading us to repent of our sins and believe in Jesus.

Here is an example of how to transition into sharing the Gospel with someone:

³ Spurgeon, C. H. (1887, June 12). "Repentance After Conversion, No. 2419." *Spurgeon's Sermons* (Vol. 41). Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Retrieved January 31, 2025, from <https://ccel.org/ccel/spurgeon/sermons41/sermons41.xxvi.html>.



*I haven't experienced that exact thing (or experience), but I have had similar problems (or issues or concerns). Can I share something that's really helped me?*⁴

Ask God to put someone in your path this week who may be broken and need to be pointed to Jesus. Be aware of those around you who may be headed for brokenness but are afraid to admit it.

Practice reading the *3 Circles* booklet aloud at home to become comfortable using it as God provides opportunities to share His love with them.

LOOKING TO NEXT WEEK...

GOD'S REMEDY FOR OUR BROKENNESS – THE GOSPEL OF JESUS

John 3:16 • Ephesians 2:8-9 • Romans 10:9

God is the only One who has the remedy for our brokenness. He offers good news through the Gospel, which is Jesus paying for our sins and offering us eternal life as a free gift. With a contrite heart, we can come to God for the help we need and receive His Son. He restores our relationship with God and enables us to follow Him toward His original design for us in this life and the one to come after death.

⁴ LIFE: *3 Circles Trainee Manual* (Alpharetta, GA North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 2014), 18. Used by permission.