

GROWING DEEP IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Returning to Our Roots

STUDY TWELVE

Exposing the Dark Side

Genesis 6:5; Psalm 51:1–5

Our deadliest killer isn't cancer. It's depravity. Every one of us has it, and every one of us suffers from its consequences.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

WE all have parts of our personal lives that we would rather hide than expose. As Mark Twain observed, “Everyone is a moon, and has a dark side which he never shows to anybody.”¹

Mark Twain penned this famous line at a time of financial setbacks and deep personal loss. While he entertained thousands with his hilarious tales and heartwarming anecdotes, he never revealed his dark side of fear and sadness.

Like Twain, we spend a lot of time on life's stage putting on a good show to cover our real feelings. But the darkness goes deeper than emotions. Humanity's dark side includes depravity—the whole-person corruption inherited from Adam that renders all humans spiritually dead and subject to God's judgment.

In society, we see the ugliest expressions of depravity scrawled across headlines heralding war, violence, greed, and evil of all kinds. Every heart bears its imprint—selfishness, shameful vices, and a rebellious nature. Twain was right. There's more darkness in people than they let on.



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

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How do we deal with our depravity? God helps by telling the truth about humanity's dark side and candidly exposing it in the people of Scripture. In this *Searching the Scriptures* study, we'll take heed from their sins and follow their lead to find God's restoration and forgiveness.



PREPARE YOUR HEART

It's good that we know the truth about our sinful condition. By acknowledging our sinfulness, we more willingly accept God's grace. Open your heart through prayer as you begin your study.

Father, show me the truth about myself. I open my heart to You because I know You love me even when I am least loveable. Expose my sin so I can receive in fullest measure Your grace-powered transformation. In Jesus' name, amen.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

"Everyone has sinned," wrote Paul (Romans 3:23). Everyone occupies a berth on depravity's ocean liner, including the most respected people in the Bible such as Noah, Moses, David, Peter, and Paul. Yes, even them. Their voyages in sin remind us that it's not just the despots and criminals who need grace. We all are sailing in the same boat headed to the same destination unless our Savior rescues us.



Observation: Five Sinners Who Point Us to Jesus

Observe the following episodes of depravity within the context of each person's life. Reflect on how their sins knocked them off the "pedestal of perfection" and remind us that they were ordinary people in need of grace, just like us.



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Noah's Drunkenness—Genesis 9:20–23

Noah's portrait hangs prominently in Scripture's hall of faith, as it should. At a time of deep darkness when everything that people "thought and imagined was consistently and totally evil" (Genesis 6:5), righteous Noah was "the only blameless person living on earth" (6:9). And yet, what did Noah do *after* he obeyed God, built the ark, and saved his family and the animals from the flood, according to [Genesis 9:20–23](#)?

Moses' Hot Temper—Exodus 2:11–15; Numbers 20:2–12

Few in Scripture are honored more than Moses, who was destined from birth to liberate his people from slavery in Egypt. And yet, according to [Exodus 2:11–15](#) and [Numbers 20:2–12](#), how did Moses' hot temper get the best of him? What consequences did his dark side unleash?



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David's Adultery—2 Samuel 11

The Lord considered David to be “a man after his own heart” (1 Samuel 13:14), and David’s psalms exude his deep devotion. And yet, even the sweet singer of Israel had a dark side. What sins did David commit, and how did he try to hide them in *2 Samuel 11*?

Peter's Denials—Matthew 26:69–75

Peter’s confident statement that Jesus was “the Messiah, the Son of the Living God” (Matthew 16:16) still stands as a monument of bold faith. And yet, how did Peter’s courage crumble in *Matthew 26:69–75*?



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Paul's Struggles—Romans 7:15–25

Paul was unmatched in his ability to articulate Christian theology. And yet, even with all his knowledge, Paul still battled sin. How did Paul describe his inner struggle, according to *Romans 7:15–25*?

Each one of these people we studied made a deliberate decision to sin. They weren't duped. They played into the hand of the old nature and that carried out exactly what the old nature performs, that is sin. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Where Our Inner Struggle Leads

If Noah, Moses, David, and Peter had looked in Paul's mirror of Romans 7, no doubt they would have seen their faces too. Like Paul, they wanted to do what was right but they did the very things they hated.

According to Paul, the “power within [us] that is at war with [our] mind” is our drive to sin or “flesh” (NASB). What is the connection between our flesh (sinful inclination) and our depravity (sinful condition)?



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Paul asks in desperation, “Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?” (Romans 7:24). His answer resounds, “Jesus Christ our Lord” (7:25)! *How* does Jesus liberate us? Read [8:1–4](#) to see Paul’s full explanation.

We can live as victors through the power of Jesus Christ. When you face evil, claim the power of God that you have in Christ and pray, “Lord, give me the grace to get through this.” —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: Jesus Christ, the Exception to Depravity

The disease of depravity passed to *every* human. According to David in [Psalm 51:5](#), how is sin imprinted in each one of us?



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Jesus, thankfully, is the exception. Because Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit in Mary's womb, He was not subject to the depravity inherited through the human lineage. How did Luke describe Jesus' conception in *Luke 1:35*? How does *Hebrews 7:26* confirm Jesus' holy nature, although He was human?

Scripture says three things of Christ: He knew no sin, He had no sin, and He did no sin. Born without sin, He didn't have a sin nature. Only He qualifies as the sinless Lamb who can bear our sin and cleanse us. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Walking in the Light

We may have a dark side of sin, but we don't have to live under its shadow. We can walk in the light of Christ's righteousness through the power of the Holy Spirit.

How? Honesty about our struggles is a first step to move out of the darkness and into the light, followed by confessing our sin and receiving God's forgiveness. Are there any dark parts of your life you need to reveal to Him? Here is some space to write.

But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all wickedness. (1 John 1:9)



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Be honest about your sin. Confess it openly and let Christ's forgiveness flow over your soul as you walk in His forgiveness today.

You're not alone when you confess your sin and receive God's forgiveness. You're in the company of Noah, Moses, David, Peter, and Paul . . . and that's good company! Take some private time now to thank the Father for His Son who makes victory over sin possible.

So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1)



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I claim Your forgiveness through the blood of Jesus Christ. Help me now to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit, who gives grace to help me do what my heart most deeply desires—that is, to love You and serve You and follow Your ways. In Jesus' name, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. Mark Twain quote. www.twainquotes.com