



# THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

## CONVERSATION STARTER

What's something small that you once thought wasn't a big deal but over time you realized it had a bigger impact than you expected?

## DEEPER

Question 17: What happened to man in the fall?

Answer: Man fell into a condition of sin and misery

Question 18: What is sinful about man's fallen condition?

Answer: The sinfulness of that fallen condition is twofold. First, in what is commonly called original sin, there is the guilt of Adam's first sin with its lack of original righteousness and the corruption of his whole nature. Second are all the specific acts of disobedience that come from original sin.

1. Read Romans 5:12. How does Paul connect Adam's sin to all of humanity? Why do you think our culture struggles with the idea of being guilty because of someone else's sin?
2. Matt emphasized that sin and misery are inseparable. What kinds of "misery" do you see most clearly in the world around you that can be traced back to sin? What about in your own life?
3. Read Romans 5:19. The Catechism says we inherit Adam's guilt and commit sins ourselves. Why is it important that both realities are true? How would the gospel lose power if one of these were not the case?
4. Sin can be described, in part, as placing our trust in our own resources instead of God. Where do you find yourself most tempted to trust your own resources? How can you remind yourself of God's sufficiency in those moments?
5. Matt's long list of sins was meant to broaden our understanding of sin beyond the "big ones." Which category—internal sins, sins of speech, outward actions, or sins of omission—do you think Christians most often excuse or overlook? What about you specifically? Why?
6. We saw how sin's growth can be traced from desire to punishment. How have you seen that pattern play out in your own life or in the lives of others? At what point do you think the desire crosses into sin?

7. Read Matthew 15:19. Why does Jesus insist that sin begins in the heart rather than just in outward actions? What implications does this have for how we pursue holiness?
8. Our hearts are being shaped every day by culture, the media, and other people. What are the main influences shaping your heart right now? How can you be more intentional about allowing God's Word, prayer, and community to shape it instead?
9. There are only two options on the shelf: pleasing God or pleasing self. What are some practical ways to recognize when you're choosing to please self instead of God? How can your group help one another choose God consistently?
10. God hasn't given up on you because of your sin. He still wants to use you in spite of your sin, how has God been telling you recently in how he wants to use you?

## NOTES

## PRAYER PROMPT

As a group spend time in prayer together:

- Thank God for his grace that frees us from both the guilt of Adam's sin and our own sins.
- Confess areas where you've been holding onto sin.
- Ask the Spirit to renew your hearts and minds so that you may daily choose to please God over pleasing self.
- Pray for one another to live in the freedom of Christ, not in lingering guilt or shame.