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**Series Big Idea:** Who is Jesus, and who are we because of Him?

**Today’s Big Idea:** We Are No Longer Separated From God Because of Sin

**Leader Reminders:**

* The focus of today’s small group discussion should be around the sin and idol areas in students’ lives. Help them get specific. Create an atmosphere of confession and transparency. You want to address in conversation the important theological concepts of Heaven, Hell, sin, separation from God, death, and Jesus’ atoning work on the cross. This is heavy stuff, and it might be easy to want to water it down. Don’t—it’s too important! Instead, talk about these things with so much grace and humility, bathed in prayer.
* An important part of spiritual formation and leading students is to leave room to allow students to disagree with you. Don’t shut students down if they have the courage to question you. Instead, ask questions back to them. Don’t embarrass them, but say something like, “You know, that’s a great question or a good point. I’ve thought about that, too. What about this, though? How do you reconcile this?” Or, simply say, “Hey, I love that you are wrestling with this. We all need to be asking questions and owning our faith. I don’t have an answer for you right now, but let me do a little research this week, and we can circle back to this subject next time.”
* If you have shy student(s) in your group, shake things up to draw them out. Instead of asking discussion questions like normal, try having students write down their responses on a piece of paper first. Give them a few minutes, and then go in a circle and have them each share what they wrote. Or, say something like, “For this next question, I want you to discuss it in partners and then tell the group what you came up with.”
* As always, the goal of your small group is to disciple your students. You don’t want to create a holy huddle that doesn’t get out and live what you learn about. Always be thinking of ways to challenge your students to action. Help them look for easy ways to start serving. Especially in the teenage years, serving can be a major catalyst for spiritual growth because it gets their eyes off of themselves. Think about organizing a service or “As Yourself” project in your community for your group, or constantly be thinking of how you could help the needs of the church by directing your students toward serving in the nursery, being on the greeting or parking team, etc.

**Icebreaker:**

* Give any **announcements**
* **Soccer Ball/Hot Seat**
* **Happy, Crappy, God Moment**
* **The Other Six Devotional Follow Up:** Did anything change as far as anxiety this past week? What is shifting inside you as you are focusing on who Jesus is and who you are because of Him?
* **Prayer Requests, Praises, and Prayer** *Have a student pray for all of the prayer requests given*
* Answer an **“Ask it Basket”** question if you are doing this.

**Starter Question:**

* Someone share a funny story about how you luckily “got off the hook” for something you did wrong.

**Digging into the Word:** *Have a student read* ***Mark 15:21–41.***

* What do you know about crucifixion?
* Why was Jesus crucified? Do you think this was His plan?
* What does Jesus mean about the temple? [**Leader Note:** Jesus meant that He was the temple.]
* Do you think God was in control of what happened to Jesus? Why or why not? (verse 30)
* What does Jesus mean when He says, “My God my God, why have you abandoned me?” Why would God abandon Jesus? (verses 33–36) [**Leader Note:** A holy God cannot be near sin. It separates. Jesus absorbed our sin on the cross. Jesus was alone on the cross and cut off from God because of our sin.]

**Wrapping It Up:**

**Application Questions:**

* What does Jesus’ crucifixion have to do with love? How does God’s love for you draw you to Him?
* How would you rate your sin on a scale of 1 to 10? [**Leader Note:** This is a trick question to see what they believe about the nature of sin. They likely won’t say 10—because they probably don’t see their sin as “that bad” or “as bad as other people’s.” They also probably don’t see sin as that serious or that it separates them from God.]
* Do you think sin has different levels? Do you think some people need to be forgiven more than others? What do you need to be forgiven of?
* Here’s a tough one, who do you need to forgive?
* How would you define the word “idol”?

**Activity:** [**Youth Pastor Note:** Google “Timothy Keller Idol Chart.” There is a page that has a list of idols and each one starts with, “Life only has meaning/I only have worth if …” Print off this assessment for each student. Have each student fill out this questionnaire and star the idols that are the biggest in their life. This assessment is so helpful because often people don’t realize they have sin in their life that is rooted in idolatry. It’s a tool that can help students go deeper. Then, have them discuss or share one of their idols.]

*Now have a student read* ***Romans 3:23–24.***

* After looking at this idols list, reading that passage in Romans, and coming to grips with the fact that you are a sinner who cannot save himself from wrath and death, what does Jesus’ death on the cross mean for you and for those who don’t yet follow Jesus? What is He offering on the cross?
* Think about these familiar feelings and what Jesus’ death on the cross means for each of them: loneliness, feeling distant from God, shame over things that you’ve done or that have been done to you, fear of death? What does Jesus’ death and resurrection mean for each of these experiences?
* What is God speaking to your heart about your next step? What is God calling you to? How is He shaping your identity?

**Challenge:** Have students rip up their idols assessment page. Explain that although it’s helpful to take a look into your heart to see that you are a sinner in need of salvation, that should not be our focus. Instead, challenge students to fix their eyes on Jesus this week, spending unhurried time with Him without distractions. Challenge them to get out into nature, leave their phone at home, and just meditate on God’s love for them, proved by Jesus on the cross. Give them each the handout and encourage them to simply think the statements over and over again.

*“God loves me. I am His treasured child. He would do anything to get me back if I got lost and He did. He died for me. I am clean. I am forgiven of all my sin. God has a purpose for my life. I want to bring Him glory and enjoy His love. Thank you, Jesus.”*

Remind them, that they can also use their “Other Six” devotional to guide their time this week.

**Prayer Prompt:** Give students individual time to pray and meditate for a few minutes to close your group.

**Stay Connected:** Text students a picture of your “Other Six” devotional this week and say something like, “Wow! It’s been powerful this week, meditating on God’s love for me in sending Jesus to the cross. I highly encourage you to sneak away for some unhurried time in His presence today. Love you guys!” Also, post the follow-up social media graphic and devo for the week so your students see it!