

This midweek study will explore why it's important for students to recognize all humanity is guilty of sin and in need of a Savior. Use the following main points, Scriptures, teaching/discussion ideas, and questions to help students gain a better understanding of the essential doctrine for this session.

Essential Doctrine: Guilt and Shame

Guilt refers to the objective status of someone being found guilty for a wrong committed, as well as the incurring of punishment that comes with it (Matt. 5:21-22; Jas. 2:10). Shame is the emotional pain that comes from sinful actions. Scripture teaches that human beings are guilty in an objective sense, and also feel the weight of shame in a subjective sense.

1 Guilt and shame are real.

(Rom. 7:25–8:8)

Option: Call for a show of hands from all students who feel holy today. State that we may not feel as if we are living holy lives because of the guilt and shame we carry as a result of sin. However, if we've accepted Christ as Savior, we are holy in His eyes.

- ▶ *What is something all people are guilty of? (sin)*

Read Romans 7:25–8:8.

- ▶ *How do these verses describe our battle with sin? What is the difference between being ruled by sin and living according to the Spirit of God?*

A battle is being waged even now between your flesh and the Spirit living within you. The flesh longs to please self, war with God, and seek death. The Spirit longs to please God, have peace with God, and seek life.

- ▶ *When was the last time you felt the sting of guilt and shame because of sin in your life?*

Guilt is one of the common emotions people of all ages experience as a result of their consciences condemning them for their actions or inactions.

2 Guilt and shame point to our sin.

(Lev. 1:3-9; Ps. 103:8-14)

- ▶ *When was the last time someone told on you or called you out for something? Do you think they were justified in doing so? Why or why not?*

Read Leviticus 1:3-9.

According to the *Holman New Testament Commentary*, when God reminded the sinner of a particular shortcoming in the Old Testament, the person would then offer a sin or guilt offering.

- ▶ *How do you know when you've sinned? What do you usually do to try to make up for or atone for your sin?*

Guilt and shame highlight the sin within our lives. This is seen pretty clearly in the Old Testament sacrificial system, in which the burnt offering was intended to remove an individual's guilt through the specific sacrifice of an innocent animal. This was intended to highlight the despicable nature of sin and what it costs to be made right with God again.

Read Psalm 103:8-14.

The psalmist used the analogy of a courtroom and God as the judge.

- ▶ *How is this scene similar to or different from what it's like when we get in trouble at home or at school?*

Even though we deserve to be punished for our sins, God is compassionate.

3 Guilt and shame point to our need for a Savior.

(Heb. 9:12)

Read Hebrews 9:12.

While guilt and shame highlight the sin within our lives, they also point to our need for an ultimate Savior—one who can permanently erase the penalty of sin, unlike the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament. Thankfully, we don't have to offer sacrifices to atone for guilt today since Jesus obtained eternal redemption through His blood.

- ▶ *Why was Jesus' blood sufficient to forgive us of our sins?*

Jesus offered His life as the perfect sacrifice, paying for our sins once and for all.

- ▶ *How will you live differently knowing your sin has been totally paid for?*

When you mess up, you must confess your sin, allow Christ to restore you, and set out again to live a holy life for Christ.

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ *Are you still holding on to guilt and shame as a result of sin in your life?*

Reread Romans 8:1.

- ▶ *What does "in Christ" mean? What difference should this make each day?*

We all sin and suffer consequences, but not condemnation.

Distribute note cards and lead students to list sins they've been unwilling to give up. Distribute red markers and invite students who are ready to give their sins to Christ to write *Paid In Full* across their note cards.