Bad to the Bone

Doctrinal Truth – Sin

Scope and Sequence

Students will learn the true nature of the human condition and be challenged to humbly repent.

Lesson Objective

**We are all bad to the bone.**

Sticky

Statement

Romans 5:12

Key Verse

**Total Depravity:** *“every part of a sinner – mind, emotion, and will – is corrupted by sin. Therefore, man is unable to do anything to merit salvation”*

Definitions

1. A PowerPoint is available for this lesson.

Checklist

1. Optional video: Grave Digger: The Definition of a Monster Truck: <https://teachersource.wol.org/resource/SBS20/13-1/> (Hook)
2. The Scripture Reference cards (Lesson Content)
3. Optional music video: “My Sin is Nailed” video: <https://teachersource.wol.org/resource/SBS20/13-2/> (Next Steps)

Resources

and

References

1. Video: Grave Digger: The Definition of a Monster Truck: <https://teachersource.wol.org/resource/SBS20/13-1/>
2. Dr. Chris Thurman. *“Self-Help or Self-Destruction”*
3. Cornish, Rick. *“5 Minute Theologian: Maximum Truth in Minimum Time”*
4. What’s So Good About Original Sin? By Crispin Sartwell. May 21, 2018: Thoughts printed in the New York Times about original sin (Reference only) <https://teachersource.wol.org/resource/SBS20/13-3/>.
5. “My Sin is Nailed” video: <https://teachersource.wol.org/resource/SBS20/13-2/>

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LESSON OVERVIEW

**We are all bad to the bone.**

1. **History** Supports the Belief that **We Are All Bad to the Bone.**
2. **Scripture** Clearly Tells us that **We Are All Bad to the Bone.** (Ecclesiastes 7:20)
3. **We are all bad to the bone** because we **act** sinfully.
   * 1. Sins of **commission** (Matthew 15:18-19)
     2. Sins of **omission** (James 4:17)
4. **We are all bad to the bone** because we have a **sin** **nature**. (1 Corinthians 2:14; James 4:1-3; Romans 7:15; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 5:12)

**Total depravity:** *“every part of a sinner – mind, emotion, and will – is corrupted by sin. Therefore, man is unable to do anything to merit salvation.”*

1. Being Bad to the Bone Brings Terrible **Consequences**.
2. Being bad to the bone will **destroy** us.
   * 1. **Minimizing** or **redefining** sin
     2. **Justifying** sin
     3. **Rejecting** our only hope of rescue, Jesus Christ
3. Being bad to the bone brings **death** (Romans 5:12; 6:23)

* Give thanks to God every day this week for saving you.
* Help someone else find freedom from sin
* Find a friend and ask for their help in your personal battles with sin.

**We are all bad to the bone.**

GENERAL LESSON INFORMATION

Teacher’s Note: *Since the name of this module is “Nailed: The Death of Sin,” consider playing the optional music video either before or after the teaching part of your youth group time. The link to the music video can be found here:* [*https://teachersource.wol.org/resource/SBS20/13-2/*](https://teachersource.wol.org/resource/SBS20/13-2/)*.*

HOOK

Does anyone recognize the name, Dennis Anderson? *[Allow for responses.]* Dennis is one of the most famous names in monster truck history. Is anyone here a monster truck fan? *[Allow for responses.]* If you know anything about monster trucks, you probably know that Dennis Anderson is a legend, the creator and former driver of the iconic monster truck named Grave Digger. Grave Digger’s theme song is “Bad to the Bone.”

Teacher’s Note: *If you are choosing to use the optional video, introduce and play the following video. This optional video briefly introduces Dennis Anderson and the Grave Digger story: “Grave Digger: The Definition of a Monster Truck* [*https://teachersource.wol.org/resource/SBS20/13-1/*](https://teachersource.wol.org/resource/SBS20/13-1/)*.*

Dennis was not always a successful monster truck driver. In fact, being a part of something like Monster Jam was never one of his life goals. He was just a guy who loved building and working on cars and trucks.

He started off with a 1957 Ford pickup body on a truck with tractor tires and whatever parts he could find. The other competitors in the competition would trash-talk and give him a hard time. He just responded, “I’ll take this old junky thing and dig you a grave with it!” It wasn’t long before the nickname “Grave Digger” stuck. The Halloween-themed paint job that the truck soon received has made it a fan favorite ever since.

Modern monster trucks like Grave Digger are amazing! Their tires are 5 ½ feet (1.68 m) tall and 43 inches (109.22 cm) wide. The truck itself is around 12 feet (3.66 m) high, weighs 10,000 pounds (4,535.92 kg), and produces 1,450 horsepower (5-6 times the amount of an average car).

As you might imagine, the cost of maintaining a monster truck is also amazing, amazingly hard on the bank account! If you were going to run a monster truck, prepare to spend $10,000 for each new set of tires. Fuel economy needs to be figured in gallons per mile, not miles per gallon! A single blast of the engine to run 300 feet will burn up to 8 gallons of fuel. Driving the truck hard for one mile will consume 140 gallons! And then there are all the parts you have to replace if you break the truck while driving it in competition.

The nature of monster trucks requires a monster bank account. If you don’t have at least $2,000,000 to spend on truck maintenance, don’t get into the sport. You could say it’s not a good first truck for a student to own. Maybe it also explains why Grave Digger’s theme song is “Bad to the Bone.”

But Grave Digger is not alone in being bad to the bone. You are too, and so am I. That’s the message of the Bible through and through. Because of our sinful human nature, every person who has ever lived (except Jesus Christ) is rotten to the core. **We are all bad to the bone**. We are not good people who occasionally slip up or choose evil. We are bad people, sinners to the core, fundamentally flawed from the day we were born.

LESSON CONTENT

Teacher’s Note: *In this next section, there are several passages to read. Be sure to hand the Scripture Reading cards out prior to teaching the lesson. Call on each student to read the verse out loud when needed.*

Tonight’s lesson is the first of a four-part series on the topic of sin. Our series is called *“Nailed: The Death of Sin.”* As we begin tonight’s lesson, it is only fair to warn you that we plan to give you the bad news first. In fact, we want you to prepare to hear some really difficult, if not disturbing, things first. We will get to the good news eventually but brace yourself for the bad news first. As we said before, **we are all bad to the bone** and we don’t have to look very far to prove this point.

1. **History** Supports the Belief that **We Are All Bad to the Bone.**

History books are loaded with evidence of our sinful human condition. Despite the claims of modern psychology and secular, humanistic thinkers that people are basically good, there has not been one culture in all of human history that has broken free from sin. Listen to this quote from psychologist Dr. Chris Thurman, “If people were basically good, wouldn’t we find at least one culture somewhere on the planet that is full of good people and relatively free from corruption? Seems to me that those who suggest we are basically good want to argue out of both sides of their mouth: ‘People are basically good, but there are hardly any good people in the world and the world is such a mess.’” No, we are not “basically good people” who occasionally slip up, **we are all bad to the bone.** But history is not the only way to know this truth.

1. **Scripture** Clearly Tells us that **We Are All Bad to the Bone.** (Ecclesiastes 7:20)

Scripture agrees with history. Well, really, history just proves Scripture to be correct. Ecclesiastes 7:20 is one of the clearest Bible statements that **we are all bad to the bone.** *[Read Ecclesiastes 7:20.]* Do those words rock your world? They should. God is saying in no uncertain terms that you have sinned against Him. We all have sinned against Him. **We are all bad to the bone.**

1. We are all bad to the bone because we **act** sinfully.

We all have consciously chosen sin. We may have ***done***sinful actions, ***thought***sinful thoughts, or ***said***sinful words. One way or another, we have all sinned. God doesn’t leave any wiggle room. All of us – 100% of the human population – have sinned. Do you believe God is telling us the truth?

We are going to do something a little different tonight. If you believe that **we are all bad to the bone**, stand and raise your right hand, and repeat ***the first part*** of the sinner’s pledge after me.

“I, *[Insert your name.]*, am a dirty, rotten sinner.”

It’s true! Thank you for participating. You can be seated. We are all sinners and there are at least two types of sin.

* + 1. Sins of **commission** (Matthew 15:18-19)

These are ***things we do*** that we shouldn’t do. Listen to the words from Matthew 5:18-19. *[Read Matthew 5:18-19.]* Sins of commission are sinful actions that we ***commit***, things that we do. But that is not the only way we sin. There are sins of ***omission*** as well.

* + 1. Sins of **omission** (James 4:17)

These are ***things we don’t do*** that God expects us to do. James 4:17 says that when we know to do good but don’t do it, it is sin. *[Read James 4:17.]*

For example, we should pray without ceasing, but we don’t. We should trust in the Lord with all our heart but we don’t. We should love our neighbors as much as we love ourselves, but we love ourselves too much to do that consistently. We should give thanks in everything, not just the things that go our way, but we don’t. These are sins of omission and there are a lot more that we could list, aren’t there? Even if you didn’t want to use God’s Word as your standard of right and wrong, we all fall short of even our own standards. We don’t even keep the standards that we set for ourselves. The evidence is clear; the truth is out. We are all dirty, rotten sinners. **We are all bad to the bone.**

Just do the math. If, by some miracle, each of us committed only three sins per day (one sinful word, one sinful thought, and one sinful action) that would add up to 1,095 sins per year. That works out to 14,235 sins by the time you are thirteen and 19,710 sins by the time you turn eighteen!

Can you imagine standing before any judge in the world with nearly 20,000 criminal offenses against you and trying to make the case, “I really am a good person”? We are either lying to ourselves or just plain naïve if we think we are good people deep down inside. **We are all bad to the bone.** But it gets worse before it gets better. We not only act sinfully, but we also have another problem.

1. **We are all bad to the bone** because we have a **sin** **nature**. (1 Corinthians 2:14; James 4:1-3; Romans 7:15; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 5:12)

In his excellent little book, *5 Minute Theologian*, Rick Cornish cuts to the chase about sin. Listen to how he describes it, “The Fall (of Adam into sin) poisoned every human capacity so that all human nature is tainted by sin’s infection.”

Things may look presentable on the outside, but every part of us is corrupted by sin, just like every part of a human body would be infected by a bloodstream full of viruses. This corruption is called depravity, which means that mankind is unable to do anything to merit salvation. If you ever hear someone talk of ***total depravity****,* they are ***not*** saying that everyone is as bad as they could possibly be. *“Total depravity”* simply means that *“every part of a sinner – mind, emotion, and will – is corrupted by sin. Therefore, man is unable to do anything to merit salvation.”*

*● [Have a student read 1 Corinthians 2:14.]* Unless God intervenes, sinful minds will reject God’s Word as foolish.

*● [Have a student read James 4:1-3.]* This is also why our desires are bent on pleasing ourselves, not God or others. We sin against others because we selfishly want what we want. From the time we were babies, we are bent toward living according to our own desires.

*● [Have a student read Romans 7:15.]* Total depravity also explains why we choose to sin even when we know we won’t like the consequences.

The problem is our wicked hearts. When Adam and Eve sinned against God by eating the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden (from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil), it was like the “virus” of sin was set loose in our bloodstream. We could also say this curse deformed our “DNA,” passing on this sinful nature to every succeeding generation.

Listen to the words of Jeremiah 17:9. *[Have a student read Jeremiah 17:9.]* Which part of us is deceitful and desperately wicked? *[Allow for an answer.]* That’s right, the heart.

We have all the evidence we need to prove we have a sin problem. So, if anyone denies it, blames others, or comes up with excuses, it is because we are too proud to admit that we are the root of the problem. The sin problem of all humanity is rooted in humanity’s sinful nature. There is no way around it. **We are all bad to the bone.**

In fact, if we were to deny that we have sinned, it would only make God’s point more clearly. Listen to the words of 1 John 1:8. *[Ask a student to read 1 John 1:8.]* This verse reminds us that if we do not believe we are sinners, we are lying to ourselves and denying reality.

So, now it’s time for part two of the sinner’s pledge. We are going to simply add three words. If you believe you have a sin problem, stand and raise your right hand, and repeat after me:

“I, *[Insert your name.]*, am a dirty, rotten sinner ***to the core***.”

You may be seated. It’s true. There is no way around it, but who cares? No one’s perfect, right? What’s the big deal? The big deal is this, being bad to the bone brings terrible consequences.

1. Being Bad to the Bone Brings Terrible **Consequences**.
2. Being bad to the bone will **destroy** us.

How many of you have ever fallen down a flight of stairs? *[Ask for a show of hands.]* Moral destruction happens as easily as falling down a flight of stairs. All it takes is one wrong step at the top, and then gravity takes over. People say, “It’s not the fall that kills you. It’s the sudden stop at the end.” In the same way, those who step off the top step of the moral staircase begin a nasty fall toward destruction. It’s a painful way to go, and it requires that we numb our minds and hearts to the pain we experience in reality. But it’s the only alternative for those who reject God and His diagnosis of our problem.

The first misstep that leads to a tumble into moral destruction is when we minimize or redefine sin.

* + 1. Minimizing or redefining sin

Here is an example of minimizing sin. On August 20, 1989, two brothers (in their late teens or early twenties), Erik & Lyle Menendez, killed both of their parents in their own home with a 12-gauge shotgun. It was a gruesome case, and both young men were sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

When arguing for their release, their lawyer, Leslie Abramson, said about one of them, “Erik Menendez is a good person who did a bad thing.” Let that statement sink in for a minute. That is a hard line to swallow, isn’t it? Does she really believe that the first-degree murder of parents is only “a bad thing”?

Not doing your homework is a bad thing. Eating too many donuts is a bad thing. First-degree murder of his parents is only “bad”? What do they need? A slap on the hand? Clearly, she minimized this heinous act.

There is a huge difference between moral bad and moral evil. When you redefine sin, you are at best creating your own moral gauge; at worst you are throwing away the moral gauge altogether. Without a moral standard, there would be no way of figuring out what is good, bad, or downright evil. When we try to redefine morality, what is “bad” today could become tolerated tomorrow and justified not long afterward.

* + 1. Justifying sin

If we do not believe that the source of the problem is within us, then we must believe that the source of our problems is outside of us. If that is the case, we can find an excuse. In other words, we justify our sin.

For example, instead of owning our laziness or poor priorities that kept us from trying to do our homework, we might say, “I didn’t have time.” It’s not us; it’s our circumstances! We claim innocence, never realizing that we are tumbling toward moral destruction. Denying that we have a sin problem does nothing to improve our situation or to fix our problems. It just makes us feel better about ourselves for the time being.

* + 1. **Rejecting** our only hope of rescue, Jesus Christ

The “sudden stop at the bottom” is when we reject Jesus Christ. He is our only hope of rescue. **We are all bad to the bone** and by rejecting Jesus we are “digging our own grave.” Judgment day is coming. One day we will all have to give an account for our lives to the God who made us. If you would rather feel good about yourself now by minimizing and justifying the reality of your sin, just know that the consequences of sin get worse than moral destruction.

1. Being bad to the bone brings **death** (Romans 5:12; 6:23)

Everyone, please turn to Romans 5:12. This verse will help us understand the “big deal” about sin. *[Have a student read Romans 5:12.]* The sin that corrupts us is passed down from one generation to another. The death rate is still 100% because every one of us is a sinner. Listen to another verse from the Book of Romans. *[Have a student read Romans 6:23a.]* The payment for sin is death and death passed upon all men because all have sinned. **We are all bad to the bone** but there is hope.

CONNECTION

There is hope and there is help for every sinner. His name is Jesus Christ. *[Read Romans 6:23b.]* Through His death on the cross, He proved His love for us by taking our sins upon Himself. In fact, my sin, your sin, is why He died on the cross! He died for all of us who are bad to the bone.

He never sinned once (2 Corinthians 5:21) – not in thought, word, or action; He didn’t ***deserve*** to die. He ***chose*** to die in our place to pay the penalty for sin. Our sin was “nailed” to the cross and that was the death of sin. You can be set free from the burden of guilt by believing in Jesus. It begins by being willing to admit that you are a sinner, that you are bad to the bone.

If you humble yourself and admit your sinful condition to God, Romans 5:18-19 explains, Jesus takes our sin on Himself and gives us the gift of His righteousness. In other words, we are saved from the penalty of our sins! “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). You don’t have to face the consequences of sin. Jesus already did that for you, but you do have to be humble enough to admit that you need a Savior.

Maybe you already believe in Jesus. If so, we want to remind you that when Jesus died on the cross, your sin was nailed to the cross. It has been put to death; it doesn’t have to dominate you. Don’t mess around with it, or it will lead to moral destruction.

CHOICE

If in listening to God’s Word today you are willing to own that you are bad to the bone, then what is next for you is simple. Pray, and ask God to save you. Humbly admit to God in your own words that you are a sinner. There are no magic phrases. Just be honest that you have sinned against God, and then ask Him for forgiveness. Tell Him that you believe that Jesus is the only way for you to gain forgiveness for your sin.

Don’t be afraid that He will reject you. He won’t! If we confess our sins, He promises to forgive (1 John 1:9). He never makes exceptions to His promises because He never has bad days. He is *so* unlike us – morally pure and wholly good! And He is rich in mercy, overflowing with compassion for sinners who repent. *[Allow some time for the students to pray.]*

Teacher’s Note: *If your students need help in verbalizing what they already believe in their hearts, you could help them call on Jesus with the following invitation.*

If you’re here today and have never accepted this free gift of eternal life, I invite you to do that right now. If you would like to put your faith in Jesus Christ, I invite you to pray this prayer silently along with me right now. This is not a magic prayer, but simply a way to tell God verbally what you believe in your heart. With every head bowed and every eye closed, you could tell God what you already believe. You could say,

Dear God, I know that my sins have broken my relationship with You. I know that I am “bad to the bone” and that nothing I could do could ever change that. But right now, I believe that Jesus died in my place and rose again from the dead. I trust Him to forgive me for my sins. Through faith in Him, I am entering an eternal relationship with You. Thank You for this free gift! In Jesus’ name, amen.

If this is something you have more questions about, please talk to your small group leader. They would love to help answer any questions you have.

Teacher’s Note: *Invite anyone who trusted Christ to come to see you after the meeting so you can follow up with them.*

NEXT STEPS

Once you have confessed your sins to Jesus asking Him to forgive you, the next steps are simple. Here are a few things you could do this week. Choose one and tell your small group which one you chose.

● Give thanks to God every day this week for saving you. Make a point, every day this week, to specifically thank God for saving you from sin. Thank Him for His undeserved kindness. Praise God for not giving you what you deserve. If you want to, sing praise songs and hymns that honor Jesus Who gave His life for us.

● Help someone else find freedom from sin. Share with someone you know how you trusted Jesus as Savior. Share with them how even though you were “bad to the bone,” Jesus died for you.

● Find a friend and ask for their help in your personal battles with sin. Be humble and honest with others about your own struggles with sin. There are no spiritual giants who single-handedly dominate sin. When God saves us, we join the ranks of the redeemed – simple sinners saved by grace. And we ought to be there to help one another with accountability and encouragement. One of the reasons God created the church was to help us fight sin together.

Which one of these will you do? As we head into small groups, be sure to talk about this with your small group leader.

Teacher’s Note: *If you have chosen to use the optional music video, play it as the students move into small groups:* [*https://teachersource.wol.org/resource/SBS20/13-2/*](https://teachersource.wol.org/resource/SBS20/13-2/)*.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**1. What are things you’ve seen that indicate that all humanity is bad to the bone?** *(We have to lock our doors/cars, mass shootings, abortions, broken relationships, etc. Make sure that the answers to this stay focused. Be sure not to allow sin to be glorified as you discuss the evil in the world around us.)*

**2. What kind of sins do you feel like teen guys/teen girls struggle with the most?** *(Work together to list the top five most common struggles with sin that teens have. It could be in the areas of sexual sin or in attitudes of disrespect toward authorities. Some people have the gift (or curse) of a quick tongue, but they constantly use it to cut others down and feel helpless to get it under control. It could be a struggle with anger or materialism or some sort of addiction. Whatever the list ends up highlighting, point out that we are all flawed in many ways, but we struggle with some sins more than others. Encourage teens to be aware of their greatest temptations, then pray diligently, learn Bible verses, and take extra steps to protect themselves in these areas. Practices like accountability, avoiding compromising situations, etc. will help them to be alert and keep their guard up!)*

**3. What action step will you take this week since you know that Jesus paid the price for sin when He died on the cross** *(Use the Next Steps portion of the lesson. Ask which one of the challenges they have chosen for this week. 1. Give thanks to God every day this week for saving you. 2. Help someone else find freedom from sin. 3. Find a friend and ask for their help in your personal battles with sin. Be sure to follow up with each student to help them with their commitment. Also, be sure that you, as the small group leader, choose one of these and allow your students to keep you accountable.)*

