

Notes And Helps to Instructors

Thank you for volunteering to lead a group through the treasures of God's word! You may feel overwhelmed or inadequate, but you can do this! The leader notes are designed to help you grow in knowledge and love for Christ and for you to help pass what you have received to your group. Here are some suggestions to help equip you to grow in your teaching and leading ability.

- These lessons could simply be read, and a group would receive something but that is not how they are designed. The notes are designed to grow you as a leader so you might tailor the lesson for the needs of your group. Some groups may not have much of a knowledge base in the bible, so the concepts must be brought down to their level. Other groups may have a large knowledge base and you may challenge them with more information. The key is to know your group. If you begin leading a group in one way and find that it is not connecting, it is alright to modify and bring down or raise up the level of information.
- The more preparation you do the stronger you will be as a leader. Let the study material be a joy for you! Let it feed you as you prepare! The more you are fed the more you have to give to your group.
- There is no set time on how long a lesson may take. Lessons could be slowed down and take several weeks to finish. Perhaps in leading a group, one question captivates the group and leads to a fruitful conversation. If that happens, that is good! You are in no hurry. If you can finish the material in a week, then great! But if it takes several, that is great as well! The important thing is that they receive deeply from the gospel of Jesus.
- Pray about your lesson! Pray as you prepare! Pray as you teach! Remember we do not teach or exercise our gifts in our own strength. The Holy Spirit is the one who opens the heart and mind. Pray for the Spirit to move in your heart and the heart of the group.

May our merciful Triune God bless your study and your group that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith-- that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

In Christ,

Prison Discipleship Ministry

Lessons in Life -- Lesson 7 – Sin Comes to Eden Part 4

Introduction: In Genesis 3:4-5 we see that Satan lies to Eve by saying, "you shall not surely die." He then promises Eve that she will "be like God knowing good and evil." In 3:6-7 we see Eve's response.

Read this passage at least five times then answer the questions as best you can:

⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. (Gen. 3:6-7 NKJ)

What does Eve see when she looks at the tree? (3 things)

What does this teach you about using your own wisdom instead of God's wisdom? Give one example.

We see from verses 5 and 6 that this disobedience was driven by a lust (desirable) to be God. Pick a common sin and explain how the same element – the lust to be God – is at the root of it.

Think about a broken relationship in your past. How did your lust to be God play into that conflict?

If I gave you a video camera and sent you in a time machine back to the Garden of Eden and had you video the first sin which is the root of all violence, drug deals, murders, wars, etc., all you would see is a woman taking a piece of fruit and giving it to her husband to eat. It doesn't look like much. What does this tell us about sin?

Lessons in Life -- Lesson 7 – Sin Comes to Eden Part 4

Introduction: In Genesis 3:4-5 we see that Satan lies to Eve by saying, “you shall not surely die.” He then promises Eve that she will “be like God knowing good and evil.” In 3:6-7 we see Eve’s response.

Read this passage at least five times then answer the questions as best you can:

⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. (Gen. 3:6-7 NKJ)

What does Eve see when she looks at the tree? (3 things)

1. It was good for food.
2. It was pleasant to the eyes.
3. It was desirable to make one wise.

Notice the similarity in these three things to 1 John 2:16:

“15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world-- the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life-- is not from the Father but is from the world. 17 And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. (ESV)”

Gen 3:6 and 1 John 2:16

1. Good for food -- desires of the flesh
2. Pleasant to the eyes -- desire of the eyes
3. Desirable to make one wise -- pride (or quality) of life.

These three things are the things that have captivated all sinful hearts since the fall.

Note that even before she has acted upon her sin, she has sinned in her heart (her mind) against God. There is not anything wrong with recognizing that the tree is good for food and pleasant to the eyes, but she is using these to rationalize and ease her way into “desirable to make one wise” which is clearly a sin. The utility (“good for food”) and beauty (“pleasant to the eyes”) become the ramp that leads down to her sin – the lust to

be wise. She is reasoning in her mind from nature to herself rather than from God to nature and herself. The beauty and utility of God's creation become in her mind facilitators to her sin. The creation – its utility and beauty – must always be understood and interpreted through God's Word.

What does this teach you about using your own wisdom instead of God's wisdom? Give one example.

The bible teaches us that God's wisdom is perfect, pure, good, and true. Our wisdom, no matter how much we learn is still subject to the fall. We need wisdom that is from outside of us. We need wisdom that is perfect, pure, good, and true. That is the wisdom which comes from God, our creator, sustainer, and lord. It is he who has the knowledge we need and can trust.

Listen to the words of the proverbs:

⁷ The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge,
But fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Prov. 1:7 NKJ)

Proverbs calls one who does not listen to God's instruction a fool. Not to listen to God is to despise Him and His Word.

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own understanding.
6 In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths
7 Be not wise in your own eyes;
fear the LORD,
and turn away from evil.
8 It will be healing to your flesh
and refreshment to your bones. (Pro 3:5-8 ESV)

We are called to not trust our own understanding but lean on God's understanding.

¹² There is a way that seems right to a man,
but its end is the way to death. (Pro 14:12 ESV)

All humans think we are acting rightly, but left to ourselves our choices all lead to death, where following God leads to life.

When it comes to looking for an example, let them share! Let the Spirit search their hearts and lives to bring up examples. When we listen here, we can hear their heart and learn more about how we can apply the gospel to their lives, heart, pain, and hear what guilt, shame, and sins they bear.

We see from verses 5 and 6 that this disobedience was driven by a lust (desirable) to be God. Pick a common sin and explain how the same element – the lust to be God – is at the root of it.

There are literally thousands of examples one can bring. Walk down the road with them of tracing how sin moves, works, and grows. Here is an example from James 4. Notice in this passage how our lusts lead to murder, coveting, fights, wars, etc. Notice, also, how this leads to broken relationships.

^{NKJ} **James 4:1** Where do wars and fights *come* from among you? Do *they* not *come* from your *desires* for pleasure that war in your members?

² You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.

³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.

⁴ Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

⁵ Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?

⁶ But He gives more grace. Therefore, He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

⁷ Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded. (Jas. 4:1-8 NKJ)

Sin never stays alone. It always moves and grows to other sins.

Think about a broken relationship(s) in your past. How did your lust to be God play into that conflict?

Again, listen to them here. Let the Spirit search them, show them things, and work. Let them share their heart with you and show you where the Spirit is working so you can bring the gospel to them specifically. If they have trouble thinking of examples, here are a few:

How did your lust affect your relationship with a parent?

How did your lust affect your marriage and/or your relationships with women?

For men -- How does this lust keep you going from woman to woman and never marrying any of them?

For women -- How does this lust keep you going from man to man and never marrying any of them?

(For homosexual men or women -- re-word as appropriate.)

How does this lust affect the children you have had with these women/men?

How does your inability to have a stable marriage affect boys and/or girls in particular?

If I gave you a video camera and sent you in a time machine back to the Garden of Eden and had you video the first sin which is the root of all violence, drug deals, murders, wars, etc., all you would see is a woman taking a piece of fruit and giving it to her husband to eat. It doesn't look like much. What does this tell us about sin?

All the video camera sees is a woman who goes over to a tree, takes a piece of fruit and eats some of it. She then gives it to her husband, and he eats. This tells us that sin may not look that dramatic, but sin must always be understood in its relationship to God, His Word, and the consequences that it brings because one has disobeyed His Word.

Sin may not look dangerous. It may even be considered a "victimless crime." But sin does not stay alone. Sin grows and sin affects so much more than we see at the time. Think about how one little lie expanded into something bigger and uncontrollable in your life. Think about how one action of sin has affected our lives for the rest of our lives.

If you as the instructor feel connection, you may consider sharing a story from your own life how one sin that seemingly didn't matter grew and moved into something life changing. Remember, we are not those who have arrived, but fellow disciples of Christ who need the grace of Christ just as much as they.

As you listen to their heart, you may have heard how the gospel can bring them the healing of Christ. Where do they feel they need the mercy and grace of Christ most acutely?

The Gospel:

The gospel comes to us so clear in James 4:6-10:

⁶ But He gives more grace. Therefore, He says: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."⁷ Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. (NKJ)

The gospel gives us permission to be weak, to be a failure, to be one who has sinned greatly and is still a sinner. We humble ourselves when we repent of our sins and place our trust in Christ. And in repentance and faith in Christ, humbled under the weight of our sins and the love of Christ, he promises to heal us, save us, and lift us up.

Here are some more questions and ideas for follow up and to bring the gospel home to their lives. Remember, there is no formula. All people are unique, and the grace of Christ comes to them personally. But these questions could be used to help bring the gospel to them personally.

How much does God know about you?

How has God convicted you with this lesson?

How much sin does the grace of God cover?

Go to God and confess your sins to Him.

Ask Him for His grace knowing that you deserve nothing from Him.

God will come near and forgive your sin.

If this is the first time you have ever prayed like this, ask Him to give you full assurance of salvation in Christ alone through faith alone.