

LESSON 66

Putting Off the Old Self

EPHESIANS 4:20 – 5:20



BIBLE TRUTH

CHRISTIANS SHOULD IMITATE CHRIST IN ALL THEY DO

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Ephesians 4:20—5:20 from the Scriptures or read story 144, “Putting Off the Old Self,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

Don’t Cross the Line

SUPPLIES

- ✓ masking tape
- ✓ table
- ✓ a bag of small pretzels

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 15 MIN

Put Off the Old Self Relay

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ men’s dress pants and shirts, tattered and torn—two sets (You can purchase these from a thrift store then slice them up a bit.)
- ✓ men’s dress pants and shirts in good condition—four sets

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 15 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 66—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 15 MIN

Before and After

TOTAL 80 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

We need to put off the old self—Having warned the Ephesians against having callous hearts Paul tells them that they were taught differently than the unbelieving Gentiles (Ephesians 4:17–20). To help them understand how to live, Paul gave the Ephesians a picture of taking off their old nature (the self), much like they would take off an old, tattered coat. Then they were to put on their new nature or self, much the same way as they might then put on a brand new coat (Ephesians 4:22–24). Since Jesus died to destroy the work of sin, we who have the knowledge of Christ should put off the sinful deeds we once knew and live for Jesus.

Each person who has been recreated by God has been recreated to be like him in true righteousness and holiness. The power of sin has been broken, so we should strive to say no to sin and yes to righteousness. As Christians, we are called to live for Christ and not for ourselves or the unbelieving world around us.

We need to live for God—God didn't leave any room for the Ephesians to be confused. After telling them, through Paul, to put off the old self and put on the new, the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to list a number of areas of godly behavior so that Christians would understand just what living for Christ looks like. For example, put off falsehood and speak truth, and put off stealing and work (Ephesians 4:25–29). Aware of the dangers of legalism—trying to earn favor and standing with God through good works—Paul reminds them that their motivation is Christ (Ephesians 4:32). Each time Paul mentions Christ, he reminds them and us of the cross and our salvation in Christ. We put off sin, not because we are trying to get right with God, but because through the work of Christ we have already been made right with God.

Paul sets the standard high—In Ephesians chapter 5, Paul goes after remaining sin with a vengeance. There must not even be a hint of sin! Paul is aware of the deceitful way sin works in the life of a believer. Sin begins with a little compromise, then a little more, until the whole person is given over. Through the book of Ephesians God tells us we should live as children of light, watching carefully how we walk, always giving thanks. Again and again Paul reminds the Ephesians that Christ is the foundation of all that we do (Ephesians 5:20). The truth is, there is no way anyone could live up to Paul's standard apart from the help of the Holy Spirit.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Light versus Darkness

Light and darkness are used in the Bible to describe righteousness and sin, respectively. The apostle John tells us that “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). Peter tells us that when we become Christians, we are called “out of darkness into [God’s] marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). Paul tells us to live as children of the light, avoiding sinful deeds of darkness (Ephesians 5:8–11). Jesus said, “I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness” (John 12:46). Jesus also said that he is “the light of the world” and that anyone who follows him “will have the light of life” (John 8:12).

Where Is the Gospel? _____

How does today’s Bible story fit into God’s greater plan of redemption?

Even though Paul challenged the Ephesians to put off their old selves and live holy lives, he never forgot the gospel of grace. Paul continually reminded the Ephesians that they are following Christ’s obedience, not striking out on their own path. Notice that in Ephesians 5:2, Paul reiterates that Christ willingly gave up his life. The men who crucified Jesus did not force death upon him. Jesus could have called down angels in his defense. Instead, he died willingly that we might all be saved.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Ephesians 4:20—5:20 from the Scriptures or read story 144, “Putting Off the Old Self,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 **10 MIN****Don't Cross the Line****SUPPLIES**

- ✓ masking tape
- ✓ table
- ✓ a bag of small pretzels

Use this activity to talk about the way we might toy with sin.

Lay out a masking tape line on the floor in front of the table and place a pretzel on the table. Position the table about a foot away from the line. (Leave room to move the table as far as three feet away from the masking tape line.) Divide the class into two teams and recruit three volunteers from each team. Have the volunteers stand in teams behind the line and, one by one, reach for the pretzels.

Tell them that you are going to move the table farther and farther from the line to see which team can get to the pretzels without touching the line or the table. At first it will be easy, but later it will become more difficult.

Place five pretzels on the table each time. If they so much as touch the table, they don't get any pretzels. If a team gets the pretzels off the table, give one pretzel to every team member.

Use this illustration as a way to introduce how Christians try to live in righteousness but want to go right up to the line and reach over into sin. Paul tells us there should not even be a hint of sin (see Ephesians 5:3). He goes on to say that we should not even talk about other people's sin (see Ephesians 5:12).

We make a lot of little compromises. Here are a few:

- We withhold the truth to protect ourselves from punishment.
- We use something without permission but justify it because we are going to give it back.
- We say something mean, but then tell a person we were only joking or that we didn't mean it.
- We watch a movie fast-forwarding through what is immoral or impure, but watching the part being fast-forwarded.

Ask the students for additional examples and help them see that we are not to try to reach over into sin and grab what we can as long as we are standing on the right side of the line. Paul tells us to avoid the line altogether.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

OBJECT LESSON 2 15 MIN

Put Off the Old Self Relay

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ men's dress pants and shirts, tattered and torn—two sets (You can purchase these from a thrift store then slice them up a bit.)
- ✓ men's dress pants and shirts in good condition—four sets

Have the class line up in two teams. Place the tattered clothes at the head of each line. Set the nice sets of clothing across the room. Explain that when you say Go, the first person on each team will need to put on the tattered clothing (representing their sin). They are then to run across the room where they will PUT OFF THEIR OLD SINFUL SELF (the tattered clothing) and PUT ON THEIR NEW SELF CREATED IN THE LIKENESS OF GOD (the new clothing). After dressing up in the new clothes, they must pick up the old clothes and carry them back for the next team member in line who will put them on. The relay is finished when all the members of one team complete the task. (Two sets of new clothing should allow the relay to work uninterrupted, but you will have to transport the new clothing to the far side of the room after each person finishes.)

Use this as a fun, energy-exhausting exercise to enable you to capture the class's attention and reinforce the teaching when you have settled the class back down.

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 15 MIN

Put Off and Put On

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Have the class divide their paper in half and draw two contrasting scenes. For example, they could draw one person sitting down and another working, or one person angry and another person happy, etc.

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 15 MIN

Before and After

The point of this exercise is to show how we all need God to help us put off sin.

Invite two church members to share their testimonies. First, invite a person who God radically saved from a rebellious life of sin. Their testimony may contain criminal behavior or even prison. Have them describe how the power of the Spirit helped them put off their old self and put on their new self.

Next, invite a person to come who grew up in a Christian home and was saved by God's grace and never entered into a terribly rebellious life. Have them share how the power of the Spirit helped them put off their old self and put on their new self. (Make sure you explain to your guests what the lesson is about so they can tailor their testimonies to emphasize the part of their lives you want to display.)

Talk with the class about what was different and similar between the two testimonies and how they fit into today's passage in Ephesians.