**Study Series: Chasing God**

Author: Angie Smith

**Lesson Title: “An Affair of the Will” (pp. 19-28)**

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The main point of this lesson is: Our faith and fellowship with God are not based on feelings but on willful obedience.

Focus on this goal: To help adults look beyond their feelings for their security and obedience.

Key Bible Passages: 2 Corinthians 3:18; 4:17-18; 5:14-15

Before the Session

1. **Prepare a display** of various emojis in a large format. (Step 1)

2. **Gather** a few baby or childhood photos from participants. (Step 5)

During the Session

**Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion**

**State** that cell phones provide access to a variety of emojis—symbols intended to communicate our feelings.

**Display** a few emojis and **challenge participants** to identify the feeling.

**State** that sometimes we expect the Christian life to be an endless stream of smiling face emojis. When that does not happen, our personal emoji may become a frowning face, and our faith and fellowship may begin to look like a confused face emoji. This session will focus on the biblical teaching that our faith and fellowship with God are not based on feelings but on willful obedience.

**Step 2. Day One – Trials ≠ Problems**

**Enlist** **two volunteers** to read 2 Corinthians 1:8-10 and 11:23-28.

**Review** the difficulties Paul faced and his response to these trials (Day One, activity 1, p. 19).

**Form small groups** and **challenge** **each group** to create a cycle of emotions Christians might experience when facing hardship. Learners may base their cycles of emotions on a personal experience.

After each group has reported to the class, **state** that trials may cause Christians to stumble in their faith because they are responding to their trials based on feelings, but, as Paul demonstrated, it doesn’t have to be this way.

**Step 3. Day Two – Compelled by Love**

**Enlist a volunteer to read** 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, then **call on learners to share** the verses in their own words (Day Two, activity 1, p. 21).

**Ask participants** to identify the four most important words in those verses: “Christ’s love compels us.”

**Ask:** How can Christ’s love compel us to get past our emotions and respond in obedience, even when times are tough?

**Step 4. Day Three – Obedience Over Feeling**

**Enlist a volunteer to read** 2 Corinthians 4:17-18.

**Lead learners** to close their eyes and imagine themselves in their favorite place.

**Invite them** to give one-word descriptions of what they are seeing with their minds’ eyes.

**Ask learners** to draw spiritual application from that exercise as they describe the tension Christians experience as they live in the “seen” world but are called to live their lives according to the “unseen” world.

**State** that as we focus on the unseen world, we are called to obey God, even when we don’t feel like it.

**Call on learners** to share their answers to Day Three, activity 2 (p. 24).

**Step 5. Day Four – Conforming over Convicting**

**Enlist a volunteer to read** 2 Corinthians 3:18.

**State** that the Christian life is one of ongoing transformation.

**Show** the baby or childhood photos gathered and **challenge learners** to identify who is in each photo.

**State** that God’s transformation in our lives is even more dramatic than our transformations from childhood to adulthood.

**Challenge participants** to identify two truths from this verse (2 Cor. 3:18): (1) Transformation is an (ongoing) (process) and (2) Transformation is the (work) of the (Holy Spirit).

**Call on learners** to discover the words in parentheses by calling out letters of the alphabet until the word is identified.

**Direct learners** to share brief statements about how God has transformed them (Day Four, activity 1, p. 25).

**Affirm** that each person’s transformation is part of his or her Christian testimony.

**Step 6. Day Five – Believing in Uncertainty**

**State** that even as God is in the process of transforming each Christian, we tend to compare ourselves to others who may seem to be more mature in their Christian commitment.

**Discuss** why such comparisons are counter-productive to what God wants for His people.

**Enlist a volunteer to read** Mark 9:14-29.

**State** that it is a human tendency to struggle concurrently with belief and unbelief.

**Invite learners** **to share** their personal experiences with this struggle (Day Five, activity 2, p. 28).

**State** that when we struggle with unbelief, we can take the author’s advice; **read** the last paragraph of Day Five (p. 28).

**Lead learners** to state these two words in unison: I believe, first, quietly, then, with more volume and conviction.

**Step 7. Practical Application - Live Out the Lesson**

**Read** this statement from C. S. Lewis (p. 19): “But the great thing to remember is that, though our feelings come and go, His love for us does not.”

**Ask learners** to pray silently that they will not rely on their feelings in their spiritual lives but will instead choose obedience to God.

After a brief time of silent prayer, **close in prayer**.

After the Session

**Pray** that the individuals in your group will choose obedience over feelings in their commitment to God.

**Write** personal notes to learners who may need encouragement in their Christian walks.