

Study Series: Live No Lies

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Lesson Title: “The Slavery of Freedom” (pp. 164-177)

Session 12

November 19, 2023

The main point of this lesson is: Uncontrolled desires enslave us.

Focus on this goal: To help adults leash their “animal” desires and unleash their deepest desires

Key Bible Passage: Romans 7:14-23; Galatians 5:13-25

Before the Session

Write on a markerboard: I simply cannot resist . . . and I admit I’m kind of addicted to . . . (Steps 1 and 7)

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Draw attention to the two statements written on the board and invite adults to suggest how they might complete one or both of those sentences. Ask: We might be willing to admit we can’t resist sour gummies or are addicted to a reality baking show, but do you think most of us are willing to complete those statements with what we’re really addicted to or can’t resist? Why is that? How might many people in our culture complete those statements and what might be their attitude when doing so? Do those statements and attitudes reflect freedom or slavery? Explain your reasoning.

Analyze the meaning of this session’s title: “The Slavery of Freedom” (p. 164).

Step 2. Defining “Flesh,” Part 1

Determine some situations when adults might hear people state, “The heart wants what the heart wants.” Evaluate how that has become a prevailing belief system of this culture. Determine what people mean by heart with this saying.

Use Day One, activity 1 (pp. 164-165) to identify Paul’s trifecta of enemies of the soul. Guide the group to review from sessions 10-11 what they learned about our first enemy the devil.

Ask: Is it strange to think of your flesh as your enemy? Explain your reasoning. Determine when our flesh is not our enemy, using the first two meanings of sarx explained in Day One (pp. 165-166).

Step 3. Defining “Flesh,” Part 2

Guide the group to use Day Two (pp. 166-168) to define the *sarx* or “flesh” that is the enemy of our soul. Evaluate why this base drive for self-gratification is our enemy.

Analyze how every person, whether they acknowledge it or not, feels the war between their “animal soul” and “divine soul” (p. 167). Guide the group to explore how “all healthy, free people self-edit this inner mix of desires” (p. 167).

Analyze the difference between pleasure and happiness (pp. 167-168). Urge adults to silently consider Day Two, activity 2 (p. 168).

Remind adults this war with the flesh is a war that has already been won by Christ and can be won by His followers. Discuss Day Two, activity 1 (p. 167).

Step 4. Authority vs. Authenticity

Invite someone to read the first paragraph of Day Three (p. 168). Discuss Day Three, activity 1 (p. 168). Invite volunteers to share how they feel about Paul’s honesty regarding his struggle with his flesh and why.

Examine what the writer means by saying culture moved from an authority structure to an authentic structure (p. 169). Explore Augustine’s view of the basic problem of the human condition (p. 169). Consider what it takes to flourish when living with this view of “disordered desires.”

Read or draw attention to the second to last paragraph of Day Three (p. 170). Explain how Freud’s view was radically contrary to Augustine’s view. Ask: If most psychologists now believe Freud got pretty much everything wrong, why do his teachings still shape most of this culture’s worldview?

Step 5. “Be True to Your Self,” Part 1

Challenge adults to identify the source of the phrase “To thine own self be true” (p. 170). Analyze what this statement implies. Discuss Day Four, activity 1 (p. 171). Note we must keep in mind Jeremiah 17:9 refers to an unredeemed heart.

Request a volunteer read Jeremiah 31:31-34. Ask whom we are true to when we have redeemed hearts. Evaluate what happens when people live with the attitude of being true to self rather than to God and His Word. Discuss Day Four, activity 2 (p. 172).

Step 6. “Be True to Your Self,” Part 2

Ask: What must even people whose hearts have not been redeemed acknowledge is unhelpful about the statements, “Be true to yourself,” and “Follow your heart”?

State the author described his own Romans 7 experience with several “I want to . . . but I also want to . . .” statements in Day Five (pp. 172-173). Relate some of those or invite participants to do so. Then guide the group to determine additional “I want to . . . , but I also want to . . .” conflicts of desire that believers battle continually.

Guide the group to read and evaluate the meaning of the Day Five Note (p. 173). Examine why the desire for God comes from the bedrock layer of our souls. Invite a volunteer to read the last paragraph of Day Five (pp. 173-174).

Discuss Day Five, activity 2 (p. 174).

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

Draw attention again to the statements you wrote on the board. Ask: How might we complete these statements when we have redeemed hearts that desire to be true to God?

Request adults follow along in their Bibles as you read Psalm 63:1-4. Declare: May this be the defining desires and determinations of our souls. Urge adults to spend time this week praying, meditating on, and perhaps memorizing Psalm 63:1-4.

Close in prayer.

