

Study Series: Live No Lies

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Lesson Title: “The Brutal Honesty About Normal” (pp. 178-192)

Session 13

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The main point of this lesson is: The world attempts to move us away from God and a godly perspective.

Focus on this goal: To help adults investigate their lives for evidences of ungodly influences on their lives by the world

Key Bible Passages: John 16:33; 17:11-18 1 John 2:15-17

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Invite adults to describe a time they saw or heard something and thought, “That’s just not normal.” Ask: Would most people want others to look at their lifestyles and think, “That’s just not normal”? Why or why not?

State although many people proudly proclaim they stand above peer pressure and live an “abnormal” life they really have just bought into what has been normalized in this world. Explain this session gets brutally honest about normal and warns us to not get taken in by a world that seeks to move us away from God and a biblical perspective.

Step 2. Redefined Morality

Declare just because something has been normalized doesn’t mean it’s right, it just means morality gets redefined. Relate the writer’s experience with Napster (pp. 178-179). Read the last two sentences of the first paragraph of Day One (pp. 178-179) beginning with “Because we now lived in a moral ecosystem . . . .”

Invite responses to the first question of Day One, activity 1 (p. 179). Urge adults to privately consider the activity’s second question. State redefined morality indicates the third enemy of the soul—the world.

Discuss Day One, activity 2 (pp. 179-180).

Step 3. The World

Use the first paragraph of Day Two (p. 180) to explain two ways the New Testament uses the term “world.”

Encourage adults to define what the Bible means by the world that is our enemy. Draw attention to the Day Two Note (p. 181). Analyze how the slavery system in America is an example of that quote.

Request adults follow along and underline the writer’s definition of the world as a volunteer reads the last paragraph of Day Two (p. 182). Ask: How are you beginning to see that the world is a really dangerous enemy?

Step 4. Moral Contagion

Ask adults to describe what a meme is. Explain we often think of memes, those funny images that go viral on the Internet, as a recent development. But the word was actually coined in a book published in the 1970s to describe how ideas, behaviors, and styles are culturally transmitted. The word meme comes from the Greek word mimeme which means to imitate.1

Guide the group to analyze when a meme is just a funny image and when it’s a dangerous phenomenon, using the remarks in Day Three (pp. 182-185) to add to the discussion.

Evaluate how social contagion goes both ways. Invite someone to read the Day Three Note (p. 184). Consider why followers of Jesus must be aware of that crucial insight.

Discuss Day Three, activity 2 (p. 184). Evaluate what John meant by the word “lust.” Guide the group to determine examples of the three lusts of the world.

Step 5. Spiritual Antidote

Request a volunteer read Matthew 4:1-10. Analyze how Jesus faced the same three temptations detailed in 1 John 2:16. Ask: What do you recall about the devil from sessions 10 and 11 that is apparent in his interactions with Jesus? What are your impressions of Jesus from these interactions?

Invite responses to the question in Day Four, activity 1 (p. 185). Request a volunteer read Hebrews 4:14-16. Analyze what this passage says to believers about avoiding this world’s viral influences that appeal to our deepest lusts.

Explore how the three temptations described in 1 John 2:16; Matthew 4:1-10; and Genesis 3:6 are not just tolerated but celebrated in the world.

Ask: How do churches try to be “normal” in this world? Does that normalization honor God and bring His kingdom to earth? Explain.

Read the paragraph of Day Four (p. 186), beginning with “The late Dr. Larry Hurtado . . . .” Invite responses to Day Four, activity 2 (pp. 186-187). Use the last paragraph of Day Four (p. 187) to add to the discussion.

Step 6. Woe and War

Explore how we are living in a world of political religions. Discuss Day Five, activity 1 (p. 188). Invite someone to read the Day Five Note (p. 188). Ask: Will that be seen as normal? Why?

Ask a volunteer to read Isaiah 5:20. Examine how we can hear a weeping parent in the word “woe.” Ask: What in this world makes God weep? What can make God smile? State one thing that makes God smile is when we love the people of this world as He does and fight for them, not against them.

Request a volunteer read John 17:20-26. Determine ways the church can fight for the people of this world.

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

Acknowledge this study is sobering, as it causes us to evaluate, not just the world we live in, but our own lives for evidences of how our enemy the world has become normalized in us. Ask: Why is it essential that we engage in such sobering studies?

Discuss Day Five, activity 2 (p. 189).

Close in prayer.

1. https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/26/crosswords/what-is-a-meme.html

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meme

