

Shadow Christians

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Lesson Title: “We Experience God’s Power” (pp. 140-153)

Session 10

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The main point of this lesson is: Shadow Christians experience God’s power.

Focus on this goal: To help adults anticipate God’s power and work in their lives

Key Bible Passage: Mark 1:39-45

Before the Session

1. Gather a few items that only work if connected to a power source: a hair dryer, small lamp, and so forth. (Steps 1 and 7)

2. Compare Luke 5:12-16 and Matthew 8:2-4 to the key Bible passage, Mark 1:39-45. Be ready to share different details reported by Matthew and Luke. (Step 2)

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Display your power-needy items, unplugged. Hold up one item and ask: What is this designed to do? What will happen if I turn it on right now? (Nothing; learners will see it’s not connected to the power source.) Walk to a wall outlet, plug it in, and ask again: What will happen if I turn it on now? This time, adults should anticipate that it would work.

Repeat the scenario with each item. Say: In today’s study, we’ll continue to see how shadow Christians are described in God’s Word. Today’s focus will help us anticipate God’s power and work in our lives.

Step 2. Special Access?

Briefly overview the two theological fallacies explained in the opening paragraphs of Day One (p. 140): 1) God only works through the spiritually special, and 2) there are some beyond the power and help of God. Ask for biblical exceptions to those common, but false, beliefs.

Invite a volunteer to read Mark 1:39-45. Reveal the differences expounded by Matthew and Luke. Point out the importance of repeated passages in Scripture. Read the author’s story (p. 142) about having an elite status on airlines (or share a similar story of your own preferred status in a certain realm). Then read the Day One Note (p. 142).

Step 3. Physically Hurting People

Briefly describe what “leprosy” meant in biblical times using the opening paragraphs from the Day Two (p. 142). Invite a volunteer who has dealt with a maddening skin irritation to briefly share how it has affected his or her life.

Read the two paragraphs from Day Two (p. 143), beginning, “Despite amazing advances . . . .” Invite a volunteer to read James 5:13-15. Point out who is encouraged to pray and what they should pray for. Ask: What are some reasons people might not pray for sick loved ones or themselves?

Use Day Two content to point out that God’s answers prayer three ways: yes, no,or wait. Stress that God always hears prayers, but doesn’t always grant the answer we seek.

Step 4. Social Outcasts

Read Leviticus 13:45-46, explaining that this would have still been the standard at the time of Jesus. Remind participants of the distancing experienced by most people during the COVID pandemic. As a group brainstorm how the leper lifestyle would have been much, much worse. Read the Day Three paragraph (p. 145) that begins “Imagine living totally alone . . . .”

Draw attention to Mark 1:41 and stress the “compassion” of Jesus. Use Day Three content again (p. 146) to explain the Greek word translated “compassion.” Invite volunteers to consider a time when they were “moved with compassion” and felt compelled to help someone.

Step 5. Religious Rejects

Use Day Four content (pp. 146-147) to explain what the author means by “religious rejects,” both during biblical times and in our world today. Challenge learners to consider people in their lives who need more than physical healing: they also need compassion, social interaction, and emotional encouragement. As a group, brainstorm actions to take to reach out to those who feel disconnected from the body of Christ.

Address the seeming contradiction between Jesus’s instruction in Acts 1:8 and His instruction to the leper in Mark 1:44 (p. 147). Point out that Jesus was not seeking a crowd, but discipleship. Engage learners in considering their own willingness to disciple others, particularly those who are new to faith in Jesus.

Step 6. Humble Yourself

Read the opening paragraph of Day Five (p. 149). Read James 4:6,10 and 1 Peter 5:6, stressing that our pride is the biggest obstacle to experiencing God’s power.

Share a time in your life when you were humbled by a circumstance or person and how that impacted your faith. Point out that worship, confession, thankfulness, and serving others all lead us to humble ourselves.

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

Grab one of the powered items you brought and used in Step 1. Pretend to plug the item into yourself and facetiously act shocked when the item does not turn on. Say: This is what it looks like when we try to use our own power to do God-ordained tasks. We may have the right tool, but in ourselves we cannot supply the power.

Close in prayer, focusing on humility in ourselves as we pursue God’s call in our lives.

