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Servants for His Glory

Author: Miguel Núñez

Lesson Title: “Be a Servant Shaped by the Gospel” (pp. 78-91)

Session 6

April 7, 2024

The main point of this lesson is: God’s servants are shaped by the gospel.

Focus on this goal: To help adults live the priorities of the gospel

Key Bible Passage: 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Ask: When’s the last time you played with playdough? What are/were some shapes you like to make with clay? What steps do you take to make those shapes? (OPTION: Distribute lumps of playdough and invite adults to play with it during this discussion.) State: Session 2 examined Romans 12:2 that tells us not to be conformed to this world. The J. B. Phillips New Testament paraphrases that verse, “Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould.” This session will help us determine how we can be shaped by the gospel, rather than the world.

Step 2. Introduction

**Note** Jesus’s words about some Pharisees describe what it means to be shaped by the world rather than the gospel. **Invite** a volunteer to read Matthew 23:3. **Use** remarks in Day One (pp. 78-79) to **determine** the problem with the Corinthian church. **Analyze** how the twenty-first century church demonstrates that same problem.

**Explain** when potters discover a defect in an item they are making they smash that lump of clay and start over again to make a new creation. **Note** personal evaluations such as Day One, activity 1 (p. 78) can feel like a painful “smashing,” but they are necessary so Christ reshapes us by the gospel.

**Ask:** *What understanding is absolutely essential if we’re going to be shaped by the gospel? We need to know the gospel!*

**Discuss** Day One, activity 2 (p. 80), using Day One remarks (pp. 79-80) to add to that discussion.

Step 3. Transformed by the Gospel, Part 1

**Consider** obstacles to a gospel-shaped life (see first paragraph of Day Two, p. 81). **Ask:** *How can we know what a life transformed by the gospel looks like?*

**Discuss** Day Two, activity 1 (p. 81), using remarks in Day Two (pp. 81-82) to elaborate on each character quality. **Evaluate** how each of those qualities reflect Jesus (see first paragraph of Day Two, p. 81). **Request** adults refer back to Matthew 5:3-10 and state what is true of believers who demonstrate these character qualities. **Ask:** *How are gospel-shaped servants blessed?*

Step 4. Transformed by the Gospel, Part 2

**Invite** a volunteer to read Matthew 6:24,33. **Analyze** attitudes a gospel-shaped believer has about material things, adding to the conversation with remarks from the first paragraph of Day Three (pp. 82-83).

**Declare** another identifying characteristic of gospel-shaped believers is the priority they place on living in gospel-centered community. **Discuss** Day Three, activity 1 (p. 83). **Consider** why people who are allowing the world to squeeze them into its mold will avoid gospel-centered community.

**Ask:** *What’s the only way the church can be of one heart and mind?* **Declare** each believer must display the fruit of the Spirit. **Discuss** Day Three, activity 2 (p. 84). **Ask** what happens when playdough is left out of its containers (it gets hard and crusty). **Declare:** *If we stay in the world we become hard and crusted. We need to remain in Christ so we can stay soft and pliable to be shaped by the gospel.* **Consider** ways believers can remain in Christ (stay in the Word, in prayer, community).

**State:** *We must continually examine ourselves for gospel impacts in our lives. If they’re not evident, we can return in repentance and the Spirit can make us soft again, just as we used to sprinkle water on playdough to make it pliable again.*

Step 5. The Gospel in the Workplace, Part 1

**Ask** adults where they find it the easiest and most difficult to display characteristics of a gospel-shaped life. **Consider** reasons it is so difficult to live the gospel in the workplace. **Declare** when the world squeezes us into its mold believers pursue the same things the world does.

**Relate** the five “P’s” the world pursues (p. 85). **Analyze** the difference between pursuing any of these “P’s” and possessing them because God has chosen to give them to us.

**Ask:** *What are some gospel-shaped reasons to work?* **Discuss** Day Four, activity 2 (p. 85).

**Read** the Day Four statement (p. 86) that begins with “Two things must occur . . . .” **Ask:** *What might those two things look like specifically in your daily work life?* (Day Four, activity 1, p. 85, can help with that discussion.) *What’s the only way those two things can occur in your life?* **Use** the last two paragraphs of Day Four (p. 86) to **add to** that discussion.

Step 6. The Gospel in the Workplace, Part 2

**Invite** a volunteer to read 2 Corinthians 5:17. **Determine** what implications being a new creation has on believers’ lives, including our work lives.

**Discuss** Day Five, activity 2 (p. 88).

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

**State:** We have two choices of what shapes us. Are we going to let the world squeeze us into its mold or are we going to submit ourselves to the Potter and allow Him to shape our lives by the gospel?

**Close by reading** the letter written by a gospel-shaped servant under Final Reflection (p. 88) **and** **by voicing** a prayer for participants to have a similar gospel-shaped perspective.

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