

Cell Lesson: YESTERDAY'S GUILT

ICE BREAKER: What do you do with Christmas or birthday gifts that you don't want?

Facilitator's Opening Comments: Many a believer and non-believer are troubled by guilt from their past actions... let's read a story that highlights this fact...

Read

Guilt Kits Story

Once there was a New Jersey artist who capitalized on people's needless guilt by selling them "guilt kits." Each kit contained ten disposable brown paper bags and a set of instructions which said, "Place bag securely over your mouth, take a deep breath and blow the guilt out. Dispose of bag immediately." Amazingly, about 2,500 kits sold at \$2.50 each! The artist was in tune with just how much guilt people seem to carry around with them.

Question: Why do you think that 'guilt' is a problem in the lives of so many people?

Answer: Unrepented sin, carrying guilt for things they didn't do, not knowing that they can release the guilt and find forgiveness.

Facilitator's Comment: Let's read our first Bible verse for this lesson...

Read

Psalm 31:9 - Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am in trouble; My eye wastes away with grief, Yes, my soul and my body! 10 For my life is spent with grief, And my years with sighing; My strength fails because of my iniquity, And my bones waste away. (NKJV)

Question: What affect does the feeling of guilt have on a person?

Answer: Depression, nervousness, hopelessness - due to feeling separated from God.

Facilitator's Comment: Let's read our 1st Commentary...

Read

1st Commentary

Guilt is a key player in Satan's master plan of deception. As he weaves his web of guilt into our lives, we are often overcome by feelings of punishment, rejection, and isolation. It is then that we are tempted to doubt the sincerity of God's forgiveness and grace.

Facilitator's Comment: Let's read what the story of Adam and Eve teaches us about the progressive affects of guilt, due to sin in our lives.

Read

Genesis 3:6 -So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

Question: What was the first action taken by Adam and Eve?

Answer: They tried to cover their sin

Facilitator's Comment: We often want to cover-up what we did...now, let's read Gen. 3:8...

Read

Genesis 3:8 - And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Question: What was the 2nd action by Adam and Eve?

Answer: They tried to hide themselves.

Question: Why do people try to hide avoid friends, family, the Pastor, or going to church?

Answer: Embarrassment, afraid to face the Lord, they want to keep doing their sinful activities.

Facilitator's Comment: Finally, let's read Genesis 3:9, which talks about the 1st emotion....

Read

Genesis 3:9 Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where *are* you?" 10 So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

Question: What was the first emotion that resulted from the guilt of the Sin in the Garden of Eden?

Answer: Fear

Question: How does guilt produce fear?

Answer: (*take responses from around the room*)

Facilitator's Comment: Let's read the following verse...

Read

Proverbs 28:13 - He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy. (NKJV)

Question: Why does covering our sin not allow us to prosper...?

Answer: True prosperity can only be found by living under the hand of God's mercy.

Facilitator comments: According to Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, one translation of "guilty" is "*enochos*," which means "held in, bound by."

Question: How does guilt hold us and bind us?

Answer: Feelings of not being worthy, not being able to be used by God, not being able to face others.

Facilitator comments: Let's read our 2nd Commentary

Read

2nd Commentary

Guilt is a legal term meaning "*to commit a breach of conduct.*" Dr. Paul Tournier, a noted Christian physician wrote in his book *A Doctor's Casebook in the Light of the Bible*: "*False guilt' is that which comes as a result of judgments and suggestions of men. 'True guilt' is that which results from divine judgment.*"

God uses genuine guilt to stir our conscience when we act irresponsibly. Christians call this conviction, which alerts us to specific wrong actions that violate God's best for our lives.

Question: Why is feeling "true guilt" good for us?

Answer: It motivates us to examine our lives and get right with God, any area of lives that need correcting.

Facilitator's Comment: Let's read the following verse that can lead us to healing

Read

James 5:16 - Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. (NKJV)

Question: Why can it be a good thing to confess our faults and trespasses to someone we trust?

Answer: They can pray with us, provide us encouragement, and provide accountability to help prevent us from relapsing into a the same sinful activity again.

Facilitator's Comment: Confession of sin restores our fellowship with God. It brings us to a point of repentance where we realize that our behavior is not in keeping with God's design. Let's read about having a clear conscience in Acts 24:16...

Read

Acts 24:16 - This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men. (NKJV)

Question: What are the benefits of a clear conscience?

Answer: Peace, security, and joy

Facilitator's Comment: Let's read a short poem by Louisa Tarkington that sums up this subject:

Read

*"I wish there were some wonderful place called the Land of Beginning Again.
Where all our past mistakes and heartaches, and all our poor selfish grief,
Could be dropped like a shabby old coat at the door, & never be put on again."*

Facilitator's Comment: Yes, you can find a place where you can "Begin Again"... the following verse tells us how..let's read it, believe it and receive it into our lives..

Read

1John 1:9 - If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (NKJV)

Facilitator's Comment: Sometimes we can struggle with God's forgiveness. Let's read our 3rd and final Commentary...

Read

3rd Commentary:

You may say, "Well, I don't feel like I deserve to be forgiven." None of us do. That is where the grace of God is applied to our lives. There is nothing anyone of us can do to be made worthy of His love and forgiveness. Forgiveness is a gift from God. Take it, and open it up and throw off your spirit of heaviness and put on a renewed garment of praise.

Facilitator's Comment: Let's join together and seek God's forgiveness and we can all leave this place with the joy in knowing our Father loves us, forgives us, and calls us His own.

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