

LESSON 2: BE REAL WITH YOURSELF

This includes:

- 1. LEADER PREPARATION**
- 2. LESSON GUIDE**

1. LEADER PREPARATION**LESSON OVERVIEW**

“Honesty is the best policy” is an age-old saying that reminds us that when we are candid and truthful about our life situation, we can effectively begin to move toward a better place. From a spiritual standpoint, we must be honest about who we are and how much we need God, because when we are in denial about our sins, we remain slaves to those areas of sin and struggle. This lesson will challenge teenagers to see that they are sons and daughters who have been adopted by God through Christ and that they have a right to experience all of the amazing benefits and blessings he has for them.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- 1. WHAT:** To discover our deepest identity, we must stop living in denial and start being real with ourselves—including our need for God’s work in our lives.
- 2. WHY:** Teenagers can grow in their faith by understanding that their true identity is found in Jesus and not any other standard the world sets.
- 3. HOW:** Students will discuss what it means to be adopted by God and be part of God’s family, and how they can live out that reality.

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE

John 8:33-37

SECONDARY SCRIPTURES

John 3:16; Romans 12:3; Galatians 3:26-29

TEACHING PREP

**LEADER
TIP**

Use this short overview to prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your group, you’ll want to absorb it as you prepare to lead.

Read John 8:33-37; you may want to read the entire passage of John 8:31-59 during your preparation to gain a clearer understanding of the context.

In this passage, which picks up after the Scripture from our first lesson, the people totally misunderstood Jesus and the whole topic of freedom and slavery. They believed they were free because they were descendants of Abraham. Yet they were in denial about how their ancestors had been conquered and enslaved by foreign nations—they had actually been conquered by many nations and were being ruled by

the Romans at that very time. However, what the people meant by not ever being “enslaved” was that they had never surrendered their will to any ruler.

But Jesus was talking about something completely different: that all people are enslaved by sin and can’t obtain freedom in their own strength. Because the Jews were the descendants of Abraham and because Abraham was one of the godliest men they knew, they believed his godliness extended directly to them. Simply put, many Jews felt that Abraham was their “hookup” and inside track to heaven, so they could live however they wanted to live.

Sadly, many people today feel the same way as the people Jesus spoke to that day. They aren’t real with themselves or honest about being enslaved by sin. Many people believe that God will accept them if they are just “good people” who are part of a “good family” and do “good works.” They don’t believe they have done enough bad to be enslaved to sin or to be rejected by God.

This passage is a reminder that no matter who we are or what we do in life, if we don’t believe Jesus is the Son of God who sets us free, we will always be a slave to sin and unable to find our true identity as a member of God’s family.

THE BEFORE & AFTER [OPTIONAL]

TEXTS OR TWEETS

Send one or both of these messages to your students prior to your meeting. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry.

- Ever felt like an outcast or like you’ve never really fit in? Are you looking for hope and answers? Come out tonight—you won’t regret it!
- In what ways do teenagers often live life behind a mask? Get ready for some great conversation this week.

PARENT EMAIL

Send this email to parents following the lesson to encourage them to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.

Dear parents,

We’re continuing our series focusing on the topic “Identity.” Each week, students are examining a different passage of Scripture to discover truths and insights about discovering their identity in Jesus.

In our second lesson, we explored John 8:33-37, where Jesus declared that people in his Jewish audience—despite being descendants of Abraham—were still enslaved in their sins. In this passage, Jesus spoke about what being part of his family really looks like. Slaves have no permanent rights in the home; those rights are reserved for the children of that household. Jesus’ objective was to get people to understand the importance of being a son or daughter who is adopted into God’s family.

This week, I encourage you to spend a few minutes talking with your teenager about our lesson. Consider building your conversation around these questions:

- What does it mean to you to be part of our family? What are some of the benefits?
- How can you be adopted into God's family?
- Once adopted into God's family, what do you think are the benefits to being part of his family?

Thanks for praying for our students and our ministry. Have a blessed week!

LESSON 2: BE REAL WITH YOURSELF**2. LESSON GUIDE****GETTING THINGS STARTED [OPTIONAL]****LEADER
TIP**

Preview the following video clip for your group: youtu.be/ikGVWEvUzNM (or find another video about identity). You will need an Internet connection and a computer or tablet to display the video for your participants.

Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and then play the video. Then **ASK**:

- *What image or statement or moment from this video stood out most strongly? Why?*
- *In what ways do teenagers often live life behind a mask? Be as specific as possible.*
- *Why might we choose to live behind a mask instead of living in truth?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Far too often, we let the color or look of our mask define us and become our truth. But staying behind the mask only brings more guilt, shame, and isolation. Living a Jesus-centered life requires honesty, transparency, and a willingness to come out from behind the mask—a willingness to be real and truthful with ourselves.*

TEACHING POINTS**LEADER
TIP**

Use the Teaching Points to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. Remember: All throughout these lessons, it's up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your audience.

Read John 8:33-37 together as a group. Consider dividing verses among your students so several people have a chance to read.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *In this passage, we find important truths about honestly and accurately knowing who we are and how we see ourselves. Let's dig into these verses for a few minutes of conversation.*

1. AVOID LIVING IN A STATE OF DENIAL**ASK:**

- *What's your initial reaction to this passage—particularly if you've never heard or read it before?*
- *Based on your knowledge of the Old Testament, why is the statement "We have never been slaves to anyone" in verse 33 so absurd?*

- Read Romans 12:3. What does it mean to have a true, honest evaluation of ourselves?
- What are some ways we might remain in denial about our real, true needs in life—in other words, a dishonest evaluation of ourselves?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *If we believe we don't need God's help in overcoming sin, then we are living in denial—just like the people in this passage were in denial about the slavery and oppression their ancestors had experienced. We can experience our truest identity in Christ once we admit our need for forgiveness and salvation. Being real with ourselves means being real about our deepest need: the need for a relationship with Jesus.*

2. CHOOSE TO BE A SON OR DAUGHTER, NOT A SLAVE

ASK:

- What are some of the benefits to being part of your specific family?
- What are some differences between being a slave and being a son or daughter?
- How does someone move from being a slave to being a son or daughter?
- Is it possible to become a slave to such things as social media, materialism, technology, or the pursuit of popularity? Why or why not?
- Jesus said that anyone who sins is a slave to sin. Yet we know that even after becoming a follower of Christ, we're still imperfect—we still sin. How can we reconcile that reality with what Jesus says about how we are truly free if he has set us free?
- Read Galatians 3:26-29. This passage declares that anyone who is a child of God is also an heir. Once adopted into God's family, what do you think are some benefits to being part of that family?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Jesus wants you to know that your permanent freedom comes when you become a son or daughter of God by faith in Jesus. He wants you to be part of his family. Regardless of who you are or what family you come from, what matters most is being a part of God's family. Your earthly family and affiliations don't define you and cannot fully meet your deepest need. Your true identity is found in Jesus.*

3. ACCEPT THE MESSAGE JESUS HAS FOR YOU

ASK:

- In our passage from John 8, Jesus mentions having room in our hearts for his message. What message do you believe he's talking about here?
- Is it possible to regularly attend church but not have room in your heart for Jesus' message? Why or why not?
- What does accepting the message of Jesus mean to you?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Sadly, many people today feel the same way as the people Jesus spoke to that day: They aren't real with themselves or honest about being enslaved by sin. Many people believe that God will accept them if they are just "good people" who are part of a "good family" and do "good works." They don't believe they have done enough bad to be enslaved to sin or to be rejected by God. But the message of Jesus*

is one of repentance and forgiveness, of turning away from sin and turning to God. That's how we receive eternal life and find our true identity in Christ.

EXTRA DISCUSSION [OPTIONAL]

Ask students to form groups of two or three to discuss these questions.



ASK:

- Read John 3:16. What do you find most amazing about how God demonstrated ultimate love, and why?
- When have you experienced unconditional love from another person—or have you?
- What makes God's love so different from any other love you can experience?

Bring everyone back together, and ask for volunteers to share answers to the previous questions, as time permits.

LIVING IT OUT

ASK:

- What idea, comment, or thought stood out to you the most from today's conversation, and why?
- Why is being part of God's family so important and significant?
- How can you grow closer to other members of God's family? Or if you're not part of God's family, is that a decision you'd like to make today?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *God is so into you and loves you so much that he sent his only Son, Jesus, so you can have eternal life in heaven with him. That is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. It's your choice: Will you accept it and believe it, or not?*

Ask students to each find a quiet spot in your meeting area for a few minutes of prayer and reflection. Consider praying together as a group or asking if any students would like prayer from the rest of the group.

SUMMARY



Provide a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) this lesson's content, (2) the dialogue that took place today, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.

FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]

Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the Scripture below.

"For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).