

# Jesus And Your Image

## Lesson 3: You Are What You Do

**What we want students to learn:** That they are ultimately known by their actions; they can try to control their image, but their actions say a great deal to the world, and to God, about who they really are.

**What we want students to do with what they've learned:** To evaluate any areas of their lives where their actions don't line up with their professed identity as a Christ-follower.

**Scripture Focus:** Luke 6:43-45

**Supporting Scripture:** Philippians 1:27

**Overview:** As you've been talking about image to your students, you've probably mentioned the idea of image control. We all try and project a certain image. Sometimes our actions line up with that image. But sometimes they don't. And when they don't, our actions will always trump any image we try to project. As your students are challenged to project an image that is more about Christ than about them, it's vital that their daily actions reflect this. In this lesson, you'll get the chance to help students grasp this truth.

### Teacher Prep Video

The *Jesus And Your Image* Teacher Prep Videos are short videos designed to help you grasp the main points of the lessons as you prepare to teach.

To access your "Jesus And Your Image Lesson 3 Teacher Prep Video," click on the URL below.

- <https://youthministry360.com/jesus-and-your-image-teacher-prep>

### Bible Background

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. The Details gives you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what's happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.


- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By "context" we mean at the very least helping students know who wrote the book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **What's The Big Deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

### The Details

- **Author:** Luke was a doctor, a Gentile Christian and a companion of Paul.
- **Time frame:** The Gospel of Luke was written around 60 AD.
- **Purpose:** Luke is the only Gentile author of the Bible. His entire purpose was to write an accurate account of the life of Jesus so as to present Jesus as Savior, fully God and fully man. It is one of the synoptic Gospels, having much in common with the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.

### The Setting

In Luke 6, Jesus is still in the early parts of His earthly ministry. Luke 4 shows Jesus being tempted by Satan, reading Scripture in the synagogue, healing the sick, teaching, and driving out demons. Luke 5 sees Jesus, among other things, calling His disciples. Luke 6 is basically a chapter consisting almost entirely of Jesus'



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teaching. This section on bearing fruit comes just before Jesus' parable of the man who built his house on the rock, and immediately following a passage on not judging others.

### The Main Point

By this point, your students are beginning to understand that the image they project can't be about them. Instead, any attempts we make at crafting an image should be one that identifies 100% with Christ. Our image should be rooted in our identities as Christ-followers.

The next step is getting students' behavior to match the image they project. We use the word "fruit" very intentionally, just like Jesus did. An apple tree can't help but produce apples: it does it because it's an apple tree. Same for an orange tree. They just do it because that's what they are supposed to do. The same goes for the behavior of a Christian. We should act in a manner that is consistent for a Christian.

Our image is about who we say we are. Yet, as the old saying goes, "Actions speak louder than words." We may say we are one thing, but our behavior will make it clear who we really are. A word of caution: be careful not to swing over into legalism. This is not about salvation. It's not about a list of do's and don'ts. It's about our actions matching up with our professed faith. It is a fine line to walk, for sure, but one that we need to make sure our students understand lest they fall into legalistic thinking.

### Lesson Plan

The Lesson Plan contains three elements: An introductory activity called The Lead In; the Bible study section called The Main Event; an application-focused segment called The Last Word.

### The Lead In

- **Goal:** To help students start thinking about identifying fruit and how each fruit has easily identifiable characteristics.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need a blindfold and a variety of fruit cut into pieces, apples, oranges, pineapples, etc. Whatever you can get your hands on. Set this up before the class starts.

**FIRST**, explain to students that you're going to be playing a game called, "Guess That Fruit." The following rules will give you a basic framework to make the game interesting, but you can adapt them to fit your group needs.

**THEN**, divide the group into two teams. The teams will take turns sending up a volunteer, who will go up and be blindfolded. At that point, the volunteer will be given a piece of fruit they have to identify using only one sense: touch, taste, or smell. They choose which one they want beforehand. They get 3 points if they can identify it by touch, 2 points by smell, and 1 point by taste. They only get one opportunity to guess. If they get it right, they get the points. If they don't, they get 0 points. Once the game has run its course (you can go one or two turns per student, or can just play until the students lose interest), gather students all back together and debrief. Ask something like:

- **Was it difficult to identify the fruit only using one sense? Why or why not?**
- **Which sense was easier? Which one was more difficult?**
- **Why are you able to identify the fruit using just one sense? (It has unique characteristics)**

**FINALLY**, transition to the Main Event by saying something like the following:

- **Here's the deal: Fruit is fairly easy to identify. You know the characteristics of an apple. You know what an orange smells like. They are fairly easily recognizable. Our lives should be the same way.**



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People should look at us, especially our actions, and see that our lives are more about Christ and less about us. In this lesson, we'll see how this impacts our discussion on image.

### The Main Event

- **Goal:** To help your students understand that they are ultimately known by their actions; they can try to control their image, but their actions say a great deal to the world, and to God, about whom they really are.
- **Set Up:** You'll need a dry-erase board and something to write with. You'll also need note cards or scratch paper for students, as well as pens or pencils.

**FIRST**, remind your students that this is the third lesson in a four-part Bible study on Jesus and Your Image. See if your students can review what you've covered in the first two lessons so far. Use the following bullet points to help guide the discussion, if need be:

- **Lesson 1: Jesus calls us to "deny ourselves," meaning our image is to be driven more by who God is and less by who we are.**
- **Lesson 1: We need to step back and evaluate the image we present to the world and whether it's focused more on us or on Christ.**
- **Lesson 2: We don't have to hide our brokenness from God or the world.**
- **Lesson 2: We need to let down our guard and express to God where we are most broken, and where we need His presence the most.**


**THEN**, explain to students that you're taking your discussion of image beyond who we think we are or say we are. Today you're going to be talking about how what we do is directly related to the image we project to the world. Before you start your Bible study time, give each student a piece of paper and ask them to define two terms: authentic and hypocrite. Give them a minute or two to come up with some good definitions. These don't have to be "Webster's" definitions, but make sure they grasp the heart of the definitions of the words.

Then, on the dry-erase board, write the two words. Have the students start sharing their definitions, and record these on the board. You should have a decent picture of what each word means (if not, give a little prompting). Then lead students in a brief discussion. Ask:

- **Which of these would you rather be? Why?**
  - Answer: Unless you have some crazy students 😊, every one of them will probably chose "authentic."
- **Why didn't anyone choose being a hypocrite?**
  - Answers will vary.
- **Several years ago there was an excellent book published, called "UnChristian" by Dave Kinnaman. The author researched the attitudes of people who don't believe in God as it pertained to Christians and the Church. One of the biggest negative stereotypes of Christians was that they were perceived to be hypocrites. Based on what you see, do you think this is fair? Why or why not?**
  - Answers will vary.
- **What is it about a hypocrite that upsets people so much?**
  - Answer: No one likes a hypocrite. We want people's behavior to match their image. We want to look at people and know that they are who they say they are. We want to say, "That person is the real deal. I am getting what I expect from them based on who they say they are," whether that's good or bad.

**NEXT**, go back to the fruit game you played at the start. Ask something like,

- **Why did an orange (apple, pear, pineapple, etc) taste, smell, and feel like an orange?**
  - Answer: Because that's how an orange is supposed to taste, smell, and feel.
- **If it tasted, smelled, felt like an apple, what kind of tree would you think it came from? Why?**



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- o Answer: It came from an apple tree, because only apples come from apple trees.
- **What would you think if I said an apple came from an orange tree?**
  - o Answer: Its impossible, you're crazy, etc, and so on.

Transition into your time of Bible study by saying something like:

- **An apple tree will always bear apples. An orange tree will never bear apples, and vice versa. It's just the way the world works. When we see an orange tree, we expect oranges. We expect the fruit to match up with the image. Jesus knew this, and He made sure to address it with His followers. Let's take a look and see what He said.**

**THEN**, have your students turn to Luke 6:43-45. While they are turning there, provide the context for Luke by referencing the Details section of your Bible Background. (Consider providing the context for the passage by summarizing the Setting section, as well.) Read or have a student read the passage aloud. Then lead students in a discussion. Ask something similar to the following:

- **Just to make sure we're on the same page, what is each tree recognized by?**
  - o Answer: Its own fruit
- **A good tree bears what kind of fruit? And a bad tree?"**
  - o Answer: Good fruit, bad fruit
- **Verse 44 strikes at the heart of our discussion of image. When someone looks at a thornbush, they have certain expectations, right? They expect it to be thorny. They don't expect it to bear fruit. The opposite is true. When someone in Jesus' day wanted to eat a fig, what did they go look for? What would their reaction be if they went to pick a fig and found nothing but thorns? Why?**
  - o Answer: A fig tree. They would be disappointed. It's all about expectations. When you expect to get a nice fig for breakfast and you go find thorns growing, you're let down.
- **Why is this concept a perfect application for our discussion of image? In other words, how is the relationship between your image and your actions similar to the relationship between a tree and its fruit?**
  - o Answer: Help students connect the dots: if you profess through your image to be a Christ-follower and your actions don't line up with your image, you're like the fig tree that produces nothing but thorns. People will expect one thing from you based on who you say you are. When they get something different, they will respond negatively. And that negative response is often directed at God, the Church, and/or Christ-followers in general.

Make sure students grasp the heart of this metaphor before moving on.

**NEXT**, continue your discussion. Ask:

- **In verse 45 Jesus turns the discussion to a person's heart. Again, just to make sure we're on the same page, what things come from the heart of "good" people, i.e., people who have had their lives transformed by Christ?**
  - o Answer: Good things.
- **What comes from the heart of evil people, i.e., people who have rejected God?**
  - o Answer: Evil things.
- **When Jesus connects our actions, or our fruit, with our heart, He is speaking about motivation. He is speaking about the emotions, feelings, and purposes that drive the things we do. Why do you think Jesus connects our actions with our motivations? What's He trying to tell us?**
  - o Answers will vary, but it should be some variation on the heart is the core of who we really are. Our actions are motivated by who we are at our core.
- **How does this all relate to the image we project?**
  - o Answer: If we project an image that is all about us, chances are pretty good that our actions will be motivated by our self-focused mindset. But if we're consciously striving to project an



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image that is Christ-driven, our actions should ideally come from a place of good intentions. While no one is perfect, the idea is that our actions would be motivated by a desire to see Christ honored and glorified through us.

Say something like:

- **Jesus uses fruit as an analogy for behavior because an orange tree can't help bearing oranges. Just like a good person can't help doing good. It comes from the heart. Our actions should not be in conflict with the Christ-centered image we project. Everyone should be able to identify our image in Christ by our actions. Our fruit should tell the world what kind of tree we are.**

**THEN**, begin to transition toward the end of your Bible study time. Ask: **If we should be easily identified by our actions, what should our actions look like if we claim to be a follower of Jesus?** Instead of answering this directly, have your students turn to Philippians 1:27 and read it aloud. Then, ask:

- **What does it mean to conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ?**
  - o Answer: To live your life in such a way that your image and your actions are a credit to God Himself. People should be able to see that you are different and that the difference in you is all because of God.
- **Paul starts this passage by saying, "Whatever happens." Why do you think he started out with those words?**
  - o Answer: Our behavior should be shaped by our core image as followers of Christ, not by circumstances or others' actions.

**FINALLY**, transition into the Last Word by saying something similar to the following:

- **Paul says that, whether he returns or just hears about their actions, he'll know from what he sees and hears that they are living in a way that honored Christ. Paul was basically saying, "I want to be able to take one look at you and know that your actions are lining up with your image." The question we have to ask ourselves is If people saw our actions today, would they be able to identify us as Christ-followers? Would our actions today line up with our image? Here's the secret though: Our focus shouldn't be on our behavior, but on our hearts. Our actions are simply reflections of what's in our heart. We need to all look at our actions, and see where they don't match up with who Jesus calls us to be. And then we need to ask ourselves, "Why"?**

Make sure no one has any questions, then move to wrap up the lesson with the Last Word.

## The Last Word


- **Goal:** To evaluate any areas of their lives where their actions don't line up with their professed identity as a Christ-follower.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need a dry-erase board and something to write with. You'll also need note cards or scratch paper for students, as well as pens or pencils.

**FIRST**, direct students' attention to the dry-erase board again, and ask your students:

- **When we think about our actions, and how we're called to act, what do you usually think of?**
  - o Answers will vary, but more than likely it will be a combination of following rules and being nice.

Lead students to go a little deeper than this. Say something like:

- **Being a Christian is so much more than the "thou shalt nots" and being nice. When we talk of bearing fruit, it's about showing the world who Jesus is and how we reflect Him. Specifically, what fruit should a Christian show to the world?**



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- o Answer: As you write these down and encourage students' responses, lead them to consider attributes that describe Jesus or God. Place their actions well within the character of God and how we see Him reveal Himself in Scripture.

**THEN**, after a few minutes discussion, ask:

- **Do you feel like you 'measure up' to God's standards? Why or why not?**

- o Answer: Likely a lot of no's. Let them answer this, even though it might be difficult. Explain to students that this isn't about measuring up, this is about what you should strive for. These are things they will continue to develop as they grow closer to Christ. An apple tree doesn't produce apples over night. But the cool thing is that apple trees don't really have to try to produce apples. It just does. The same is true with them the longer they walk with Christ.

**FINALLY**, leave students with an encouraging word, one that will also help them veer away from seeing their faith through a legalistic lens. Say something like:

- **The fruit we bear is not about what we do. It's about who we are. If we are followers of Christ, the fruit will follow. The only way to get an orange when you have an apple tree is to tear down the tree and plant an orange tree. Some of us live lives where our actions line up pretty closely with our image. For those people, the goal is to continue to grow in your faith, becoming more Christ-like each day. (Come to think of it, this is a pretty good goal for all of us!) But there are some of us in the room who look at our images and our actions and we see the two not lining up all that well. For us, we might need to tear down your old tree, your old life apart from God, and plant a new seed. If this describes you, let's find some time to talk about it after we're done.**

Close by reminding students that if they're a follower of Christ, God is with them in the form of His Spirit, helping them to tend to the tree HE has planted in their lives. He is there to help them nurture it, water it, help it grow, and watch it bear fruit. This is an encouraging thought! We're never on our own. God is always with us, compelling our actions to line up with our image.

If no one has any questions or observations, close in prayer.

- Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're printing them, have them available for students as you wrap up class. If you're texting a link, posting them on Facebook, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
- Use the Social Media guide to stay in touch with students via text or Twitter, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.

## We Want To Hear From You . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at [feedback@youthministry360.com](mailto:feedback@youthministry360.com).