

Jesus And Your Image

Lesson 4: Fearless

What we want students to learn: That it's a mistake to let their concern for their image, and what people think about them, get in the way of their devotion to Jesus.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: To recommit to living a bold faith for God regardless of how they may look to the world around them.

Scripture Focus: Luke 7:36-50

Supporting Scripture: 1 Peter 2:21-24

Overview: Your students love God and want to follow Jesus. Let's at least give them the benefit of the doubt. And yet for so many of them, culture's call to look calm, cool, and collected keeps them from being as passionate about their faith as they might be. This final lesson will help your students see what it looks like for someone to put serving God above what others think about her. In this lesson, your students will be challenged to forget about what people may think about them, and to pursue Christ above all else.

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 4 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,



Jesus And Your Image

Lesson 4: Fearless

among other things, calling His disciples. Luke 6 is basically a chapter consisting almost entirely of Jesus' teaching. Luke 7 sees Jesus traveling between Capernaum and Nain when he was asked by a Pharisee to come to his home and eat.

The Main Point

Your students have crafted an image over the years based around what others think of them. For many of them, they had become so wrapped up in this false image and concern for the approval of others that they lost sight of who they really are inside. Hopefully, over the past few weeks, you've been able to crack through this false image to release their Christ-honoring identity inside.

Now they will be going back into the world, and their image will be under assault. Friends won't understand it. Family might be confused. To reflect Jesus in this world will mark them as "different" and maybe "weird." As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1, it looks like foolishness to the world to follow Christ.

This lesson will prepare your students to face the world and live out their faith boldly.

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 get students thinking about what we think is important.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need a dry-erase board and something to write with. In the week before the lesson, be listening out for topics you hear that are relevant to your students' lives. (Watch Twitter for trending topics, be aware of what's going on in sports, music, and entertainment, etc.) Try to have as wide a variety as possible to hit most of your students' interests.

FIRST, explain that you're going to start the class with a discussion about the things in our world that many people find importance in. Explain how you've gathered your info, and then write the topics on the dry-erase board. When you've finished, give students a chance to fill in any topics that were on their radars this week, maybe topics they've tweeted, or posted on Facebook or Instagram.

THEN, when you've finished, lead students in a brief discussion. Ask:

- **Why do you think these were popular trending topics for people?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **Which ones do you think are the most interesting? The most lame? Why did you answer the way you did?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **How many of these things are truly important?**
 - Answers will vary. Hopefully there are some that have some level of importance on a national or global scale.
- **What is it about human nature that people spend so much energy following things that aren't important in the grand scheme of things?**
 - Answers will vary. Lead students to see that it's certainly OK to have leisure activities and interests. But it's true that many people place a great deal of importance (for example, a trending topic at the time of this lesson's production was #mileycyrusdog) in the big picture of life.

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



Jesus And Your Image

Lesson 4: Fearless

- Today we're going to wrap up our discussion about image by thinking about the importance we place on the image we project to the world. So many people spend so much of their time energy and even money projecting a perfect image to the world. And so much of what they do is aimed at not messing up that image. But what we'll see today is that our fixation on image is one of the things people see as important that is anything but. We'll learn what's truly important. Let's take a closer look.

The Main Event

- **Goal:** That it's a mistake to let their concern for their image, and what people think about them, get in the way of their devotion to Jesus.
- **Set Up:** None needed.

FIRST, remind students that this is the last lesson in your study of what Jesus had to say about our image. Ask students to share anything that has stuck out to them over the last three lessons. Asked if anyone has had any revelations about how they had been thinking about their image and about how Jesus' words have changed that. Reinforce or redirect students' responses by summarizing these points that review what you've learned over the last three lessons:

- **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 2: We don't have to hide our brokenness from God or the world.**
- **Lesson 3: We can try to control our image, but our actions say a great deal to the world, and to God, about who we really are.**

When you have finished your review time, transition to your time of Bible study by saying something like:

- **We've spent the past three lessons talking about our image and how we should be focused on projected an image that is Christ-driven, not us-driven. This lesson, we're going to wrap up our time by looking at what it means to put everything aside and live a bold life for Christ.**


THEN, lead off with a loose discussion about why teenagers are sometimes tempted to minimize their faith as they project an image to the outside world. Ask something like:

- **What are the main reasons people aren't as bold in publicly identifying themselves as Christ-followers?**
 - o Answers will vary.
- **What are some practical examples of how you see this manifesting itself?**
 - o Answer: Discussions over what or what isn't a sin; discussions about the existence of God; discussions about comparisons over religions; and so on.
- **Why do you think people downplay their relationship with Christ in the face of disagreement or tough conversations?**
 - o Answers will vary.

Explain to your students that the point of this conversation is simply just to set the table for your time of Bible study. Explain that you're about to read a pretty long narrative passage that shows a dramatic example of someone who took a bold step in professing her love and worship of Christ at the risk of sacrificing what others thought of her.

NEXT, instruct students to turn to Luke 7. While they are finding the chapter, have someone provide the details for who Luke was. Use the Details and Settings section of the Bible Background to provide a little context for the passage you're about to read. Before reading the passage, ask:

- **Who remembers who the Pharisees were?**
 - o Answer: Remind students that Pharisees were the largest group of Jewish religious leaders within Judaism. They controlled the synagogues and exerted a ton of control over the



Jesus And Your Image

Lesson 4: Fearless

Jewish population. They were Jesus' chief opponents, in large part because of their insistence on the tedious, legalistic keeping of God's Law, plus many other rules they had added themselves, as a means of being righteous in God's eyes. The vast majority of them believed Jesus was a heretic and a trouble maker.

Explain that this is an important detail, as the story takes place at the home of a Pharisee. Once you've established this, read or have students read Luke 7:36-39. Then, lead students in a discussion. Ask: Someone summarize what just happened.


- **How did Luke describe the woman?**
 - o Answer: Luke said she was known as someone who had lived a sinful life. Some scholars read an implication that maybe her sin was of a sexual nature, possibly an adulteress or a prostitute. Regardless, she had a reputation that wasn't really good.
- **We know she was a "sinner," and the chances are pretty good that she was also impoverished (it was customary for the poor to enter into banquets like this one and wait for table scraps at the end of the meal). What kind of reaction might her presence have caused in that gathering?**
 - o Answer: We can't know for sure, but based on the Simon the Pharisee's response, her presence wasn't welcomed.
- **What do you think might have compelled the woman to approach Jesus as she did and do what she did to Him?**
 - o Answer: While we can't know her thoughts, we can tell from the text that she was weeping, possibly in remorse for her sin, or simply in awe of Jesus.
- **What was Jesus' reaction to what the woman was doing? Did He rebuke her or pull away?**
 - o Answer: No. He allowed her to worship Him as she was doing.

Before moving on, say something like:

- **Let's not move on before we pause and acknowledge how awkward this situation would have been. You're eating dinner when a woman comes in and starts crying on Jesus' feet. She wipes her tears off with her hair. She then kisses Jesus' feet, which would have been dirty from walking in the dusty ground, and then she poured perfume on them, a beautiful sign of adoration and worship. This had to kind of be an unusual event for all who were there. And we know from Luke's account that Simon was not a fan. Let's see how the event plays out.**

THEN, read or have a student read verses 41-47. When you have finished, lead students in a discussion. Ask:

- **What point do you think Jesus was trying to make in the short parable He told?**
 - o Answer: The person with the greater debt appreciates forgiveness of the debt more than the one with the smaller debt. The woman apparently realized her sinfulness and realized that Jesus was God. Her sin in the face of Christ caused her to be broken. Simon seems to be in line with how many of the other Pharisees are depicted in Scripture: Self-righteous and convinced he is better than other "sinners." Jesus rightly points out that the woman is more needy and more welcoming of His grace than Simon.
- **Jesus gets us to the heart of the matter pretty quickly. He compares Simon to the woman. List the things Simon didn't do that the woman did.**
 - o Answer: Simon didn't give Jesus any water to wash his feet, a custom that would have been a sign of respect. The woman washed His feet with her tears. Simon didn't greet Jesus with a kiss on the cheek, again, a custom that would have shown respect for a guest. The woman continuously kissed Jesus' feet. Pouring oil on someone's head would have been a sign of anointing from God, or a special blessing. Simon didn't offer this. But the woman anointed Jesus' feet with perfume.
- **So, at this point, we have Simon, the well-to-do Pharisee, the leader, a man who by all signs we can gather was very concerned with his image. And we have the poor, sinful woman, who threw aside her image to humbly worship Jesus. Not that this is the best way to think about these things, but if we wanted to ask, "Who came out on top"?**



Jesus And Your Image

Lesson 4: Fearless

- o Answer: Obviously, the woman.
- **As we wrap up our discussion of image, remember that we've defined image as the way in which we craft a public perception of ourselves and put it forward to the world. Image is about looking good. Image is about self. What lesson does this story have for us about image?**
 - o Answer: Help your students see that what the world thinks about us can never come between us and our devotion to Christ. Our love for Christ must take precedence over what others think about us. We can never shrink away from seeking out God because we are worried about how we might look in the eyes of the world.

FINALLY, as you move to begin wrapping up the lesson, have your students follow along as you read 1 Peter 2:21-24. Then ask:

- **How does Peter describe how Jesus was treated?**
 - o Answer: He was insulted, suffered, and died on the cross.
- **In verse 21, how did Peter say we can expect to be treated as Jesus' followers?**
 - o Answer: Likely, the same way. We will follow in Jesus' steps, steps that inevitably lead to much persecution.
- **So, how did Jesus respond when He was mistreated?**
 - o Answer: Jesus never retaliated. He never cried out how unfair or undeserved it was.
- **How should we respond when we are treated poorly?**
 - o Answer: The same as Jesus.

Close by saying that you included this final passage because so often we struggle with our image because we don't want people to be upset with us. We don't want people to make fun of us because of our faith. We don't want to ruffle anyone's feathers, or call any undue attention to ourselves. But remind students that the Bible tells us over and over again we can't have it both ways. We can't follow God and be friends with the world. By leaving behind a me-first image and embracing a Christ-centered one, we will find ourselves at odds with the world. But Peter tells us to expect this. Say something like:

- **We have nothing to fear because God is with us. Jesus knew that He would suffer. He knew that He would be insulted. The Bible is pretty clear that as followers of Christ, we will suffer the same fate. We will be looked down on. We will be insulted. We will suffer. But we are trusting that God will get us through, and God will take care of us. We live with no fear, because God is with us.**

If no one has any more questions or additions, transition to 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:** Prepare to show a YouTube video to your group. The video is available at the following url:
 - o <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4a4AU9FYyc>
- If it's not available at the listed URL, simply search for "Penn Jillette Evangelism" and you should be able to find another version of it. Note: The video is primarily about evangelism (or as Jillette puts it, "Proselytizing"). Don't get caught up in that specifically, but look more at the fearlessness of the guy who is willing to approach a celebrity atheist and engage with him in a discussion about God.
- You'll also need some scratch paper or note-cards, pens, and a few red markers.

FIRST, tell your students you're going to watch a video about someone who came into contact with a person living a fearless life for Christ. Explain who Penn Jillette is (a long time celebrity illusionist and celebrity, but also a professed atheist). Then show the video.



Jesus And Your Image

Lesson 4: Fearless

THEN, when you've finished the video, ask:

- **What's the one thing that stood out to you about the video?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **Does it surprise you to hear an avowed atheist talk about a Christ-follower/Christianity like this? Why or why not?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **What seemed to impress Jillette most about the guy who gave him the Bible?**
 - Answer: He lived out his faith in a way that wasn't fearful, judgmental, or image-driven. He expressed sincere care for Jillette at the risk of being ridiculed or run off.

NEXT, when you've finished, distribute paper and pens to each student and say something like:

- **We've looked at a woman from the Bible, and we've looked at a random guy talking with a celebrity. Now we're going to look at you. What keeps you from sacrificing your image to fearlessly pursue Christ? Is it how other people view you? Is it fear of losing friends? Is it not knowing how to do it right? Take a few minutes, and write down what those things are.**

Once they've written them down encourage anyone to share their responses with the group. Encourage them that these aren't trivial things. These are probably big issues. Serious issues. Remind them that you and other adults in their lives have probably struggled with too. But help them see that none of these reasons are worth failing to follow Christ. Say something like:

- **The question you need to answer is, are these bigger than what Jesus has done for you? Are these more important than the love Jesus has shown you? Are any of these obstacles big enough to keep you from expressing your love and thankfulness to Jesus through the daily living out of your faith? The answer is, of course, No."**

FINALLY, pass around the red markers. As you do, say:

- **I want you to take your list and mark over it with the red marker in the shape of the cross. This is to signify that pursuing Jesus is worth more than what the world thinks of you. Loving Jesus with your whole life is worth more than projecting a cool, got-it-all-together image. Fearlessly pursuing Jesus is the goal for all Christ-followers.**

End by encouraging students to take a minute to pray and release their fears to Jesus, asking Him to give them the strength to go fearlessly into the world with a Christ-centered image.

Wrap up your group time by praying for your students.

- 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.