

JESUS AND MEAN PEOPLE



Lesson 3: Don't Be Afraid

What we want students to learn: That they are to have courage when facing mean people because the Holy Spirit is with them, always.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: To commit to listening for the Holy Spirit with they find themselves face-to-face with a mean person

Scripture Focus: Luke 12:4-6, 11-12

Overview: Fear is a very real emotion when we encounter particularly mean people. And yet Jesus reminds us that this isn't the emotion He wants us to experience. Jesus reminds us that we shouldn't fear mere people. And more than that, we should be bold, trusting that when people put us in the position to defend our identities, and especially our faith, we can know that the Holy Spirit is giving us the words to say.

Teacher Prep Video

The *Jesus And Mean People* 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 Mean People* Lesson 3 Teacher Prep Video,” click on the URL below.

- <https://youthministry360.com/jesus-and-mean-people-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.

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The Setting

There's a lot going on leading up to Luke 12. In Luke 10 Jesus sends out his disciples and tells the parable of the Good Samaritan. In Luke 11 Jesus teaches His disciples the Lord's Prayer, and has His "woe to you" confrontation with the Pharisees. By the time we see Jesus in Luke 12, we find Him teaching His disciples amidst a larger crowd. Though the crowd would no doubt hear what Jesus was saying, Luke tells us that the teaching was primarily for His disciples.

The Main Point

For many teenagers, fear is an emotion that goes hand in hand with their interactions with mean people. The smallish 9th grader lives in fear of the older bully lurking by the lockers. It's a natural reaction, of course. But Jesus reminds us that what feels natural to us is often counter to what God empowers us to experience. You want to encourage students to see that Jesus desires for them to be bold in the face of mean people. They're only people, after all (which is Jesus' point in 12:4-5). More than that, Jesus reminds us that we're not alone. The Holy Spirit is with us in times where we have to take a stand against those opposed to us. We can be bold precisely because we have God Himself providing us with courage.

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 begin thinking about the idea of fear and the role it plays in their lives.
- **Set-Up:** You'll probably want a dry erase board or something similar to record students' responses, though it's not absolutely necessary.

FIRST, explain to students that this lesson is all about fear. And while you'll explain that more in a bit, you want to start off by talking about the most common fears that plague people.

THEN, explain that you're going to see if they can come up with the top 10 most common fears people experience. Have them begin to call out common fears (flying, public speaking, etc.). Write down their answers, limiting them to 10. You may want to do this by starting with more than 10 then voting on which ones to cross out. Write their answers on a dry-erase board.

NEXT, when they have finished, explain that different websites have different lists. But, a sampling of a dozen or so websites and articles reveals a top 10 that looks something like this (in no specific order):

- **Fear of Spiders**
- **Fear of Heights**
- **Fear of Going Out In Public**
- **Fear of Public Speaking**
- **Fear of Needles (injections)**
- **Fear of Flying**
- **Fear of the Dark**
- **Fear of Dying**
- **Fear of Germs**
- **Fear of Cramped Spaces**

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Have students compare your lists to see how well you matched up. Allow for some fun debate about which ones did or did not justify being included/excluded. Then, ask students the following questions:

- **Which fear would be the most debilitating?**
- **Which one would be the easiest to conquer?**
- **Do you have any of the fears mentioned?**
- **If so, where do you see it pop up most frequently?**

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

- **This lesson is the third lesson in our look at what Jesus had to say about mean people. In this lesson, we're going to all admit that sometimes we can be scared of mean people. Maybe not, knee-knocking, lip-trembling fear. Maybe it's more like an uneasiness or a desire to avoid them. But no matter how you look at it, it's born out of a fear of confrontation. But we're also going to learn that Jesus urges us not to fear mean people. In fact, He has some thoughts on how to face the people we fear. Let's take a closer look.**

The Main Event

- **Goal:** To help students understand that they are to have courage when facing mean people because the Holy Spirit is with them, always.
- **Set Up:** None needed.

BEGIN by taking a few moments to remind students what you've covered so far in the previous two lessons. Ask if students have any specific truths they remember from earlier lessons. If you need a little help, use the following bullet points:

- **Lesson 1: Jesus said that when we're living as Christ-followers and people are mean to us, we should count it as a blessing.**
- **Lesson 1: We have to learn to look for how God is working for good through our interactions with mean people.**
- **Lesson 2: Jesus taught that we're called to treat mean people with grace, and in so doing, identify ourselves with God.**
- **Lesson 2: We need to evaluate our own actions and attitudes toward any "mean people" in our lives.**

THEN, when you've finished, instruct students to turn to Luke 12. As they are doing so, see if anyone can remember the details of who wrote Luke (and who Luke was), and maybe the date and purpose for its writing. If you need help filling in the gaps, reference the Details and Setting sections of your Bible Background. When students have turned to Luke 12, read or have a student read Luke 12:4-6 and 11-12. When they've finished, lead students in a discussion. Ask something like:

- **Let's look first at verses 4 and 5. Let's summarize what Jesus is saying here. When Jesus said, "Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell," who was He talking about being afraid of?**
 - o Answer: He was talking about fearing Satan.
- **Who was Jesus urging His audience not to be afraid of?**
 - o Answer: Human beings. Better known as mean people.
- **Jesus helps provide the reasons for this. Why does He say we shouldn't fear what people can do to us?**
 - o Answer: Jesus makes it clear that no matter what the meanest of people can do to us, even take our lives, they do not have the power to affect our souls.

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- **Why is this counterintuitive to how we are inclined to feel about people who are mean to us? Why is it easy for us to feel fear when it comes to mean people?**
 - Answer: Because they can make our lives miserable. Mean people can embarrass us, humiliate us, and maybe even hurt us physically. Fear is our human response to such people.

Explain to students that being afraid of mean people is something most of us struggle with at some point. But Jesus is helping us understand the difference between the fleeting things of this earth and the forever things of the spiritual realm. Say something like:

- **Consider the worst thing the meanest person might do to you. Whatever it is, when you see it in view of eternity, no matter how bad it is, it's not that bad. When compared to the impact that Satan has on leading people away from God, a bully making fun of you or even hurting you isn't the end of the world. Though it definitely causes a ton of unpleasant emotions, we can treat these mean people with the right kind of attitude because of what Jesus says in verse 6.**

NEXT, have students look at verse 6. See if anyone can grasp what Jesus is saying here. Allow him or her to share his or her thoughts with the class. If you need to reframe or address any loose ends, summarize the verse by saying something like:

- **Jesus is saying here that sparrows have very little value. In fact, they are so valueless that five of them are only worth two pennies. And yet, the amazing thing is that God remembers each of them. God places tremendous value on the valueless. The point Jesus is making? If sparrows, which have no value, are important to God, how much more important are you? God values us so much that He promises to be by our side through the worst of what we may experience at the hands of mean people.**

THEN, once you've made this point, tell students to hold that thought for one moment. Tell them to look at verses 11-12. Ask the following:

- **What is a synagogue and why would Jesus' audience have to worry about defending themselves in front of it?**
 - Answer: A synagogue was the Jewish place of worship in any city not named Jerusalem. In Jerusalem the Jews had the Temple to worship in. But in cities outside of Jerusalem, they would have worshipped in a synagogue. Christ-followers would routinely be brought before the Jewish rulers in the synagogues to have to defend their faith in Christ, as many Jews did not believe Jesus was the promised Messiah.
- **We can imagine why this would be a scary time, a time that would lead people to be afraid. Why did Jesus say that His followers shouldn't be afraid?**
 - Answer: The Holy Spirit would give them the words to defend themselves.
- **So, let's tie these verses together, and make some modern day application. God values His children greatly. So greatly that in the face of mean people, He promises the Holy Spirit will be with us. How does this make you feel?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **How does this give you strength to deal with the mean people in your life?**
- **What does it look like to rely on the Holy Spirit for strength when you find yourself face-to-face with a mean person?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **How does this keep you from being fearful?**
 - Answers will vary.

FINALLY, make sure students understand the relationship between boldness and the presence of the Holy

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Spirit. Say something like:

- **The most amazing thing is that God Himself lives inside of us. The Holy Spirit is God with us, each and every day. And when God is with us, promising to see us through the worst encounters with mean people, we do not have anything to be afraid of. There is nothing a mean person can do to us to separate us from God. We simply have to begin to learn to listen for the Holy Spirit in times when we're confronted by mean people. We'll wrap the lesson up talking about this very thing.**

If there are no further questions or comments, transition to the Last Word.

The Last Word

- **Goal:** To help students commit to listening for the Holy Spirit with they find themselves face-to-face with a mean person.
- **Set-Up:** None needed.

BEGIN by asking students a simple question. Ask:

- **Can you believe Jesus? Can you take Him at His word?**

You're not necessarily looking for an answer from your students, so don't force them to respond. If they do, great. If not, let it hang in the air for a bit. Follow this up by saying the following:

- **If you do think that Jesus can be believed, then that's a good thing. I think He can too. And Scripture is pretty clear that God is Truth, literally incapable of falsehood. We can believe Jesus when He tells us something. And we just saw where He told us something pretty cool. He said that when we're confronted by mean people, the Holy Spirit will guide us in how to deal with it.**

THEN, ask:

- **So, here's the next question: think back on the last time you encountered a mean person. Did you hear or feel the Holy Spirit talking to you? Could you tell that He was giving you the words to say and the thoughts to think?**

Again, allow this to hang out in the air for a bit. Then, say something like:

- **Many of you would say that you haven't heard the Holy Spirit in these situations. And most people would have a similar response. But, if we believe Jesus, we have to believe that our inability to hear the Spirit is a problem with us, and not with God.**

NEXT, engage in a little exercise to drive home your point. Instruct students to stick their fingers in their ears and to block out any noise as effectively as possible. Lower your voice to a whisper. Ask who can hear you. If students are complying, no one will be able to hear what you're saying. Then, in a loud voice, ask students to unplug their ears. When they all have, say:

- **None of you could hear me speaking. But I was talking wasn't I? (Yes) Just because you couldn't hear me didn't change the fact that I was speaking. The same is true with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit speaks to us when we encounter mean people, and in plenty of other instances in our lives. (Jesus promised us this.) If we can't hear Him, it's because we're not listening.**

FINALLY, encourage your students to engage in a time of silent reflection. Have them take a moment to talk with the Holy Spirit in prayer, maybe confessing their belief that He speaks to them, and asking the Spirit to help them be more ready listeners. When they've had a few moments to pray silently, close in

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prayer, thanking the Spirit that He gives us the words to say when we encounter mean people.

- **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 and with being mindful of the choices they make during the week.**

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.