

AMPLIFY

GROWING A
FAITH THAT LASTS

AMPLIFY: OBEDIENCE
LESSON 13: FREE TO OBEY

What we want students to learn: That disobedience and sin defined their lives before Christ but because of Jesus, they've been set free from sin to live lives of obedience.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: To help students understand that they have been set free to pursue obedience, and what this looks like in their day-to-day lives.

Scripture Focus: Romans 6:15-22, Galatians 5:13

Overview: As Christ-followers, we live in tension. It's the tension between being saved from the punishment of our sins through the work of Christ on the cross, and still striving to be obedient. The tension comes from knowing that through God's grace, we won't be condemned for our weakness. But this freedom can sometimes lead us to strive less to be holy and Christ-like. Put simply: the tendency for us, and our students is not to get too worried about obeying Christ because we know we're "covered." This is an important issue that strikes at the heart of obedience. As Christ-followers, your students are called to live in a way that's different than others around them because of Jesus. While addressing the topic of being different, Paul called the church to freely obey because Jesus was now their Master. Paul calls us to be people who strive to pursue obedience in our daily lives as a result of our freedom.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO

Each **Amplify** lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your **Obedience** lesson 13 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 13, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.

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.

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THE DETAILS

Romans

- **Author:** Paul is the author of Romans.
- **Timeframe:** Romans was probably written from Corinth in the winter of 56-57 AD.
- **Purpose:** Since the church in Rome had not received comprehensive theological teaching on salvation and other implications of following Christ, Paul wrote Romans to ensure a good understanding of such things. In addition, since many Jewish Christians were rejecting some of the new Gentile converts, it was essential that a 'level playing field' be given to all Believers. This is what Paul was advocating for in Romans.

Galatians

- **Author:** Paul, the persecutor-of-Christians-turned-missionary, is the author of the Letter to the Galatians (see Acts 7:57-8:3 and 9:1-31). After his conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul set out on several journeys to proclaim about the salvation that is available through Jesus and His death and resurrection. Several churches were planted as a result of Paul's leadership, including the church in Galatia.
- **Timeframe:** Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians sometime between 48 and 53 AD, most likely by 49 AD.
- **Purpose:** The primary purpose of Paul's letter to the Galatians was to respond to a particular issue: a group of Jews— also claiming to be Christ-followers (many early Christians were Jewish Christians)—had begun to argue that Christians are not just saved by faith, but that they also were required to keep the Mosaic Law. This, of course, went against everything Paul knew to be true about Jesus. The main thrust of Paul's teaching was that there is no work we could accomplish to be saved (Ephesians 2:8), including the keeping of the Law (Galatians 2:16).

THE MAIN POINT

There are two words in the Bible used for the word "slave." One is in Hebrew, "ebed," the other as in the passages we will look at today, is "doulos" in Greek. This word literally means, "bondservant," or a slave that has chosen to give their whole lives to their master. Before we have a relationship with Jesus, we are living our lives on our own in selfishness and disobedience. Therefore, we become a "slave" to sin. In other words, there is nothing we can do to stop living on our own defying God's will. When we come to grasp who Jesus is and what He has done, we enter into a relationship with Him that changes everything.

In the Romans passage, we learn that this freedom from our "slavery" to sin does not give us a free pass to do whatever we want. Instead, we transfer ownership of our lives. In sin we had no choice, we were chained to a mess we could do nothing about. However, in Christ, there is the freedom to become His and His alone. What does this mean in our daily lives though? How can we learn what a "slave to righteousness" does? Just knowing who Christ is, but continuing to live as we always have is like serving two masters. We are divided and feel confused often. When we go "all in," then we find freedom as a "bondservant" to Jesus. We continue on giving everything to Him.

Finally, in the Galatians passage, we take a look at what the freedom from sin looks like practically speaking. It does not mean we can indulge in the acts of the world and do what we want. Instead, it becomes about a life of service to Christ and others.

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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:** The goal of this object lesson is to see the stickiness of sin and that Christ is the only one that will free us from it.
- **Set-Up:** You will need a piece of gum for every student in your group. If you have a large group or one that might be grossed out by the following activity, pick about five students to come up front with you and give them a piece of gum. You will also need a paper plate and two sheets of paper, one black or dark colored and one white; both cut into the shapes of hearts. Cover the white heart in Vaseline.

FIRST, give every student a piece of gum as they come into the room and ask them to chew it quickly. Don't worry if every student won't take a piece. However, the more gum, the more impactful the object lesson. Ask them to chew it for only a few moments and then spit their gum onto the plate. You, the leader will need to have a strong stomach and make sure all the gum is sticking together in one big heaping gross pile. You want it to be stuck on the plate really.

THEN, bring the plate of gum and the dark paper up front to show the students.

Start by talking about how all of the gum on the plate represents our sin. We begin with our own sin. (*Note to leader, you should be chewing a piece of gum as well.) Take your gum out and place it on the top of the rest of the pile.

NEXT, say something like, "We all have our own sin." Then, as it sticks to the rest of the pile, talk about how that sin represents all of our sin. "Other people's sin sticks to us as well." Show them the big glob of gum. Then ask:

- **How do other people's sins affect us? How does our sin affect others?**
 - Answers will vary.

Then say something like:

- **Then there is also the fact that sin exists in the world. Remember, when we learned the difference between good and evil in the Garden, with Adam and Eve, our innocence was lost, and sin came into the world. When we look at this pile of gum, it is like looking at a pile of sin that just keeps getting bigger and more stuck together. Notice as one "sin" gets stuck to another we can no longer separate them.**

THEN, take the glob of gum and put it in the middle of the dark piece of paper and fold it in half, so the gum sticks there. Try to unfold the paper, showing how the gum is now stuck to the paper and can't be removed. Say something like:

- **This sin enters our heart and gets stuck there. In our own strength, there is nothing we can do to take the sin away. (Try and remove the gum from the paper. For effect try to get it off and show how it gets stuck in a way that rips the paper. You can't get it off.)**

AMPLIFY

GROWING A
FAITH THAT LASTS

AMPLIFY: OBEDIENCE
LESSON 13: FREE TO OBEY

Ask:

- **Is there such a thing as a “big” and “little” sin? Is one sin more “sticky” than others?**
 - Answer: In God’s eyes, sin is sin. It is what draws us away from Him, and causes us to try and figure out life on our own. He doesn’t look at murder as more awful than telling a lie. All of it sticks to us and just keeps making a mess. However, there are different earthly consequences to our sin. Murder causes us to go to jail, and maybe even death row. A lie may wreck a friendship. In God’s eyes, they both cause us to be separated from Him.
- **What happens when we try to “take care of our sin” ourselves?**
 - Answer: We can’t take care of our own sin, it only gets more stuck to us. It gets all over everything, eventually ripping us apart.

FINALLY, take out the white paper heart, the one that has Vaseline on it, and hold it up. Crumple up the dark paper and throw it out. Chew one more piece of gum. Sum up by saying something like:

- **We tend to think that when we have a relationship with Jesus, he takes away the gunk in our hearts, just like if we just removed the gum from the paper. The problem with that is it still leaves us with something torn and broken. Instead, He takes it all away and makes us a new creation altogether. We are no longer “slaves” to the old sin that we couldn’t “unstick,” we are now His. This gives us the freedom to live in obedience to Him, a different life altogether. It can feel like sin still follows us around trying to stick to us. (Take out the gum and unsuccessfully try to stick it to the paper.) However, when we have a relationship with Christ, we can now go to Him, and that sin won’t stick to us in the same way ever again.**

Transition into the *Main Event* portion of your lesson.

THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** That disobedience and sin defined their lives before Christ but because of Jesus, they’ve been set free from sin to live lives of obedience, and this would change everything about how they approach their lives.
- **Set Up:** None

FIRST, kick things off by asking students what they remember from last week’s lesson on obedience.

- Ask:
- **What did we learn about the connection between love and obedience?**
 - Answer: When we have a relationship with Christ, we have a deeper desire to follow Christ and live a life out of obedience. Our heart’s motivation moves from, “We have to do this,” to “We want to do this,” for Him.

NEXT, remind students, however, how we did live a life of sin that caused us to actually be a “slave” to sin. Think of the object lesson we just saw. Explain that we were totally stuck to it, and it was stuck to us. Tell them you are going to go deep into a passage that takes a look at how we were once slaves to sin, but now we choose to become Christ’s. Take a look at Romans 6:15-22. Read or have a student read the passage. Then, ask:

- **Taking a look at verse 15, it can be hard to understand what do you think it means? What is your definition of grace?**

AMPLIFY

GROWING A
FAITH THAT LASTS

AMPLIFY: OBEDIENCE
LESSON 13: FREE TO OBEY

- o Answer: Grace is a “free gift” that can’t be earned. There was nothing we could do to earn Christ’s love for us. God loved us when He made us and loved us enough to send His only son to die a horrible death on our behalf, and then to conquer death to remove us from our sin. Before, this we had to keep trying to “do” something to “earn” our place with God. Remember, how the priest had to perform sacrifices to “atone” for our sin? We can think that because He did this for us, that now we can just go about doing whatever we want because we are “covered” and the Lord will forgive us. (Note: Avoid getting in too deep on what it means to live under the law now in our relationship with Christ. This is more of time to understand that Grace is not a “free pass.”)
- **Looking at verses 16 & 17. This passage talks about being a “slave” to two different things. What are they? Why do you think the writer uses the word, “slave?”**
 - o Answer: When we think about slaves, we think about a horrible life, that someone is literally chained to a master of some kind. That is exactly what being a slave to sin looks like. However, we know who is in charge of our lives, based on what we are willing to do for them. If we are a “slave” to sin, we live like it. If we are a “slave” to obeying the Lord, then everything is different. We, however, cannot live like we are serving both of these.
- **How does your life look differently as a “slave to righteousness,” on a daily basis?**
 - o Answers will vary. The important point you want to draw out here is that we should look different when we obey God over sin. It isn’t just about reading our Bible, praying and going to church. All of those help us draw closer to the Lord. It’s about a willingness to put what we want to do aside, to do not just what’s “right” but what God wants of us.
- **This can be complicated as there are no verses in the Bible that talk about the music we listen to, or the way we use social media. However, it does tell us we should keep ourselves from being “polluted by the world” in James 1:27. What does this look like as we walk out our lives in school, at home and in the world beyond?**
 - o Answers will vary.

Explain the Bible talks about how we can’t serve two “masters.” In this case being a “slave” to “righteousness” is the same as freedom. Say:

- **Remember in week one when we talked about a fence and the freedom we have in those boundaries? God wants us to stay inside what He designed for us because He knows it will keep us safe and bring us closer to Him. However, we can’t decide sometimes we will do it His way and other times our own. It’s one or the other. In Christ, we have freedom to follow Him and His ways totally.**

FINALLY, read or have a student read the rest of the Romans passage and Galatians 5:13. Explain to students that these passages together show us what freedom in Christ really looks like. Point out that the Romans passage actually asks us what the benefit was of our life in slavery. It makes the connection that no matter how “fun” it might have seemed, in the end, that slavery led to death.

- **What is the benefit we get by becoming slaves to God?**
 - o Answer: Jesus suffered and took our place on the cross, and then overcame death. In this, we are freed totally from the chains of sin. This doesn’t mean we won’t ever make a mistake or sin. However, our hearts are different now. The helplessness of not being able to “fix” our lives is gone because we know that Jesus did this for us. We now have been given the power to obey, through Him, and his help. Remember, we can’t obey and do things His way without Him. This is why the relationship

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- with Him is central to everything.
- **If you are really honest, looking at yourself, who is your master?**
 - Answers will vary.
 - **Why do you think Galatians 5:13 points out so clearly what our freedom means?**
 - Answer: We can keep going our way and live like the chains of sin are still on us. Remember, the gum? It would be like living like we can't get "unstuck" from that big gob of a mess. It is like taking it along with us. Instead, knowing that sin can't really "stick" to us, in the same way, means living with the responsibility of living for the Lord. One of the ways we show this is to really serve others and God with a heart of love.

We want students to walk away from this lesson understanding truly who their "master" is and what this means for their everyday life. When we attempt to keep up our life of sin, and really dwell there, it will continue in a cycle of guilt and shame. Part of what comes in the freedom of choosing obedience to the Lord is being free to be loved and live in this place. It is a place of hope, and peace even when the circumstances in life aren't great.

Transition to the **Last Word** to wrap up your lesson.

THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** The goal of this section is to really look at how we are living day to day, and whom we serve.
- **Set-Up:** Each student will need a pen and paper.

FIRST, give students pen and paper. Ask them to write down the answers to the following questions. No one else has to see their answers.

- **What is your favorite musician, or name a couple of bands you listen to a lot?**
- **What are three shows you watch on TV?**
- **Of the movies in the theater now, what are two you MUST see?**
- **What is the name of the last movie you watched on DVD?**
- **What video games are your favorite (if you play)?**
- **If you read magazines or books, what do you read?**
- **How much time do you spend on Twitter/Facebook/Instagram/YouTube? What do you look at on there?**
- **Are you embarrassed if your parents looked at what your friends are saying in texts or in one of the above? (Yes or No)**
- **When you hang out with different friends, do you act differently than you do in church, youth group, or with other friends? (Yes or No)**
- **How often do you read your Bible?**
- **How often do you pray?**

THEN, have them look at their answers. Ask, if they are totally honest, do these things bring them closer or farther away from God? Have them write down next to each answer the word, "Close" if it brings them closer to God, "Far" if it moves them away from thinking about God and His ways, and "Neither," if truly it is in the middle of these two.

AMPLIFY

GROWING A
FAITH THAT LASTS

AMPLIFY: OBEDIENCE
LESSON 13: FREE TO OBEY

Have them look back at the list. Are the words mostly, "Close, Far or Neither?"

NEXT, ask:

- **In looking at your list and answers, now whom would you say your master is?**
 - Answers will vary.

FINALLY, finish by talking about how, in a practical sense, these are activities that remind us who our "master" is. We think we can just do whatever and it will be all right. However, what we do in our free time, what we allow our eyes to see, ears to hear, and mind to ponder, will help us know God better or not. Help them see that they have to make hard decisions in life, and this is not about a right or wrong. Avoid telling them what they shouldn't be doing and allow the Lord to convict them. However, leave them with the challenge to belong fully to Christ and obey His ways alone.

Close in prayer.

- **Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're posting them on Instagram, 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 Instagram, 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.