

LESSON 4: JESUS' IRREPLACEABLE LOVE

This includes:

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

1. LEADER PREPARATION**LESSON OVERVIEW**

Jesus loves us and wants to take care of us. But sometimes we turn to other people or things to fill our needs. Maybe it seems easier to trust someone we can see or something we can feel and control. Their promises seem too good to be true—and they are. Relying on other sources for life and fulfillment makes trusting Jesus harder and harder. Jesus promises that if we seek him first, he'll meet all our needs—not all our desires or dreams, but all our needs. That's because he offers true love and came to give us true life.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- 1. WHAT:** When we allow Jesus to be the center of our life, being faithful to him becomes our top priority.
- 2. WHY:** Teenagers who place their complete trust and hope in Jesus discover the amazing depths of his faithfulness and love.
- 3. HOW:** Students can grow in their relationship with Jesus by reading his Word and receiving encouragement and support from their Christian peers.

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE

1 John 5:16-21

SECONDARY SCRIPTURE

Matthew 6:33

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 1 John 5:16-21.

This passage was written during a period of rapid growth for Christianity. As the faith spread, churches popped up everywhere. But wherever new believers flourished, false teachers also arrived on scene. Because new Christians were vulnerable to false doctrine, Jesus' disciples and apostles wrote letters filled with clear, solid teaching. They wanted to help lead the new believers and churches down the path of truth.

First John 5 contains instructions that are still relevant and important today. Verse 21 warns, “Keep away from anything that might take God’s place in your hearts.” Even lifelong Christians are tempted to replace Jesus in our hearts. We make room for our friends, a favorite TV series, and various other interests. Often this means that Jesus falls to third or fourth on our list of priorities. That’s why we need reminders to ask Jesus to rule in our hearts.

This letter also emphasizes that Jesus came to have fellowship with us. When we don’t experience this fellowship, Jesus slides further and further down our list, as other things consume our hearts and time.

Jesus doesn’t desire first place in our hearts because he’s ultra-competitive and has to win. He desires first place because he’s the only true God. Only he can fill our hearts and lives. Only he can forgive our sins, bear our burdens, and restore our brokenness.

When we make Jesus our top priority, we can experience true fellowship with him. This fellowship doesn’t fade away and won’t condemn us or fail us. Jesus, who is always faithful, longs to pour his love over all that we are and do.

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.

- What are your top priorities? Do you agree that Jesus’ love for us is irreplaceable? Come engage in a great conversation tonight!
- What’s one thing you just can’t live without? Find out what’s irreplaceable—and bring a friend along, too.

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,

As we wrapped up our series on culture this week, we discussed 1 John 5:16-21. This Scripture instructs us to keep away from anything that might take Jesus’ place in our hearts. With so many things in today’s culture clamoring for our time and attention, this can be hard to follow.

This week, I encourage you to take a few minutes to review our lesson with your teenager. Please consider these questions for your conversation:

- In your life and your daily schedule, what things sometimes take a higher priority than your relationship with Jesus?
- How can you tell when Jesus falls to second place—or lower—in your life? What needs of yours don’t get met when that happens?

- How does seeking Jesus first and making him the center of our life shift our attitudes? our actions? our outlook?

We appreciate all the ways you help us minister to your teenager. Have a blessed week! We love you!

LESSON 4: JESUS' IRREPLACEABLE LOVE**2. LESSON GUIDE****GETTING THINGS STARTED [OPTIONAL]****LEADER
TIP**

Preview the following video for your group: [youtube.com/watch?v=eleZg0-Tc9M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eleZg0-Tc9M) (or use another video about something that's irreplaceable). You'll need an Internet connection and a computer or tablet to display this video for participants.

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

- *What's your initial reaction to this commercial's message?*
- *The man in this ad keeps pressuring Emma to use a tablet. When it comes to your faith, what are some of the pressures you face?*
- *When have you tried to replace Jesus' love with a substitute? What was the result?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *This man wonders, "Why use these other things when you could use this tablet?" He wants Emma to replace all the paper in her life with an electronic device, which he thinks is superior. Do you ever feel this kind of pressure when it comes to your faith? Does anyone ever suggest it's time for an "upgrade" in your beliefs? Do they hint that Jesus is outdated? The truth is, nothing can take Jesus' place. And his irreplaceable love won't ever fade away.*

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 1 John 5:16-21 together as a group. Because this passage is so brief, consider having students read the verses several times, from different translations of the Bible.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *As we dive into group conversation, let's spend a few moments exploring today's Scripture passage. It addresses the role that Jesus wants to play in our lives.*

1. NOTHING COMPARES TO FELLOWSHIP WITH JESUS

ASK:

- *What are some ways you can tell you're experiencing fellowship with Jesus?*
- *When you have fellowship with Jesus, how might it change the way you handle difficult life situations?*
- *When fellowship with Jesus becomes a Sunday-only experience, how does that affect the rest of your week?*
- *When you face difficulties, where do you turn first, and why? What are the benefits of seeking Jesus first?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Sometimes we're so motivated by our need to belong that we'll do anything to be accepted. This urgency to belong, to be accepted by others, can drive our priorities and decisions. When that desire leads us on a path of sin, Jesus is ready to offer forgiveness and reconciliation to his true fellowship. Our sin doesn't give the evil one full reign over us. We belong to Jesus, who promises to protect us when we trust in him.*

2. CAN'T TOUCH THIS

ASK:

- *How does verse 18 demonstrate Jesus' unfailing love for us?*
- *No matter our sin, Jesus offers us forgiveness and fellowship. Why, then, can it be so difficult to forgive ourselves? How can Jesus' forgiveness boost or restore your love for yourself?*
- *Think of a time you felt consumed by sin and then encountered Jesus' love. What was that like?*
- *How can that experience help you reach out to friends who are ensnared by sin? Who can you ask Jesus to give life to today?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *An idol is anything we worship instead of Jesus. The world has always been full of these replacements, which always fail to satisfy or fulfill us. This letter warns us not to allow anything to take Jesus' place in our hearts.*

3. JESUS GIVES US THE COURAGE TO LET GO OF OUR IDOLS AND TRUST IN HIM ALONE

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *This Scripture reminds us that true fellowship and eternal life come from Jesus. The evil one no longer controls us. When we give our hearts completely to Jesus, he protects, provides, and restores us. His love motivates us to find our purpose and identity solely in him.*

ASK:

- *How can you tell when your heart belongs only to Jesus?*
- *How can trusting in Jesus help you overcome temptations to follow new idols?*
- *What are some ways you've noticed your trust in Jesus grow as you've followed him?*
- *To build your foundation of trust even more, what doubts, fears, or concerns can you give to Jesus today?*

EXTRA DISCUSSION [OPTIONAL]

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



ASK:

- Read Matthew 6:33. What's the difference between having our needs met and having our every desire fulfilled?
- When we seek Jesus' kingdom first, he promises to meet all our needs. What are some needs you have today?

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

LIVING IT OUT

ASK:

- What priorities might you need to rearrange in order to trust Jesus completely?
- Think of an idol that has taken—or is taking—the place of Jesus in your heart. What can you do to let go of it so you can experience true fellowship with Jesus?
- How can giving your heart to Jesus be a daily desire and commitment in your life?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *If you feel as if idols have pushed Jesus to the far corner of your heart, pray that he'll give you the strength and courage to trust only in him. Jesus doesn't want to condemn you; he wants to love you and fill your heart with his everlasting love.*



Ask students to find a place where they can be alone for a few minutes to reflect on the lesson and pray. Consider coming back together for a group prayer led by students.

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.

"Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need"
(Matthew 6:33).