ACTIVATE: God’s Faithfulness

**MS & HS CURRICULUM**

**Connect Groups**

**July 25, 2021**

**Lesson 42:** God’s Faithfulness, Our Faithfulness

**What we want students to learn:** That God's faithfulness empowers their faithfulness, especially when it comes to temptation.

**What we want students to do with what they’ve learned:** To commit to taking God up on His promise of a “way out” when they are tempted to sin.

**Scripture Focus:** 1 Corinthians 10:12-13

**Overview:** This lesson will take a particular view of God's faithfulness, one that is focused on helping your students understand an extremely practical application of God's faithfulness. There are a lot of different ways to look at how God's faithfulness impacts our lives. The goal of this lesson is to show students that it has real-life application in their daily struggle to live as Christ-followers.

**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 of what’s happening in and around the passage. *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**

1 Corinthians

* **Author:**The Apostle Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to the Church in Corinth.
* **Timeframe:** Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians was written from Ephesus in the spring shortly before Pentecost. We are unsure of what year, but it was likely between 53 AD and 55 AD.
* **Purpose:** Paul's first letter to the Corinthians was written to a divided church to call them to become united for the sake of the Gospel. He was calling the church to lay down the things that divided them to fully embrace the one thing that is strong enough to unite them: Christ crucified!

**The Main Point**

This is a little bit of a direction change, but it felt like the series opened itself up to this direction. As you have talked about God's faithfulness, you're going to wrap up with a challenge for students to be faithful in light of God showing Himself faithful in their lives. It's a super practical, very relevant lesson that will focus on temptation and how God helps us to be tempted but not sin.

**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 is for your students to begin thinking about the idea of escape.
* **Set-Up:** None

FIRST, explain to students that you’re going to read them a real-life story about an absolutely amazing escape artist. Read the following:

* **Christopher Daniel Gay is nicknamed Little Houdini for a reason: He is a master escape artist. And he is very short. But Gay is known for less legal avenues of escape than was Houdini.**

**In 2005, Gay broke out of a Nashville jail. Two years later, Gay was being transported to a jail in Alabama for stealing an RV. He freed himself from a full set of shackles (on his hands, feet, and waist!) and then stole a pickup truck, drove 300 miles, hot-wired an 18-wheeler, and drove another 100 miles to a town just north of Nashville. He refused to pull over until he reached his mother's house, where he drove the big rig onto her front lawn and fled into the woods.**

**Gay then headed to Nashville and stole a famous country singer’s tour bus. He drove the bus to a NASCAR race in Lakeland, Florida, where he told the track manager that he was there to pick up Tony Stewart, the legendary race car driver. When authorities became suspicious, Gay abandoned the tour bus and fled.**

**Gay was arrested once again in Florida. But he escaped as police were transporting him back to Tennessee. Despite locking down the surrounding area and searching for Gay with helicopters and bloodhounds, Little Houdini worked his magic on a big rig and took flight yet again.**

**Gay and his 18-wheeler were finally apprehended on March 16, 2008, near a Wal-Mart in Lakeland, Florida. A spokeswoman for the Polk County sheriff's department told journalists, "He is being treated as an escape risk." You can say that again.**

THEN, ask students:

* **Have you ever heard of anything as crazy as this? How is it possible for one man to be so good at escaping? (And why couldn’t he have used his powers for good and not evil???)**
* **What do you think it is about this guy that motivated him to try to escape so often?**
* **Have you ever been in a situation where you had to escape? Hopefully, you weren't stealing country singer's buses. But have you ever had to escape somewhere? Share the story!**

FINALLY, explain that today’s lesson is all about escaping. But not the kind of escaping we just talked about. Explain that this is the final lesson in your three-week look at God’s faithfulness. Encourage students that they might be surprised with what God’s faithfulness has to do with their escaping!

If there are no more comments, transition to The Main Event.

**The Main Event**

* **Goal:** To show students that God’s faithfulness actually empowers their faithfulness, especially when it comes to temptation.
* **Set-Up:** You may want to use a dry-erase board to record your answers.

FIRST, encourage your students to spend a few minutes reviewing what you have learned over the last two weeks. If you want, make it a game and reward students who answer correctly. Feel free to use the following bullet points to help you:

* **God is perfectly faithful**.
* **God’s faithfulness stands out in the midst of an unfaithful world.**
* **Jesus showed great faithfulness in fulfilling God’s mission, even in the face of extreme circumstances.**
* **When things get tough, we can look to Jesus' example of strength and encouragement.**

THEN, when you've finished, explain that this lesson is going to be, and practical. Explain that before you jump into the Bible study portion of the lesson, you want to ask them some questions about a subject we're all super familiar with, but one we don't often spend a lot of time talking about. Ask something like:

* **OK, somebody define the word temptation for me. What does it mean to be tempted?**
  + *Answer*: Temptation is merely the urge to do something, especially something that is wrong or sinful.
* **Let’s go through and build a list of some examples of how people are tempted.** 
  + Answers will vary. Use a dry-erase board to record their responses.
* **Use your brains for a moment: Think about a somewhat famous moment in Scripture where the phrase “lead us not into temptation” is used. Describe that moment for me.**
  + *Answer*: Obviously, it was during the Lord’s Prayer when Jesus was teaching the disciples to pray.
* **Why is this significant? Is it a sin to be tempted?**
  + *Answer*: Scripture is clear that temptation leads to sin, but to be tempted isn't sin itself. Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, and yet we know that Jesus was sinless.

Then, explain to students if they are wondering about now whether this is a lesson on temptation or faithfulness, it's OK. You're about to see how the two are related, and it's pretty impressive.

NEXT, have students turn to 1 Corinthians 10:12-13. Provide the context for the passage using the Bible Background while they find the book. Then, read or have a student read the passage. When they are finished, lead students in a discussion. Ask:

* **Paul comes out swinging in verse 12. What is he warning his audience about? (HINT: It’s what we have just been talking about!)**
  + *Answer*: He is warning them to be on the lookout for temptation and sin.
* **Look at the very first part of verse 13. What does Paul mean when he says, “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind”?** 
  + *Answer*: No matter what we’re dealing with, we’re not the first to struggle with it.
* **Why is this comforting to us?**
  + *Answer*: Sometimes it seems like we’re the only one dealing with the sins that trip us up. This helps us know that we’re not alone. Others are going through the same struggles we are.
* **OK, now look at the second part of verse 13. This is the first reason why these verses were chosen in this final look at God’s faithfulness. What does Paul mean when he says, “And God is faithful; he will not let you be temptedbeyond what you can bear”?**
  + *Answer*: While God is never the cause of temptation, He allows us to be tempted. The Bible tells us it’s part of growing our faith. But Paul assures us that God will not let us be tempted by anything that we don’t have the power to overcome. And Paul says this is because of God’s faithfulness. Explain that God is so faithful, He even chooses to walk with us through temptation.
* **The second sign of God’s amazing faithfulness comes in the rest of the verse. Paul says, “But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.” How does this show God’s faithfulness?**
  + Answers will vary.
* Pause for a moment and help your students see what faithfulness this shows on God’s part. Not only was Jesus faithful in purchasing our salvation (what you studied last week), God is faithful as we live out our daily lives to help keep our temptation from turning into sin. THAT is a faithful God!

FINALLY, say something like:

* **This is a powerful truth. It makes us stop and think, doesn’t it? When we are tempted, sin is not a foregone conclusion. We have a choice. In fact, Jesus died to free us from the power of sin. Sin doesn’t have mastery over you anymore. You just saw in God’s word where God promises to be there for you and give you a way out when you’re tempted. Let’s finish up our time together by thinking about what this looks like practically speaking.**

Then, transition into The Last Word.

**The Last Word**

* **Goal:** To challenge students to commit to taking God up on His promise of a “way out” when they are tempted to sin.
* **Set-Up:** Provide a rubber band, or a string, or some other kind of bracelet, enough for each of your students to have one.

FIRST, ask a couple of questions:

* **Is it possible for us to go through life without sinning?**
  + *Answer*: No. We are born with a sin nature. And though the Holy Spirit constantly works to make us more like Christ, we will never be perfectly sinless this side of heaven.
* **But wait. Paul just said that God offers us a way out of every temptation? Doesn’t that mean that it’s possible that we could live sin free?**
  + Allow students to wrestle with this for a bit. Then explain to them that the problem with our sin nature is that it is so strong. There has never been a human outside of Christ Himself who has resisted every temptation they’ve faced. It’s sad. But it’s true. However, explain to students that you want to challenge them today to take God up in His offer to provide a way out for them when they are tempted.

THEN, distribute whatever you have provided as a bracelet to your students. Explain to them that the first step in being able to resist temptation is to have an awareness in the moment that God is faithfully ready to help you out of it. That’s what the bracelet is for. Say:

* **When you find yourself in a moment of temptation, I want you to remember this bracelet. Look at it and remember that God is faithfully ready to help keep you from temptation turning into sin. Whether you’re tempted to gossip, or lie, or look at a website you’re not supposed to look at, in that moment, look at the bracelet and stop. Pause, turn your attention to God, and listen and look for how He is going to provide you a way out. He may bring Scripture to mind. He may help lead you to change the subject or shut down your browser. Whatever it is, you can know that God is faithfully ready to help.**

FINALLY, encourage your students to respond with any questions or comments. When they are finished, close your group time 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.