

The Gospel Project for Adults, Summer 2016
Extended Instructional Approaches for Session 1

Introduction: *Engage the group by examining a word.*

Before your students come into the class, have this written on the board:

“Demand. An act of demanding or asking especially with authority and something claimed as due.”

Ask your students to think about something they have demanded during their respective lives. Allow 2-3 students to answer. The goal of this exercise is to prepare their minds and hearts for the lesson.

Part 1: *Stimulate your group with a historical example.*

In the midst of the American Civil War, the United States Senate passed a resolution requesting that the President designate and set apart a day for national prayer and humiliation. On March 30, 1863, President Lincoln issued Proclamation 97 declaring a day of national humiliation, fasting, and prayer.

Read the following quote from this proclamation. Before you read, ask the students, “What does President Lincoln identify as the root cause of America’s problems? Is it still our problem?”

Whereas it is the duty of nations as well as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon, and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord;

And, insomuch as we know that by His divine law nations, like individuals, are subjected to punishments and chastisements in this world, may we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war which now desolates the land may be but a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people? We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken

success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us.

It behooves us, then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.

[Source: Abraham Lincoln, “Proclamation 97 - Appointing a Day of National Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer,” The American Presidency Project [online], 30 March 1863 [cited 9 May 2016]. Available from the Internet: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=69891>.]

Part 2: Help your group members connect with the major theme.

Have a group member read the following quotation:

“The thing we serve is the thing we worship! Whatever controls our lives and ‘calls the signals’ is our god.”

Ask the class to comment on the above quote. Ask, “What controls your life? Whom do you serve?”

[Source: Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary: New Testament*, vol. 2 (Colorado Springs: Victor Books, 1989), 532.]

Part 3: Engage the group to examine their attitude.

There is a tendency in all of us to want to conform to societal norms, primarily because we do not want to stand out and be thought of as peculiar. God called Israel—and He calls the church—to be distinct. Hand out the following article from *Our Daily Bread*, and have your students break into 2-3 groups. After they have read the article, instruct them to comment on the dangers of conforming to the world.

Insulated From Sin

Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. –Romans 12:9

I watched with fascination as workers from the Grant Tower Company dismantled each section of the transmitter tower. The powerful radio signal had been sent up a 1” copper tube inside a 4” protective steel pipe. At each joint and throughout the 20’ sections, nylon spacers kept the copper from getting too near the outside pipe and ruining the signal.

A major lightning strike had blown out a transmitter bay and “fried” the transmission line at every weak joint, dirty connection, and worn spacer. A little preventive maintenance just might have kept that radio station on the air.

Much as that transmission line had fallen into disrepair, the Corinthian church was becoming susceptible to destructive forces. The apostle Paul expressed deep concern and urged those struggling believers to keep themselves insulated from sin by keeping their distance from it. In fact, he appealed to them to be completely separate from the unclean things of the world (2 Cor. 6:17). The closer their connection with the world, the more they would be corrupted by it.

Let’s ask God to help us avoid situations that may damage our spiritual health. The Holy Spirit’s power and guidance is the only way we can keep insulated from sin.

O child of God, guard well your life
From anything that stains your heart;
Forsake those things that soil your mind—
Your Father wants you set apart. —Fasick

We can live in the world without letting the world live in us.

[Source: David Egner, “Insulated From Sin,” Our Daily Bread [online], 21 February 1996 [cited 9 May 2016]. Available from the Internet: <http://odb.org/1996/02/21/insulated-from-sin/>.]

Conclusion: *Challenge through a moment of conviction.*

Ask your students to spend some time examining their “demands.” Do we think God is not enough? Is our rebellion the cause of enslavement? Do we look and act just like everyone else? After a few minutes of reflection, ask them to spend a few minutes in prayer confessing this sin to the Lord.

Teaching Tip of the Week

In his seminal book *Teaching to Change Lives: Seven Proven Ways to Make Your Teaching Come Alive*, Howard Hendricks succinctly states: “If you stop growing today, you stop teaching tomorrow.”

As teachers, we are always to be students first and foremost. We are to share from the overflow of our learning and passion for the subject. The goal of our instruction should be transformed lives (see Luke 6:40), not only for our students but also for

ourselves. Ask yourself, “What am I doing to continue learning?” If you can’t answer that question in the affirmative, add something to your life today to help you in this endeavor. Suggestions include taking a class, reading a book on education or on the Bible, and visiting the classroom of a great teacher.

[Source: Howard Hendricks, *Teaching to Change Lives: Seven Proven Ways to Make Your Teaching Come Alive* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1987), 17.]