**1. Motivate**

What was the funniest time you were caught “red-handed”?

* hand in the cookie jar
* crumbs/jelly/lipstick on my face
* soaping someone’s window at Halloween
* trying to sneak in at night past curfew

A video introduction to the lesson is available. View it at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_in3irsho> If you have no wi-fi where you teach, best to download to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/2p8kac59>

* left muddy tracks on the floor
* icing on my fingers
* the gas tank was empty the next morning
* with my head in the fridge at 2:45 am

**2. Transition**

With God we will *always* be found out

* We deserve punishment. But God forgives!
* Jesus takes our guilt and sets us free.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 Break the Law, Pay the Penalty

Listen for a trap.

John 8:2-6a (NIV) At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. 3 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group 4 and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. 5 In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" 6 They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

What did Jesus sit down to do in the temple courts?

* all the people gathered around him
* sat down
* began teaching

Whom did the scribes and Pharisees bring before Jesus?

* brought a woman caught in adultery
* made her stand before the group
* announced her sin
* noted the penalty stated in the Law of Moses
* asked Jesus to comment

Note how this was a trap.

* If Jesus said “stone her” it would be a violation of Roman law (only Roman courts could sentence to capital punishment)
* If He said “let her go” he would be condoning adultery, seen as soft on sin
* They wanted to put Jesus in a “lose-lose” situation

Who is missing in this scene? What is suggested by this person’s absence?

* where’s the man involved
* he’s guilty also
* the religious leaders aren’t interested in justice, they are interested in just making a scene

Which sins do *we* tend to categorize as “big” sins (those that are worse than all others)?

* murder
* adultery
* drugs
* violence
* large amounts of money
* harming innocent people, children
* sexual abuse

Which sins do you think *God* classifies as “big” sins?

* any sin is a “big” sin
* any sin is rebellion against God
* sinfulness is a condition … all sinful actions are the *result* of our condition

With that in mind, in what way are each of us in the same situation as the woman in the story?

* we are all sinners, all guilty of sin
* “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”
* “the wages of sin is death” – spiritual death, eternal separation from God
* God has “caught us in the act” of sin

Why do we tend to hope some people will be caught in their sin?

* their actions are egregious (shocking, appalling, terrible, awful, horrendous, frightful, atrocious, abominable, abhorrent, outrageous)
* they seem like they always get away with it
* we want justice for them (but mercy for ourselves … we may be bad, but not that bad)

Why is it necessary for sin to be punished?

* God is totally righteous, holy, separate
* Sin cannot exist in His presence
* it demands immediate punishment, judgment by death
* sin is rebellion against God and His law

Note that in some situations forgiveness will not include a renewed trust.

How should *we* treat people who have sinned?

* treat them as someone for whom Christ died
* point them to the only One who can truly forgive them
* Jesus said we should forgive them seventy times seven … many, many times

3.2 Jesus Intervenes on Our Behalf

Listen for how Jesus responds.

John 8:6b -9 (NIV) But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. 7 When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." 8 Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. 9 At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there.

What unusual actions did Jesus take in response to those confronting Him?

* He stooped down and wrote in the dust on the ground
* He challenged them to go ahead and stone her … the first stone thrown by the one who could claim he had no sin
* stooped down and wrote again … waiting for them to respond

The men walked away from the confrontation, one by one – why do you think they gave up in their accusations?

* they realized their own sinfulness
* they had to admit that even though they were Pharisees who put forth every effort to obey every minute point of the law, they had failed sometime
* they began to realize that “big” or “little” sin is man’s description, to God it is all the same

They are said to have left oldest to youngest. What do you think was the significance of this sequence?

* the older ones realized their own foibles or were willing to admit them
* the older men had had more opportunity to realize their own failures (sin) over the years
* older is often wiser … they caught Jesus point quicker
* younger is often brash and idealistic … takes longer to see our own mistakes

Why is it sometimes easier to see others’ sins more than our own?

* we wear moral “blinders”
* when you see/accuse someone else of something, it’s easier to forget your own issues
* we do a moral contrast, “I’m not so bad, look at that person”
* we don’t want to admit our own sin, but compensate by seeing/accusing others

About what do we tend to be self-righteous?

* church attendance
* participation in church activities (choir, usher, tithing, helping with SS, etc.)
* my “I ♥ my church” bumper sticker
* always carry my big Bible, read it every day!
* quick to see sin in lives of others
* look up Ray Stevens song about “The Mississippi Squirrel Revival” and the “First Self-Righteous Church”

3.3 Jesus Shows Grace and Forgiveness

Listen for Jesus’ response to the woman.

John 8:10-11 (NIV) Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" 11 "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

What are Jesus’ comments to the lady after they are gone?

* where are your accusers
* I don’t accuse/condemn you either
* go and do not sin any more

Why might she have felt a sense of relief on the one hand but of concern on the other?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Relief | Concern |
| * I’ll not be stoned
* I’ve been set free from punishment
* those guys who trapped and accused me are gone
 | * what I did was still wrong
* not easy to leave sinful ways
* still have to deal with the results of sinful choices
 |

What was the heart of Jesus’ message for the woman?

* even though sin is wrong and harmful, forgiveness is available
* *everyone* has sin in their lives, but Jesus offers forgiveness and a restored relationship
* some of the results of the sin may remain, but God can redeem, free us from the slavery to the sin

What opportunities do we have to extend God’s grace instead of condemnation?

* with our children
* with other family members
* with someone who is on the fringe of our church family
* with fellow workers who have wronged us

Consider the relationship between forgiveness and right living?

* We are not forgiven so we can keep on sinning
* We are forgiven to be set free from *both* sin’s penalty and sin’s power over us
* We are offered the strength to live a life free from sin through the power of the Holy Spirit within us

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Application

Confess sin.

* What are some ways sin has reared its ugly head in your life?
* Take a moment and think about the consequences of that sin.
* Confess it to Christ. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

Write a prayer.

* Most of us speak our prayers, but writing prayers can be a powerful exercise.
* Write a prayer of thanksgiving to God for saving you from your sin. Mention His mercy and grace.
* Ask Him to help you show grace to others even as He has shown grace to you.

Extend grace.

* Rarely does a week goes by without a situation that causes us to get flustered.
* Someone cuts you off in traffic, or a customer service representative pushes your last button.
* Prepare yourself now to extend grace.
* When you extend grace to others, you reflect Christ to those around you.

Fallen Phrases Puzzle



The magnetic letters were bombarded by enemy electromagnetic pulses. More than half of them fell down. Our decoders are busy watching March Madness on ESPN. Luckily the letters fell straight down from their columns. Check out the two and three letter words. Choose letters that make reasonable words. This message came from one of our spies in Ldiveskely and he risked his yearly bubble gum ration to get it to us. When you re-assemble the message, pass it along to your church’s IT department. Tech help and other Family Activities are available at <https://tinyurl.com/2p8kac59>