**1. Motivate**

When has a fresh set of eyes really changed your perspective?

* what you saw and what the house inspector saw
* what you wrote and what your teacher or secretary saw
* the desk you built and what your kids saw
* the landscaping you had in mind and what the expert came up with
* the car you saw and the car your mechanic saw

A video introduction to the lesson is available. View it at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_kfz05ns7> If you have no wi-fi, best to download to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/2ptb935c>

* the dress you sewed and what your kids saw

**2. Transition**

The God we perceive in our minds and what God is really like can differ.

Especially when we deal with how we have mishandled a temptation.

Return to God for forgiveness and restoration.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 Joy and Blessing from God’s Forgiveness

Listen for words which have to do with sin.

Psalm 32:1-2 (NIV) Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. 2 Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.

Who are the blessed?

* those whose transgressions are *forgiven*

Note the Lord’s actions in *italics*.

* the person whose *sins are covered*
* the man whose sin God *does not count against* him
* the person in whose spirit is no deceit

What “sin” words do you find in this passage? Note the meanings of each.

* transgressions ⇨ defiant rebellion against God’s standard
* sin ⇨ missing the mark, not meeting God’s standard
* deceit (iniquity) ⇨ the twisted inner character of the sinner

What are the words and phrases used in the passage to talk about forgiveness? Note the meanings.

* forgiven ⇨ a lifting up and taking away the barrier
* covered ⇨ permanently hidden from God’s sight
* the Lord does not count against ⇨ God declares us “not guilty”

Why do people initially feel it is fun to get away with doing wrong?

* you fool someone who made the rules
* you beat the system
* some people like the thrill of testing the limits
* in many cases the sinful act is, indeed fun … at the time … the payback is the hard part, however

Why do you think that wrong ultimately brings such weight upon a person?

* you feel guilty
* you regret something you’ve done
* you are discouraged about not being able to do the right thing
* you are afraid you cannot break out of the vicious cycle of sinning
* you feel like a failure

David rejoiced because God covered his sin. What is the difference between *our* trying to cover up sin and *God* covering it?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| When I try to cover my sin. | When *God* covers my sin. |
| * ineffective
* temporary
* hides from other people, not from God
* doesn’t help failure the next time
* it can come back to haunt me repeatedly
* it can get me into more trouble than I started with (recall David covering up sin with Bathsheba)
 | * God forgives and forgets
* it is forever
* it is placed behind His back
* it is buried in the deepest sea
* it is removed as far as east is from west
* it ends the cycle of cover up effort (which can lead to further sin)
 |

Consider how forgiveness is like a debt being erased.

* Sin demands God’s judgment – think of it as a debt owed
* With forgiveness the offended party (God) says, “I will not require payback for the offense”
* The effect is that the debt of judgment (punishment) is not held against you
* The debt of your sin is erased

Note that David begins the psalm with praise and thanksgiving to God … not by dwelling on his sin. Why is focusing on God more important than continually recalling our sins?

* God is holy and righteous … that is reminder enough of the contrast between Him and us
* God is forgiving, loving … better to be assured of that than of our failure
* God is also empowering and enabling for future victory over sin
* when we focus on ourselves, we are discouraged
* when we focus on God we are lifted up … out of our sin
* we glorify God when we focus on God’s forgiveness
* we glorify sin when we give a testimony that makes a big deal of all our many sins then end with, “and God saved me”

3.2 Forgiveness Requires Confession

Listen for the effect of unconfessed sin.

Psalm 32:3-5 (NIV) When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. 4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Selah 5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"-- and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah

What words or phrases express David’s feelings when he had unconfessed sin in his life? How did David’s struggle with his sin affect him?

* says his “bones wasted away”
* he felt like “groaning all day long”
* strength sapped like working in the heat of summer
* felt like God’s hand was heavy on him

What did David decide to do about his sin?

* quit keeping silent about his sin
* acknowledged his sin
* didn’t cover up his iniquity
* confessed his transgressions to God

Confession means to agree with God that what you have done is sin …

* You refuse to rename wrong as right
* You call it what it is … hurtful actions against God and people
* You begin to trust God rather than your own perception of right and wrong

What kinds of things prevent us from confessing known sin in our lives? Why do you think we are sometimes hesitant to repent of sin, even when we know God will forgive us?

* pride, fear, stupidity
* don’t want people to know what we are really like on the inside
* don’t want to quit sinning
* afraid of the consequences (punishment – not only from God, but from parents or from authorities)

Why is it important that David (and we) blame no one else for personal sin?

* when you blame someone else, you are saying, “it’s not my really sin, since I have an excuse”
* when you blame someone else, it’s not you that did it
* blaming someone else means you are not agreeing with God that what you have done is wrong

3.3 Avoiding Future Sin

Listen for benefits of timely repentance.

Psalm 32:6-7 (NIV) Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him. 7 You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah

What is the recommendation David issued to others?

* pray to God (confession) while you are still able
* keep listening to God’s Holy Spirit
* don’t let events keep building up until you end up ruined
* take care of sins – confess, repent, seek God’s forgiveness NOW
* the longer you wait, the harder it can be, the more trouble you are in

What can the one who comes seeking the Lord in times of trouble expect?

* God will forgive
* He is your hiding place
* you will be protected from trouble
* you will be “surrounded with songs of deliverance”
* God restores your joy

What caused David to feel he was surrounded by songs of deliverance?

* he confessed, repented
* he looked to God to be forgiven
* the load of guilt had been lifted
* he could *feel* the sin load was gone

What about forgiving ourselves? How could it be that *not* forgiving myself affects my spiritual growth?

* you are, in effect, negating what God has done … He *has* forgiven you
* if I continue to wallow in self-induced guilt, I am distracted from growing spiritually
* I end up focusing on self, not on what God has done for me
* in a sense it means my opinion is more important than God’s opinion – imputing more authority to me than to God
* if I am calling God a liar (“I’m not really forgiven”), thus I cannot grow closer to Him

⇨ How much better to experience what David says …

you are my hiding place

you will protect me from trouble, surround me with songs of deliverance

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

Application

Confess.

* If you are still groaning under the weight of your sin, make Psalm 32:5 your prayer.
* Confess your sin to God and embrace His forgiveness.

Rejoice.

* Write a note or prayer, rejoicing in God’s forgiveness.
* Consider God’s goodness and mercy.
* Express to Him your thankfulness.

Talk.

* If you struggle with continuing pangs of guilt, talk to your pastor or a trusted Christian friend.
* Seek support and assurance in discovering this truth and reality …
* When God says He forgives, He forgives completely

Cryptogram

Our agents in Yefri Dormicape intercepted this message under the seat of a subway car. Our decryption staff is busy taking final exams at Jackson Middle School. Can you help us? Each symbol is matched to a letter in the key below. An example “HELLO WORLD” shows you how it works. For technical help check <https://tinyurl.com/2ptb935c> You will also find other Fun Family Activities.