

IDENTITY

Finding Truth Among the Lies

Lesson 4: Lie #3—Humility Is not valuable

1. LEADER PREPARATION

LESSON OVERVIEW

One of the biggest lies in our culture is that arrogance and pride are not only acceptable traits, they're also admirable. This lie tricks us into focusing on ourselves and ignoring others. It also makes us think that we experience freedom through selfishness, and happiness through arrogance. This lesson will help your students discover how true freedom comes through humility—the attitude that recognizes our needs and limitations while emphasizing our dependence on Jesus.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. **WHAT:** We discover our true identity as we reject arrogance and pray for humility on our journey to freedom.
2. **WHY:** Our culture emphasizes arrogance over humility, but our teenagers can pursue the path away from selfishness and pride—Jesus followed the path of humility and calls us to follow, too.
3. **HOW:** Your students will examine the risks of arrogance and the rewards of humility, and they'll consider how to follow Jesus on the path of humility.

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE

Titus 3:1-8

SECONDARY SCRIPTURES

Matthew 11:28-30; 18:1-4; Galatians 5:22-23; 6:14

TEACHING PREP

Read Titus 3:1-8.

Paul wrote this letter to his friend Titus to encourage him to be a strong leader, and the letter is filled with nuggets of wisdom and practical advice. Titus was leading a church on the Greek island of Crete, in the Mediterranean Sea, and we see in Titus 1:11-13 that he faced many challenges ministering in that culture.

That's one reason Paul's words in Chapter 3 are so important. He asks Titus to lead fellow Christians to a different lifestyle—to imitate Jesus in the way they lived and interacted with their culture. Jesus led a life of humility, and living that way would be a powerful statement to friends and neighbors on Crete. Instead of being trapped by "lusts and pleasures," by "evil and envy," and by hate, these Christ-followers could chart a better course and follow the journey to freedom.

Our teenagers face many of the same challenges today. Our culture emphasizes pursuit of lusts and pleasures. It encourages envy and arrogance. It promotes rebellion and quarrelling. And those patterns of living lead to bondage and captivity. Fortunately, the message of Jesus is one of freedom—freedom that can be experienced through humbly recognizing our need for Jesus' work in our lives.

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2. LESSON GUIDE

GETTING THINGS STARTED [optional]

Organize an activity for your students that will direct their focus toward other people—or have your students organize this. Perhaps you can write encouraging notes to some senior citizens or some soldiers or people in your community who are hurting from a loss. Perhaps you can do something practical for part of your time together, such as doing some yardwork or making a meal for a family. Simply choose something that will encourage discussion about humility and living in a way that looks out for others.

Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and then lead students through the activity you have prepared. Once you have finished the activity, **ASK:**

- *What was most rewarding about this activity?*
- *Did our activity help you feel more arrogant or more humble? Why?*
- *The Bible includes lots of verses that talk about the dangers of arrogance or pride, and the rewards and importance of humility. Why would God care so much about this issue in our lives?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *One of the biggest lies in our culture is that arrogance and pride are not only acceptable traits, they're also admirable. The problem with this lie is that it tricks us into focusing on ourselves and ignoring others. It also makes us think that we experience freedom through selfishness, and happiness through arrogance. Today we will focus on how true freedom comes through humility—the attitude that recognizes our needs and limitations while emphasizing our dependence on Jesus.*

TEACHING POINTS

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 Titus 3:1-8 together as a group. Consider dividing verses among your students so several people have a chance to read.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Let's explore this Scripture for some truths about the dangers of arrogance and the benefits of humility.*

1. Arrogance says, "It's all about me"

ASK:

- *Talk about some specific ways our culture sends the message that it's OK to be proud and arrogant.*
- *When have you seen arrogance damage or destroy a friendship?*
- *How is arrogance connected to the spiritual enslavement Paul mentions in verse 3?*
- *How can arrogance draw you away from Jesus?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Arrogance is an attitude that says, "It's all about me. I have everything figured out. I don't need anyone else." And that carries over into our faith by deceiving us into thinking we don't need Jesus—or we don't have to rely on him for much.*

2. Humility says, "I cannot ignore others"

ASK:

- *In this passage, the Apostle Paul asked Titus to encourage other Christians to "be gentle and show true humility to everyone." How do you know if another person is truly humble? What evidence might you see?*
- *Tell us about a time in your life when humility rescued or restored a friendship.*
- *How can humility help you experience the freedom Jesus offers?*
- *Look through this passage and identify all the words or phrases connected to the importance of caring about other people.*
- *Why is true humility such a struggle?*
- *Read Galatians 6:14. How is it possible to "boast" in what Jesus did without it becoming some form of arrogance? What do you think Paul means here?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Humility says, "I know I don't have it all together. I know that I'm flawed and imperfect. I know that this world doesn't revolve around me and that Jesus wants me to care about other people." It doesn't mean you have low self-esteem; it simply means that you recognize your need for Jesus and that you aren't self-centered or focused on just your own needs or wants.*

3. Jesus says, "Follow me"

ASK:

- *Read Matthew 11:28-30. Jesus wasn't a wimp, but he was humble. What's the difference?*
- *When has arrogance been a "heavy" burden that made you weary?*
- *Read Matthew 18:1-4. If this were the only passage of Scripture we had about Jesus, what is one thing you would know for sure about him?*
- *What does it look like to follow Jesus on the path of humility?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Jesus modeled a life of humility. He was confident without being arrogant, and humble without getting walked on. Some people might look at his crucifixion as a sign of weakness or defeat, but it wasn't. It was an act of humility—he gave everything for us. He loved us so much that he willingly died in our place, to pay the penalty for our sin. Truly, it was the ultimate demonstration of humility, of the attitude that says, "I cannot ignore others."*

EXTRA DISCUSSION [optional]

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

ASK:

- *Read Galatians 5:22-23. These verses speak to what a transformed life can look like. Which word or phrase captures your attention most strongly, and why?*
- *Is it possible to grow these characteristics in your life without God's participation? Why or why not?*
- *This passage doesn't specifically mention humility, but how are all of these Fruit of the Spirit related to humility?*

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

LIVING IT OUT

ASK:

- *Where in your life do you most need Jesus' help in developing greater humility?*
- *What spiritual habits or disciplines can help you with this?*
- *Where in your life do you need to experience the rest Jesus promises in Matthew 11:29?*
- *How can you help other people to follow Jesus' pattern of humility?*

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 verse below.

"As for me, may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross, my interest in this world has been crucified, and the world's interest in me has also died" (Galatians 6:14).