

IDENTITY
Lesson 1: Identifying the World's Lies

LEADER PREP.

LESSON OVERVIEW

- 1) Since the beginning of time, people have been enticed into believing lies. This deception can lead to a personal prison that blocks true freedom in Christ.
- 2) Freedom from these lies requires acknowledging they even exist and the power they have over us.
- 3) Consider the consequences of listening to the world's lies—and the rewards of listening to truth instead.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. WHAT: Our culture is filled with lies about us and about God, but we can identify, acknowledge, and respond to those lies.
2. WHY: When we see the lies that surround us, we are more capable of claiming the truth and walking FORWARD not just walking SOMEWHERE.
3. HOW: By guiding your students toward the message of freedom in Christ, they can more effectively differentiate the truth from a lie.

TEACHING PREP

MAIN SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 11:1-15.

In this letter to Christians in the Greek city of Corinth, the Apostle Paul affirms people who turn from false teachers but also rebukes people who choose to keep following those teachers. In this context, the false leaders were trying to discredit Paul and change the gospel message—the message of Jesus.

Paul reminds Christ-followers about the simple nature and the incredible power of the message of Jesus, while contrasting it with the deception of the false teachers. He calls out how—since the beginning of time—people have been cunningly deceived.

Paul didn't want them to be deceived any longer about Jesus, the Spirit, or the gospel message because deception would keep them from experiencing the fullness and freedom of following Christ.

He spends the first part of his letter declaring truth about Jesus, the Spirit, and the gospel—and about himself. When we get to Chapter 11, we see the exhortation start to take place, and Paul calls out the deception and how easily the church had fallen for it. Why? Paul wanted them—and wants us—to have a sincere and pure faith, the kind of faith that launches a person on the journey of freedom instead of getting led astray by the lies of the world.

Group Questions:

- **If we can't tell the difference between truths and lies, how might that affect our faith in Jesus?**
 - We will believe anything. If you stand for nothing you will fall for everything.
 - We will never be sure of who we are, who Jesus is because that "Truth" is always changing when we cannot tell the difference between truth and lies.

- **What are some specific lies from our culture that might hurt or hinder your relationship with Jesus?**
 - We have to perform before we belong
 - If we are not FULLY PERFECT we cannot be FULLY LOVED or FULLY ACCEPTED

- **How do you need Jesus' help in identifying the lies that our world is trying to tell you right now?**
 - Have students answer

- **How can we as a family remind one another of the truth and help one another choose truth instead of lies?**
 - Have Students Answer

IDENTITY

Finding Truth Among the Lies

Lesson 1: Identifying the World's Lies

2. LESSON GUIDE

GETTING THINGS STARTED [optional]

Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and then lead students in this opening activity:

Play a few rounds of "Truth or Lie?" Go around the group, and have each person make one statement about himself or herself—the rest of the group must decide if the statement is true or a lie. Encourage students to avoid obvious truths or lies, such as "I have a brother" or "I have visited three different planets." Then lead your students in discussion.

ASK:

- *Whose truth was most surprising—and why?*
- *Whose lie was most believable—and why?*
- *When do you find it easiest to be tricked into believing a lie?*
- *If you can't tell the difference between truths and lies, how can that affect your faith in Jesus?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *When we believe lies—especially lies about ourselves or about Jesus—we can struggle to walk in the freedom that Jesus offers us. It's important to remember that humans have believed lies since the beginning of time—you're not the first person to wrestle with this issue. But we can find truth that will lead us along the journey to freedom—including truth about the lies.*

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 2 Corinthians 11:1-15 together as a group. Consider dividing verses among your students so several people have a chance to read.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Let's jump in and see what we can learn from these verses about the importance of identifying our world's lies.*

1. We are all vulnerable to lies and deception

ASK:

- *Think about a time a lie damaged one of your friendships—a lie you told, a lie the other person told, or a lie someone else told. Why are lies so deadly to friendships?*
- *Can anything good ever come from a lie? Why or why not?*
- *Read Genesis 2:15-17 and 3:1-24 for the full account of Adam and Eve's deception. Paul described the serpent's lies as "cunning"—what was so cunning or clever or crafty about the way the serpent deceived Adam and Eve?*

- *How do the consequences of Adam and Eve’s choices in Genesis 3 continue to impact us today?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Since the beginning of time, people have been vulnerable to deception and lies—including lies that separate us from God and all the wonderful things that he has for us. Adam and Eve chose to believe the serpent’s lies, and their deception meant removal from the Garden of Eden, and the beginning of sin. Jesus came to give us freedom from sin and its power to trap us, but we still remain vulnerable to lies and the way they can impact our lives.*

2. We must identify the lies around us

ASK:

- *Summarize the consequences of lies and deception, according to our passage from 1 Corinthians 11.*
- *In this passage, Paul specifically targeted lies and deception from “false teachers” within the church—how are these lies similar to and different from lies we might be told in our culture?*
- *What are some specific lies from our culture that might hurt or hinder your relationship with Jesus?*

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

ASK:

- *Look at verse 3—what does “pure and undivided devotion to Christ” look like?*
- *How is devotion to Jesus similar to other kinds of dedication and commitment? How is it different?*
- *Look at verse 4—why are “different” or “new” ideas sometimes so appealing?*
- *What are the real-life implications of verses 14 and 15?*

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

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *If you were walking through a field filled with traps and pitfalls and all kinds of other hidden dangers, you’d be much safer if you could identify all of those dangers! We can experience freedom when we know and identify the lies and deception around us. Paul wanted the Christians in Corinth to experience that freedom by realizing how lies and deception were impacting their faith. The way they saw Jesus changed how they lived. The way they saw the work of the Spirit affected their lives. You will face lies and deception—it’s just a matter of whether you’ll believe them and fall into their traps.*

3. We can choose truth instead of lies

ASK:

- *Why do you sometimes choose to listen to a lie, even when you know the possible consequences?*
- *Tell us about a time you listened to a truth instead of a lie. Why did you make that decision, and what were the rewards of your choice?*
- *How does God help you know the difference between right and wrong, truth and lies?*
- *How does believing a false gospel impact faith and freedom?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Some people and voices in our culture will try to deceive you with lies about your worth, about God's love for you, or what it means to be a Christian. When you believe these lies, your faith and freedom are impacted. But you can choose to follow God's truth instead of the world's lies. You don't have to fall into the trap of lies and deception. That might not always be an easy choice, but it's always the better choice.*

EXTRA DISCUSSION [optional]

ASK:

- *Read Romans 1:18-23. How does "wickedness" suppress God's truth?*
- *When you trade truth for a lie, what happens to your worship?*
- *Is it always obvious if you are worshipping the wrong things? Why or why not?*
- *Look at verse 21—what are some examples of "foolish" things that our culture says about God?*

LIVING IT OUT

ASK:

- *What could your life look like if you called out the lies around you? How might that give you power against those lies?*
- *How do you need Jesus' help in identifying the lies that our world is trying to tell you right now?*
- *How can we as a group help one another choose truth instead of lies?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Think about lies you've been told, lies you've believed, or lies that have created distance between you and Jesus. During our next few gatherings, we're going to talk about specific lies and how Jesus wants to rescue you. But right now, pause for a moment to reflect on your current struggle against lies. It doesn't matter what the actual lies are—Jesus offers a path of truth and freedom away from those lies.*

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 Scripture below.

"But I fear that somehow your pure and undivided devotion to Christ will be corrupted, just as Eve was deceived by the cunning ways of the serpent" (2 Corinthians 11:3).