

**LESSON 3: ENTITLEMENT**

This includes:

- 1. LEADER PREPARATION**
- 2. LESSON GUIDE**

**1. LEADER PREPARATION****LESSON OVERVIEW**

We have become a society of people who believe that we are due certain things: We should have this or that, and if we don't have it, we have the right to complain about it. And if we don't get what we want or deserve, we get jealous and angry. We are a society of entitlement. This lesson will help your students consider the risks of living with a sense of entitlement—and they'll consider how humility is a powerful antidote to that attitude.

**LESSON OBJECTIVES**

- 1. WHAT:** Our culture increasingly reflects a sense of entitlement—our desire to get what we don't have, and to obtain and achieve things without hard work.
- 2. WHY:** When an entitlement mentality pops up in our thoughts, we can find ways to replace it with humility and thankfulness for what we have.
- 3. HOW:** Students can come before God with their struggles and be thankful for what they have—and they can look to the interests of others instead of striving for notoriety or extra attention.

**PRIMARY SCRIPTURE**

James 4:1-10

**SECONDARY SCRIPTURE**

Philippians 2:3-8

**TEACHING PREP**

**LEADER  
TIP**

**Use this short overview to prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your group, you'll want to absorb it as you prepare to lead.**

**Read James 4:1-10.**

We want what we don't have. This is an attitude that we can see in small children, teenagers, and adults. It isn't something that is just part of Western culture—it's everywhere in our world. In this passage, James talks plainly and bluntly about how the fighting and discord among us come from a desire to get what we don't have. That's entitlement! We believe we are entitled to have certain things. When we don't get what we want, our lives are filled with anger, bitterness, and jealousy.

God wants to give us so much more than we could imagine. God even tells us to ask him, but we need to ask with pure motives. God sees behind our outward appearance and knows our heart.

Our lesson also includes a passage—in the Extra Discussion section—from Philippians, which was written by the Apostle Paul. He was raised right (in his culture’s eyes). He had it all. He came from the best ancestors and was part of the “right” groups. Everything he did seemed to be perfect in the eyes of society. If anyone deserved the best, it was Paul.

But Paul didn’t see it that way. He recognized that we must only rely on what Christ has done for us and not put any confidence in our own efforts. He knew that everything he had accomplished and all of his history was nothing but garbage when compared to knowing Jesus. That is the greatest thing we can do: to know, love, follow, and draw close to Jesus. Everything we have ultimately comes from Jesus, and we need to recognize that.

## **THE BEFORE & AFTER [OPTIONAL]**

### **TEXTS OR TWEETS**

**Send one or both of these messages to your students prior to your meeting. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry.**

- Does everyone else around you have all the good stuff while you have nothing? Come out tonight and let’s talk about it.
- Are jealousy and envy killing your friendships? Join us this week with a powerful solution to that problem.

### **PARENT EMAIL**

**Send this email to parents following the lesson to encourage them to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.**

Dear parents,

We’re continuing our series on the topic of lifestyle, with an emphasis on choosing and living wisely. Our goal each week is to provide a very practical series of conversations about issues teenagers are facing today: drugs and drinking, anger, entitlement, and laziness.

In this third lesson, we talked about how to deal with our sense of entitlement. We focused on James 4:1-10 and its warnings about the dangers of jealousy, envy, and our desires to acquire and obtain things we don’t already have.

We encouraged our students to pursue humility because it goes against so many core values or beliefs in our culture. It means doing our best, with Jesus’ help, to ignore and not believe all the self-centered lies of our culture. It doesn’t mean that we’ll never struggle with jealousy or envy or a sense of entitlement. But the more we draw close to Jesus and pursue a life of humility, the less we’ll feel trapped by the desire to obtain what we don’t have. Humility gives us a healthier, more balanced perspective on what matters most in life—and that truth opens the door to greater freedom.

Here are some questions you might want to ask your teenager this week:

- When do you find yourself most vulnerable to an attitude of entitlement?
- Talk about some specific ways our culture pushes us toward a sense of entitlement.
- How can a sense of entitlement keep you from experiencing freedom in Christ? How can it create spiritual bondage or entrapment?

Thanks for praying for our students and our ministry. Have an amazing week!

## LESSON 3: ENTITLEMENT

## 2. LESSON GUIDE

## GETTING THINGS STARTED [OPTIONAL]

LEADER  
TIP

Preview this video of Ashton Kutcher on *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* discussing a speech he made at the Teen Choice Awards in 2013: [youtu.be/sykEOFu0aYQ](https://youtu.be/sykEOFu0aYQ). If you want to show his actual Teen Choice Awards speech, preview it here: [youtube.com/watch?v=FNXwKGZHmDc](https://youtube.com/watch?v=FNXwKGZHmDc). In both videos, he uses the word *crap* once—use discretion on whether this is or isn't appropriate for your audience. You will need an Internet connection and a computer or tablet to display either video for your participants.

Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and then SAY SOMETHING LIKE:

*Ashton Kutcher was given a lifetime achievement award at the Teen Choice Awards in 2013. He decided to use his acceptance speech to share a message about the value of hard work, building a life, and the power of being smart, thoughtful, and generous.*

Play the video clip, and then ASK:

- Give me a quick summary of Ashton Kutcher's main point.
- What do you think about people who have a life goal of becoming a celebrity?
- Why would many of us rather be handed success easily instead of working hard for things?

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *It seems like more and more people are becoming famous for the strangest reasons. Some of them are only famous for being famous! Other people want instant success and fame without working hard. There seems to be an entitlement outbreak throughout our culture. Why is that such a bad thing? Let's look for answers together.*

## TEACHING POINTS

LEADER  
TIP

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 James 4:1-10 together as a group. Consider dividing verses among your students so several people have a chance to read.

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *Let's spend a few minutes discussing what James says in this passage. He nails it when it comes to the issue of entitlement in our culture today.*

## 1. A SENSE OF ENTITLEMENT CAUSES BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS

### ASK:

- *What does it mean to feel “entitled”?*
- *What’s the difference between feeling entitled and being blessed?*
- *Think about a recent argument—you don’t have to share all the details, but what role did jealousy or envy or pride play?*
- *When do you find yourself most vulnerable to an attitude of entitlement?*
- *What’s it like to lose a friendship because of jealousy or envy or feeling entitled?*
- *Look at verse 3—why would James criticize only pursuing things that give us pleasure?*

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *In this passage, James talks plainly and bluntly about how fighting and discord and broken friendships are often rooted in our desire to obtain what we don’t have. That’s entitlement—an attitude that we can see in small children, teenagers, and adults! We believe we are entitled to have certain things. When we don’t get what we want, our lives are filled with anger, bitterness, and jealousy. We can easily spiral into a “poor me” mentality. We feel like we should be able to have what others have—or even more than what they have. Sadly, jealousy and a sense of entitlement can damage or destroy the relationships in our lives.*

## 2. A SENSE OF ENTITLEMENT DISTANCES US FROM GOD

### ASK:

- *Talk about some specific ways our culture pushes us toward a sense of entitlement.*
- *Look at verse 4—what does “friendship with the world” mean, and how does it make someone “an enemy of God”?*
- *Look at verse 6—why does God oppose the proud?*
- *What’s the connection between arrogance and a sense of entitlement?*
- *Look at verse 8—what happens when our “loyalty is divided between God and the world”?*
- *How can a sense of entitlement keep you from experiencing freedom in Christ? How can it create spiritual bondage or entrapment?*

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *We find freedom as we draw close to Jesus, but pride and arrogance and a sense of entitlement create distance. We buy the lie that we don’t need other people’s help—and we certainly don’t need God’s help. Our jealousy and envy become like poison, and they distort our attitude toward God. At the end of the day, feeling entitled hurts all of our relationships in life—with other people and with God.*

## 3. HUMILITY IS A POWERFUL ANTIDOTE TO A SENSE OF ENTITLEMENT

### ASK:

- *How would you summarize the main emotion of verses 7-10?*
- *How does humility help you resist the devil and his temptations?*
- *What’s the main message of verse 9? How could tears and sadness and sorrow ever be a good thing for us to experience?*

- *When have you seen a person's humble attitude powerfully impact other people?*
- *How can thankfulness also help us respond to a sense of entitlement?*

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *It's hard to pursue humility because it goes against so many core values or beliefs in our culture. It requires sacrifice and discipline. It means doing our best, with Jesus' help, to ignore and not believe all the self-centered lies of our culture. It doesn't mean that we'll never struggle with jealousy or envy or a sense of entitlement. But the more we draw close to Jesus and pursue a life of humility, the less we'll feel trapped by the desire to have what we don't have. Humility gives us a healthier, more balanced perspective on what matters most in life—and that truth opens the door to greater freedom!*

### EXTRA DISCUSSION [OPTIONAL]

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



PAIR  
SHARE

**ASK:**

- *Read Philippians 2:3-8. How do selfishness and self-promotion feed a sense of entitlement?*
- *What does it look like to look out for the interests of others? Give some specific examples.*
- *Tell us about a time another person looked out for your best interest, and what you learned from that experience.*
- *As flawed, imperfect humans, what does it look like to have an attitude like Christ?*

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

### LIVING IT OUT

**ASK:**

- *What idea or truth from today's conversation has impacted you most deeply, and why?*
- *How can you start living differently from what our culture promotes and encourages?*
- *What part do you play in leading a humbler life? What part does Jesus play in creating that change in your life?*
- *How can you draw closer to Jesus this week?*

### SUMMARY



LEADER  
TIP

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.

*“Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too” (Philippians 2:3-4).*