



SESSION 6: THE LEPER: A DESPERATE FAITH

1—FOOT IN MOUTH DISEASE

If you've ever made a mistake or two of your own, run to John 21:15-17.

You couldn't believe the words were coming out of your mouth, but you couldn't stop yourself. Your best friend, Mel, had told you that she was tired of the way you gossiped about her. And yet there you were telling Gina that Mel liked Greg. You knew Mel was going to be mad at you, but you told Gina anyway. When Mel finds out, she might not even speak to you again.

The good news is that Jesus is not like Mel. Although He wants us to do the right thing, He forgives us when we blow it, even if we blow it over and over and over again. Look at how He forgave and reinstated Peter in John 21:15-17, even after Peter had denied knowing Him (see John 18:15-27).

Spend a few minutes confessing some of the things you've been doing that God doesn't want you to do, and thank Him for the way He forgives you, even when you keep making the same mistake. But don't stop there—ask Him to help you stop making that mistake!

2—WHAT I DON'T WANT TO DO, I DO

Race over to Romans 7:14-25.

"I just don't understand it," moans Davis. "I asked Jesus to be my Savior and take over my life, and I can tell that I'm a different person. But I still keep swearing, even though I try not to. Didn't Jesus take away all my sins?"

He's looking at you for an answer; what do you tell him?

If you're speechless, maybe you ask Davis to read Romans 7:14-25. Paul understood how tough it is to do the right thing, even though we've asked Jesus to be our Savior. But he gives us an answer in Romans 7:25. Reread it. Jesus will rescue us from our sins! It may take longer than we would expect or would like, but as we rely on Him, He will rescue us.

Is there a sin that you keep struggling with? If so, you need to keep asking Jesus to help you beat it. Spend a few minutes right now asking Him to help you do the right thing.

3—A LIFETIME OF GROWING

Hop and skip your way over to Philippians 1:3-6.

The weekend retreat had been great, and on Saturday night Diana stood up and said that she wanted to do a better job obeying and loving her parents. Unfortunately, by Tuesday,

Diana was back to her old ways—at least some of them. Although she did a much better job cleaning her room when her parents asked her to do so, she still spent more time online talking with her friends than she spent talking to her parents. Even at dinner when her dad asked her how her day was, instead of telling him about the fight she saw at lunch or the cute guy who waved to her, she just said, “Fine,” and kept on eating her meal.

Following Jesus often feels like we go three steps forward and two steps back. Diana had a powerful experience with God, and it made a difference in her life, but she still wasn’t where she wanted to be.

The good news is that we have our whole lives to learn how to love and serve God and others. Today, thank God that He isn’t impatient with you but is faithful to complete the good works that He began in you.

4—JUST LIKE GOD?

First Peter 1:13-16 is pretty cool. Go ahead—read it and see for yourself!

Charlie couldn’t believe what he was reading in 1 Peter 1:13-16. Was God crazy or something? There’s no way that he could be holy like God is holy. He was just a 13-year-old who struggled with cheating at school and looking at porn on the Internet. He wasn’t holy. God must be out of His mind.

When Charlie met with his youth leader, Josh, to ask about these crazy verses, Josh told him that our holiness doesn’t come from ourselves—it comes from Jesus and His forgiveness of our sins, which make us a new creation. But that doesn’t mean we can coast through life. We need to cooperate with God as He transforms us more and more into His image, making us holy.

What is the sin that you are struggling with (see Day 2 devotion)? Ask God to help you be more holy in this one thing *today*. Since it takes a while to develop a habit, it will take a while to change a sinful habit or attitude; be prepared to ask Him for help again tomorrow and the next day.

Read Philippians 1:6 and be encouraged. He has promised to complete His work in you.