

Lesson 6 / October 6, 2024

Dumping our Defiance

By RLD Editorial Team

for use as
STEP 1 

Lesson 6**Focus:**

Sin separates us
from God.

Lesson 6**Bible Basis:**

Genesis 3:6-13;
Romans 3:23-26

Lesson 6**Memory Verse:**

For all have sinned and fall short
of the glory of God. —Romans 3:23

Students will view and discuss a pastor who attempted to hide his abuse of influence as they explore how sin separates us from God.

Materials:

Internet access

Have you ever tried to cover up a bad decision? We all have! But no matter how creative we are, we will eventually be discovered. Let's take a look at an individual who covered up years of manipulation and abuse of influence. In early February, a pastor of a multicampus church in Texas was dismissed from his position.

Share this information with your teens.

The elders of the church had discovered this pastor had been sending inappropriate text messages to congregants, one of whom had been a minor at the time, for over a decade. They determined that these behaviors “show a very clear pattern of predatory manipulation, sexual exploitation, and abuse of influence.”

While it's unclear how the messages and abuse of influence came to light, the elders determined that termination of this pastor's “employment was necessary in accordance with the clear biblical standards.”

When you finish sharing the information, discuss the following questions:

➤ **Humanity is very creative. The ways we plan and execute our wrongdoings are often intricate and complex. Why do you think this pastor was able to get away with manipulation and abusing his influence for so long?** (Answers may include: he had a position of power and influence, he had other people who kept his secrets, he convinced the people he texted this behavior was okay, no one wants to think poorly of a medical pastor, etc.)

➤ **This pastor's behavior was damaging to many people, including those he treated inappropriately, his congregation who lost their pastor, and his family. For us, most of our sin is quite different. How so?** (For the typical American teenager, sin is less extreme and subtler. Internal rebellion, defiance, and private sins like lust and pride are easier to hide.)

➤ **Is it fairly easy to deceive ourselves when it comes to our shortcomings?** (Rationalizing our behavior is commonplace. No one likes to confront his own weaknesses, so denial and avoidance are often our default positions on sin.)

➤ **Why is it easier to see others' bad behavior than our own?** (It often makes us feel better about ourselves when we compare our external behavior to others. Gossip and pride also become part of the equation.)

Adam and Eve were the archetypes for original sin, and we share in their broken humanity. Let's see how we can better submit to God's design for redemption.

Source:

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/2024/02/aaron-ivey-jamie-ivey-austin-stone-worship-dismissal-texts/>

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

Lesson 6 / October 6, 2024

Dumping our Defiance

for use as
STEP 4 

Lesson 6**Focus:**

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From God.

Lesson 6**Bible Basis:**

Genesis 3:6-13;
Romans 3:23-26

Lesson 6**Memory Verse:**

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of the glory of God. —Romans 3:23

Materials:

Smartphones

Encourage your students who have smartphones to take them out for this next exercise.

If you have a smartphone in your possession right now, please take it out. On the count of three, hand it to the person to the right of you.

Wait for students to exchange phones before continuing. (If your class is meeting online, have teens imagine what they would feel like if other people were holding their phones.)

Did you know that most people are uncomfortable when someone else is holding their phone? Teenagers are particularly uncomfortable when an adult asks to see their phone. For the most part, smartphones are private devices that connect us to our identity, interests, activities, and interior life. They are no longer just a practical tool, but they've become an extension of ourselves.

We can use our phones to gauge our motivations and the intentions of our heart. Help students create groups of 3–4 students, making sure that no one is left out, especially those students who might not own a phone. (If your class is meeting online, you can use the breakout rooms feature of your video chat software.) Have your students discuss the following questions in their small groups.

➤ **How does it make you feel when someone else handles your phone? Is it worse when an adult or parent asks to see your phone? Why?** (Allow students time to discuss.)

➤ **Would you be comfortable if your browsing history was projected on a large screen in front of our class today? How do phones reflect our priorities and weaknesses?** (While pornography is the first offense people might mention, there are many internal struggles reflected in our phone usage, including envy, materialism, self-absorption, and heart attitudes.)

➤ **More and more students are using multiple social media accounts that they can customize to “launder” their behavior for certain audiences. What does that teach us about human nature?** (We are prone to manipulate our external behavior, like the Pharisees, in order to look good when it suits us.)

➤ **The Bible transcends cultural context, so we won't find verses about modern behaviors like social media usage or the Internet. What principles in the Bible still apply to these areas of our lives?** (Slander, pride, envy, or lust—these are sins that all people of all times have struggled to control. Even if the Bible doesn't address a specific contemporary situation, it gives us guidelines on how to honor Jesus Christ.)

When your group is finished, give them some smartphone homework for the coming week. Encourage students to write down all of the accounts, apps, or uses for their phone. For each one, students should investigate what each one tells them about their attitudes and blind spots toward sin. It might be time to “clean house” by getting rid of edgy apps, Instagram accounts, or Snapchat behaviors that lead them away from Jesus.

Remind students that even a phone “clean up” can be a false exercise unless the heart issues are dealt with first. For students who don't have a smartphone, ask them to take a similar inventory and clean-up of the things they enjoy/spend time on—whether it is watching television, reading, or using a computer.

Close in prayer, asking God for help in all these areas.

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