

LESSON 65

The Gift of Men

EPHESIANS 4:1-19



BIBLE TRUTH

GOD GAVE LEADERS AS GIFTS TO HELP THE CHURCH MATURE AND GROW

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Ephesians 4:1–19 from the Scriptures or read story 143, “The Gift of Men,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

Blown by Every Wind of Doctrine

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ electric fan
- ✓ four yards of yarn
- ✓ a paper cutout of a person
- ✓ Bible

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 15 MIN

Speak the Truth in Love

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ masking tape
- ✓ two playground balls
- ✓ two blindfolds

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 65—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 20 MIN

Walk in a Manner Worthy

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ several helpers

TOTAL 90 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

As Christians we are called to live lives worthy of our calling—After spending the first three chapters of his letter teaching the Ephesians about the magnificence of Christ and the power of his grace, in chapter 4 Paul turns to applying this teaching to their everyday lives. Paul tells them that as followers of Christ, they should make every effort to live in peace and kindness with one another. Sin divides, but Paul appeals for unity on the basis that all Christians share the same hope, the same faith, the same Spirit, the same baptism, and the same Lord (Ephesians 4:4–6).

God gave us leaders to help us grow and mature in Christ—Paul was aware that obeying the command to live in unity was not going to be easy. That is why Paul explains that God has given us leaders to help us grow and equip us for ministry (Ephesians 4:11). Paul goes on to explain that our leaders are gifts given by God to the church to prepare his people for service until we all reach unity and become mature in Christ (Ephesians 4:13). Until this happens, when we are with the Lord in heaven, no one can say they don't need the help of a God-ordained spiritual leader. In Hebrews, God makes our responsibility to our leaders clear when he says, “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you” (Hebrews 13:17).

As believers we are called to live holy lives—Paul exhorts the Ephesians to live holy lives. When he tells them to no longer live like the Gentiles (Ephesians 4:17), he is referring to the unbelieving Gentiles who hardened their hearts and lost their sensitivity. They had become so familiar with sin that their consciences no longer bothered them; they were completely given over to sin. That can easily happen to us. The more violence or sensuality we expose ourselves to in the media, for instance, the more callous we become. Our hearts and consciences become dull and hard and we lose the ability to discern what is pleasing to God.

Where Is the Gospel?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

In Ephesians 4, Paul turns to the practical issue of obedience, but the cross remains at the center. Although we need to obey and help one another obey, we do it for Christ. Our fellowship is designed to help us grow up into Christ, "until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13 NIV). We do not obey to become Christians; we obey to become more like Christ!

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Ephesians 4:1–19 from the Scriptures or read story 143, "The Gift of Men," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

Blown by Every Wind of Doctrine

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ electric fan
- ✓ four yards of yarn
- ✓ a paper cutout of a person
- ✓ Bible

Use this exercise to help the children understand how our church leaders can be used of God to help us stay on the path of righteousness.

Tie a piece of yarn from the ceiling of your classroom and cut it off about four feet from the floor so that it hangs above a table in the front of the room. Attach the yarn to the head of the paper cutout person. Place the fan on the table so that when you turn it on, it blows the cutout all around. Then take a second piece of yarn and secure it to the bottom of the feet of the paper person.

Read Ephesians 4:1–16 and ask the children what it means to be like an infant tossed back and forth by the waves and blown here and there by every wind of teaching. (Explain to the class that if we are not well grounded in the Word of God we might be easily led astray.)

Start the fan and share these examples with the class:

Some teach that if you sin you are not a Christian. This causes people to be condemned every time they sin. (Let the fan blow the paper person.)

Some teach that it doesn't matter if a Christian sins because we have been saved. (Move the fan to blow the person another way.)

But our leaders—pastors and Sunday school teachers—can preach God's Word to help us understand that although we have been saved by grace, we still sin. While you say this, grab the bottom string to keep the paper person grounded so it is not blown. Our church leaders can teach us that we need to live for God, not to earn God's favor but because we have God's favor.

Some people teach that Jesus was just a man. (Let the fan blow.)

But our leaders can help us by teaching us from the Bible that Jesus was both fully God and fully man. (Hold the string.)

Talk to the class about the importance of the ministry of their leaders, who are charged with caring for the flock and feeding them sound doctrine.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESON 2 **15 MIN**

Speak the Truth in Love

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ masking tape
- ✓ two playground balls
- ✓ two blindfolds

The object of this lesson is to help the children see the value of speaking the truth in love to one another.

Prior to class, use masking tape to outline a three-foot wide oval racetrack around the classroom. Mark two starting lines opposite one another.

Divide the class into two teams and ask for a volunteer from each team. Explain to them that the racetrack is the path of life and the ball is your life. The track represents the road of righteousness and the area outside the lines represents sin. Tell the two volunteers that they are to roll their ball around the track with their feet and not let it get out of the lines into sin.

Just when they start to warm to the task, pull out the blindfolds and explain that we will not fully know Christ and be free of sin until we get to heaven. While we are sinners in this life we are often blind to our sins and need others to help us.

Position your class around the track, alternating team members. Tell your two volunteers to listen to the voices to know which way to go. They should make sure not to listen to the opponent's commands.

Blindfold the volunteers and then spin them around three times and move them each to their own starting line. The first person to make it back to their starting line is the winner. Run three races with new volunteers each time. The team with the most victories is the winning team.

Ask the children the following questions:

- **How was this race like real life as a Christian?**
(Life is like a race where there is a good path and a bad one; we need others to help us; etc.)

- How did the opponent's directions being given at the same time make it confusing to know which way to go?
(If you didn't listen carefully you could be lead astray.)
- How was that like the temptations of the enemy?
(Even though we sometimes know the right thing to do, we might follow the voice of temptation and fall into sin.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 65—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- What do we call people who preach to us on Sunday at church and lead the church?
(We call people who lead the church pastors.)
- What is the man in the picture doing?
(He is preaching from the Bible.)
- Why is it important that we listen to the people that God gives to teach and lead us?
(They can help us to follow God's Word.)

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON **20 MIN**

Walk in a Manner Worthy

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ several helpers

Divide the class into groups. You can make as many groups as you have helpers to lead them. Each group will come up with a short skit to illustrate humility, gentleness, patience, and bearing with one another in love. But secretly have the last group demonstrate what it is like to have a hard callous heart and conscience. The helper working with that group should do a skit that shows someone refusing to share and fighting over a toy. When corrected he should respond with a callous, disrespectful remark like, “I don’t care.”

Perform the skits for the class and leave the callous one for last. Then draw out the class as to how the leaders God gave us can help us not to live callous lives but lives that follow and worship the Lord. End by making sure the class knows that it is only by the power of the Spirit of God through trusting in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross that we can live holy lives before God.

LESSON 65 - THE GIFT OF MEN

