

SESSION 6

# THE GOSPEL PROJECT

FOR STUDENTS



THE  
GOD  
WHO  
SPEAKS

FALL 2012: LEADER GUIDE

**Ed Stetzer** General Editor  
**Trevin Wax** Managing Editor

LifeWay | Students



## SESSION 6

# NUMB TO THE WORD: DISOBEDIENCE LEADS TO DEATH

IN THIS LESSON, we will look at the consequences of our disobedience to God's Word. The Bible teaches that we have long suffered from spiritual leprosy ever since human beings sinned. In our time together, we will discuss how disobedience cuts us off from the Source of life, why our best efforts to fix ourselves are in vain, and how even our best desires are insufficient to change us.

### STEPS TO PREPARE

1. Read Romans 1–3, and then study the main passages for this week's lesson:
  - ▷ Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-2
  - ▷ Isaiah 64:6
  - ▷ Romans 3:10-12
2. Study the Expanded Lesson Content (pp. 68-75).
3. Determine what elements of this lesson are most applicable to your particular group.
4. Consider ways to personalize the lesson content for you and your class.
5. Review the Teaching Plan (pp. 66-67).
6. Refine the lesson plan based on your group's particular needs.
7. Adjust the plan where necessary.
8. Pray for the Lord's guidance as you lead your group through this material.

### LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Slow Death** (Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1-2).
2. **Our best efforts are in vain** (Isa. 64:6).
3. **Our best desires are insufficient** (Rom. 3:10-12).

SESSION 6

TEACHING PLAN

NUMB TO THE WORD:  
DISOBEDIENCE  
LEADS TO DEATH

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Begin with the illustration of leprosy and how this disease affects one’s ability to feel. Make the parallel between spiritual and physical leprosy (leader p. 69; learner p. 56).

**?** *Have you ever felt numb to God’s Word? What attitudes or decisions lead to spiritual numbness? How does a person begin to “feel” again?*

Remind the group of the previous lesson on the law and of Israel’s sad, downward spiral of disobedience. Announce the summary and goal of the lesson (leader p. 69; learner p. 57).

1. DISOBEDIENCE CUTS US OFF FROM THE  
SOURCE OF LIFE.

Read Ephesians 2:1-2 and Romans 6:23, encouraging your group to note the description and results of sin. Use “Further Commentary” as needed (leader p. 70). Explain “spiritual deadness” in terms of suppressing general revelation and special revelation (leader p. 70; learner p. 57).

**?** *Can you think of actions in your life that reflect a suppression of God’s Word? What sins have we in the church made “respectable”? What has been the response of the lost world around us?*

Highlight death as the inevitable result of our choice to exchange the truth of God for a lie (leader p. 70; learner p. 58).

**?** *What are some lies that our world believes in contrast to the truth of God revealed through creation? What are some lies that we in the church believe in contrast to the truth of God revealed in His Word?*

2. OUR BEST EFFORTS TO FIX OURSELVES ARE IN  
VAIN AND FOR OUR VANITY.

Read Isaiah 64:6. Use the example of Oprah Winfrey’s message on “unworthiness” as a launching pad into the discussion of the Bible’s diagnosis of our true problem (leader p. 71; learner p. 59).

**?** *How is all sin rooted in unbelief? Why might we prefer the word “mistakes” over “sin” when speaking of our attitudes and actions?*

Highlight the definitions of *shame* and *guilt* and how these two feelings work out in our personal efforts to save ourselves (leader p. 72).

**?** *Is it possible to run from God while trying to earn His favor? How can our “best efforts” get in the way of true salvation?*

Show how the gospel upends our best efforts to save ourselves and displays the glory of God in Christ (leader p. 73; learner p. 60).

**?** *How does our inability to save ourselves provide a platform for God to display His glory? How does “boasting in the gospel” influence the way we think about evangelism and missions?*

3. OUR BEST DESIRES ARE INSUFFICIENT TO  
CHANGE US.

Read Romans 3:10-12. Consider using George Robinson’s personal story of “good desires” in order to make the point that good desires cannot change us (leader p. 73; learner p. 61).

**?** *What are some signs in a person’s life that indicate God’s work in preparing their heart for salvation? Since sin has left a permanent mark on us, how can we enter God’s holy presence? How often do you notice you have the desire to do something but your actions never play it out? Why do you think that is?*

Contrast the holiness and glory of God with our fallen state. Describe salvation as Jesus stretching out His hand to those of us with spiritual leprosy (leader p. 74; learner p. 61).

CONCLUDE THE LESSON

Use the illustration of lepers gathering in a “colony” as a springboard into our mission as a church—a colony of former lepers now commissioned to take the message of hope and salvation to the world (leader p. 75; learner p. 61).

*Are you more sensitive to God’s Word and voice now than when you first believed? Why or why not?*

*How does our being healed of spiritual leprosy lead us to take the message of healing to the spiritual lepers around us?*

**?** FOR FURTHER  
DISCUSSION

*In what ways is shame different from guilt?*

**?** FOR FURTHER  
DISCUSSION

*How does our understanding of human sinfulness affect how we share the gospel?*

**?** FOR FURTHER  
DISCUSSION

*Recruit a class member ahead of time who can share their personal testimony regarding how they came to faith in Christ and were made alive to God’s Word as a result.*

**?** FOR FURTHER  
DISCUSSION

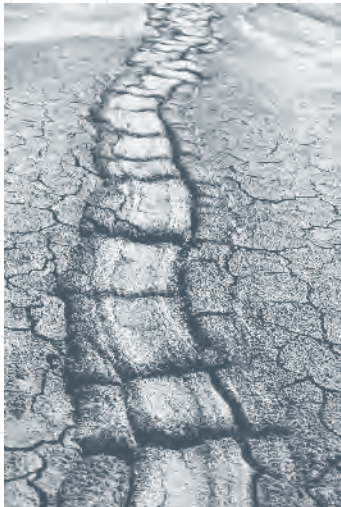
*How does our understanding of God’s holiness affect our view of His judgment?*

SESSION 6

EXPANDED LESSON CONTENT

NUMB TO THE WORD:  
DISOBEDIENCE  
LEADS TO DEATH

OPENING ILLUSTRATION & DISCUSSION STARTER



“UNCLEAN! UNCLEAN!” The shout resounded through the narrow streets of Palestine. Jewish ceremonial law rendered anyone with leprosy to be unclean. Any physical contact with lepers (even their shadow) would make you ceremonially unclean and exclude you from worship activities.

Why were lepers treated with such disdain? One reason concerned the disfigurement caused by the skin disease. A face without a nose is a scary sight. Fingers, toes, and other extremities were often missing. That’s why anyone who had this infectious

disease was considered an “outcast” by the rest of society. “Colonies” of lepers formed in order to provide social interaction for this ragged bunch of outcasts.

Leprosy is a disease that adversely affects the nervous system. It gradually numbs a person’s extremities to the point at which pain is no longer felt. You might think that never feeling pain would be a good thing, right? After all, if you’re going to get a filling in a tooth, you’re thankful for that shot of novocaine! And if you’re going to have surgery, you schedule an anesthesiologist. Pain is bad, right? In the case of a cavity or a cut, we want to avoid needless pain. But what if the numbing from the novocaine was permanent? What if the sensation of pain never returned to your mouth? Over time, you’d chew your tongue off!

Pain serves a purpose. In fact, it is a gift from God and part of His creation order. Pain tells a child not to touch a hot stove. Pain tells a carpenter to aim skillfully with a hammer. Pain warns and guides. And that’s the problem with leprosy. Lepers are numb to pain, which means they don’t know when their hand is burning or when they’ve just hit their thumb with a hammer. Lepers literally destroy their own bodies through their actions. Why? Because they can’t feel anything. They don’t sense that anything is wrong until it’s too late.

But there’s more to “feeling” than just pain. What about feeling good things? A leper doesn’t feel pain. But neither can lepers feel the gentle touch of someone who cares for them. Numbness eliminates *all* feelings—the painful feelings given to protect you and the good feelings given to bless and encourage you. The numbness of leprosy results in “death by a thousand cuts.” What a horrible disease!

More horrible than physical leprosy is spiritual numbness—the inability to recognize our sin and how it harms us and the inability to recognize God’s grace and how it benefits us. Sin sears our consciences, leading us away from life—in all its beauty and complexity. The end result is spiritual death.

**?** *Have you ever felt numb to God’s Word? What attitudes or decisions lead to spiritual numbness? How does a person begin to “feel” again?*

Last week, we discussed God’s standard of conduct as given in the law. We saw that the Ten Commandments were given *after* God had already redeemed and rescued Israel from Egypt, putting an end to the idea that their obedience was what would save them. In Exodus 20, God spoke to the Israelites in order to show them how they should relate to Him vertically and how they should relate to one another horizontally.

Unfortunately, the remainder of the Old Testament painstakingly documents Israel’s indifference to God’s gracious Word. Where once it was Pharaoh who hardened his heart upon hearing the word of the Lord delivered through Moses, now the very people whom God had rescued chose to suppress the truth of God’s Word. Israel’s history is marked by cycles of disobedience, judgment, and deliverance.

The irony is that Israel’s hearts proved to be much harder than the stone tablets upon which God had written His commands. But God promised through Jeremiah, “I will put My teaching within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be My people” (31:33). Spiritual leprosy would not have the last word!

LESSON SUMMARY

IN TODAY’S LESSON, we will look at the consequences of our disobedience to God’s Word. The Bible teaches that we have long suffered from spiritual leprosy ever since human beings sinned. In our time together, we will discuss how:

- 1. Disobedience cuts us off from the Source of life.
- 2. Our best efforts to fix ourselves are in vain and for our vanity.
- 3. Our best desires are insufficient to change us.



FURTHER COMMENTARY

“‘Trespases’ are lapses; ‘sins’ are shortcomings. Apart from Christ, people are without authentic spiritual life. In this state the most vital part of the human personality is dead; thus people cannot by their own efforts or ingenuity experience fellowship with God or meet His requirements.”

“‘This world’ is associated with the realm of Satan. The way of life without Christ is in accordance with Satan’s ways.”<sup>1</sup>

For more information, see the HCSB Study Bible.

VOICES FROM THE CHURCH

“The power of all temptation is the prospect that it will make me happier. No one sins out of a sense of duty...The Word helps me stop trusting in the potential of sin to make me happy. Instead the Word entices me to trust in God’s promises.”<sup>2</sup>

—John Piper

1. SLOW DEATH (EPH. 2:1-2; ROM. 6:23).

<sup>1</sup> *And you were dead in your trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler who exercises authority over the lower heavens, the spirit now working in the disobedient.*

<sup>23</sup> *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

In Ephesians 2:1-2, we learn that we are spiritually dead. What does it look like for us to be dead in our trespasses and sins and to walk according to the ways of this world? The apostle Paul shines further light on this “spiritual deadness” in Romans 1–2. There he shows that we suppress the truth made available to us in general revelation (through creation) and also the truth made available to us in special revelation (God’s direct Word to us).

So first, **we suppress the truth of general revelation.** This suppression comes out in several ways. For example, the pantheist declares that all of nature is God. The deist declares that God has nothing to do with the day-to-day workings of nature. Some people are so consumed with the creation that they fail to honor the Creator. Each of these positions is wrong, and they lead us to a warped view of creation and the Creator.

In His goodness, God has shown Himself to us in creation. But rather than glorify God or show gratitude, mankind has suppressed and disobeyed this God-speech and turned to idolatry. Our acts of suppression, disobedience, and idolatry always lead to death because they cut us off from the One through whom all life exists.

Second, **we suppress the truth of special revelation,** meaning we disregard God’s direct Word to us. Paul often spoke of his own people as resting in their identity as God’s chosen, in their possession of the law, in God’s ownership of them, and in the ability to know His will. The tragedy was that God’s people had abused these gifts and disobeyed God’s law. If the Gentiles were guilty for suppressing their general knowledge of God, how much more the Jews for their outright disobedience of their special knowledge of God! What’s worse, Jewish hypocrisy had resulted in God Himself being blasphemed.

**?** *Can you think of actions in your life that reflect a suppression of God’s Word? What sins have we in the church made “respectable”? What has been the response of the lost world around us?*

Disobedience results in death. We exchange life for death. We rebel against God as our Master only to find we are now enslaved by another master—the Evil One. And our spiritual deadness leads to more and more sin. Our suppression of God’s revelation shows that we don’t value God’s

Word as we should. Because we don’t recognize the value of God and His Word, we exchange the truth of God for a lie.

Like a naïve person in Chinatown paying top dollar for a “genuine” Rolex, our suppression of God’s Word has made us speculators in the marketplace of sin. We have become comfortable trading in counterfeit currency—so comfortable that we are unable to recognize the voice of God apart from His gracious intervention.

**?** *What are some lies that our world believes in contrast to the truth of God revealed through creation? What are some lies that we in the church believe in contrast to the truth of God revealed in His Word?*

If God’s standard is perfect righteousness (and it is), and we are filled with all unrighteousness (and we are), then God’s Word says that we deserve death. As we read above in Romans 6:23, Paul speaks of the wages earned by the sinner as being “death”—not just physical death, though that is certainly on the horizon. The death that Paul speaks of is the same death that God warned Adam about in Genesis 2:17—“you will certainly die.” This is worse than physical death, which separates us from God’s world. Paul is speaking here also of spiritual death, which separates us eternally from God Himself. Sin earns death.

2. OUR BEST EFFORTS ARE IN VAIN (ISA. 64:6).

<sup>6</sup> *All of us have become like something unclean, and all our righteous acts are like a polluted garment; all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities carry us away like the wind.*

In the spring of 2011, Oprah Winfrey ended her long-running daily television show by hosting a variety of guests and celebrating the show’s success. In the final few minutes, she took the stage much like a preacher. And the sermon to her adoring fans was about the root of our pain and suffering. She said: “There is a common thread that runs through all of our pain and all of our suffering, and that is unworthiness. Not feeling worthy enough to own the life you were created for. Even people who believe they deserve to be happy and have nice things often don’t feel worthy once they have them.” She went on to tell the audience: “Your being alive makes worthiness your birthright. You alone are enough.”

Oprah’s counsel to her massive television audience stands in direct contradiction to the Bible’s view of our problem. Scripture doesn’t teach us merely that we *feel* unworthy but that we *are* unworthy. And when we trace the signs of our brokenness and pain, we find the root cause of sin, and at the bottom of sin is unbelief.

VOICES FROM THE CHURCH

“Sin is a spiritual and moral malignancy. Left unchecked, it can spread throughout our entire inner being and contaminate every area of our lives. Even worse, it often will ‘metastasize’ from us into the lives of other believers around us.”<sup>3</sup>

—Jerry Bridges

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

“Be killing sin or it will be killing you.”<sup>4</sup>

—John Owen (1616-1683)

VOICES FROM THE CHURCH

*"We don't like to use the word sin because it doesn't cater to our pride. We want our sins to be 'mistakes.' Everyone makes mistakes! Mistakes are forgivable. But sins paint us too darkly...if we examine the Bible, we discover that we are not just injured or even caught in a coma. We are dead. 'As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins' (Ephesians 2:1 NIV). And not just any kind of dead, but smelly, decaying dead."*<sup>5</sup>

—Christian George

VOICES FROM THE CHURCH

*"Ungodliness may be defined as living one's everyday life with little or no thought of God, or of God's will, or of God's glory, or of one's dependence on God. You can readily see, then, that someone can lead a respectable life and still be ungodly in the sense that God is essentially irrelevant in his or her life."*<sup>6</sup>

—Jerry Bridges

All sin is rooted in unbelief. Each time we knowingly (or unknowingly) transgress God's righteous standard, we are doing so because we believe something (or someone) more than we believe God. The Greek word for "sin" carries the connotation of "missing the mark" as an archer might miss the bulls-eye on a target. The biblical authors go even further: We're not just missing the target, we are aimed in the opposite direction!

**?** *How is all sin rooted in unbelief? Why might we prefer the word "mistakes" over "sin" when speaking of our attitudes and actions?*

We're not just making mistakes. We are all filled with all unrighteousness, so that even the good things we do are tainted by unrighteous motives. No amount of cheerleading our own "worthiness" will make us truly worthy of God's love.

In Genesis 3, we read that after Adam and Eve sinned, they immediately made coverings for themselves in the form of fig leaves. This was a vain attempt to fix themselves. Why did they feel the need to cover their nakedness when just moments before, in Genesis 2:25, they "were naked, yet felt no shame"? The implicit reasoning is that once they suppressed the truth of God ("you will certainly die") and believed the lie of the serpent ("you will not die"), their eyes were opened and they now felt guilt and shame.

The feeling of guilt is a gift from God, much like nerve endings are to the human body. Guilt helps us avoid those things that are destructive in our lives. It is an internal working of the Spirit prompting the conscience when we abandon the righteous standard of God.

Shame is the emotional or physical response to guilt. When improperly handled, guilt and shame drive us deeper into sin by causing us to hide in the bushes, much like Adam and Eve. When the first man and woman covered themselves with fig leaves, it was because they recognized that they no longer met God's righteous standard. Fig leaves wither, thus making their efforts in vain. Had God not graciously replaced the leaves with skins, Adam and Eve would have been forced to cover themselves over and over in one act of vanity after another.

Isaiah 64 makes it clear that **no one will be saved because of personal effort**. Paul says the same in Romans 3:20: "For no one will be justified in His sight by the works of the law, because the knowledge of sin comes through the law."

Last week, when we discussed the role of the law and our response, it was clear that God didn't give us the law as a means to get right with Him through our effort. He gave the law to make us realize that we are broken and can't fix ourselves. Every time we transgress the law, if the Spirit of God is working in us, we feel that merciful twinge of guilt. Like a hot stove screams at your fingertips, "Move or my heat will destroy you!" the law of God shouts at transgressors like you and me: "You're not able! Run to Jesus!"

**?** *Is it possible to run from God while trying to earn His favor? How can our "best efforts" get in the way of true salvation?*

Rather than just sweep our sin under the rug and ignore it, God has dealt with it by sending His Son to bear its burden. Jesus is the righteousness of God, and those who put their trust in Him have the burden of their sin completely removed and receive the blessing of His righteous standing before the Father as their own! In 2 Corinthians 5:21, Paul said it this way: "He made the One who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." So our right standing with God is completely His own doing. The gospel removes any possibility for boasting (Rom. 3:27-28). Our only boast before God will be in the gift that He has given us—"eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (6:23).

**?** *How does our inability to save ourselves provide a platform for God to display His glory? How does "boasting in the gospel" influence the way we think about evangelism and missions?*

3. OUR BEST DESIRES ARE INSUFFICIENT (ROM. 3:10-12).

<sup>10</sup> *as it is written:*  
*There is no one righteous, not even one.*  
<sup>11</sup> *There is no one who understands;*  
*there is no one who seeks God.*  
<sup>12</sup> *All have turned away;*  
*all alike have become useless.*  
*There is no one who does what is good,*  
*not even one.*

When I was 14, I had a moment. I started to see that the way I was living did not line up with the stories that I heard in Sunday School. So I did what many people who are brought up in the Bible Belt do. I waited until the end of the worship service on a particular Sunday morning and went to the front. When our elderly pastor stepped down to greet me, I told him, "I want to straighten my life up." Unfortunately, my pastor replied by saying, "Okay. You're going to get baptized."

I left church that morning on cloud nine. I was ready to change! By evening, I had fallen from cloud nine without a parachute! But I went ahead and got baptized anyway, hoping that it would do some good. No change. Despite my best desires, I wasn't able to "straighten my life up." My best desires wouldn't save me.

In Romans 3, Paul quotes a number of Old Testament texts to drive home the point that "there is no one righteous...there is no one who seeks God" (Pss. 14:1-3; 53:1-3; Eccl. 7:20; Pss. 5:9; 140:3; 10:7; Isa. 59:7-8; Ps. 36:1). None of us really pursues God on our own.

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

*"The Scriptures look especially into the heart and have regard to the root and source of all sin, which is unbelief in the inmost heart. As, therefore, faith alone makes righteous, and brings the Spirit, and produces pleasure in good, eternal works, so unbelief alone commits sin, and brings up the flesh, and produces pleasure in bad external works, as happened to Adam and Eve in Paradise."*<sup>7</sup>

—Martin Luther (1483-1546)

VOICES FROM THE CHURCH

*"Every effort to change must involve at its core a shift in direction away from dependence on one's own resources for life to dependence on God."*<sup>8</sup>

—Larry Crabb

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

*"Speak not peace to yourself before God speaks it; but hearken what he says to your soul...There is, if I may so say, a secret instinct in faith, whereby it knows the voice of Christ when he speaks indeed; as the babe leaped in the womb when the blessed Virgin came to Elizabeth [Luke 1:44], faith leaps in the heart when Christ indeed draws nigh to it. 'My sheep,' says Christ, 'know my voice' (John 10:4)."*<sup>9</sup>

—John Owen (1616-1683)



VOICES FROM THE CHURCH

“Salvation comes not through our willpower, but through God’s will and power.”<sup>10</sup>  
—Trevin Wax

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

“My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things—that I am a great sinner, and that Christ is a great Saviour.”  
—John Newton (1725-1807)

VOICES FROM THE CHURCH

“There are many professing Christians who have a view of salvation that disconnects it from real life, and that nullifies the threats of the Bible, and puts the sinning person who claims to be a Christian beyond the reach of biblical warnings.”<sup>11</sup>  
—John Piper

But what about that neighbor who has been asking questions about church? What about those years that I listened to sermons and felt guilty? Are these not examples of seeking God? Yes and no. Yes, many people show interest in God long before their conversion. But no, that interest is not their doing. The bottom line is this: If a person is seeking God, it is because the Spirit is at work.

? What are some signs in a person’s life that indicate God’s work in preparing their heart for salvation? How can we discern these signs in order to share the gospel?

In Genesis 1–2, God created man and woman in His own image, and the result was nothing short of glorious. “Glory” carries the connotation of “weightiness.” There was a glory to the man and woman in relation to the rest of creation because they reflected God’s own glory. They had the distinct privilege of being God’s steward over all that He had made. And man was up to the task. Why? Because he was living in perfect harmony with God.

But then the man and woman fell from that glory. Their ability to accurately reflect God’s glory was lost. They were still in His image, but that image was fractured. All creation suffered as a result. Mankind had “fallen short of the glory of God.”

In the Old Testament, the people of Israel waited each year for the Day of Atonement for the assurance that their sins were forgiven. On that day, the high priest would take a blood sacrifice into the tent of meeting where God’s presence dwelled, and he would sprinkle the blood on an altar called the holy of holies, where the glory of God rested. They had one chance. Everything was riding on one man to get the job done. But entering into the presence of God was terrifying because God’s standard was perfect righteousness and nobody had it.

? Since sin has left a permanent mark on us, how can we enter God’s holy presence? How often do you notice you have the desire to do something but your actions never play it out? Why do you think that is?

So take my personal scenario back into that mind-set. For me to “straighten my life up,” I would have had to march right in there myself—and I would’ve fallen short of God’s glory! According to the Scriptures, I would have dropped dead on the spot. Why? Even my best intentions to change are tainted with sin. On my best days, I still fail to live up to God’s righteous standard. How could I enter into God’s presence on my own when I was aimed in the wrong direction? I was indeed lost.

Thankfully, by the grace of God, my heart was not too hardened to hear from God. The Holy Spirit drew me into an authentic relationship with Christ when I was 21. I had grown numb, but Jesus stretched out his hand and touched me. Immediately, I was cleansed (Matt. 8:3).

CONCLUSION

Humans were created to relate to God and one another. God has spoken clearly telling us how to live, but all too often, we ignore Him. We plug our ears and continue in the path of Frank Sinatra as if “doing it my way” works. All the while, God’s Spirit convicts and prompts, beckoning us to repentance so that we may live. After a while, our hearts are so hard and calloused that they no longer feel conviction. We’ve become spiritual lepers! Like those in Jesus’ day, lepers have a tendency of gathering together in shared misery.

The gospel says that Jesus still touches lepers—and when He does, feeling is restored. What was once disfigured and dead is made whole and alive! When we repent and turn to Christ at the sound of His voice, numbness flees and we are enabled to feel the pleasure of His love evermore in His presence.

You need no longer bear the internal pain of being “unclean.” You have been made clean and now are free to gather with others who have been made clean in a new colony called the “church”—the people tasked with spreading the message of hope and salvation to a world of spiritual lepers.

Charles Spurgeon famously said that evangelism is nothing more than one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread. Applying Spurgeon’s insight to leprosy, we might say God’s mission goes forth when His people, whom He has healed of spiritual leprosy, go out and tell other spiritual lepers about the Savior who is willing to stretch out His hand and heal them too.

The church is a colony of former lepers. It’s not a club for people who are perfect but an assembly of people who through God’s grace have been forgiven and cleansed and whose lives are looking more and more like the Savior who healed them. We are no longer spiritual lepers whose lives are marked by uncleanness. Instead, the good news of Christ’s healing power must resound from our lips and be demonstrated in our lives.

Are you more sensitive to God’s Word and voice now than when you first believed? Why or why not?

How does our being healed of spiritual leprosy lead us to take the message of healing to the spiritual lepers around us?

Hymn of Response

“Gracious God, my heart renew, Make my spirit right and true; Cast me not away from Thee, Let Thy Spirit dwell in me; Thy salvation’s joy impart, Steadfast make my willing heart. Sinners then shall learn from me And return, O God, to Thee; Savior, all my guilt remove, And my tongue shall sing Thy love; Touch my silent lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall praise accord.”

REFERENCES

1. HCSB Study Bible, 2030, n. 2:1; n. 2:2.  
2. John Piper, *Future Grace* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 1995), 334–335.  
3. Jerry Bridges, *Respectable Sins* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2007), 23.  
4. John Owen, *Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers*, in *Overcoming Sin & Temptation*, eds. Kelly M. Kavic and Justin Taylor (Wheaton: Crossway, 2006), 50.  
5. Christian George, *Sex, Sushi, & Salvation* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2008), 89.  
6. Bridges, *Respectable Sins*, 54.  
7. Martin Luther, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. J. Theodore Mueller (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1976), xv–xvi.  
8. Larry Crabb, *Inside Out* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2007), 216.  
9. Owen, *Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers*, in *Overcoming Sin & Temptation*, eds. Kavic and Taylor, 118, 126.  
10. Trevin Wax, *Counterfeit Gospels* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2011), 121.  
11. Piper, *Future Grace*, 331.

## SESSION 6

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## NUMB TO THE WORD: DISOBEDIENCE LEADS TO DEATH

### DEVOTIONAL MATERIAL

*Encourage your group to read the three devotional readings included in the learner guide.*

### STUDY MATERIAL

“The Malignancy of Sin”—Chapter 3 from *Respectable Sins* by Jerry Bridges

“The Results of Sin”—Chapter 29 from *Christian Theology* by Millard J. Erickson

“Nightmares of Painlessness”—Chapter 1 from *The Gift of Pain* by Paul Brand and Philip Yancey

“Death Vs Life in Ephesians”—Article by Robert Earl Jones on *Biblical Illustrator Plus* (CD-ROM); order at [www.lifeway.com/biblicalillustrator](http://www.lifeway.com/biblicalillustrator)

### SERMON PODCAST

David Platt: “The Urgency of Eternity”—The Church at Brook Hills  
[www.disciplemakingintl.org/media/series/view/176/the-urgency-of-eternity?filter=book&book=37](http://www.disciplemakingintl.org/media/series/view/176/the-urgency-of-eternity?filter=book&book=37)

### ARTICLE

“Georgia girl who doesn’t feel pain helps researchers understand condition”—[jacksonville.com/news/metro/2010-08-28/story/georgia-girl-who-doesnt-feel-pain-helps-researchers-understand-condition](http://jacksonville.com/news/metro/2010-08-28/story/georgia-girl-who-doesnt-feel-pain-helps-researchers-understand-condition)

## TIP OF THE WEEK

### PRAYER REQUESTS

Most of us have faced the challenge of getting everything done on Sunday morning. Unfortunately, some things will get squeezed out if we are not careful. Here are some ways teachers can gather prayer requests or pray in their Sunday School classes when they have a limited time schedule to follow in Sunday School: collect prayer requests on index cards as people arrive; break the class into smaller groups, praying only for each other’s requests; guided, conversational prayer time; allow each person in the class to actually pray for their own requests; take requests at the end of the class time; declare a Sunday when only requests for others’ spiritual condition are allowed.