

THE 49-DAY JOURNEY

A Higher Perspective To Living A Biblically Based Life



SESSION 4 - The Façade of False Living



SESSION 4

The Façade of False Living

In this fourth session of our seven-week study, we will go beyond the questions of religious doctrine and consider how we apply our religious beliefs to the cultural actions of our day. Our culture is bombarding us with ideas on what behavior is acceptable, what should be celebrated, what should be tolerated. Unfortunately, most of those ideas are counter to the truth presented to us in the New Testament. This session examines some of those culturally approved behaviors and helps us understand how we can live godly lives in contrast to the cultural norms..

FAST FACTS

Our **2020 survey** provides more insight into the thinking and actions of Americans on areas we will consider today:

- What do young adults under the age of 40 believe regarding sex outside of marriage; specifically, pornography, casual sex, and living together outside of marriage? Across those who are not born-again Protestants, less than one in twenty (4%) ascribed to a biblical standard. Of those Protestants who claim to be born-again, only one in four (23%) ascribed to the standards for sexual purity clearly taught in the Bible. The vast majority of American adults align themselves with the culture not the Truth in the area of sexual behavior.
- How about another topic that is the focus of much debate in our society today? When asked about dealing with people attracted to same sex relationships, one of the answers reflects a biblical



SESSION 4 THEME

The world and the flesh are enticing us to live in ways that negate our testimony. Cultural captivity is not that we sometimes fall but rather that we believe sinful behavior is not sin because our culture promotes it is good.



worldview. It states “(they) are to be loved and told God’s truth regarding our sexual practices.” Young adults claiming to be born-again Protestants were much less conformed to the culture, with almost four out of ten (40%) of them agreeing with this biblical position. But that means a clear majority of the born-again Protestant population hold to the view of the culture rather than standing up for the truth of the Bible.

Christian Smith, in his book, entitled *Lost in Transition: The Dark Side of Emerging Adulthood*, pointed out five areas of concern they discovered from their research. The five areas were: 1) moral aimlessness, 2) materialistic consumerism, 3) intoxicated living, 4) deep troubles from sexually liberated behavior, and 5) lack of interest in civic and political life. In *Cultural Captives*, we affirmed these characteristics and added three more: 6) cheating, 7) pluralism and 8) lack of meaningful spiritual activity. As Smith put it, “**Might it be true that the farthest boundary of sight that youth today can envision as real and being worth pursuit is entirely imminent, purely material, and completely mundane?**”

PRIOR TO THIS WEEK'S SESSION

- Participate in the experience by reading a chapter a day in your *Periscope* book. This week the assignment is Chapters 22 through 28.
- Read/Listen to the daily email messages you will receive from Periscope this week.
- Read this week's Facilitator's Guide Session 4 in preparation for leading the session. Knowing the time you have allocated for your small group study; mark the time you want to start each major part of the outline. Within each activity, mark the questions that you want to have your group discuss.

LEADING THE SMALL GROUP SESSION

Begin with whatever fellowship time (if any) you normally include in your small group time. Begin the session by asking one of the group to lead in a prayer specifically asking for God's presence and leadership during this time. Once again, ask them to pray for openness, a willingness to hear what God is saying to them and a desire to apply it to their lives.



Press **Play** on this Thought Tickler Video – *Spiritual Growth Hormone*
Once it starts press **Pause** when you reach the questions at the beginning.

The Questions below in **Blue** appear exactly as they do in the videos. The Material in brackets are additional information to help you lead the discussions.

Opening Warm Up Questions - Session 4

1. How do biblical standards of behavior sit with Americans today?
2. Does God care how we behave?

[After letting the group discuss this for a few minutes, share with them some of the statistics presented above and Christian Smith's quote]

3. Discuss this quote: "Might it be true that the farthest boundary of sight that youth today can envision as real and being worthy of pursuit is entirely imminent, purely material, and completely mundane." – Christian Smith – *Souls in Transition*

Press **Play** to continue the video. At the end the Discussion Questions will appear.

Group Discussion Questions

4. Do you sometimes feel that you could use some Spiritual Growth Hormone?
5. What are the positive aspects of being able to purchase and use a Spiritual Growth Hormone?
6. What are some problems with such an approach?
7. Read Romans 12:2. What does it take to renew our minds so that we are not conformed to this world?

Close the Video Window

BODY OF SESSION**30 - 55 minutes**

Play the teaser video for Session 4. It is entitled *Looking for Answers*. Press **Pause** for the Questions It lasts about 3 minutes.

Group Discussion Questions

1. When you have questions about which behaviors are right and which are wrong, where do you normally go to get answers?
2. What area of your life do you find the widest range of possible answers for what is correct? Is there some area of behavior where your belief in what is right has changed over time?
3. Are there teachings from the New Testament on activities still prevalent today that are no longer valid?

Close the Video Window



Press this **Play Button** to start the Teaching Video for Session 4 It is called *The Façade of False Living*.

WARNING: Be prepared to Press **Pause** when the First Set of Discussion Questions appear before the 6 minute mark. Rewind if necessary.

Group Discussion Questions

1. Read Eph. 2:8. If we are saved by grace, why does God give us instructions on right living? [In Ephesians 2:8, Paul tells us *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”* So, if we are saved by grace, why does God give us all these instructions on how to live? Is it important to try to follow those instructions? What would a captive person say in response to this question?]
2. Look at Romans 13:13. How does it relate to the current practice of “hooking up” with someone? Are sexual immorality and jealousy relevant issues today? [Our hosts talked about Romans 13:13, *“Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in*

orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.” This verse seems to be way out of sync with our current views of sexuality and partying. As long as I have a designated driver and a means of protection, you know safe sex, shouldn't I consider this verse as outdated? Perhaps quarreling and jealousy are problem behaviors, but you know jealousy can be a good motivator. Is jealousy really a problem for us or does it help our capitalist system function – aren't a lot of advertisements really feeding our jealousy?]

3. **Read Col. 3:8-9. Share a time when you were tempted to slander someone. Is there even such a thing as obscene talk in today's world?** [Consider Colossians 3:8-9, *“But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.”* Ask someone share a time when they got pulled into slandering someone? How would you rate the internal obscenity filter on your tongue? Remember captivity is not when you sometimes stumble, but rather when you act as if that which is wrong is really right.]
4. **Read Romans 13:14. Do we need to understand the difference between our needs and our desires? Do you think “no provision” is a little harsh?** [Romans 13:14 *“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.”* What does this verse say to you about your approach to life? Do we need to understand the difference between our needs and our desires? Do you think “no provision” is a little harsh; shouldn't it say “make appropriate provision”?]

Press Play on the Video to continue to the questions at the end.

Discuss the Group Questions.

Group Discussion Questions

5. **Read Eph. 5:8-11. Remember captivity is not when you sometimes stumble, but rather when you act as if that which is wrong is really right. Cultural captivity makes us open to “unfruitful deeds of darkness”. How can we learn what is pleasing to the Lord? What does it mean to expose the deeds of darkness?** [Now look up, Ephesians 5:8-11, *“now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of the light – for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth – trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of*

darkness, but rather expose them.” Walking in the light includes “trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.” Where do you think we can learn those things? Do you think our cultural captivity is on the list of things which are pleasing to the Lord? It also includes exposing the unfruitful deeds of darkness. How can Christians go about doing that in today’s American society?]

6. **Consider Ephesians 5:15-17, How does a wise person live differently from an unwise person? How do we take advantage of every opportunity?** [Ephesians 5:15-17 *“Therefore be very careful how you live – not as unwise but as wise, taking advantage of every opportunity, because the days are evil. For this reason do not be foolish, but be wise by understanding what the Lord’s will is.”*]
7. **Read Gal. 5:13. What is to motivate our behavior?** [Finally, consider Galatians 5:13, *“For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”* According to this verse, are we called to be slaves to a code of conduct? How can I use my freedom as an opportunity for the flesh? What does it look like when I am using it to serve one another in love?]

Close the Video Window

CLOSING THOUGHTS 8 - 15 minutes

When we live with Christ, we are not motivated by the pride and selfishness that fuel much of what passes for normal behavior in our current society.

Let’s pray that we will accept God’s provision of freedom from captivity to the things the world thinks are important. Pray for awareness of areas of our life where we are living out the actions of the world instead of standing in the love of Christ. Pray for sensitivity to the voice of the Spirit calling you to live in holiness.

FOLLOW UP TO SMALL GROUP SESSION

Closing Prayer for any prayer requests or concerns brought up in your group.

Think about the session. What went well? What seemed to fall flat?

NEXT WEEK - THE DANGER OF FALSE LIVING

Next week, your group is going to be talking about how to begin embracing true reality. Satan wants your group to continue embracing the lies of the world.

Pray that God will make break through with the truth of Christ to each member of the group.

Pray that God will make His Truth clear to each member of the group.

