**Live in Community**

 Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**Recognize Sin**

Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! ([2 Corinthians 5:17](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.2Co5.17))

*The Bible has a lot to say about sin and forgiveness. It acknowledges the deep brokenness of this world and our individual life. It is only by understanding the depth of human sin that we can understand the remarkable work of God’s forgiveness. Because of His forgiveness, we escape the eternal consequence of our sin and can rightly respond to the call to live a holy life. We learn to receive forgiveness, put off sin, and show forgiveness to those who have sinned against us. We learn to pursue holiness in the midst of the world’s brokenness.*

**Session Overview**

**Live Holy**

**Biblical Encounter:** Jesus Clears the Temple ([Mark 11:15–19](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mk11.15-19))

**Outcome:** Be willing to radically remove things from your life that displease God.

*In this session, we encounter Jesus’ passion about the temple and its purpose. Jesus had recently arrived in the city of Jerusalem after traveling from the Galilee region. Sadly, when Jesus entered the temple in Jerusalem, He saw it being used inappropriately as a marketplace instead of a house of prayer. Out of His righteous anger, He quickly, and without hesitation, removed everyone who was not in the temple for the right reason. Many were probably shocked that Jesus would be so aggressive. However, there were things happening in a place reserved for devotion to God that shouldn’t have been. Jesus was willing to radically remove things that displeased His Father. We should share the same attitude about displeasing things in our own life.*

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| ***You Will Need*** *• Smartphone or timer* *• Painter’s tape* *• 100 sheets of paper, crumbled into balls (adjust as needed, depending on the size of your group)****Getting Ready*** *• Tape off a 10x10' square in an open space. Adjust if needed, depending on the size of your group.* *• Place the paper wads outside the square with about 25 pieces on each side.* •***First time leading* Live *for Youth? Look here for the*** [**Facilitator Guide**](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf)**.** |

*To access session content and videos from a computer, visit:* [***BibleEngagementProject.com/downloads***](https://bibleengagementproject.com/downloads)

**Engage**

**Welcome**

*Take this time to welcome everyone, introduce new students, learn names, and thank everyone for coming. Your friendliness here can create a comfort level that encourages student participation later.*

**Opening Prayer**

*Prayer thoughts: Ask the Lord that, as you discuss the Bible today, He’d open your students’ eyes to the things in their lives that might be displeasing to Him. Pray that every heart would surrender to God, and that they would begin to remove those things—allowing themselves to become a clearer reflection of Jesus to others around them.*

**Introduction**

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| **QUESTION**What’s the craziest event you’ve ever witnessed? |

For those who saw it firsthand, the Bible account we’ll talk about today might have been their answer to that question! Jesus did lots of things that didn’t match people’s expectations. As we read through Scripture and get a better picture of Him, we also see the importance Jesus put on letting go of things that get between us and God.

But the world and culture we live in is corrupt and immoral. We are exposed to things that displease God on a daily basis. As believers, it can be very difficult to try and navigate our way through it all. It helps to know that Jesus was able to navigate this world and still avoid doing sinful things. The challenge for us today is to think about what we allow to enter our life. How hard do you work to remove sinful things from your life?

**Group Activity**

**Get Out!**

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| ***You Will Need*** *• Smartphone or timer* *• Painter’s tape* *• 100 sheets of paper, crumbled into balls (adjust as needed, depending on the size of your group)****Getting Ready*** *• Tape off a 10x10’ square in an open space. Adjust if needed, depending on the size of your group.* *• Place the paper wads outside the square with about 25 pieces on each side.* |

We are going to play a game called Get Out! For this game, the group will divide into two equal teams. One team will step inside the square and the other team will be outside the square along the four sides.

When I say, “Go,” I’ll start the timer for one minute. The team on the outside will toss the balls of paper into the square. You can only toss one paper ball at a time. The team inside the square will pick up the paper balls and toss them back out of the square. Throw the pieces of paper on the floor, not at each other.

After one minute, I’ll yell, “Stop,” and everyone must stop throwing the paper balls. We’ll count the number of paper balls inside the square, and then the teams will trade places. When all the paper balls are back outside the square, we’ll play again for one minute. The team with fewer paper balls inside the square at the end of their round is the winner. Let’s play.

• *Start the timer.*

• *Play the game, count the paper wads inside the square, and then play again.*

• *Determine the winning team.*

Life can seem a lot like the game we just played. We try to remove negative things from our life as the enemy continually tries to add them back. We want to get rid of the trash in our life, but it seems like we are in a never-ending battle. Thankfully, we have the Holy Spirit to help us clear our life of sin as we draw near to Him. Our Bible story will help us see the passion Jesus has for His followers living a pure life. Before our discussion, let’s watch this video.

**Watch**

**Consider What the Bible Says**

*Ensure each student has access to a Bible, preferably the same version.*

Today, we’re looking at a situation that happened in the temple that involved Jesus, some business people, and some priests and teachers of religious law. To understand what’s going on here, you need to know that the temple was a special place that was set apart for people to connect with God. Every section had specific and unique purposes established by God. Ignoring or interrupting those purposes was essentially ignoring or interrupting God’s will. We’ll see that Jesus had a clear understanding of God’s purposes for the temple, and He wanted others to honor them.

**Jesus’ Righteous Anger**

Read [Mark 11:15–16](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mk11.15-16).

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| **QUESTION**What do you think Jesus was thinking and feeling as He stepped into the temple that day? |

We get a glimpse of Jesus’ emotions through His response when He walked into the temple and saw what was happening. Seeing that His Father’s house was being used as a place of business rather than worship made Jesus very upset. Some people may have a hard time understanding why it was okay for Jesus to get so angry in this moment. However, this was a righteous anger—one that came from a disgust for those who dishonored God and His temple.

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| **QUESTION**How do you think the crowd reacted to Jesus making a scene at the temple? |

We can only imagine the different thoughts going through their minds. Some might have felt ashamed because they knew what they were doing was wrong. Others may have even been frustrated that Jesus inconvenienced them or thought it was His place to judge them. Hopefully, at least a few in the crowd would have been glad that someone was addressing the shameful behavior.

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| **QUESTION**How would you have felt as one of Jesus’ disciples during this event? |

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| **QUESTION**What do you think Jesus wanted His disciples to learn from seeing Him do this? |

**Did You Know?**

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| The requirement for the Passover sacrifice in Jerusalem was an unblemished lamb for each household. But the journey from the northern region of Galilee to Jerusalem was over rough terrain and could take up to a week to travel. The challenges of that trip led many pilgrims in the first century to sell their unblemished lamb and travel with the money rather than the lamb. Then, once in Jerusalem, they used that money to buy an unblemished lamb there. This practice allowed the leaders of the priests to capitalize on the demand for lambs in Jerusalem and take advantage of those who came to Jerusalem to worship. |

**Jesus Corrected Their Focus**

Read [Mark 11:17](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mk11.17).

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| **QUESTION**What do you think Jesus meant by calling the temple “a house of prayer for all nations”? |

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| **QUESTION**What might have changed in the temple area after the things that displeased God were no longer there? |

Jesus was so passionate about removing the things that didn’t belong because they got in the way of what did belong in that special place. This temple was to be used for honoring and worshipping God, but at the time, that wasn’t the case. Our life should honor God too.

Read [1 Corinthians 6:19–20](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co6.19-20).

In the verses we just read, Paul explained that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. For the Jewish people during and prior to Jesus’ day, the temple was a special place where God’s presence stayed in a special way to connect with His people. Now, every single believer has God’s Holy Spirit living in them in a special way.

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| **QUESTION**How would you describe what it means to honor God with our body? |

What we do, think, watch, and say should reflect God’s presence in our life. We need to guard our mind, heart, and life, and avoid things that are displeasing to God. The challenge for us is to recognize when those things creep in and then, be just as radical as Jesus was and remove those things from our life.

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| **QUESTION**How should Jesus’ response to what was happening inside the temple inspire us to do something radical about sin in our own life? |

**The Religious Leaders’ Response**

Read [Mark 11:18–19](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mk11.18-19).

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| **QUESTION**Why do you think the religious leaders plotted to kill Jesus? |

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| **QUESTION**What similarities could there be between the attitude of these religious leaders and some non-Christians today? |

Many Christians today will never have to deal with plots to kill them for their faith. Yet the emotional response of the priests and religious leaders toward Jesus may not be as unusual as we think. Some non-Christians today want Christians to ignore or encourage sinful behavior. Even though thousands of years have passed since Jesus was on earth, Christians today can still become a target when they embrace and encourage a lifestyle of purity.

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| **QUESTION**What are some practical ways to drive out the things in our life that are displeasing to God? |

Jesus’ desire for God’s will to be done on earth angered the priests and religious leaders. They didn’t like that Jesus’ actions showed everyone the problems with the space they were supposed to be caring for. Similar to the religious leaders in the passage, there may be people in your life who get upset when you start to remove sinful things from your life. You may even lose friends. But when you stick to living your life as a reflection of Jesus, you live the life He intended for you.

**Reflect**

**Be willing to radically remove things from your life that displease God.**

Jesus set a powerful example by showing us how important it is to remove things that displease God. According to [Romans 3:23](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ro3.23), everyone has sinned. The first step to removing that is to accept Jesus as the Leader of our life. But that first step isn’t the end. Life is full of struggles and temptations that every believer must work through. We must face sin with the same mindset that Jesus did when He walked into the temple. We too must be passionate about making the temple of our life a place devoted to God.

**Listen to God**

Let’s take time to consider how our life demonstrates a real trust in the Bible. These questions are meant to serve as a conversation between you and God. Sharing your responses with the group is completely voluntary.

• *Pause for a few moments of silent reflection after reading the questions. Then ask students if they want to share. Sharing your personal response may also be helpful to the students.*

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| **QUESTION**How did this Bible story about Jesus challenge you to live holy because your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? |

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| **QUESTION**Is there something specific in your life right now that Jesus wants to drive out because it’s displeasing to Him? (*Caution students not to overshare.*) |

**Activate**

The Holy Spirit may be revealing things that you have allowed into your life that should not be there. Why don’t we take a few minutes to pray on our own? Ask God to show you what things you may have a blind spot to and don’t realize are displeasing to Him.

As those parts of your life come to your mind, write them down on paper or in your phone. Then spend some of your daily prayer time asking Jesus to help you remove them from your life. Most importantly, don’t walk through this alone. Share your struggles with someone you trust and have them pray with you and ask how you are doing from time to time.

**Conclusion**

The story of Jesus clearing out the temple is a great example of how we need to be in constant check of our own life. It is far too easy to allow unholy things back into our life. We need to keep a close eye on our heart so we don’t allow the sin we got rid of to return. We must do as Jesus did in the temple and radically remove unholy things from our life. We are called to passionately stand against sin. This will be an ongoing battle, but the more time we spend with Jesus, the more we will become like Him.

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| **Salvation Opportunity***Include this if you think there may be some in the group who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus.*Perhaps you read this story today and realized that your life is filled with things it shouldn’t be. Maybe you’ve never asked Jesus to come into your life and help you clean things up. The first step is to invite Him into your heart. He is ready to forgive you regardless of whatever mess you’re in.**Is anyone here that we can pray for who doesn’t have a relationship with Jesus or wants to renew their relationship with Him?***Take a moment to acknowledge those who respond, and thank them for their desire to make things right between themselves and God. Pray with them as you close in prayer or after the group time is over. Following group time, talk more about where they are in their walk with God and how you might be able to help.* |

**Prayer**

Dear Heavenly Father, even though we may feel pressure from others to do things we know are wrong, thank You that we do not have to walk through this life alone. We pray that You would help us remove all the unholy things in our life that are displeasing. We want our life to be an incredible reflection of You. We want others to see You and not the things of the world. We pray that the Holy Spirit would help us to see what needs to be removed, so we can live holy. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

**Dismissal**

If you haven’t done so, you really need to check out the Bible Engagement Project app! I want to challenge everyone to read through the devotions this week and allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you through the Bible.