

LIVING VICTORIOUSLY

Lesson 1 Crushing the Enemy's Head

Lesson 2 Listening to God's Voice

Lesson 3 Growing Deeper

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Lesson 1

CRUSHING THE ENEMY'S HEAD

“I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy, nothing will harm you” (Luke 10:19)

WELCOME

Ask your members how their week/day has been.

WORSHIP

Do a *Thanksgiving Chain*. Starting from the leader followed by the next person, each one is to mention something they are thankful for just. Do it for three rounds or more as you see fit.

WORD

HOOK: Have you ever experienced being hindered to go to church or to other spiritual activities (e.g. reading the Bible, attending a small group meeting)? What happened?

BOOK: Genesis 3:8-15

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and

they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

¹⁰ He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” ¹¹ And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” ¹² The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” ¹⁴ So the LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this,
“Cursed are you above all livestock
and all wild animals!

You will crawl on your belly
and you will eat dust
all the days of your life.

¹⁵ And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel.”

Today, we will look at a familiar story in the Bible found in Genesis 3. It tells us about the fall of humanity. After committing an act of disobedience, Adam and Eve hid from God. Sin entered the world and humanity’s relationship with

God got broken. But if we look closer, this chapter also tells us about the defeat of the enemy!

*“And I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel”
(Genesis 3:15).*

God’s curse on the serpent is a declaration of his impending doom! We all know that to kill a snake, all you have to do is crush its head. The enemy is only allowed to strike our heel but God gave us authority to crush its head! Jesus affirms this:

“I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you” (Luke 10:19)

But you might ask: If this is true, how come I feel so defeated? How come I still fall in temptations? Why do I feel so weak? This is because being hit in the heel results in loss of balance and potential stumbling. Most times, the fall is very hard. And the devil is cunning. He is wise and he knows what he’s doing.

1. The Devil’s Game Plan: Lies and Deceptions

“He was a murderer from the beginning, and stayed not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44).

The enemy uses lies and deception to sway us and to keep us from the Truth. What are the lies and deceptions that the enemy causes you to believe in?

- About God? “Did God really say?”
Did God really say that I am forgiven? Loved?
- About yourself? “Who told you that you are naked?”
I am not good enough. I don’t belong here.
- About others?
He’s hopeless. They won’t listen. It’s useless to talk to them.
They won’t like me.

The problem is that even though we already know that they are all lies, we still listen to them. Worse, part of our usual response is to blame others for our own failures.

2. Our Response: The Blame Game

The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.” Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate” (Genesis 3: 12-13)

The endless game of pointing finger has its beginning in Genesis 3! We blame others, the situation, an event, and even God. It is very hard for us humans to admit our mistakes and failures. We love playing the role of the victim, pampering our weaknesses and sins and demanding that everyone should understand us if they really love us. We have to change this

kind of attitude and mindset. It's time to end the blame game and address the problem head on!

Jesus has given us authority to crush the enemy's head. And by authority, he means that we must exercise it. It is our choice whether to give in or resist the enemy.

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age" (Titus 2:11-12).

"No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).



The enemy might have wounded Jesus' heel, but He has crushed Satan's head when He died on the Cross. And if we are in Christ, we are sharing this victory with Him. Jesus doesn't want us to live defeated lives. We will overcome because we have a victorious God!

LOOK: What do you think are the lies and deceptions that you have been listening to until now?
Do you also tend to look for someone to blame whenever faced with trouble?

TOOK: What specific actions are you going to do to resist the enemy and break its influence over you?

WORKS

We are all sinners. We all have weaknesses and are not immune to temptations. Take this moment to be vulnerable in front of one another. Share your struggles with temptations, then pray for each other. Encourage one another as well.

Lesson 2

LISTENING TO GOD'S VOICE

*“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me”
(John 10:27)*

WELCOME

Ask your members how their week/day has been.

WORSHIP

Let each member finish the following sentence: “I praise God because _____.” After everyone has shared, ask someone from the group to lead a prayer.

WORD

HOOK: If a friend calls you using an unknown number, will you be able to recognize him/her instantly? What do you usually do when you receive a call from an unknown number?

BOOK: 1 Kings 19:1-15

Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ² So Jezebel

sent a messenger to Elijah to say, “May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them.”

³ Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, ⁴ while he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. “I have had enough, LORD,” he said. “Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.” ⁵ Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.

All at once an angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat.” ⁶ He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

⁷ The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, “Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.” ⁸ So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. ⁹ There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the LORD came to him: “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

¹⁰ He replied, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”

¹¹ The LORD said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.”

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake.¹² After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.¹³ When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

¹⁴ He replied, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”¹⁵ The LORD said to him, “Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram.

Elijah fled to Horeb because of the death threat of Queen Jezebel. He feared for his life and decided to quit and just hide. He even said, “I have had enough, Lord. Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.” Elijah was depressed. But God didn’t leave him that way. God came and spoke to him. Let us look at some lessons about hearing God’s voice based on this story.

1. Hearing God’s Voice During Trials

And the word of the Lord came to him: “What are you doing here, Elijah?”¹⁰ He replied, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too” (1 Kings 19:9-10).

God speaks even in the midst of trials. He comes to us and comforts us in his own way. When we think God is being silent, perhaps we just have to try to listen better. Sometimes, it might be that we are so occupied with the “noises” around us, making God’s voice difficult to hear. It may be that we are so overwhelmed by our problem that we fail to notice God at work. It may also be we are too busy making list of our rants and bitterness. Or maybe we are entertaining Satan’s lies, causing causes us to doubt God’s presence. Elijah, however, heard the voice of God.

2. Can’t Be Heard in Loudness

The Lord said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.” Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire (1 Kings 19:11-12).

Oftentimes, we imagine God's voice to sound like a mighty thunder or a rushing wind. We expect him to talk to us through a burning bush like with Moses, or expect a blinding light to descend from heaven like with Paul. But God talks to us uniquely. In fact, God doesn't always speak to us using supernatural signs and wonders. We cannot expect angels blowing their trumpets on the background when God speaks.

3. God's Voice as a Soft Whisper

After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. ¹³When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" (1 Kings 19:12-13).

Whispering is a sign of intimacy. Elijah heard God not through powerful manifestations but through a soft whisper. And he heard it clearly! God whispering only proves that God is near! Intimacy is the key. We should prioritize our relationship with him if we really want to hear his voice clearly.

How do we hear him more clearly?

- Have a Seeking Heart
- Learn to be a good listener
- Be patient
- Read His Word
- Obey!

“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion” (Hebrews 3:15)

- LOOK:** What are the “noises” that have been distracting you from listening to God?
Recall a moment when God spoke to you so clearly. What was it about?
- TOOK:** What specific actions are you going to do to hear Him more clearly?

WORKS

Take note of your members’ answers from section TOOK. Follow up on them throughout the week and encourage them in the process. Close the group in prayer.

(This lesson is based from Rev. Jordan Escusa’s sermon on 8 July 2018.)

Lesson 3

GROWING DEEPER

“We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil”
(Hebrews 5:12-14)

WELCOME

Assess your members’ Bible knowledge by asking any of the following questions:

1. How many books are in the New Testament? (Ans. 27)
2. In what city was Jesus born? (Ans. Bethlehem)
3. How many people did Jesus feed with five loaves of bread and two fish? (Ans. 5,000 men)
4. After Jesus fed 5,000+ people with two fish and five loaves of bread, how many baskets were left over? (Ans. 12)
5. In the Gospel According to John, which of the apostles doubted Jesus’ resurrection and said he’d believe only if he sees Jesus with his own eyes? (Ans. Thomas)

6. To what city was Saul traveling when he encountered a great and blinding light? (Ans. Damascus)
7. Who was the high priest of Jerusalem who put Jesus on trial? (Ans. Caiaphas)
8. What is the unique literary genre Jesus employs to preach his message? (Ans. The Parable)
9. Which Gospel is most concerned with the mystery and identity of the person of Jesus? (Ans. John)
10. Which Gospel is written by a doctor? (Ans. Luke)

WORSHIP

God deserves to be praised every moment of our lives. Ask the group what was the highlight of their week and how did they see or experienced God through this event. Lead the group in prayer.

WORD

HOOK: What do you think are the qualities of a mature person?

BOOK: Read Hebrews 5:12-14

“We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone

who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.”

The world has a set of standards and expectations based on our age. Teenagers are tagged as young, wild and free, and not much was expected from them. People in their twenties are expected to finish college and find a good job. Marriage and starting a family are expected from people in their thirties. The list can go on.

But maturity does not always go with biological age. There are young adults who still don't have a sense of responsibility, while there are teenagers who already work part-time to go to college. In the same way, in our spiritual walk, maturity can't be measured by how long one has been at church. Today, we will be encouraged to pursue spiritual maturity by growing deeper in the faith.

1. Leaving Infancy Behind

.... you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness (v.12-13)

“Therefore, let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity” (Hebrews 6:1)

“When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me” (1 Corinthians 13:11)

When we were new to the faith, like newborn babies, we needed other people’s help to feed us spiritually. We wanted to feel welcome and we longed for people’s attention and assurance that we belong. But as we mature in the faith, we should soon learn to feed ourselves and feed others as well. We seek more to serve than to be served. We should start to see the church as a family and not as a social club.

It is an embarrassing truth that there can be persons who have been at church for a long time but remain children in their understanding and commitment. This is called childishness, which is different from childlikeness. All believers should seek to pass the state of infancy. A helpful step to maturity is to have the desire to leave spiritual infancy.

2. Moving Forward Towards Maturity

But solid food is for the mature... (v.14)

The next step is to move forward. Crave for solid food! Dig deeper in the Word of God. Work harder on our spiritual disciplines. Pay more attention to the needs of the church. Let go of immature ways. Be quick to forgive offenses.

It’s time to be part of the solution! We learn to endure, that’s what maturity is about. We should not try to escape troubles;

instead, we should face and solve them. The deeper mysteries of religion belong to those who are of a higher class in the school of Christ, who have learned the first principles and improved through them.

3. Having Discernment of Good and Evil

... who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil (Hebrews 5:14)

“His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness” (2 Peter 1:3)

The key to living an uncompromising life lies in one's ability to exercise discernment in every area of our lives. Discernment refers to the gift of spiritual direction and understanding. It is the grace-enabled wisdom to decide between truth and error, right and wrong.

Unfortunately, many Christians lack discernment. They exhibit little ability to measure the things they hear, even if these contradict the Word of God. They unwittingly engage in all kinds of unbiblical decision-making and behavior. In short, they are not armed to take a firm stand against unbiblical thinking and attitudes they face in the world.

For all of us, we need to stop being a baby. It is time to be more mature. It is time to be a better discerner. As Paul wrote, *“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the*

cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming”
(Ephesians 4:14).

LOOK: What immaturities are you still guilty of until now?
What is God telling you from today’s message?

TOOK: What specific actions are you going to do to be
more mature?

WORKS

Take note of your members’ answers from **TOOK**. Follow up on them throughout the week and encourage them in the process. Close the group in prayer.

(This lesson is based from Rev. Jordan Escusa’s sermon on 15 July 2018.)