



Livin' The Big Easy
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Preview

This lesson is leading us through a short study of I John 5:3.

Praise

Have everyone stand, then go through this list of statements. The last one standing wins. Create your own list that would be fun for your group.

Sit down if ...

You've eaten chocolate today

You're wearing purple

You were born in September

You have blue eyes

You're the youngest child

You have broken a bone

You can speak more than two languages

You've gone a week without a shower

Parable

Sing "Your Grace Is Enough" as a group.

Present

I want to begin today by asking you quite an uncomfortable question. Get ready. Buckle your mental seatbelt. Dig deep inside of your heart and ask yourself this: What is the darkest, most sinful, most ugly temptation that you deal with on a daily basis? You know, the thing that you won't tell anybody because it's *SO* bad. Now keep that in mind as we talk today.

Recently I wanted to do some research on a topic about young adults and the things we struggle with the most. Then I saw a question on Twitter: "If you could only name one, what do you think is the main issue facing teenagers today?" I expected to see just a few responses but



was very surprised when I saw over 100 people had responded to the question! Obviously people had much to say about this subject. Here are some notable responses:

@michaelensey – Having the emotional maturity and spiritual discernment to make proper use of technology and navigate the options it provides.

@ChrisLCrawford – Living up (or down) to what Hollywood says is beautiful/cool.

@jarronpaul – Low self esteem. It breeds insecurity which gives in to peer pressure which leads to sex, drugs, cutting, etc.

@justinreinking – Identity crisis. Who am I? Personality. Why am I here? Purpose. What do I believe? Passion.

I was blown away by the quantity of answers I saw, but also the quality of the answers. These are all such great points! Students (and even adults) today struggle with image, sex, identity, peer pressure, social pressure, and so on. Our culture is continually and aggressively putting ideas in young people's lives and forcing us to make decisions. The question I took away from all of this was, "How in the world do we address EVERY issue that EVERY person deals with?" This task is one that honestly overwhelmed me until something caught my eye in this scripture:

"Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3, NLT).

We all know and love that scripture. We love to grab on to the first half of that sentence and make it a stand-alone statement. But what about the second half of this scripture? "And His commandments are not burdensome."

I had to go back and let it soak in for a minute. Think about this. Yes, we **all** struggle with all of those things that so many people posted about this issue. But what if we are making this harder than it really is? We as Christians spend so much time worrying about following the commandments of God. Making sure that we do everything just right. Dot all the "i's." Cross all the "t's." But as Paul explained, we still fight this desire constantly to do the things that we know we shouldn't (and don't want to) do.

1 John 5:3 says if we truly love God we **will** keep His commandments. Not only that, but it will be **EASY!** It won't even be a burden! What if instead of focusing on the struggles and problems that we face every day, we focus on making our love for God deeper? What if instead of teaching against so many individual ideals and concepts, we just lead people to being completely IN LOVE with Jesus? Ultimately our love for God should be so thick and full that other stuff won't even be appealing. The issues are not the issue!



That's what "Livin' the Big Easy" is all about! Not that we won't have struggles or temptations; it's that our love for God needs to be bigger than any of those. Today don't dwell on the fight. Focus on growing your love for Jesus deeper and deeper. Take steps, even if they are small, toward loving Him with your whole heart. That's truly living the "Big Easy"!

Pactice

What are some adjustments we can make in our mindset that pertain to this?

Pray

God, I want to thank You for the opportunity You have given us today to gather and talk about Your Word and how it applies in our lives. Although we are fighting everyday to keep Your commandments, help us to focus on our love for You more than anything. Jesus, we would go to the ends of the earth to serve You, for You are the only true God. And it's in Your name we pray. In Jesus' name ... amen.

Plus

The next time you feel that burden of temptation, just think about how good God has been to you. As cheesy as it may sound, start thinking and even vocalizing your love for God. Remember, resist the devil and he will flee.