

THE.....  
**CLEANSE**  
RID YOUR LIFE OF IDOLS  
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**Overview:**

In this series, we'll talk about the struggle we all have with fighting against idols in our lives.

**Lessons:**

1. Purging the Idols in a Woman's Heart
2. The Idol of Acceptance
3. The Idol of Fear
4. The Idol of Envy
5. The Idol of Bitterness
6. The Gift of Grace



# PURGING THE IDOLS IN A WOMAN'S HEART

*Find discipleship resources at [pursueGOD.org/Cleanse](http://pursueGOD.org/Cleanse)*

## TALKING POINTS

*In this lesson we'll look at the Old Testament book of Jeremiah to see how the ancient people of Israel struggled with idols in their day.*

- There was a time when Israel \_\_\_\_\_ God for his provision and marveled at his miracles. The relationship between God and his people was \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ – like that of a young married couple. **Jeremiah 2:2-3**
- An idol is the \_\_\_\_\_ of something or someone revered above all else. In other words, an idol is anything in our lives that we \_\_\_\_\_ more than God. **Jeremiah 2:7-11**
- Our idols are like broken pots or wells that can't hold \_\_\_\_\_. We can keep trying to collect water in them but the water will continue to seep out. Only \_\_\_\_\_ can provide the refreshing drink we need. **Jeremiah 2:12-13**

## DISCUSSION

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1. *What are some idols our culture encourages us to worship? How are those things reinforced or promoted in our society?*
2. *Read Jeremiah 2:1-3. Share a time you were on a spiritual high with God. What did you learn about God during that time? Why is it hard to sustain that level of intimacy all the time?*
3. *Read Jeremiah 2:4-7. Share a time God provided for you. Why do we so easily forget to give God credit for all he's done in the past when we're facing hard times now?*
4. *Read Jeremiah 2:13. Why is it so common to want to replace God with something else? What are some of the "broken cisterns" you've put your hope in instead of God?*



# THE IDOL OF ACCEPTANCE

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## TALKING POINTS

*The modern day idol of acceptance tricks us into thinking that approval from the world is more important than what God has to say about us.*

- Being a prophet in Jeremiah's day meant you had to stand up to (and against) the \_\_\_\_\_, expose rampant \_\_\_\_\_, and warn about coming \_\_\_\_\_. Prophets were often \_\_\_\_\_ and Jeremiah was no exception. **Jeremiah 1:6**
- It's natural to want others to \_\_\_\_\_. us. But chasing the approval of others often leads to bad choices and moral \_\_\_\_\_. The more we try to impress others, the less we worry about impressing \_\_\_\_\_. **2 Kings 17:15, Romans 12:1-2**
- We're never \_\_\_\_\_ in our journey with God. If others can't understand or accept us for who we are as \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus, we know God still does. **John 6:37**

## DISCUSSION

1. *What are some common ways that you see people trying to gain approval from those around them? Give some specific examples.*
2. *Was there ever a time when you didn't feel accepted by someone close to you? How did it make you feel? Did you do something to try to earn their acceptance? Did it work?*
3. *Jeremiah was afraid to become God's mouthpiece for fear of what others might think. When have you spoken up for God even when it wasn't popular? Have you missed opportunities to speak for God because of fear?*
4. *Read John 6:37. What does this verse say about Jesus and you? How should we respond?*
5. *Tell about a time when your desire to be accepted caused you to compromise or make a poor choice. How do you think the truth of God's acceptance can help you to act differently in the future?*
6. *Read Romans 12:2. What are "patterns of this world"? What would it look like to "transform our minds" especially in regards to the idol of acceptance?*
7. *Luke 12:1-2 and other passages talk about fearing man vs. fearing God. What does it mean to "fear man" and what does it mean to "fear God"? Why should we fear the Lord, but not fear man? (Learn about how God is a jealous God)*
8. *What is a decision you are facing (new car, dating someone, having another child, school options, work decisions, time management, etc.) How can you use this topic to help you follow God with that decision instead of worrying about what anyone else might think?*



# THE IDOL OF FEAR

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## TALKING POINTS

*The modern day idol of fear sidetracks us from trusting in God's plan because we elevate our own perspective over God's perspective.*

- Our \_\_\_\_\_ response puts us at the center of the situation relying on our own \_\_\_\_\_ to deal with it rather than \_\_\_\_\_ God. **Proverbs 3:5-6**
- God doesn't use \_\_\_\_\_ to motivate us or to steer us. Fear is a tool of the \_\_\_\_\_ who is always trying to \_\_\_\_\_ us from our \_\_\_\_\_ of God. God operates out of love. **1 John 4:16-18**
- We need to actively \_\_\_\_\_ against fear in our lives and replace it with \_\_\_\_\_ that feeds our trust in God and his plan. **Philippians 4:6-7**

## DISCUSSION

1. Describe a time when the fight or flight response helped you get out of a tough situation.
2. Make a list of some of your biggest fears. Why did those make the list? What is at the root of each of those fears?
3. How has fear been an idol in your life? Why is it more natural for us to rely on ourselves?
4. Read 1 John 4:16-18. Identify every key description about love and fear in this passage. Why is love the opposite of fear?
5. What does it mean to you that there is no fear in God's love? How can that truth change the way you look at hard situations in your life?
6. Read Proverbs 3:5-6. What are the potential consequences of trusting our own perspective over God's?
7. How do you think doing the cleanse be helpful to you as you battle fear?
8. Read Matthew 6:25-31. What are these verses saying about worry? Why can we be confident that God will take care of our lives?
9. Read Philippians 4:6-7. What should we pray for when we're battling the fear idol? Why is being thankful part of the equation?



# THE IDOL OF ENVY

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## TALKING POINTS

*The modern day idol of envy tricks us into thinking that what others have is better than what God has given us.*

- When we long for a \_\_\_\_\_ life we are saying that what God has given us, or the life that we have, is not good enough. When we doubt the \_\_\_\_\_ of God and His control over our lives we only need to look at the \_\_\_\_\_. **Romans 8:32**
- If we do not have something it is because God who is \_\_\_\_\_ and knows all has decided that it is not best for us at that time. If we become \_\_\_\_\_ of what another has, we can not really \_\_\_\_\_ them. **Romans 12:15**
- Envy blinds us from recognizing our \_\_\_\_\_ and leads to a life of \_\_\_\_\_. We need to desire the things of God rather than the things of this \_\_\_\_\_. **Proverbs 14:30, Colossians 3:1-2**

## DISCUSSION

1. *How does our world today keep us always wanting more?*
2. *Discuss how envy has affected your life and relationships.*
3. *Read Ecclesiastes 2:10-11. The book of Ecclesiastes was written by Solomon, probably the richest man who ever lived. What does Solomon observe about life?*
4. *Read Isaiah 55:1-3. According to this passage, what does God want us to do?*
5. *Can you think of times in your life when you have been so focused on what you did not have that it prevented you from enjoying what you do have?*
6. *How is envy a denial of the goodness of God?*
7. *Read Romans 8:32. What are your thoughts about God when you read this verse? How can this verse impact your struggle with envy?*
8. *Melissa Kruger wrote The Envy of Eve. In it she states, "Our belief that all our days are ordained by His loving and providential plan is a powerful weapon in our battle with discontentment and coveting( envy)." What do you think she meant by this? How can you use this insight as a weapon in your life?*
9. *Read Matthew 22:36-40 How does envy lead us to break both the command to love God and to love our neighbor?*
10. *Can you think of a time when not getting what you longed for at a particular time was actually better for you later?*
11. *Read Colossians 3:1-2. What are some specific ways you can set your heart on things above rather than on earthly things?*



**NOTES**



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# THE IDOL OF BITTERNESS

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## TALKING POINTS

*The modern-day idol of bitterness tricks us into thinking that holding onto our anger is better than freeing ourselves through the gift of forgiveness.*

- Bitterness is prolonged \_\_\_\_\_ toward a person who has wronged us. And, if not dealt with, it will breed \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in our hearts.

- Bitterness is like \_\_\_\_\_ in a garden. If we don't pull it from its \_\_\_\_\_ it will choke out the \_\_\_\_\_ stuff.

**Ephesians 4:31, Hebrews 12:15**

- The only way to truly uproot bitterness from our lives is through \_\_\_\_\_. God didn't choose bitterness over forgiveness. Jesus came to \_\_\_\_\_ for us while we were still \_\_\_\_\_. **Romans 5:6-8**

## DISCUSSION

1. Put yourself somewhere on the personality spectrum: At one end, the person who forgets nothing. The other end, the person who lets everything roll off their back. How has your personality helped you when you've been hurt or offended? How has your personality hindered you when you've been hurt or offended?
2. Define bitterness in your own words. Why is bitterness such a common struggle?
3. How have you seen bitterness destroy a person's life and relationships?
4. Have you ever sought the "high" of bitterness? Explain why you wanted that or how you thought that would help you?
5. Read Hebrews 12:15. How do we allow bitterness to take root in our hearts? How does it corrupt us and our relationships?
6. Why is forgiveness a powerful antidote to bitterness? Have you seen forgiveness heal relationships in your life? Explain.
7. Read Romans 5:6-11. At what point did Christ die for us? Why is this distinction important to our understanding of forgiveness?
8. How does understanding God's gift of forgiveness change the way you view the people who have hurt you? What steps might you need to take with those people?
9. Read Colossians 3:12-13. Identify all the qualities we should "put on" as followers of Jesus. Which of those qualities are hardest for you? Explain.



# THE GIFT OF GRACE

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## TALKING POINTS

*God's grace can cover over any of our failings. He is willing to forgive us and restore us.*

- God knows what we are like and still desires to have us in his \_\_\_\_\_ and he offers us the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ that we need. **Psalm 103:8, Jeremiah 3:12-15**
- We need to acknowledge our \_\_\_\_\_ and confess our \_\_\_\_\_ but we also must remember that He is our \_\_\_\_\_. We must \_\_\_\_\_ to His lordship in our lives. **1 John 1:5-10**
- We can be \_\_\_\_\_ by his Word, \_\_\_\_\_ by his people and \_\_\_\_\_ by the Holy Spirit to live freely for him. **Jeremiah 31:33-34**

## DISCUSSION

1. Read Jeremiah 3:12-15 List the words in this passage that describe the character of God. Then list the descriptions of people.
2. What does God say he will do for people in this same passage?
3. What kind of emotions do you experience when you think that God wants you to “come home” to Him.
4. Read I John 1:5-10 Do you find it difficult to admit when you have sinned? What does this section of scripture teach us?
5. How do you respond when confronted with your own weaknesses and sin? What keeps you from returning to the Lord?
6. Read II Corinthians 5:14-21 and answer the questions 6-8.
7. How should our lives be different because we have experienced the love of God?
8. What comfort do you see in verse 17? How do you think this can be seen in your daily life?
9. What do you think it means to be an ambassador for Christ?
10. Comment on the RC Sproul quote “The more we understand how kind God has been to us and the more we are overcome by His mercy, the more we are inclined to love Him and to serve Him”. Have you seen this to be true in your life?
11. Do you find yourself spending as much time in prayer asking God for things as you do thanking him for his grace and forgiveness? Are there changes that you feel need to be made in this area of your life? Explain.

**NOTES**



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