

Leader's Guide

Part 2: Lesson Seven – Taking Care of the Temple

Materials Needed

- Cheap, handheld mirrors, 2 per student (Can purchase at a dollar store)
- Clear contact paper cut out in the shape of the mirror (Not the handle or frame)
- A baggie or placemat to put under the hammer to catch any glass shards
- Dry Erase Marker, 1 per student
- Hammer

The Main Point

“Because my body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, I am responsible for being a good steward of it by taking care of it to the glory of God.” [Scripture ref. 1 Cor. 6:19 and Rom. 12:1]

A Word of Encouragement as You Lead

I want to share an encouraging word with you that I received from one of our group leaders who has been helping to pilot the Bible study with a group of girls. As you read it, please remember to pray for each of your girls and for God to expose any secret sins as well the hidden motives of their hearts. (See 1 Chronicles 28:9 and Jeremiah 17:10)

*“I honestly thought that none of the girls in my group could possibly struggle with self-injury. To my surprise 3 out of the 4 of them confessed to having committed self-injury! It was an eye-opening group this week. One girl said she did it just once or twice and didn't do it again. One girl said she stopped because it was becoming harder to hide it and her parents still don't know that she was cutting. The other day she felt herself getting angry and began to dig her nails into her arm, but she caught herself and stopped. We went through Day 4 and walked through **why** each of them had been self-injuring. One said that her reason was anger. Another cut when she wasn't in control. The girl who did it once or twice was punishing herself for her sins. They all understood that it was a selfish act and says that they sinfully believe Jesus' sacrifice for them wasn't good enough. This lesson especially spoke to the girl who was cutting to punish herself.”*

While most people would be comforted that most of the girls said they had stopped self-injuring, if we do not help our students get to the “heart” (the root cause) of their sin, they will either return to it *“like a dog returns to its vomit”* (See Proverbs 26:11) or seek out a new method to express their sin (i.e. sex, relationships, alcohol/drugs, or some other destructive behavior). As your students have been studying God's Word, they have learned that *sin starts in the heart*. Please pray for each of your students, asking for the Holy Spirit's help as you disciple them. Have great HOPE that God's Word can radically change their hearts and minds as they read it.

We have listed some recommended resources for your students who struggle with an eating disorder or self-injury:

Love to Eat, Hate to Eat by Elyse Fitzpatrick (with many practical helps in the appendix)

Eating Disorders: The Quest for Thinness by Edward T. Welch

Self-injury: When Pain Feels Good by Edward T. Welch

Cutting: Bleeding the Pain Away by Amy Baker

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If your student needs a more radical approach to getting help, requiring a residential treatment center, we want to recommend Vision of Hope in Lafayette, Indiana. They offer hope and help to young women who are struggling with drug and alcohol abuse, eating disorders, self-harm and facing unplanned pregnancies. Contact Vision of Hope by phone at (765) 447-5900, by email at voh@vohlafayette.org, or visit their website at <http://www.faithlafayette.org/voh>.

Open with Prayer

Group Activity

[**Leader's Note:** Prior to your meeting, use a permanent marker to write "Image of Christ" on the first set of mirrors that you will give your students. Then, in order to keep any glass shards from scattering and possibly causing a cut, place a sheet of clear contact paper over the mirror. **To begin this activity**, give each student *one* of the hand-held mirrors and a dry erase marker. Have each student write two things they wish they could change about themselves on the mirror. (*For example:* body features such as eyes, nose, hair, or skin; weight or clothes). Next, have each student write two situations they wish they could change. (*For example:* to be popular, to be on the team at school, to have a boyfriend, to stop being angry, to stop being scared, to stop...)]

Say: Did you notice that if you look in the mirror, it actually says "*Image of Christ*" underneath what you wrote about yourself? *His image* is what Christians are *supposed* to clearly reflect with their lives. Instead, you have covered it up with the things you don't like about your *own* image.

Say: This week you learned about taking care of God's temple, your body. You also learned how misusing, abusing, or refusing food as well as self-injury is destructive to your body. Many times, a young woman will abuse her body in order to change her image, just like the changes you wrote on your mirrors. Instead of achieving the desired change to make her "feel" better about herself, the abuse of her body ends up **destroying** it.

Say: So, I want you to take the hammer and break your mirror because *this is what it is like when you abuse your body to change your image*. As a Christian, when you refuse to take care of your body, then the image of Christ that you present to the world looks "broken".

Say: God wants you to love Him with all of your strength by taking care of your body so that you can represent the beautiful image of "***Christ in you, the Hope of Glory***".

[Give each girl a new mirror.]

Say: If you have been abusing your body in any way and you are a Christian, have hope that the Holy Spirit is always at work in your heart to convict you of your sin so that you will confess it and repent of it. God then *renews your heart* so you can clearly reflect Jesus, just like this ***new*** mirror I am giving you. [Read 1 John 1:9 together.]

Say: Now, I want you to write on the mirror a few ways in which you can begin to *reflect the image of Christ* in your life to others. Take this mirror home and you can either write "Image of Christ" in permanent marker on it or use a dry erase marker to write different ways that you can reflect Christ to others. It will remind you each week to *focus on Jesus* instead of *focusing on*

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your own image. You may want to write out a particular scripture verse on your mirror to memorize each week.

Group Discussion

1. On Day 1, what did you think about your body being compared to a church building? (Take responses)
2. What were your thoughts about how different people in different parts of the world view food? (Allow time for responses)
3. Of the three ways that people can treat food: abusing, misusing, or refusing, which one do you struggle with most often? (Have each student respond)
4. What did you learn from the study this week that can help you in this struggle? (Have each student share)
5. Please share what you put in the box on page 132 to express your thoughts about turning to Jesus to find comfort instead of abusing food. (Allow time for each student to answer)
6. On Day 2, it talks about your body's warning signs regarding eating. God designed your body to signal you when you are either hungry or full. What are some physical warning signs that help you know when you are beginning to abuse, misuse, or refuse food?
(Answers: *To refuse food* = stomach growling, headaches, weak, light-headed, shaky, significant weight loss; *To abuse or misuse food* = bloated, heartburn/acid reflux, significant weight gain, nausea/vomiting, abdominal pain/discomfort)
7. What did you learn about how much to eat according to Proverbs 25:16 on page 133? (Possible answers: only what you need, just enough, what is sufficient, not too much)
8. What did you learn from Luke 10:8 about being picky over the food people serve you? (Answer on page 133: God provided the food people share with me; I should not refuse it)
9. What did you learn about *refusing* food on page 134? (Answer: Food is a blessing and gift from God for to me to enjoy; it sustains my life) [**Leader's Note:** Take time to have your students pray confessing and repenting over abusing, misusing, or refusing food whether their reason is greed, pleasure, comfort, body image, control, or other motive.]
10. According to what you learned, why are eating disorders so dangerous? (Take responses)
11. What did you learn from Day 3 about pleasing God and loving Him with all your strength? (Answers: God's Word shows me that eating in a healthy way and exercising is the best way to take care of my body and to love Him with all my strength)
12. What did you think about videos #17 and #18 that you watched this week on overcoming eating disorders by taking care of your body? (Allow time for them to share)

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Say: Days 4 and 5 focused on what God's Word says about self-injury. If you struggle with this sin, you are *not* alone; many teens struggle with self-injury. Let's spend some time sharing honestly about how this behavior has affected you personally. Whether **you** have struggled with any form of self-injury or **you have a friend** who has struggled, remember that we all need to keep confidentiality in this group. If you want to share about a friend's struggle, please don't say **who** they are or **how you know them**. Share what God is showing **you** about helping them. Don't let this time turn into an opportunity to gossip about your friend's struggle.

13. If either you or your friend have self-injured, what are some of the emotions or thoughts that take place before someone decides to self-injure? What are you trying to "say" by doing this? (Give plenty of time for them to share; as their leader, if **you** can identify with this sin struggle, please share what God has been teaching you about it)
14. What were the 3 main reasons given in the study for why people self-injure? (Answers: see Day 4 pages 136-138; to comfort emotional pain, demonstrate control, and as punishment)
15. Read Deuteronomy 14:1-2. What did you write for #1 on page 137? (Have them answer)
16. Read Hebrews 11:6 together. What did you write for #2 on page 137? (Have them respond)
17. What are the things listed in Isaiah 53:5 that Jesus did to show you He took all of your punishment on Himself? (Share answers for question #1 on page 138)
18. On Day 5, what did you learn from Ecclesiastes 2:10-11 about seeking your own pleasure? (Allow time for responses; see page 139)
19. In regards to taking care of your body, what have you been loving more than loving Christ? Why? (Allow time to share; this may have to do with an eating disorder, not eating healthy, not exercising, or self-injury)
20. According to what you learned in Psalm 51:17 and Romans 12:1, what kind of sacrifices are you supposed to give God? (Answers: broken and contrite (humble) heart; a living sacrifice)
21. What did you think about video #20? Which struggle could you identify with the most? What did you like most about both videos #19 and #20? (Allow time to share)
22. Share your answers on page 140 about how you are going to serve God and serve others this week. (Have each student respond)

Fill Out Prayer Cards and End with Prayer

****Important Leader's Note:** The next lesson covers Sexually Transmitted Diseases. There are four videos to watch at www.healinghearts.org/youth. Find them under the **Part 2 Media** link. Your students will fill out the information on page 149 of their study as they watch the videos. Parents or guardians might want to preview the information so that they can have good dialogue with their children. We suggest you email them to let them know what the content is for this week's lesson. In order for students to abstain from sex until marriage, they must understand what activities classify as "sex". We have given them this information for their protection to refrain from participation in sexual activity before marriage.