

4

HEALTHY MARRIAGE 1

1

Embracing a Spirit of Reconciliation

ASSIGNMENTS

- **MISSION** – Your JG will begin work on the **60-Second Testimony** exercise this week (see pp. 10-15). Over the next 4 weeks each member of your JG will share their **60-Second Testimony**, starting with you, then 3rd year group members and so on. Start recruiting people to share their testimony right away. Try to have only one or two people share per week so that newer people have a chance to observe other examples and hear the coaching that others receive. Some will need an extra opportunity if their testimony is unclear, too long, or doesn't focus on what Christ has done. Help your JG learn to do this well. If you have a small group, there may be time to have JG members share their testimony, receive coaching, revise and present again the following week.

EXERCISES

- Review the memory verse of the week.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – You can discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions. Here are some tips:
 - **MATTHEW 7:1-5** – If there's one verse that non-Bible readers know, it's "*judge not...*" This verse is often used as a defense for a guilty conscience, but that was not Jesus' intent. He does not mean for Christians to be undiscerning. Elsewhere he clearly instructs us to discern Christians from non-Christians by the fruit of their lives. He means for us to be non-judgmental, that is, that Christians should understand their own spiritual bankruptcy, and in humility help others to see the same.
 - **MATTHEW 10:34-39 / LUKE 12:49-53** – Help your JG understand that Jesus knows the gospel will cause conflict, but He does not rejoice in that conflict. It is an unavoidable outcome of confronting the world with the truth that Jesus is Lord. When the Kingdom of Heaven is finally consummated in the future, there will be complete peace.

- **1 CORINTHIANS 10:23-33** – In this passage, Paul answers the question, “Should a Christian eat meat offered to idols?” Even though we don’t buy meat that has been sacrificed to idols in public markets, Paul’s principles of Christian motives and conscience still apply to our cultural situation. Help your JG understand Paul’s teaching that love is to be the Christian’s primary motive, not concern for one’s personal rights. In addition, you can introduce your JG to the concept of the freedom of the Christian conscience. Christians are free in Christ from the need to perform to earn God’s favor. Yet we must form individual convictions about moral and ethical matters that aren’t specifically addressed in God’s word. In these matters, our consciences are bound to Christ and not to any other person. Therefore, whether you do or don’t participate in a particular activity for conscience sake is not as important as having the proper motive for doing so, nor is it as important as maintaining the freedom of conscience that Christ purchased for you.
- **TRUTH** – Try to help your JG understand the important connection between the example and power of the gospel and their need to embrace a spirit of reconciliation.
- **EQUIPPING** – Give your JG members an opportunity to share their prayer for learning to resolve conflict.
- **MISSION** – Introduce the **60-Second Testimony** exercise with a question, “If someone asked you why you were a follower of Jesus and you only had one minute to answer, what would you say?” Allow some discussion, and bring out the importance on being able to give an attractive, concise response. Explain how the **60-Second Testimony** exercise will equip your JG to effectively communicate their spiritual journey. Model the **60-Second Testimony** first before any of your group members. You want to inspire your JG to make it their goal to be able to *effectively share their story of becoming a follower of Jesus*.