



First Baptist Church Selmer

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE • PAY ATTENTION! • LUKE 17:1-4 • 3/5/2023

MAIN POINT

Loving God requires overcoming temptation, lovingly addressing sins committed against us, and forgiving others with a genuine heart.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is the worst advice that you ever received?

Have you ever given someone else poor advice? What was the outcome?

There is an old hymn called, "Oh, Be Careful", which was first published in 1956. Many of you may know the song or have at least heard it before. The first paragraph of the hymn states,

"Oh, be careful little eyes what you see

Oh, be careful little eyes what you see

For the Father up above

Is looking down in love

So, be careful little eyes what you see."

Many of us can relate to this song and the importance of guarding our children against exposure to things in the world, but have you ever put much thought into the importance that we have as adults in paying attention to the things they see us do?

We will look today at a warning that Jesus gives his disciples. Jesus doesn't tell them that they have to live perfect lives but, they better pay attention to how they are living. If we are currently

doing things in our lives that could possibly lead someone else away from Christ, then we better make it right immediately.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ LUKE 17:1-2.

1 "And he said to his disciples, 'Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! 2 It is better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin.'" (ESV)

What is the meaning of Jesus' warning in verses 1-2? What might be an example of this?

**What are some things we may do—even accidentally—that cause other people to sin?
Why do we do those things?**

The Bible teaches that temptations are inevitable, certain, and even necessary (Matthew 18:5-8; Romans 14:13). However, sins that come from those temptations are a matter of choice because we are always given a way to escape them (1 Corinthians 10:13). Jesus warns that the even greater issue arises when the temptation to sin arises from a follower of Christ.

Jesus turned to the strong language of grief and mourning to express His woe upon anyone who is an agent of temptation, who causes someone else to sin. The emphasis in Luke's writings on caring for the underprivileged, the crippled, the blind, the widow, and the poor continues in this passage. It is these "little ones" in life on whom we have influence and who will follow our lead in sinning.

Have you ever been tempted to lead someone else to sin against God?

Why does leading others to sin carry with it a harsher judgment than the sin itself?

Paul addresses the idea of being a stumbling block to others in his second letter to the Corinthian church. Paul speaks about their newfound freedom in Christ but that freedom carries an even greater responsibility. Paul tells the church in 2 Corinthians 8:9, *"But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak."*

What are some "stumbling blocks" that have hindered your faith?

How can you be sure that you aren't laying "stumbling blocks" before others around you?

| ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ LUKE 17:13-4.

3 "Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, 4 and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him." (ESV)

What does Jesus mean when he tells the disciples to "Pay attention to yourselves!"?

We have a tendency to worry more about others than we do ourselves. From the fall of mankind in the garden, blaming or focusing on others' sins comes naturally to us. Jesus specifically addresses this issue as it relates to our struggles with temptation by telling the disciples to "Watch out!" Paul echoes this in 1 Timothy 4:16 when he tells a young man in Timothy to "Pay close attention to yourself and your teaching..."

Why do we need constant reminders to take care of our own selves versus others?

It has been said that the easiest person to deceive in this world is the one that looks at you in a mirror. If we are to live according to the standard that Jesus modeled and taught to His disciples, we must quit seeing others' sinfulness as being greater than our own.

Jesus continues this warning by challenging His disciples about their response to others' sins.

What does it mean to rebuke someone (v. 3)?

How are rebuke and forgiveness linked? What happens if you rebuke someone for his or her sin, but aren't willing to forgive?

Why is forgiveness such a critical characteristic of genuine faith?

Growing in our love for Christ involves more than simply overcoming temptation; it requires confronting our brothers and sisters in Christ who are in sin, while also not neglecting our responsibility to forgive. We may see someone else's sins first but the greater issue at hand is our willingness to forgive those who sin against us. If our brother does repent, then we have an added responsibility. We must forgive just as God forgives, for this is the essence of our prayer

life (Luke 11:4). Love requires that we fight the temptation to keep score and seek to forgive others as God has forgiven us in Christ.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What challenges and obstacles do we often face when we need to rebuke a fellow Christian? How can we overcome them?

Who is the Holy Spirit revealing to you that you need to forgive? Similarly, are you prepared to accept others who come to you this week, forgiving you for your sin against them?

Of all the qualities of a disciple's heart that we discussed today—overcoming temptation, concern for others, forgiveness,—which one do you have the most difficulty with? How might dealing with this affect the other qualities?

PRAYER

God, thank you for never leaving or forsaking us. Thank you for the strength to overcome temptation, the boldness to help others in their personal walks, and the ability to forgive the offenses of others in my life. Help me live my life by following the example you have set for me.

COMMENTARY

| LUKE 17:1-4

17:1-2. Offenses (Gk skandalon; “that which causes sin”) are unavoidable in life. However, divine judgment awaits the person who causes a disciple of Christ (one of these little ones) to sin. A millstone was a large round stone used to grind grain. A large stone around the neck would cause a person thrown into the sea to sink and drown.

The phrase “little ones” refers to little children, but also to persons of immature faith. Jesus warned His disciples against doing anything that would lead others astray or cause them to stumble and fall into sin. A Christian leader who causes others to stray can have a disastrous

impact on those who look to him or her for a Christlike example. Such a leader could cause the “little ones,” or immature believers, to stray from the truth. At all times and in all circumstances, we should strive to live our lives so we exhibit Christ to those around us. We never know when someone is looking to us as an example of our Lord.

17:3-4. The purpose of rebuking a sinner is to get him to repent of his sin. If there is true repentance, there should be full forgiveness. Seven is the biblical number of completeness. To forgive “seven times” means to keep forgiving, no matter what (see Matt. 18:21-22).