



Learning Christ

Putting off the Old, Putting on the New

Putting Away Falsehood

by Sally Michael

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Putting Away Falsehood*

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Our vision at Truth78 is that the next generations know, honor, and treasure God, setting their hope in Christ alone, so that they will live as faithful disciples for the glory of God.

Our mission is to nurture the faith of the next generations by equipping the church and home with resources and training that instruct the mind, engage the heart, and influence the will through proclaiming the whole counsel of God.

We equip churches and parents by producing curriculum for Sunday School, Midweek Bible, Intergenerational, Youth, and Backyard Bible Club settings; vision-casting and training resources (many available free on our website) for both the church and the home; materials and training to help parents in their role in discipling children; and the Fighter Verses Bible memory program to encourage the lifelong practice and love of Bible memory.

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Preface

“The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”

(Luke 6:45)

... “What comes out of a person is what defiles him.²¹ For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery,²² coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness.”

(Mark 7:20-22)

It can be a despairing thought to realize that our actions are actually an overflow of what is in the heart—the heart that the Bible describes as “deceitful above all things and desperately sick.”¹ It is when we realize that we are helpless to change that heart, that despair sets upon us. How can we ever overflow in righteousness? How can the words of our mouths be gracious, the actions of our lives be kind and generous, the thoughts of our minds be pure?

But Paul’s instructions in Ephesians give hope to us, to the children in our homes, and to the children we teach and counsel. We need no longer walk as the Gentiles, in the futility of our minds, with darkened understanding, alienated from the life of God due to a hard heart!² We and the children in our care can “learn Christ”!

Children can “hear” about Him and be “taught” the truth that is in Jesus.³ We can lead them to put their confidence in Christ, trusting Him for the forgiveness of their sins and the fulfillment of all His promises to them—including the promise to change their hearts and to be their strength in weakness. As we work out our “own salvation

1 Jeremiah 17:9

2 Ephesians 4:17-18

3 Ephesians 4:21

with fear and trembling,”⁴ we can model and instruct them in putting off the “old self” and putting on the “new self.”⁵ We can help them “be renewed in the spirit of [their] minds”⁶ as we train them in righteousness, encourage them to trust in the power of God, deny the temptations of the enemy, and practice walking in the truth.

Whether you are a parent, a lay counselor, a grandparent, or any Christian adult, may the instructions and activities in this booklet help you lead the next generation in walking “after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness”⁷ as an expression of a transformed heart and the desire to obey and please Christ.

4 Philippians 2:12b

5 Ephesians 4:22-24

6 Ephesians 4:23

7 Ephesians 4:24

SESSION 1

Deception

Prayer

(Before the session, pray for God's help to open blind eyes and soften hard hearts. Pray for wisdom and sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit. During the session, pray with the child at the beginning and the end.)

Discovery

Biblical Illustration

- After the Israelites crossed the Jordan River under the leadership of Joshua, they fought the battle of Jericho. God caused the walls around Jericho to fall down and gave Israel victory over their enemies.
- Then Israel defeated the people of the city of Ai, which made all the kings in the nearby Canaanite cities nervous. So these kings banded together to fight against Joshua and Israel.
- The Gibeonites, however, had a different plan.

(Read with the child Joshua 9:3-15, and then discuss the following questions.¹⁴)

But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai, ⁴they on their part acted with cunning and went and made ready provisions and took worn-out

¹⁴ The Scripture portions are printed in the guide for the parent or counselor to refer to when preparing for the session. However, it is strongly suggested that the adult and child read the story directly from the Bible itself, encouraging the child to bring his own Bible with him each time.

sacks for their donkeys, and wineskins, worn-out and torn and mended,⁵ with worn-out, patched sandals on their feet, and worn-out clothes. And all their provisions were dry and crumbly.⁶ And they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a distant country, so now make a covenant with us."⁷ But the men of Israel said to the Hivites, "Perhaps you live among us; then how can we make a covenant with you?"⁸ They said to Joshua, "We are your servants." And Joshua said to them, "Who are you? And where do you come from?"⁹ They said to him, "From a very distant country your servants have come, because of the name of the LORD your God. For we have heard a report of him, and all that he did in Egypt,¹⁰ and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon the king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, who lived in Ashtaroth."¹¹ So our elders and all the inhabitants of our country said to us, "Take provisions in your hand for the journey and go to meet them and say to them, "We are your servants. Come now, make a covenant with us."¹² Here is our bread. It was still warm when we took it from our houses as our food for the journey on the day we set out to come to you, but now, behold, it is dry and crumbly.¹³ These wineskins were new when we filled them, and behold, they have burst. And these garments and sandals of ours are worn out from the very long journey."¹⁴ So the men took some of their provisions, but did not ask counsel from the LORD.¹⁵ And Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live, and the leaders of the congregation swore to them. (Joshua 9:3-15)

(Ask questions such as those suggested to make sure the child has understood the passage.)

- *How did the Gibeonites escape defeat?* [They fooled the Israelites; they pretended to come from a faraway country and offered themselves to the Israelites as servants.]
- *What did they do to fool the Israelites?* [They made it look like they had been traveling for a long time by using worn-out

clothes, sandals and other items, and by having dry, crumbly food; they also told the Israelites that they were from a faraway country.]

- *What was wrong with what the Gibeonites did?* [They lied and intentionally tried to fool the Israelites.] *Were they being honest?*
- *Why do you think the Gibeonites did what they did?* [They were afraid; they did not trust in God to care for them; they thought they could solve their own problems without God's help.]

Explanation of Deception

The Gibeonites were deceitful. Do you know what it means to deceive someone or to be deceitful? (Answers may vary.)

(Be sure the child understands the following concepts about deception. Encourage questions and discussion/interaction.)

- To deceive someone is to try to make that person *believe* something that *isn't true*, to believe something *false*, to believe a lie—like the Gibeonites tried to make the Israelites believe that they came from a faraway country, which wasn't true.
- Another way to understand what it means to deceive someone is to try to make the person *not believe* something that is *true*—like when Satan told Eve that she would not die if she ate the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden of Eden. This was a lie. What God had said was true—eating the fruit would bring death. But Satan deceived Eve by trying to make her *not* believe that what God said was true.
- Deceitfulness or deception is *not* when a person makes an honest mistake—like if you tell someone there is no more milk because you think it's all gone. That is a mistake. You did not mean to make the person believe a lie. There was no unkind or mean intention or purpose in your heart.

- Deception is something you do on purpose to make a person believe something that is not true. It is intentional or deliberate. Your heart wants the person to believe the wrong thing.
- Deception is wrong, and God hates it.

Can you give some examples of deceit? (Answers may vary, from biblical examples, to historical examples, to current life examples. The goal here is to discern if the child understands what deception is. You may need to prompt the child, give an example or two, or do more explanation.)

Let's see what the Bible says about deceit. Let's read Jeremiah 17:9.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? (Jeremiah 17:9)

(Ask questions such as those suggested to make sure the child has understood the passage.)

What does this verse say about the heart? [It is deceitful and sick.]

What else does Jeremiah 17:9 say about the human heart? [It can't be understood.]

- It is hard to see the deceit in our own hearts or to really know the deceit in another person's heart. Only the Holy Spirit truly knows what is in our hearts.

Whose heart is the Bible talking about in Jeremiah 17:9? [everyone's]

- Everyone—every single person—has been born with a deceitful heart; a desperately sick heart.

Can you give me an example of when you did something deceitful? (Answers will vary.) *What was in your mind when you did that? What were you thinking? Did someone have to teach you to be deceitful? Where did that deceitful thing you did come from? It came right from the sin nature in your heart—the deceitfulness you were born with.* (You may also want to give a short, personal example.)

We cannot change our deceitful hearts. We do not have the power to take out the deceit in our hearts. That is a really hard thing to think

about. It is very uncomfortable, isn't it? What do you think it would be like to have a deceitful heart forever? (Answers may vary, such as: it would be awful; no one would trust you; you would become very unhappy.)

If you could change your heart, what would you change about it? (Answers will vary.)

Grace

- The good news is that we do not have to live with a hardened, deceitful heart.
- Though we cannot change our hearts, God can. He is eager and willing to give people new hearts.
- Not only does God change hearts, He has also provided a way for our deceit, meanness, anger, bad attitudes, and all His people's sin to be paid for and forgiven. He did this by putting the punishment for our sin on His Son. Jesus died on the cross to take care of our sin problem.
- Every person who repents of sin (turns away from loving sin) and trusts in Jesus to take the punishment for his sin has received a new heart—and has become a child of God.

(Ask the child to read John 1:12.)

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:12)

(Ask questions such as those suggested to make sure the child has understood the passage and the essence of salvation.)

What does it mean to "receive" Jesus? [to welcome Him; to trust Him; to receive His gift of forgiveness paid for on the cross; to submit to His lordship and determine to follow Him]

What does it mean to "believe" in His name? What do you need to believe about Jesus? [that He is the Son of God; that He died on the cross to pay for the sins of those who trust in Him; that His payment

on the cross is sufficient to pay for sin—that it fully paid for sin; that He rose from the dead and is living in heaven; that He can and will accept anyone who comes to Him; that He knows what is best for us; that His way is best]

Do you think the new heart God gives to those who are His children is free from sin? How do you know that?

- The changed heart is free from the *controlling power* that sin has over those who are trusting in Jesus. Sin no longer has a tight grip on God’s children.
- So they now have the help of Jesus and the Holy Spirit to change—to turn away from sin. Step by step, the Christian is being changed or transformed—growing to hate sin more and turn away from it more.

I want you to look at one verse again. (Ask the child to read Joshua 9:14.)

So the men took some of their provisions, but did not ask counsel from the LORD. (Joshua 9:14)

Why were Joshua and the Israelites fooled or deceived by the deceitful Gibeonites? [They did not ask God to show them what to do.]

This story about the Gibeonites and Israel is not just a story about deception. This story, and the whole Bible, is teaching us to seek God—to look to Him for help, to trust Him, to involve Him in all of life, to run to Him when we are in trouble or put our problems in His hands, to learn to know Him and love Him.

Joshua and the Israelites did not seek God. They did not ask Him to show them what was true, or to lead them. They did not ask for His wisdom. They acted on their own instead of seeking God. You have the same choice. You can live life on your own and fight deception on your own, or you can seek God.

(End with prayer. Check the assignments you would like your child to complete, or add assignments for your child. Your child will need to complete the Ephesians 4 assignment in order to be ready for the

next session. Note: Assignment sheets are also available as a separate printed booklet and as a printable PDF through Truth78.org.)

Assignment

- Talk with your mom or dad about deceit. What kinds of situations give opportunities for a person to be deceitful? Ask Jesus to show you this week how you are tempted to be deceitful. Is there a way in which you acted deceitfully? What can you do about this? Talk with your mom or dad about your struggles and victories this week.
- Memorize John 1:12 using your Bible version. Make a bookmark or card with the verse on it so you can review it often.

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, (John 1:12, ESV)

- With your mom or dad, read about the new life that Jesus offers from Ephesians 4:17-24. What two kinds of people do you see in this passage? What is the difference between these two kinds of people? What are those who are children of God—trusting in Jesus—able to put off? What is the problem with the “old self”? What is the “new self” like? What can those with the new self put on? Describe what you would like to be able to put off and put on.

(Parents, be sure to discuss the meaning of the answers to these questions. It might be helpful to your child to underline, double underline, circle things, and mark up the passage in other ways in order to understand it better. This passage is provided below from the ESV for this purpose. If you use a different version, you may want to copy or print it for your child.)

Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. ¹⁹They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy

to practice every kind of impurity. ²⁰But that is not the way you learned Christ!—²¹assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²²to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:17-24)

Thank God that He receives all who come to Him. Pray that God will give you a heart that hates sin and loves what is true and honest and good.

Other: _____

My Thoughts: _____
