

# Dropping the Baggage, or Clearing the Air

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

1John 1:5-10 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have **fellowship** with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have **fellowship** with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

Psalm 32:3-5 When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"— and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Gal 6:2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Read Hebrews 12:1. What kind of things would "hinder" or "entangle" someone running a race? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the "race" that the writer of Hebrews is talking about?

Guilt can be a major *hindrance* to living our free life in Christ. We feel guilt from a variety of thoughts, deeds, and circumstances.

What do you feel guilty about? \_\_\_\_\_

Take a look at the rocks that symbolize guilt loaded in the suitcase. Review the "guilt-trips" written on them.

Read 1 John 1:5-10. Many times verse 9 is the only verse of this passage ever read. Its meaning has been distorted by some denominations and faiths to mean our sins are not forgiven unless/until we confess them. This is not true. When taken as a whole this passage is more about \_\_\_\_\_. Even though God knows everything (omniscient) trying to hide or ignore our sin gets in the way of our **fellowship**. We're just not being honest with God.

Read Psalm 32:3-5. How did David feel when he bottled up his guilt inside?

How did he feel once he "acknowledged" his sin to God?

What did God do?\_\_\_\_\_ Can we expect God to do the same for us?

Think about God's promise of forgiveness and thank Him for forgiving you. Acknowledge your guilty feelings to Him in prayer. Accept your forgiveness by putting aside your guilty feelings. Re-open the lines of communication and fellowship.

Another way to relieve the guilt is to talk about your issues with a close friend. It's better not to be alone in your trouble. Ask them to pray for you.



# Dropping the Baggage: Repentance

Romans 3:20-24 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. But now a righteousness from God, apart from the law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and you are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

2 Corinthians 10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

John 14:15 “If you love me, you will obey what I command.

Jeremiah 18:8 (NIV)...and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned.

Jeremiah 18:8 (KJV) If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.

Romans 6:1-2 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin;

Ro 5:20-21 The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People can come up with all kinds of arguments and excuses to justify their actions. What are some common excuses people use?

According to Romans 3:20, what is the purpose of “the law” (that is documented in the Bible): \_\_\_\_\_

God’s Word stands in defiance to excuses. Why would that bother us (John 14:15)?

“True repentance is not merely a feeling of remorse, such as Judas had after he betrayed the Lord. It involves the **intellect**, the **emotions**, and the **will**. Repentance brings the mind to realize both the holiness of God’s law and one’s utter failure and inability to keep it. Godly sorrow in contrast to one’s being superficially sorry for sin, often precedes the change of mind (2 Corinthians 7:10). Repentance is a deliberate, **willful turning away from sin and following after God.**”<sup>\*1</sup>

Compare the New International Version and the King James translations of Jeremiah 18:8. The word “repent” in the NIV is translated as \_\_\_\_\_ in the KJV.

What does it mean to **turn** from something?

Keeping in mind the quote above, match the verses in the left column to the action below:

Intellect \_\_\_\_\_

Emotions \_\_\_\_\_

Will \_\_\_\_\_

Will you ever stop sinning? \_\_\_\_\_ Will you ever measure up to God’s standards? \_\_\_\_\_

**The key point:** As long as you admit your actions are wrong (sin) they are covered by grace. You are forgiven. Once you believe in Jesus all of your sins, past present, and future, are of no consequence to your entry into heaven (Romans 3:20-24).

Do you keep on sinning then (Romans 6:1)? \_\_\_\_\_

Addictions and reinforced behaviors are hard to stop. However, your failures should not become a wall between you and God (Romans 5:20-21).

What can be a great compulsion to strive to change our lives (John 14:15)? \_\_\_\_\_

# Lesson Plan: Dropping the Baggage, or Clearing the Air

## The Goal:

The goal of this lesson is to help the kids uncover hidden sins in their heart and get it out in the open between them and God. Hopefully the end result will be a feeling of great relief for them a renewed sense of fellowship with God.

## Pre-Lesson Activity:

Get an old suitcase. Load it with several large rocks. On the rocks use a dry marker to write sentences like “I hate my mom.”, “I view porn on the internet.”, “I sneak booze from my parents liquor cabinet.”, “I cut myself.”, “I do drugs.” “I’m Gay”. Divide the kids into two teams for a relay race. Make one team drag the suitcase as they race.

I divided the kids into boys and girls and made the boys carry the suitcase. The weight of the rocks almost stopped them cold. This girls actually felt sorry for the boys and tried to help them drag the suitcase. One boy stopped and emptied out the rocks as he rounded a car at the far end of the parking lot. These actions were actually great for the analogy during class.

**Leading the lesson:** This can be a two-part lesson with each page being one week. Take it at your kid’s pace.

Spend some time in prayer the day before, going over the verses and questions in your mind.

Have a kid read the first set of verses and then go thru the questions for those verses. Give them time to answer. Listen to what they say and lead the discussion with additional questions of your own to lead them to the correct answers.

Note: When reading, kids will frequently stumble on words they do not know. Explain the meaning of the words so they can fully grasp the concept of the Bible verse. Sometimes you must restate the passage in your own words for them to get it.

Things that might hinder a runner could be (just for laughs) loose clothing (pants might fall down), a 10 gallon water bottle, a backpack full of school books, or a suitcase full of rocks. Make note of what the kids say they feel guilty about. You might want to talk to them alone about it later. Don’t force them to open up but give them a little time to think. Then review what you wrote on the rocks ( I actually heard gasps when the statement hit a nerve).

One time I had the kids write their sins on a piece of paper and toss them in a metal can to which I had affixed a cross. We burned the papers as a symbol of Gods forgiveness. This ritual as been done so many times it may be lame for your group so you might not want to do it but it worked for my kids.

**Page two:** The goal of page two is to make clear what it means to repent but also to stand against the guilt that comes from the enemy over continued sin, especially sins of addiction. The lines of fellowship between God and man must remain open even when addictive behavior has yet to be conquered.

## Summary:

Spend a long time in prayer at the end of this lesson. Include a long quiet moment when they can confess their sin quietly to God. Finish by asking God for renewed fellowship with Him.

## Take Prayer Requests

Always ask the kids for prayer requests for the next week. Write their requests in a journal. Check how things have turned out from the previous week’s concerns. Keep track of answered prayed and review them from time to time. They really know you care about them when you pray for their concerns.