

Disclaimer: I have lost some of the discussion questions we used. So create your own based on the notes given.

Gray Lesson 1: Lying

In this series we will be looking at how living every aspect of your life for the Lord makes all the difference with those who see you everyday. Living for Christ even in the GRAY. Some sins are very black and white, and we can see very clearly that they are sin...but there are some sins that a lot of times we don't notice them for what they are and what they are doing to us. Those sins are the GRAY SINS.

Sometimes we think, "Hey, I didn't murder anyone this week." Or "I didn't rob a bank this week. So I am doing pretty good. Go Me!"

But what if it were the little things in life that made all the difference.

As I introduce tonight's first gray area let me start with a story:

When I was growing up I hated reading. So when teachers would assign reading for homework, I would go home and play video games instead of reading, knowing that we would most likely have a pop quiz over what we read. But honestly, I wasn't too concerned because I had gotten pretty good at guessing my way through reading quizzes.

I would always feel really good till you got to the last question, the dreaded: DID YOU READ THESE CHAPTERS?

And then I was faced with a dilemma...a choice...lie or tell the truth and fail the quiz??

Then what do you do?

You know lying is pretty easy, isn't it? I mean we can actually get pretty good at it. It's not something that we ever have to be taught to do...in fact, it is one of the first things that we learn. Listen to some of these kids lies:

<https://www.babble.com/kid/liar-liar-pants-on-fire-11-hilarious-lies-kids-have-told/>

Sometimes we like to laugh at some of the lies we tell...or that we come up with...but listen to what God says about lying in Proverbs 12:22 "**The Lord detests lying lips** but he delights in people who are trustworthy."

That word detests in Hebrew can also mean "to make nauseous." Get this: GOD HATES LYING!! In fact, it makes Him nauseous...It makes God want to VOMIT. That's how much God hates lying.

So when we laugh about it, it is making God want to vomit.

PET SOUNDS GAME: Did you know that in other countries they say different things for animal sounds? (example: so like a cat says MEOW in english...in other languages it is something different)

Check it out: GO TO CREATE.KAHOOT.IT

START KAHOOT GAME.

Animal	Japan	Italian	Russian	English
Bee	Boon boon	Zzzz	Zh-zh-zh	Buzz
Bird	Pee Pee	Chip	Pio	Tweet
Dog	Kian Kian	Bau Bau	Gav Gav	Woof Woof
Frog	Kero Kero	Cra Cra	Kva Kva	Ribbit
Cat	Nyan Nyan	Miau	Miyua	Meow

Use this to create your game:

Some of you might have a serious lying problem...telling BOLD FACED lies, but probably most of us deal more with LITTLE WHITE LIES...OR NOT TELLING THE WHOLE TRUTH...OR BENDING THE TRUTH SLIGHTLY.

But the truth is (just like all those different animal sounds are the same animal), A LIE IS A LIE NO MATTER WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE. If it's not the entire truth, then its a lie.

When it comes down to it, why is telling the truth, as a Christian, more important than lying?

We should be more concerned that people trust us than to necessarily make ourselves look good. Because when it comes time for us to talk about God, Jesus, Sin, or the response our friends make to Jesus, we don't want any barriers there.

We should want to speak the truth at all times because we represent THE Truth.

Gray Lesson 2: Gossip

"Did you hear about..."

"Guess what?! So and so said..."

"I don't know if I should share this but..."

"Can you believe..."

"She said not to tell anyone but..."

"Don't tell anyone I told you this..."

How many conversations start off this way everyday? Probably too many to count.

When you hear one of these phrases more than likely you are about to get a juicy bit of gossip.

We love to be in the know, don't we?! There is something kind of fun and exciting about gossip. For whatever reason, we all like to talk about other people. It's fun. It's easy. Sometimes there is nothing better than to get the scoop on someone else.

Who is dating whom...why they broke up...whoever did at that party...

And then guess what we do with that gossip as soon as we hear it or see it...we share it! Social media might just be the single greatest tool that Satan uses in this generation. I'm not saying that Social media is of the devil, but Think about it...within seconds you can text everyone on your contact list, put it on your snapchat story, tweet it out for the world, and post it to Facebook and instagram, all in less than a minute! Then we can search through all the different news feeds and share any gossip with the click of a button...and maybe my least favorite feature on our phones is the screenshot...we can screenshot and picture, any post, any conversation we had and send it all over the place.

Yet, for some of us gossip is so easy it doesn't even feel like gossip at all. It just feels like a regular conversation...and we don't even realize we are spreading info about someone else...

But if you have ever been gossiped about or heard that someone was talking about you behind your back, then you know the pain it causes.

So why do we gossip? To be honest I think it is pretty simple:

1. We gossip to cover up our own insecurities.
2. We gossip to intentionally hurt other people.
3. We gossip to divert attention away from ourselves
4. We gossip to tear others down to make ourselves look better

ALL of these are terrible reasons! The problem is IT IS FUN, IT IS EASY AND IT SEEMS LIKE NO ONE GETS HURT! But deep down we all know better than that. Gossip is like pouring gasoline on someone and hoping for a spark!

James 3:5-6

I've seen gossip destroy football teams, families, friendships, relationships, marriages and even CHURCHES. GOSSIP IS UGLY!!

Proverbs 16:28

So what do we do...how do we stop gossiping? I want to share with you ___ things to help you stop gossiping.

1. Realize that we are ALL children of God.

Why do you think God hates gossip so much? BECAUSE EVERY TIME THAT WE GOSSIP, WE ARE TALKING ABOUT ONE OF GOD'S CHILDREN.

2. Know that I can either be a part of the problem or the solution.

When you hear one of those warning phrases that we mentioned at the beginning of class, you have a choice to make:

- a. join in
- b. listen to it
- c. change the subject
- d. call them out on it (lovingly)

When you are faced with this you have a choice...you can either be a part of the problem or you can be a part of the solution.

Listen to Proverbs 17:4. "An evildoer listens to wicked lips..."

3. Remember YOUR WORDS MATTER.

READ Ephesians 4:29.

OUR WORDS MATTER. Let's be people who build up and not tear down. Some of you who are here tonight, have people in this very room that you have hurt by something you have said...some of you have hurt someone so bad by talking about them that they won't even come in here anymore. I want to encourage you to go and MAKE THINGS RIGHT! Words can tear down, but they can also build back up.

As we close, here are some helpful questions to ask yourself about your conversations:

- 1. Is my conversation helpful or hurtful?
- 2. Am I making a private matter public?
- 3. Am I permitting others to gossip?
- 4. If you wouldn't say it to them, why would you say it behind their back?
- 5. Am I hiding gossip in humor?
- 6. If they overheard you saying it, how would they feel?

Gray Lesson 3: Cheating

This Lesson was mostly spent in our Small Groups (Groves)

2 Weeks ago we started a new series that we are calling Gray.

Sometimes we feel as though we have done really well at the end of the day or the end of the week...because we haven't cussed anyone out, we haven't robbed a bank, we haven't murdered someone...

But what about all those little sins...all those gray areas. All those things that we do from day to day and don't even realize or think about them being sin.

We all have those gray sins that we deal with.

Week 1: we talked about lying. Not really so much about blatant lying...but about those little white lies. And we said, "A lie is a lie no matter what it sounds like." Sin is sin no matter what it looks or sounds like.

Week 2: we talked about that thing that we all do and never realize we are even doing it. GOSSIP. We love to talk about other people...we love to be in the know...and we said that gossip tears down friendships, families, teams, relationships, marriages and even churches. I urged you last week to STOP THE GOSSIP THAT GOES ON HERE. There are people in this room that have been hurt by things that some of you have said...there are people who aren't in this room tonight because they have been hurt by something that you said behind their back, and they will no longer even come in here.

And tonight we talk about another gray area that I think will really hit home with most of you. In fact, it is something that most of us don't even think about.

SO KAHOOT TIME!!

<https://play.kahoot.it/#/k/d8ba56c4-f894-4d69-a3ab-5eb96d157530>

Ephesians 4:28

"Do your work honestly with your own hands..."

GROVE TIME.

Grove Discussion Questions:

1. What is cheating? Define it.
2. Is cheating a sin? If so, why? If not, why not?
3. Are there degrees of cheating? (Explanation: where do we draw the line in cheating? Is cheating on homework the same as cheating on a test? Is asking someone to write your paper for you the same as looking at someone else's test?)
4. Why do you think we/others cheat? (possible answer: it is the easy way out)
5. What excuses do we use for cheating?
6. Share some of these scriptures: Proverbs 12:19; Proverbs 11:1; Luke 8:17
7. How does cheating relate to our faith as Christians?

Gray Lesson 4: Anger

Over the last few weeks we have been talking about GRAY AREA sins. We have looked at LYING, GOSSIP, AND CHEATING.

All of these things are things that we sometimes forget about being sin...we think about the big 3: MURDER, ADULTERY, STEALING. But forget about all those little things that happen...in fact, we almost called this series simply, "THE LITTLE THINGS".

As we start tonight, let me ask this. Are you a STEWER or a SPEWER?

Let me explain.

When you get angry do you bottle it up, push it down and just let it build up?
Or are you somebody who expresses their angry...expresses is a nice way of saying YOU RAGE!! YOU EXPLODE! YOU GO INTO HULK MODE.

Whichever you are...how you respond to anger is what really matters.

The Bible tells us in seven different books of the Bible that "God is slow to anger..."
We find Jesus angry at times in the NT.

Ephesians 4:26 says "Be angry and do not sin."

So clearly, ANGER isn't the sin...but it is what we do with it.

In Genesis 4, we find the story of Cain and Abel's sacrifice.
Start reading verses 3-7.

Cain became angry...and then God says, "Wait...slow down...think about this, think about your next move. You are angry...and that can produce a bad choice..." He says, "Sin is crouching at the door...but you must rule over it!"

Ephesians 4:26-27..."Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil."

GETTING ANGRY IS EASY. ACTING ON IT IS EVEN EASIER. DON'T GIVE SATAN THE CHANCE TO ACT IN YOUR ANGER.

James 1:19 says, "...let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness that God requires."

The anger of man does however point to the possibility of another type of anger that is ok. Godly or righteous anger.

Look at Mark 3.

The Pharisees here are trying to trap Jesus by getting him to “work” on the Sabbath. Jesus sees a man who is in need of healing...so he heals him, but check out what transpires before that.

Verse 5.

What is the difference in this type of anger and the anger that we see all around us so often?

Jesus had an anger toward the sin...not at the people themselves. Look at what it says, “...grieved at their hardness of heart...”

So what do we do with all this...listen to what Paul says in Ephesians 4:1-2, “I urge you to walk in a manner worthy of your calling, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE...”

So how do I deal with anger? WITH LOVE. What does a spirit of love dealing with anger look like?

Lets take a quick look at the heart of God as we end.

Read Psalm 103:8-13. 2 Peter 3:9.

3 things quickly:

1. God is merciful and loving. SHOW MERCY AND LOVE. DON'T RETALIATE... HOW DOES GOD SHOW US LOVE, HE IS SLOW TO ANGER BUT RATHER GIVES US GRACE. REPAY ANGER WITH GRACE.
2. God is merciful to all. WHEN WE GET ANGRY WITH SOMEONE, REMEMBER THAT HE DIED FOR THEM. REMEMBER THAT HE WITHHELD HIS ANGER TOWARD ME BY DYING FOR MY SIN...

Anger is a tool to be used by Satan...but by ruling over it, we can tame the beast of anger. BE SLOW TO ANGER...just like our Heavenly Father is slow to anger.

Gray Lesson 5: Laziness

Jelly Beans Video

How important is how we spend our time?

The Bible talks about our time quite a bit...but is it really that important what we do with our time. Does it really matter to anyone? Does it really make a difference if I sit at home all day and play video games...or spend hours and hours on social media?

The Bible talks about Sloth a lot. But what is sloth?

This is a sloth but It's not this??? Picture of the Sloth from Zootopia

Slothfulness is really this idea of being lazy...but especially neglecting what God has said to do.

Listen to what the Bible says about laziness.

2 Thessalonians 3:10 "If a man doesn't work, neither should he eat."

Proverbs 26:14 "As the door swings back and forth on its hinges, so the lazy person turns over in his bed."

Proverbs 26:15 "The lazy buries his hand in the dish; it wears him out to bring it back to his mouth."

The Bible basically says the lazy shouldn't eat, they flop in their beds like a wet fish, and they can't even bring their hand to their mouth to feed themselves.

Not really the greatest picture painted of the lazy...the sloth.

You look at those and say...Andrew, no way that is me. Have you seen my schedule? Have you seen my calendar? I don't have time to be lazy.

I talk with students every week who are in school for about 35 hours each week, spend another 5-10 hours doing homework, another 5-10 hours in sports/music/dance/etc., plus many hold a part-time job and have responsibilities at home and still need to find some time to, you know, be teenagers.

I talk with adults every week who are working 40-60 hours each week (sometimes adding driving time on top of that), some are still in school, some are raising young kids, others are chauffeuring older ones around, some have sick family members to care for, all have bills to pay, and almost all find it difficult to balance the demands on their time.

Yeah, I get it, you're busy... but you're also lazy.

Busy is the new lazy.

Listen to this story in Haggai.

Read verses 2-12.

God says, "You have busied yourselves with things that don't matter...you are wasting your time because you aren't doing things that really matter."

I think God would look at us and say, "You are so busy worrying about your grades, about being first chair in your band, about starting on the sports team, about pleasing your friends...that you have neglected me and my house."

Does that sound familiar? Busy is the new lazy!

When we are too busy for God, then we are being lazy by not taking care of the things that really matter. The time you have been given on earth is a gift from God that is to be used for his glory.

Let me share something with you that won't make a lot of sense but hopefully it will help you.

I have noticed that when I make time for God, EVERYTHING SEEMS TO WORK ITSELF OUT.

I am more productive, my work is done better, my relationships are stronger, and I am much happier.

"Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness..." Matthew 6:33

Gray Lesson 6: Living for Christ in the Gray

Tonight, we wrap up what might have been one of my favorite series that we have ever done. It has been something that has been so relevant...it has brought about great discussion...and has really made me think about some sins that I commit everyday without even realizing it.

I hope it has been good for you as well. We have talked about GOSSIP, LYING, CHEATING, ANGER, AND LAZINESS. And tonight we wanna wrap this entire series up by looking at Ephesians 4, the place where this entire series has come from.

Let's read it real quick. Ephesians 4:17-32.

Verses 17-19. Hardened Hearts, calloused hearts...

Paul starts by saying some of you have calloused hearts...hearts that have been so calloused by sin, that you don't even recognize sin anymore.

Then Paul says in Verse 20. "BUT THAT IS NOT THE WAY YOU LEARNED CHRIST!"

Verses 21-24. Paul says, you have been taught to be DIFFERENT. To live differently from the world around you...you have been taught that once you are in Christ Jesus you must put off the old self and put on something different, something NEW...something that can only be worn by someone living in Christ.

Now listen to what Paul says in verse 25. He says, alright here is what that means... here is what that different person looks like.

Read verse 25...speak truth (white lies)

Verse 26-27...be angry and do not sin (how you deal with anger)

Verse 28...do not steal (cheating)

Verse 28...doing honest work with his own hands (laziness)

Verse 29...let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths (gossip)

Paul says you wanna live differently from the people around you...he says, THEN DO THE LITTLE THINGS RIGHT! Live like Christ, like the new self in EVERYTHING!!

And now listen to how Paul closes this section of his letter in verse 30.

"DO NOT GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD, BY WHOM YOU WERE SEALED FOR THE DAY OF REDEMPTION."

What does it mean to grieve the Holy Spirit? VERY SIMPLY, IT MEANS IT HURTS THE SPIRIT OF GOD WHEN WE DON'T LIVE LIKE CHRIST.

When we become a Christian we are sealed with the Holy Spirit...we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit...God in US. But when we live as though God is not in us, IT HURTS HIM. He grieves.

LIVING LIKE A LOST PERSON WHEN YOU'RE SAVED SAYS GOD HAS NO REAL POWER OVER YOU.

Paul says, so live like Christ, do not grieve the Spirit, don't make the Spirit sad by how you are living. And that means not just the big sins, notice Paul doesn't mention a lot of the BIG SINS here...

LIVE FOR CHRIST IN THE BLACK, IN THE WHITE, AND ESPECIALLY IN THE GRAY!

GROVE TIME:

1. Of the different gray areas that we have talked about, which one most hit home with you?
2. Why is it important to live for Christ in the gray areas? How does living for Christ in those areas show Christ to others around us?
3. How can we as a grove help to hold each other accountable in the gray?