

## EPIC Cycle 10: Dealing with Lies and Conflict

### How to have a student-led club:

- Open and close meetings in prayer
- Explain First Priority [First Priority is a Christian group, but you do not have to be a Christian to attend]
- Download the First Priority of Tampa Bay phone app
- Report weekly attendance via the phone app
- Send weekly meeting reminders

**Memory Verse:** “Blessed are peacemakers, for they will be called children of God”

**Matthew 5:9**

### EQUIP Week 1: The lies that we believe

This week, we will talk about how lies impact our lives, and why it is important to understand the source and stand on faith against them.

1. The opposite of a peace-maker is a trouble-maker, and this is someone who is always causing problems. In **John 10:10** reads: “The thief’s purpose is to steal, kill and destroy. My [Jesus’] purpose is to give life in all its fullness.” And **John 8:44b** reads: “He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

#### Questions:

- A. What are some ways that the devil attempts to “steal, kill and destroy” in a Christian’s life?
- B. How do the lies of the devil (and others) cause division and destruction, and how do we protect ourselves from this?
- C. Are you able to give an example of a lie that you believed? How did you get freedom and healing from this?

2. Once we believe a lie and then allow it to distort our perceptions, it can become a stronghold. The dictionary defines a stronghold as *a place that has been fortified so as to protect it against attack or a place where a particular cause or belief is strongly defended or upheld*. An example of a lie that has become a stronghold is unforgiveness. If we choose not to forgive someone because they hurt us, we are accepting the lies of that hurt (such as you should never forgive them- you should retaliate). Then, our perception of the experience becomes distorted and we justify the unforgiveness, which leads to bitterness.

In **Isaiah 28:17** it reads: “Workers use a string and weight to show their work is straight and true. I will use justice as the string and goodness as the weight when I lay that foundation. But your safe places were built on lies. So they will be destroyed and washed away when the

troubles come against you like hail storms and floods." In other versions of this verse, the words "your safe places" is described as strongholds. A stronghold can be a place of protection, but in this case, it is used to describe how believing a lie then becomes the foundation for more lies.

**Questions:**

- A. In the first part of the verse, why is "justice" and goodness used as the best foundation?
- B. Why is a foundation built on lies easily destroyed?
- C. Can you give an example in your life or in a current world situation where a lie has become the foundation for more lies?

3. **Isaiah 44:20** reads: "He doesn't know what he is doing; his confused mind [deluded/deceived heart] leads him the wrong way. He cannot save [rescue; deliver] himself or say, "This statue I am holding is a false god [Is there not a lie in my right hand?]." This verse tells us that when we are deluded or confused that we have a deceived heart and this leads us astray. For example, having a distorted perception of self-worth (pride or insecurity).

**Questions:**

- A. In what ways can we be confused by a lie and how does this lead us astray?
- B. How is confusion similar to distortion and why does this matter?
- C. If we are led astray by believing a lie, how does this cause us to lose our peace, strength, and hope?

**Challenge: Pray for a friend who needs to know Jesus or is struggling in some way.**

**PREPARE Week 2: Responding to lies**

Last week, we talked about how lies impact our lives and this week we will talk about how to respond to them.

1. **2 Corinthians 10:4:** "The weapons we use in our fight are not the world's weapons but God's powerful weapons, which we use to destroy strongholds. We destroy false arguments; we pull down every proud obstacle that is raised against the knowledge of God; we take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ."

**Questions:**

- A. What are God's powerful weapons that we use to destroy strongholds?
- B. What are false arguments and how are they dangerous to us?

2. **Ephesians 5:11** reads: "Have nothing to do with the things done in darkness, which are not worth anything. But show that they are wrong [expose them]." And **Lamentations 3:17-18** reads: "I have no more peace. I have forgotten what happiness is. I said," My strength is gone, and I have no hope in the LORD."

When we take part in what we know to be wrong, we are agreeing with the lie. The shame of the behavior leads us to behave in secret. This verse tells us to expose the lie - to bring the wrong into the light.

**Questions:**

- A. Why do we often do bad behavior in secret and how does this keep us trapped in the behavior?
- B. Why does confessing the behavior [or exposing our secret] remove the power of the shame?
- C. How does bringing our bad behavior into the light help us to OVERCOME the power that sin has over us?

**PREPARE for next week by:**

- 1. Asking a student to share his/her faith story and a student to share the gospel and invitation (see below).
- 2. Asking for volunteers to pass out Response Cards (also phone on the FP website).
- 3. Discuss how you will promote the meeting and invite friends.

**Challenge: Invite at least two friends to next week's meeting.**

**INVITE Week 3: Sharing the gospel message**

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the cycle, when you invite your friends to hear the good news of the Gospel.

Please follow these steps:

- 1. A student shares their faith story [a time when God moved in their life]
- 2. Read the gospel message and invitation (SEE BELOW)
- 3. Pass out pens and Response Cards [found on the First Priority of Tampa Bay website under the Students tab]
- 4. Report attendance and decisions for Christ on the First Priority phone app or by text
- 5. Use the Follow Up Plan (SEE BELOW)

**Gospel Message (To be read out loud to the group):**

- Admit that you are a sinner. To "sin" means to make a bad choice, and sin separates us from God.

- Believe in Jesus and put your trust in Him. Christ's death on a cross two thousand years ago was an act of selfless love. He took on the whole sins of humanity, making it possible for all people to encounter God.
- Confess Christ Jesus as your Lord and Savior. This means acknowledging that you want Him in your life.

**Invitation/Prayer (ask students to bow their heads):**

If this message is speaking to you today, and you want to trust in Jesus as your Savior then pray this simple prayer to yourself: Dear Lord, I know that my selfishness has separated me from you because you are a Holy God. I am sorry for being selfishness and I ask you to forgive me and help to believe in Jesus. Today, I pray that you will come into my life and help me to trust in you and live in a way that is pleasing to you. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

**Follow UP Plan:**

Once you've shared the gospel and invitation, collect the Student Response Cards (can be downloaded from the First Priority website) and then follow these steps:

1. Student leaders commit to praying for and contacting any student who has made a decision for Christ and/or has questions.
2. When contacting these students, student leaders will want to:
  - Answer any questions they may have
  - Offer to pray for them
  - Invite them to the next week's HELP Week meeting
  - Invite them to your church, if they don't have one
3. Return all Student Response cards to the student leader or teacher (Response cards or information on the cards must never be given to an outside adult or organization/ church)

**Challenge: Invite two friends to your youth group or church this week.**

**CONNECT Week 4: Dealing with conflict**

This week, we will talk about how to deal with conflict, which is often due to our unmet desires. It is important to understand the source and deal with these unmet desires before it turns to bitterness and rage.

1. In **James 4:1-2a**, we see that the root of conflict is usually unmet desires: "What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? <sup>2</sup>You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight." But, <sup>1</sup>**John 5:21** tells us how to keep unmet desires from becoming our ultimate need: "Dear children, keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts."

**Questions:**

- A. What does it mean to covet something and how can this become an obsession or unhealthy need?
- B. How do we know if something or someone is above God in our hearts and how do we fix this?
- C. What is an appropriate way to respond to someone who is angry or combative? Hint: the two sources of anger are fear and/or hurt.

2. In these verses, we learn that peace-making is an action that requires us to be humble and committed to reconciliation (this means to restore to a healthy place). **Matthew 18:15** reads: "If your brother or sister in God's family does something wrong, go and tell them what they did wrong. Do this when you are alone with them. If they listen to you, then you have helped them to be your brother or sister again." And **Hebrews 12:14** reads: "Try to live in peace with all people, and try to live free from sin [pursue holiness/sanctification]. [For] anyone whose life is not holy [sanctified] will never see the Lord."

**Questions:**

- A. Why is confronting someone who has wronged us important for reconciliation (the root is usually hurt and/or fear)?
- B. If we are confronted because of our own bad behavior, why is important to acknowledge the hurt we have caused, accept the consequences, and change our behavior? Can you give an example of when this has happened to you?
- C. How does connecting with God through prayer and reading the Bible help us to live in peace with others?

3. Spend the remainder of the meeting talking about ways for students to CONNECT over the summer (examples: church events/campus, social activities).