



redefining

NorMal

{understanding that Christ sets us apart}



Redefining Normal Leader's Guide

Written and Published by Doug Compton Ministries and Imagine Ministries, Inc.

3752 W Spurgeon

Fort Worth, TX 76133

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the *HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION*®, *NIV*®, © Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.



Copyright © 2009 Doug Compton Ministries

Copyright © 2009 Imagine Ministries, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without the purchase of at least ten (10) accompanying student booklets or prior written permission of the publisher.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Session 1: Fear of God.....	5
Session 2: A Healthy Fear of God.....	9
Session 3: The Difference.....	13
Session 4: Fake versus Real.....	17
Session 5: Convenience versus Conviction.....	22
Counseling Helps.....	27

Introduction

Over the past decades, the lines of what is right and wrong have been sadly blurred to the point that many cannot see the difference. The norm in 21st Century culture is really no norm at all. *Normal* has become as relative as a term as the terms *right* and *wrong*. For far too long have our churches allowed the line of what the Christian life should be (God's norm) to slowly be erased by cultural influences. Scripture makes it very clear that the *norm* of humanity is to be that of Jesus Christ, yet in today's society, bucking the norm seems to be more popular than following the norm that Christ set for us. It is time that we redefined what normal is to what Scripture defines it as.

Redefining Normal is a study focused on the reality of knowing the true God of the Bible does not lead us to a life of conformity or uniformity to worldly ideals, but to the full freedom of life in Christ. The study will examine the fear of God as displayed through the life of Job; what a healthy fear of God unlocks in our time on this earth; the intrinsic and extrinsic differences between believers and unbelievers; true reality versus fake reality; and the calling of God to live a life of conviction rather than convenience.

Some of the goals of this study include:

- Realizing and acknowledging the norm of today's society and the difference to that described in the Scripture.
- Realize that in the midst of trials and persecution, God continues to make Himself and His plan known to us.
- Understand that a healthy fear of God leads to a life of purification and transformation through living obediently to His plan.
- To know how Scripture describes the difference between believers and unbelievers both intrinsically and extrinsically.
- To learn a simple presentation of the Gospel through the discernment of what is real and what is fake.
- To know the difference between a life of conviction and a life of convenience.
- Understand that God calls us to live a life of conviction rather than convenience so that Christ is made known to all that we encounter.
- <YOUR OWN>

- <YOUR OWN>

Notes:

Session 1: Fear of God

Notes:

Session Goals...

- Realizing and acknowledging the norm of today’s society and the difference to that described in the Scripture.
- Realize that in the midst of trials and persecution, God continues to make Himself and His plan known to us.

Introduction

Be sure to spend a devoted amount of time getting to know your group and having them get to know you as well. Consider using the first part of each session as an opportunity to share your testimony and for your students share their testimony.

Starter Question

What are you afraid of?

Why do you fear what you mentioned?

Many people have an unhealthy fear of things. People fear the sun, being around people, water, and even going to school.

When is fear unhealthy?

Fear is unhealthy when it prevents you from living.

Write your own definition of fear below.

Fear (n.) – (1) a distressing emotion aroused by impending danger, evil, pain, etc., whether the threat is real or imagined; the feeling or condition of being afraid; (2) reverential awe, esp. toward God.
www.dictionary.com (Webster’s)

How important is fear in the life of a Christian?

As Christians, if we live our life for Christ, we have nothing to fear. John 10:10 says that Christ came to give us life more abundantly. So, fear is something we rarely talk about in the church.

Who do we need to fear?

Ask someone to read Romans 8: 37 – 39.

Nothing can _____ separate _____ us from the love of God.

Now that we know that nothing can separate us from the love of God, what do we fear as Christians? Christians should not fear, death, rulers, powers of darkness or any other worldly principality. True, healthy fear in the lives of Christians should only be devoted to God Almighty.

God's love is intense. Far beyond any love expressed through any of creation. How did He show that He loved us and wanted have a right relationship with us? Through the sacrificial offering of His Son on the Cross!

In the Old Testament people had to sacrifice a blemish-free, clean animal every year to cover their sins. This offering was called the *Sin Offering* or *Offering of Atonement*.

Priests would offer the sacrifice, but to do this they have to enter into the Holy of holies! Each Priest would have bells sewn to the hem of his garment. This was important! If the bells stopped making noise, it meant the priest had likely died because of his own uncleanliness. The priest could only enter the holy of holies if he had also provided the sacrifice for his sin.

Priests had a healthy fear of God. They knew and revered His power.

What is considered a healthy fear of something?

A healthy fear is realizing that the consequences of such an action far exceed the blessing. A healthy fear leads to a better understanding of who God is and who we are not.

Having a healthy fear of God is critical to living a life that is pleasing to God.

Though the Scripture reveals many men who fear God, one man in particular exemplifies what it means to have a healthy fear of God.

Ask someone to read Job 1: 6–12

Job knew God and loved Him. Job 1:1 again refers to Job fearing God and shunning evil. Notice that Satan was on the hunt throughout all of creation (v. 7). He was hunting to stir up trouble with God. Satan wanted to know if God took His hand off of Job, would he curse God.

It is easy to love and fear God when things are good. Job loved his family and His God.

When life is easy and parents aren't fighting and grades at school are good – it is easy to walk with God. Our circumstances seem to dictate how we act many times.

Notes:

When things are not going your way, whom do you often blame?

Job had some horrible things happen to him.
What does God give Satan permission to do? (v. 12)

Anything he wanted to except not to harm the man himself!
In a moment's time, life for Job totally changed! It went from roses and cookie cake, to tears and heartache.

What happened to Job?

Ask someone to read Job 1: 13–18.

Job 1: 13 – 15 The ox and donkeys were killed and even the servants – except one to tell!
Job 1: 16 The sheep and the servants – only one escaped to tell!
Job 1: 17 The camels were taken and the servants killed – except one to tell!
Job 1:18 His children – their wives – grandkids – all died – except one alone to tell!

Imagine how horrible that must have been for Job. In a matter of minutes, Job's life as he knew it was gone. How would you respond if such events happened in your life? What would your gut response be?

How did Job respond to the horrible things that had happened?

He tore his robe, shaved head and WORSHIPPED!

He went before God and worshipped Him. Worship is often the last thing that comes to our mind as a response to such tragedy. When things go bad we ask the question, God why did you allow this to happen?

Ask someone to read James 1: 2-4.

Trials will come, but people who fear God will continue to worship. Even when things aren't going as planned.

Notes:

What is something in your life that has not gone as planned? Who did you blame?

Take a moment and write down how you felt? Can you see a bigger picture in God's plan yet?

Prayer Closet:

Ask God to give you clearer sense of what true, healthy fear is. Ask God to reveal attributes about who He is so that you might better understand how Holy the God we serve is. Re-examine your own life to determine how your walk with God reflects your reverence of who He is. Ask God to provide you opportunities to share with others why you fear God and not the things of the world.

Notes:

Session 2: A Healthy Fear of God

Notes:

Session Goals...

- Realizing and acknowledging the norm of today's society and the difference to that described in the Scripture.
- Understand that a healthy fear of God leads to a life of purification and transformation through living obediently to His plan.

Recap

The main discussion of Session 1 revolved around that of fear. Ask your group what are the two primary types of fear (Answer: Healthy and Unhealthy). Ask your group how they would define healthy and unhealthy fear. Refer back to what happened to Job. Be sure to keep at the forefront of your group member's mind the reality that nothing we do can separate us from God's love (Romans 8:37—39)

Introduction

Despite all that Job went through, his relationship and belief in God remained strong. Job did not attempt to defend himself, nor did he strive to figure out what he did wrong. He maintained a sense of awe and obedience to the God who gives and takes away.

In today's world, in our own humanity, we try to figure out what we did wrong and provide the best reasoning for such wrongdoings.

What does the fear of God do?

Ask someone to read Luke 8: 26—29.

Overview :

A Healthy Fear of God...

...drives out impurities from our lives.

...provides true transformation in our lives.

...motivates us to live a life of obedience.

Reading Response:

1. What is unique about the man's appearance?
The man is naked.
2. What is unique about the man's home?
He lives in the local cemetery.
3. What is unique about the life the man lives?
The man is forced to live a life separate from people; a lonely, solitary life.
4. How does the man respond to the presence of Jesus?
The man falls at the feet of Jesus.
5. What is unique about the man's condition?
The man is demon-possessed.
6. What verbal response did the demons offer to Jesus?
The demons asked Jesus not to torture them.

- 7. What did the demons response to Jesus reveal?
The demons response to Jesus both in word and deed reveal their understanding and acknowledgment of the power of God.

Ask someone to read Luke 8:30—33.

Notice that Jesus asks the demons for their name (Legion), but the demons know the Son of God without any form of introduction.

Question: Why do you think the demons recognized Jesus? Why do you think the demons feared Jesus?

The demons knew the power of God and recognized that Jesus not only contained such power, but was the source of such power.

The demons knew who Christ was and did not take that for granted. In today’s society we have managed to push the power of God out of the equation! The demons did not want anything to do with Jesus – why they knew that they could not co-exist with Jesus – light and dark cannot occupy the same place.

Jesus commanded the demons to come out of the man!

Even though light and darkness cannot exist together, light is always in control. Though this man was filled with darkness (demons), the Light (Jesus) maintains authority over the darkness and can and does pierce even the darkest places in the lives of man.

Notice that earlier the demons begged Jesus not to send them into the “Abyss”. Jesus somewhat teasingly allows the demons to provide what they see as an escape—a herd of pigs. The demons begged to go into a herd of pigs – Jesus allowed it and then had the pigs do what? they ran off a cliff

A healthy fear of God will not allow impurities to stay in our life!

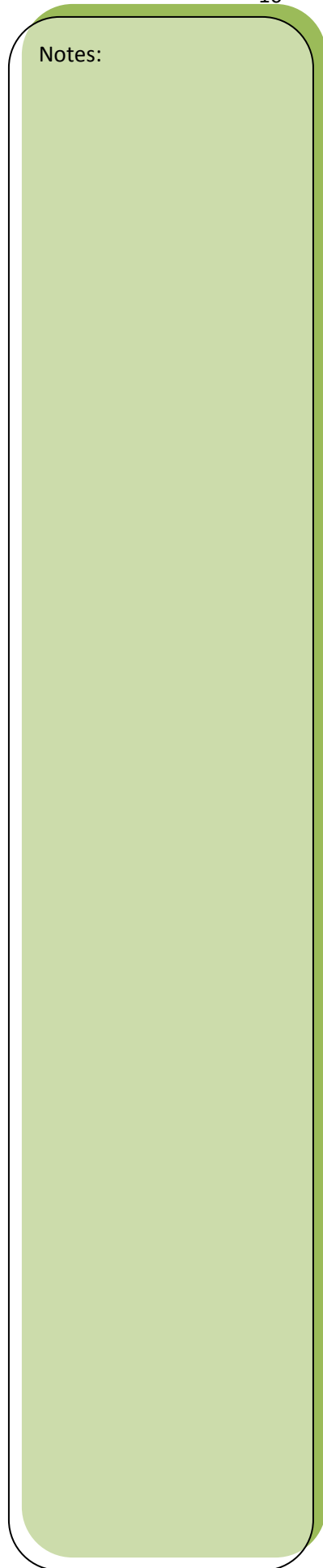
- 1. **A healthy fear of God allows Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, to drive impurities out of your life.**

Introspective Question: What impurities exist in your life?

Ask someone to read John 10:10.

What is preventing you from living the abundant life, talked about in this passage? Make of list of the impurities in your life.

Notes:



****Encourage your group to pause, pray, and ask God to provide them a healthy fear of God and cleanse them of impurities. If you have a CD worship song that is not too long this would be a great time to play it. Let the group get alone for a few minutes. Each of us need to look at our own lives and the impurities in our lives!****

Ask someone to read Luke 8:34—37.

Reading Response:

1. How did the townspeople respond to what happened?
The townspeople freaked out!! They did not respond well.
2. How would you have responded had you seen this take place?

3. How did the man respond?
The man responded in transformation and obedience.
4. How was the man transformed?
The man was now clothed and in his right mind.
5. How did the man respond in obedience?
He instantly took his place at the feet of Jesus.

2. A healthy fear of God provides true transformation in one's life.

Question: How does a healthy fear of God provide true transformation in your life?

How can you tell when someone has made a change in his or her life?
If the change is fleeting it will not last. If the change is real, weeks from now the change will still be obvious to oneself and others!

Question: How did the man respond to this transformational change in deed?
(The man respond by placing himself at the feet of Jesus and pleads with Jesus to let him go with Christ.)

Question: How does Jesus respond?
(Jesus sent the man home with the command to tell his family what God had done in his life.)

3. A healthy fear of God motivates you to live a life of obedience.

Question: How did the man respond to Jesus' sending him home?
(The man returned to his town and shared with everyone what Jesus had done in his life.)

Notes:

Notice that the man did not pout, throw a hissy fit, or go his own way when Jesus did not allow what he thought was best for him. At times what we think is best for us is not really best for us. More often than not, God's best for us involves bringing out the best in others through sharing Christ's love with those closest to us.

Students this is exactly what God wants from you! Right now His desire is for you is to show the change at home first. Let mom and dad see the real you, the you God created you to be!

Ask someone to read James 2:19.

4. A healthy fear of God leads to a right relationship with God.

This passage refers to the fact that even demons believe in the power of God. The difference between demons and man is that man is only given access to a relationship with God which is based on faith or belief. Only through a right relationship with God made possible through the redeeming blood of Christ can mankind truly grasp the fear of God and ultimately receive the power of God. This will be discussed in more detail in Session 3.

Prayer Closet:

Ask God not only to cleanse you from the impurities in your life, but to also give you a transformed life in the image of Christ. Begin to ask for ways that you can obediently follow Him. Ask God to reveal to you what it truly means to have a right relationship with Him rather than what the world teaches.

Notes:

Session 3: The Difference

Notes:

Session Goal...

- To know how Scripture describes the difference between believers and unbelievers both intrinsically and extrinsically.

Recap

The main discussion of Session 2 centers on what happens when we have a healthy fear of God. Ask your group what the four things are that can happen in the lives of those that practice a healthy fear of God. (Answer: 1. Drives out impurities, 2. True transformation, 3. Life of obedience, and 4. Right relationship with God.) Refer back to what happened to the demon-possessed man.

Remember to focus on the spiritual truth that only through Christ can we attain abundant life (John 10:10).

Introduction

In our attempt to redefine what normal is to the world in light of what should be normal according to Scripture we must examine what differentiates Christians from non-Christians.

Question: How SHOULD you be able to determine the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian teenager?

(Possible answers: attitude, language, respect for others, respect for parents, telling others about Christ, etc.)

Question: What actions do you typically see in Christians? Are these actions truly different than non-Christians?

Question: What do you think causes the Christian to act differently?

DID YOU KNOW:

“More than 4 of 5 teenagers report belief in God.”

Parenting with Kingdom Purpose; Ken Hemphill and Richard Ross; 2005.

People seem to know that God exists. They just don't have a relationship with him!

Question: Is a belief in God enough? ____ Yes ____ No

If you marked “yes” recall from Session 2 that even the demons had a belief in God.

Ask your group to write down John 3:16 as close as they can from memory.

Ask someone to read John 3:14—15.

According to this passage, what was lifted up in the desert? a snake

Ask you group to turn in their Bibles to Numbers 21:4—9 to find out the historicity of this passage.

Ask someone to read Numbers 21:4—9.

Reading Response:

1. Why did the snakes come out?
The people got impatient and spoke against God and Moses (v. 5).
2. What did Moses pray?
Exactly what the people asked for (v.7).
3. How did God respond to Moses' prayer for the people?
God commanded Moses to make a bronze snake that would serve as a means of healing for those that were bitten.
4. What two choices did those that had been bitten by snakes have to make?
Death, due to the venom in their body, or life through the healing power of God expressed through the bronze snake.

****Notice that God did not just take the snakes away just as He does not take away all the temptation that we encounter today. God wanted the Israelites to know and understand the power of God. The people wanted an easier life by the removal of the snakes, but God knew that the only way to true life was**

Notes:

through a relationship with Him. A relationship with God forces us to seek the empty cross for healing.**

Question: Suppose you are walking around and a snake bites your best friend, do you:

- a. Tell him goodbye and ask for his stuff.
- b. Kill the snake and suck the poison out of his leg.
- c. Grab him and run as fast as you can so he can see the snake that Moses has made.

The people of Israel had a belief in the snake, and that belief pushed them to bring everyone that had been bitten by the snake to the pole.

Back in John 3:14—15 Jesus had to be lifted up so that we could overcome sin.

Sin is poisonous. Once sin gets in your system you begin to shut down. Your life begins to take on a new form, a form of emptiness and ineffectiveness.

The only way to overcome sin in your life is the cross.

Do your friends have sin in their lives as well?

Question: What are some of the things that your "friends" struggle with?

It is our desire to make sure that they are brought to the cross. Jesus was lifted up to overcome our sin.

Suppose your best friend is living a life of sin. You know that they do not have a personal relationship with God, do you:

- A. Wish them good luck and move on.
- B. Try to find another friend, telling them goodbye.
- C. Take them to the cross, by telling them about Jesus.

Are you still lifting Jesus up in your life by the way you live? What about the things you say?

God loved us so much, that He allowed His Son to be lifted up and become the sacrifice for our sin.

Sin is poisonous. Jesus is the cure.

Notes:

Share Jesus. That is the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian. They realize they have been cured and want all to experience that saving grace.

Prayer Closet:

Ask God to reveal to you some of the temptations in your life that likely lead you to sin. Ask God to surround you with others to help you in the battle of defeating these temptations. Ask God to reveal to you the need of the lost surrounding you. Begin thinking of ways to share the Good News of Christ with those that you encounter daily.

Notes:

Session 4: Fake versus Real

Notes:

Session Goal...

- To learn a simple presentation of the Gospel through the discernment of what is real and what is fake.

Recap

In Session 3 we discussed the difference between Christians and non-Christians. We began the session by looking into the different ways Christians act versus the world. Ask your group what truly makes Christians different than non-Christians. Ask your group if people they encounter every day could tell whether or not you are a Christian. Refer back to what happened in the desert during Moses' time.

Introduction

Today's society is filled with many phonies. From performance-enhanced athletes to fake investment strategists, society is riddled with fakes. Due to an influx of counterfeit people, we find ourselves getting fooled into something that is fake because we thought it was real. One thing is for sure, sin leads to death and death leads to eternal separation from God. For far too long have we Christians sat on the sideline allowing our friends and family members to slip deeper into the phoniness of society. It is time that we took a step of faith in leading our friends and family members to Christ.

Question: How can you tell if a \$20.00 bill, by appearance only, is counterfeit or not?

Question: How can you tell if a person is real or fake?

No matter what - it is hard to determine what is Real and what is Fake in today's society!

Question: How do you determine who is a real Christian and who is fake?

Christians **MUST** be sharing their faith!

Question: Why do you think people choose not to share their faith?

Reasons that people do not share their faith:

1. FEAR
2. Unsure of what to say
3. Previous rejection
4. Laziness

Question: So do we have to share the Gospel?

Ask someone to read Acts 1:7–8.

Reading Response:

1. Who does the receiving?
We are the ones that receive.
2. What do we receive?
We receive power.
3. How do we receive the power?
When the Holy Spirit comes upon us.
4. Who does the Holy Spirit come on?
The Holy Spirit comes on us.
5. After we receive the power of the Holy Spirit, what do we become?
We become God's witnesses. We become the method that He uses to advance the Kingdom of Heaven.
6. Do we have an option to receive the power and responsibility?
No. When we give our lives to Christ, the Holy Spirit descends upon us and provides us the power necessary to fulfill our God-given purpose of being His witnesses.

Ask someone to read Matthew 28:19–20.

This passage commands us to both Go and Make disciples. In order to fulfill the second part of this command, we must share with others what Christ did for us.

Here is a simple strategy for sharing:

Notes:

REAL**R—The Rescue**

Ask someone to read Ephesians 2:1.

We were _____ dead _____ in our sin!

Trespass (n.) – (1) to commit a transgression or offense; (2) an offense, sin, or wrong
www.dictionary.com
 (Webster's)

The word trespass denotes a slip or fall from living the life God intended.

As a Christian we are forgiven one time, for all-time from the sin that we commit! Access to forgiveness was given to all mankind through Christ's death on the cross. We cannot receive forgiveness, however, unless we respond to His gift. You need to go and pray asking God to help you stop making the same mistakes over and over!

SOUND THE TRUMPET**E – the event**

Ask someone to read Philippians 2:8.

Jesus took on the FORM of man!

The EVENT of the cross is how we are rescued.

Our sin is why this event had to happen.

Without this event – we would not have the opportunity to be rescued from our sin.

Without this event – we would not be able to have the relationship we have with Christ! This event was crucial – because He died on that cross – and He rose again 3 days later to overcome our sin!!!!

SOUND THE TRUMPET**A – Accept**

Ask someone to read Romans 10:9.

We have to accept that someone wants to rescue us from our sins!

He did this through the event of dying on the cross.

When you accept the cross of Christ, you give God control of your life!!!

Philippians 1:21 lets us know that Christ is gain! We are to live as for Christ. Accept that He has died to forgive you of your sins!

Notes:

L – life-everlasting

Ask someone to read John 3:16 and John 10:28.

Every person you will ever meet will have life - everlasting. We get to decide where we will spend eternity.

Either you accept access to the forgiveness of Christ or you don't. You will either be forgiven from your sin or you will not! There is no middle ground.

People seem to think that God is so nice that He could never let anyone spend an eternity in Hell. He does not desire that to happen, but you must be REAL! When you ask Christ into your heart – you are made a REAL person! Finally, you have everything it takes to be the best you can be!! As a Christian you might be scared to share, but look at the next statistic!

3 out of 4 people that you share with will listen to the entire presentation of the gospel.

DID YOU KNOW:

“More than 7 in 10 U.S. teens profess belief in a coming judgment day when God will reward some and punish others.”

Soul Searching; Christian Smith and Melissa Lundquist Denton; 2003.

Teens are thinking about God. It is our job to tell them and make sure they know the TRUTH!!

SOUND THE TRUMPET!!

BE REAL!

Who are some people in your family you need to be REAL with?

Who are some people in your school you need to be REAL with?

Notes:

Large green rounded rectangular area for taking notes.

Are you willing to be a REAL watchman? If so, sound the trumpet and tell your family and friends about a Real Savior who loves them!

Prayer Closet:

Ask for God to give you a new view of those that surround you. Ask God to reveal to you the real need of those that surround you. Ask God to give you courage and timing to share His love with those that you encounter daily. May your words be His words and your love for others His love for others!

Notes:

Session 5: Conviction versus Convenience

Notes:

Session Goals...

- To know the difference between a life of conviction and a life of convenience.
- Understand that God calls us to live a life of conviction rather than convenience so that Christ is made known to all that we encounter.

Recap

In Session 4 we discussed the phoniness that is rampant in today's society. We are surrounded by counterfeit people in nearly every aspect of life. Ask your group how do we tell the difference between real and fake. Also recap some of the reasons we do not share our faith. Ask your group how we overcome such fears. Refer back to the Acts passage for the commission that God has enlisted us with.

Introduction

Question: Why do we choose to go to fast food restaurants?

Question: How long have you had to wait at a drive through window?

(Answer: 5 min. 10 min. 15 min.)

Question: How did that make you feel?

Why are WalMart stores so appealing?

convenience

It seems that convenience dominates American society.

Examples:	Ipods	The Cellphone	The Internet
	Movies On Demand	Take Out food	
	The Microwave	Pizza delivery	

All of these things work because of convenience.

If it is not convenient it is not worth it to today's culture!

The Bible speaks about a life of conviction over conveniences.

Ask someone to read Daniel1: 1—5.

Reading Response:

1. How many years did these men train?
The men prepared for 3 years to serve in the king's service.
2. What are the qualifications to serve in the king's service?
The men had to be youthful with no defect, handsome, intelligent, knowledgeable, quick learner, and able to serve.
3. What did the king appoint them to have each day?
The king appointed an allotment of food and wine for them to consume each day.

Most of the food offered to the king's servants was food sacrificed to the false gods of Babylon. Though the food was high quality and convenient, the four men from Israel would not eat food offered to a false god. These men chose...

CONVICTION NOT CONVENIENCE!

Ask someone to read Daniel1: 6—7.

Reading Response:

1. What are the Jewish names of these young men?
Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. (v. 6)
2. What are the Babylonian names given to these young men?
Beltshazzar, Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego. (v. 7)
3. Why did Daniel choose not to use his Babylonian name?

CONVICTION NOT CONVENIENCE!

Ask someone to read Daniel1: 8—10.

Reading Response:

1. What was the request of these young men regarding their diet?
They requested not to defile themselves with the king's food. (v. 8)
2. What did they request the king serve them?
The men requested that they only be served water and vegetables.

CONVICTION NOT CONVENIENCE!

Ask someone to read Daniel1: 11—20.

Reading Response:

1. How many days did Daniel ask to be tested?
He asked the chief official to test the young men for 10 days. (v. 11)
2. What was the *physical* result of the vegetable and water diet?

Notes:

The men looked healthier and better nourished than any of the other men in the king's service. (v. 15)

3. What was the *eternal* result of the young men choosing to live a life of a conviction?

The king appointed the men into high authoritative positions in the kingdom. (v. 18—20)

CONVICTION NOT CONVENIENCE

Question: Are you living a life of conviction or convenience?

Question: Are you prepared to live a life of conviction over convenience?

It must have been incredibly tough to sit and drink their water and watch everyone else eat meat and potatoes. These guys would have surely been made fun of! They would have been insulted, put down, and may not have had many friends. They were living a life of conviction – not convenience! What is more important to you?

****Notice the blessing that these young men received when they lived a life of conviction.****

Question: What blessing did these young men receive based on their life of conviction?

(Answer: The young men received knowledge and understanding which in a Babylonian society meant everything.)

DID YOU KNOW:

Most Bible scholars think that Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were only teenagers. Most scholars place their ages between 14 and 19.

Young people control the majority of how the media and many other businesses create their products. Businesses want to make sure that the American young person thinks their products are cool. Young people have done amazing things in Biblical and other historical times.

Notes:

Question: Can you think about any young person in today's society that has made a difference in the world they live in?

In today's world, we must make choices based on conviction and not convenience.

Question: What convictions do you have that you will never compromise?

Question: Why do you have these convictions?

Question: What are some things that people do or do not do because of convenience?

Question: How do we live a life of conviction?

Three ways to live a life of conviction:

1. *Study God's Word.*
Spend time daily in the scriptures! (Colossians 3:16)
2. *Pray diligently.*
Take time to listen to God and to talk. (Luke 5:16)
3. *Walk in the Spirit.*
(Romans 8: 5 – 10)

Notes:

Think about people who are watching you. What do they see? Do they see a person who lives by conviction or convenience? When will you live a life that is for God?

The choice is yours to live a life of...

CONVICTION **OR** **CONVENIENCE**

Prayer Closet:

Praise God for supplying us with Scripture of what our convictions should be. Ask God for a clear direction on what your convictions should be. Ask God to give you the strength to live a life of conviction over convenience.

Notes:

When to Refer¹

It is important to seek outside help for helpees who:

- Are in legal difficulties;
- Have severe financial needs;
- Require medical attention;
- Are severely depressed or suicidal;
- Appear to be losing control over behavior, thoughts, or emotions;
- Require more time or emotional energy than we can give;
- Want to shift to another counselor;
- Show extremely aggressive behavior;
- Make excessive use of alcohol or other drugs;
- Have strong feelings of dislike, are sexually stimulated, or threaten the counselor;
- Have a problem that appears to be getting worse in spite of your help;
- Have problems that are beyond the helper's training or ability to help; and or
- Appear to be severely disturbed.

¹ Collins, Gary; *How to Be a People Helper*. Grand Rapids: Tyndale House, 1995.

Unhealthy and Healthy Ways to Meet a Crisis

Unhealthy Ways to Meet a Crisis

1. Deny that a problem exists.
2. Evade the problem by ignoring it, hiding it, or trying to escape it with alcohol or other drugs.
3. Refuse to seek or accept help.
4. Hide feelings of sorrow, anger, guilt, etc.
5. Give no thought to practical ways by which the crisis might be handled.
6. Blame others for causing the crisis, and expect that somebody else is totally responsible for curing it.
7. Take on the role of a helpless victim who has been abused by others and who can do nothing except suffer.
8. Turn away from friends or family.
9. Refuse to pray about the crisis.
10. Convince yourself that a crisis is evidence of God's punishment or disfavor.

Healthy Ways to Meet a Crisis

1. Face the fact that there is a problem.
2. Attempt to understand the situation more fully.
3. Open channels of communication with friends, relatives, pastors, or others who might be able to help.
4. Face up to negative feelings of guilt, anxiety, or resentment, and consider actions and alternative ways of viewing the situation so that you can deal with these feelings.
5. Separate the changeable from the unchangeable in the situation, and accept that which cannot be changed.
6. Explore practical ways of coping with the problem, and take steps (however small) in handling the problem in a practical way.
7. Accept responsibility for coping with problems, even problems that seem to have arisen from situations beyond your control.
8. Pray about the matter, honestly sharing your concerns with God. Remember that God is both aware of our crises and concerned about us.

Step 1:
Building Rapport

Step 2:
Clarifying the Issues

Step 3:
Exploring Alternatives

Step 4:
Stimulating Change

Step 5:
Evaluating Results

Step 6:
Terminating the Relationship

