WEEK OF

JANUARY 15, 2012

SMALL GROUP

BIBLE DISCUSSION

TOPIC: NO FREE PASS

Lesson in a Line:
Here is reality: everything we do has consequences, whether we be young or old.

Key Scriptures:
1 John 2:1-17; 2 Kings 2:23-24; 2 Corinthians 6:11-18; 1 Timothy 4:7-12; 1 Samuel 18:5,14,15,30

Points to Make

- A very large gang of young men (the noun used here, "*na 'ar*", most often refers to people at least in their teens) recognized Elisha as he was going to Bethel and began following, ridiculing and taunting him on a couple of fronts:
  - "Go up": i.e. If you are the prophet, the new 'Big Man' in town, ascend into heaven as your predecessor Elijah has done.
  - "Baldhead": a derogatory term in their day to indicate a lack of power. Men with hair were considered strong and virile, bald men were considered weak and undesirable.
- They were ridiculing God and God's man.
- There are likely other aspects to this encounter that we are not fully aware of, but the crucial point is that God held these young men accountable for their words and actions and sent His judgment upon them.
- God's desire is for young people to use their strength and power for the purposes of His kingdom, not to engage in immoral, illicit or illegal acts, wrongly thinking they can get away with misdeeds just because they are young!
- "Just hold this for me for a couple of days." "Just drop this off to so and so for me."
- Doing "favours" for somebody can land you in jail with a record for drug possession, even trafficking.
- Providing "benefits" to your friends can leave you pregnant and/or diseased and totally destroy the plan you (and/or God) had for your life.
- Sex for fun comes with a price tag.
- The desire to "fit in" – dressing, walking and talking like the people they currently admire -- has already led to people being seriously hurt, arrested or even killed as a result of mistaken identity. (As a killer on a public transit bus said in a text message to his leader: "I did the wrong guy".)
- Could you be next? "Of course not," you say. The truth is, no-one knows.
- The apostle John exhorts us: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15 KJV).
- The apostle Paul pleads with the Corinthians: 14"Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? … 17 'Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,' says the Lord. 'And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. 18 'And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,' says the Lord Almighty" (2 Corinthians 6 NASB).
- Bad things *can* happen - God's judgment *can* fall - to the young as well as to the old. There is no 'youth exemption'!
- As young people, the Lord actually expects us to be leaders for good, not followers of evil.
- 1 Timothy 4:7-12 (NASB) "… discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness;… 10 For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers….12 Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe."
- Let us live with wisdom and understanding as David did (1 Samuel 18). We have no exemptions or 'mulligans' *(golf: replay of shot)*.
- Everything we do counts. There is no free pass. Let us live with this reality in mind.

Discussion Tools

- Discuss as a group: a) is it more challenging to be "separate" from the world system as a child, youth, young adult, or adult? b) Does it get easier? If so, why? If not, why not?
- Is it ever okay to be as "the world" in any way? Explain.
- What are some basic principles we need to develop in our youth, or eventually, if we truly want to become "examples of believers"?

Prayer Time

Lord, whether I am young or old please help me to focus on You and on what You desire. Help me to be a true example of a believer.

ICE-BREAKER: What is one thing (new or repeated) that you are thinking of doing, or determined to do this year?

NOTES