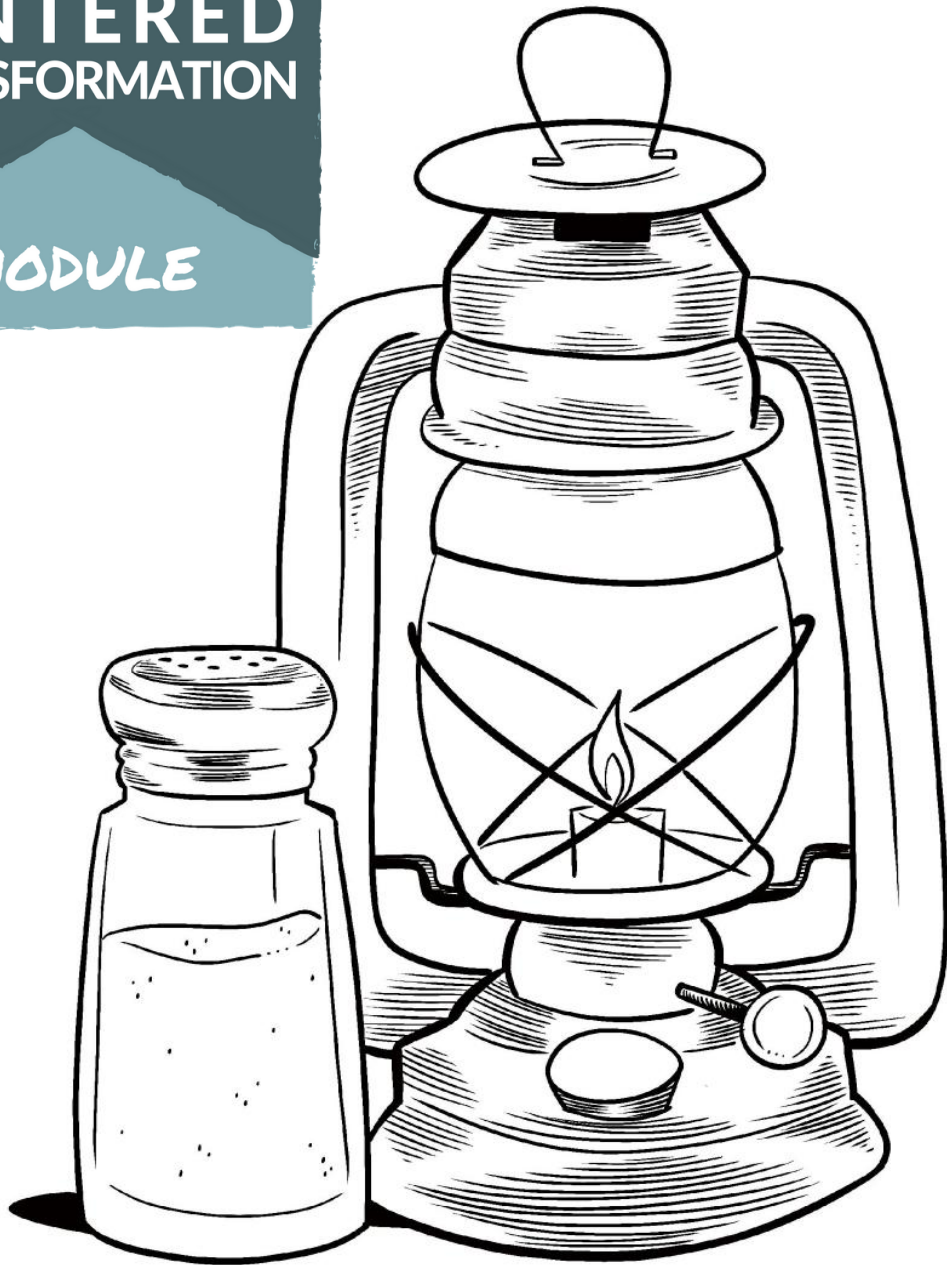


**TRUTH
CENTERED
TRANSFORMATION**

MODULE



SALT AND LIGHT SERMON MATERIALS

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Lesson 1: Salt and Light

Main Idea: As salt and light, our lives are intended to create change in our communities.

Introduction

Hold up a container with salt in it. Salt is a basic and wonderful way to make things better!

- Adds flavour to food. Good for cleaning and preserving things. Our bodies need salt to live.
- Salt is a symbol for who Christians are.

Key Ideas

Be like salt by caring for your community

Matthew 5:13

'You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.'

- Jesus is talking to His followers (us).
- Jesus is telling His followers two things by comparing them to salt.
 - Salt is valuable - we are very valuable.
 - Salt is useful - we are able to be useful in our communities.

Story

Imagine that two people go into a shop to buy grain, and the shopkeeper gives them both too much change. The first buyer laughs to himself about how uneducated the shopkeeper is, and then goes away and keeps the money. The second buyer tells the shopkeeper about the mistake, and returns the money. When the shopkeeper says thank you and confesses that he has trouble with maths and it's hurting his business, the second buyer volunteers to help teach him if he'd like to learn.

- The second buyer is being salt. He shows his value by being useful to the shopkeeper—making his community a better place to live.
- We should also be salt, every day making things better for those in our communities.

Be like light, doing good deeds to bring glory to God

- Light helps us to see and helps things to grow.

In John 8:12, Jesus says:

'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'

- When we follow Jesus, He shows us how to live.

Matthew 5:14–16

'You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.'

- We shine our light by doing good deeds. People will see them and glorify God.
- This is the church's role in the world. Where people of God choose not to shine their light, their communities are left in darkness with no hope.

Two story illustrations

In one village, whenever someone got sick, the witch doctor would come and require them to sacrifice an animal in order to receive advice and medicines. When the Christians at the church learned about health through the TCT programme, they started to use the lessons to treat common illnesses for themselves and their neighbours. All the people in the village could see that the people who were following their advice would get better without having to sacrifice animals. Now the whole village tries to prevent and treat illness rather than making sacrifices. This saves them money and keeps them healthy. It seems that serving God makes Christians' lives better. It makes others' lives better, too!

In another village, when people came to help harvest a field, the owner of the field was required to provide a large meal and sodas or alcohol to everyone who helped. Sometimes the cost of this was more than the profit from the harvest! After studying about Acts of Love, the Christians in this community decided that they would help in the fields of the poor without requiring any food. People were surprised that the Christians didn't only help each other but helped people outside the church too. Soon, other people in the village saw what they were doing and followed their example. Now everyone in the village works in each other's fields for free. They all bring their own meals, and they work together. As a result, each family is able to make a profit. Now harvesting is a time the village looks forward to instead of a time they worry about, and they can provide for their families with their profits.

- The churches did good deeds and made their communities better.
- Now the communities know that the God of the Christians is good.
- *Share some stories from your community and remind the congregation how the community responded.*

Conclusion and Application

We are to be salt, changing our communities for the better.

We are to be light, doing good deeds so that God will be praised.

- Do I really believe that God intends for His followers—including me and my church—to be salt and light, doing good deeds that create change in our community?

Pastor: Pray that God will show the church a way to be salt and light. Take a minute or two to wait quietly for Him to answer.

Lesson 2: Glorifying God

Main Idea: The purpose of being salt and light to others is to glorify God in all that we do.

Review of Lesson 1

As salt and light, our lives are intended to make things better in our communities.

Matthew 5:16

'In the same way let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.'

Introduction

- The purpose of being salt and light is so that God will be glorified.
- This sermon focuses on what it means to glorify God.

Key Ideas

Our lives should glorify God

- Background to passage: The Israelites were God's chosen people. He delivered them from slavery in Egypt, and they travelled through the desert to the land God had promised them (Exodus).
- When they got to the land, they sent in spies. Two spies talked about the good food and beautiful land. The rest focused on dangers and 'spread a bad report' (Numbers 13).
- The people didn't trust God. They wanted to go back to Egypt. In response, God said that He would destroy the Israelites and instead make a new people for Himself out of Moses (Numbers 14:1-12).

Numbers 14:13-16

Moses said to the Lord, 'Then the Egyptians will hear about it! By Your power You brought these people up from among them. And they will tell the inhabitants of this land about it. They have already heard that You, Lord, are with these people and that You, Lord, have been seen face to face, that Your cloud stays over them, and that You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. If You put all these people to death, leaving none alive, the nations who have heard this report about You will say, "The Lord was not able to bring these people into the land He promised them on oath, so He slaughtered them in the wilderness".'

- Moses begs God to forgive the people.
- Moses is more concerned about God's reputation than his own. He wanted God to get glory.
 - He wonders, 'What will the people think about God if this happens?' Moses worries that if God destroys the Israelites, then the Egyptians and others will think that God was not able to fulfil His promise to bring them to the promised land.

1 Corinthians 10:31

'So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.'

- Do you ever think about God's reputation?
- Everything we do, even something as simple as eating or drinking, should be done for the glory of God.
 - If the houses of Christians are the worst kept in the community, their property is uncared for, and their children dressed in dirty clothes, what will people think about God?
 - 'God only cares about spiritual things but doesn't care about families.'
 - 'God doesn't have enough power to take care of His people.'
- This doesn't mean that we need to be rich or perfect to glorify God.
 - Jesus was born into a poor family.
 - We need to use what God has given us as best we can to bring Him glory.

STORY

A family was relocated to a small village because of a war in their country. Before the war, the family had been very wealthy. Instead of a fancy house in the city, they now lived in a mud hut. The wife missed the beautiful house and thought about it all the time. She didn't take care of the simple house and it quickly became run down. After some time, her oldest brother-in-law came to stay. He swept and cleaned the area, repaired the house, and picked flowers to bring a little of God's beauty inside. He stayed for a few weeks doing these kinds of simple tasks without using any money, and the feeling in the home changed. It gave hope to his brother's wife, to the whole family, and their neighbours as well. Even though the family was still poor and the house was still small and simple, the brother used what the family had to give glory to God in the midst of a difficult situation.

- The brother-in-law tried to glorify God in everything, even small things. It made a difference.
- If we take care of ourselves, our family, our property, it will make God look good.
- People will think, 'The God they worship is so wonderful. His laws are good. His ways are the best!'

Our lives should give God a good reputation

2 Corinthians 5:20

'We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us.'

- An ambassador is someone who lives in a foreign country to represent his home country.
 - Everything he says and does, even the way he dresses, is meant to bring honour and benefit to his home country.
 - If he does something bad, it makes his country look bad.

- This is similar to having children. If your child does something bad, you are embarrassed. It makes you look bad. If your child does something good, you are proud. It makes you look good.
- We are ambassadors for God's kingdom. We are His children.
 - When people look at us and our lives, they judge what God is like.
 - We want them to know that God is great and good. They should see the joy and generosity and sacrificial love that God gives.

Living for God's glory brings us joy

John 15:10-11

'If you keep My commands, you will remain in My love...I have told you all this so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.'

- Keeping Jesus's commands is not a heavy burden, but a joy.
- Just as Jesus had great joy in obeying the Father, we will have joy in our obedience to Him. We have complete joy when we follow His ways, and God gets the glory.

Conclusion and Application

1 Peter 2:12

'Live such good lives among [those who do not believe] that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us.'

- Think about how you have represented God this past week. When people look at your life, what might they think about God? Is there anything you need to change so that people will see how good God is?
- Our goal in living for God's glory is that others will see His goodness and also glorify Him. Isn't it wonderful that by living in this way, God blesses us even further by giving us joy? We have reason to glorify Him!

Lesson 3: True Christianity

Main Idea: True Christianity is expressed through external activities that come from who we are on the inside. They are the result of our love for God.

Review of Lessons 1 and 2

As salt and light, our lives are intended to make things better around us and in our communities. The purpose of being salt and light to others is to glorify God in all that we do.

Introduction

Can you tell what someone is thinking by looking at them? Does it matter what we are thinking? Today, three people who are doing good deeds will tell us what they are thinking. *(Pastor: You can read each person's role, or you can have a member of the church prepare beforehand to read them.)*

Key Ideas

Don't do Acts of Love just to show how good you are.

PERSON 1

(PROUDLY) How satisfying! Today I preached to a crowd of people in town. I told them all the ways they should be living. I truly am the best evangelist in this area —no-one else has as much success as me! It's not surprising: I spend 2 hours praying and 1 hour reading the Bible every day. Last week I fasted for 3 days and asked God to give me 150 conversions this month. I am sure when He sees how much I pray and fast that He will answer my prayer. It's too bad that others aren't as spiritual as me... Oh! There's that neighbourhood drunkard again. It looks like he won't even be able to find his way home and it's only 5:00! Ha. He really needs to hear one of my sermons! Well, I don't have time for him right now—it's time to pray!

- This person is proud of his own ability and performance.
- He thinks he is righteous for what he knows and does. He thinks he can earn God's favour with his work.
- This person is like a Pharisee.
 - The Pharisees were church leaders during the time of Jesus. They were so concerned with being perfect that they added many extra rules to the 10 commandments. They expected everyone to follow their rules also. People thought no one could be as 'holy' as Pharisees.

Matthew 23:5a

'Everything they do is done for people to see.'

Matthew 23:25

'Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.'

- The Pharisees had the right actions, but inside were greedy and proud, only interested in making themselves look good.
- Jesus judged them by what was in their hearts.
- We can be tempted to do good things so we look good instead of doing them because we love God and want other people to know how good He is.
- God cares most about our relationship with Him.
 - Our actions should come from a close relationship with Him.

Good deeds without love mean nothing

PERSON 2

(FRUSTRATED) Phew! What a day. I'm exhausted! Being part of the church is taking up a LOT of my time! Every week I spend time helping others. No wonder the pastor told me that I was such a blessing to the church! Today I brought food to 3 sick people. Last week, I organised the building of a house for a widow... (GETS ANGRY) Not that I really understand that woman. She did say thank you, but it was almost like she felt like she deserved it. I really don't like people like that. They don't understand what I sacrifice to help them. I mean I do have my own family to look after. But really she had no gratitude. People should respect my efforts more. Stupid widow, I wish I hadn't helped her.

- Person #2 wants to feel good about herself so she is frustrated when the widow doesn't show enough appreciation to her.
- She did these things so that people would praise her not because she truly loved.

1 Corinthians 13:1–3

'If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.'

- Person #2 is missing love. Serving without love in our hearts is not enough! We must have love in order for our Acts of Love to be worthwhile.

God's love gives us the ability to love others

1 John 4:7–8

'Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.'

- God is the source of love. We need to look to God to give us more love when we aren't feeling loving. Ways to grow in love:
 - Remember how much God loves you.
 - You don't have to be better than others. You are valuable to Him just as you are.

- Memorise a verse like Isaiah 49:15. *‘Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion for the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!’*
 - Pray for the person you have a hard time loving.
 - Love grows as we pray for people—even those we don’t like.
 - Ask God to give you love for them. Keep doing this.
 - Learn about this person.
 - Often as we understand people better, our love for them increases.
 - Loving someone means that we really want what is good for them.
 - It doesn’t mean that you agree with all of their actions.
 - Jesus spent time with prostitutes, tax collectors, and other sinners. He loved them, ate with them, shared His life with them, and served them.
 - Even if we don’t feel loving, we can still try to show love towards someone.

PERSON 3

(HUMBLE) I am always so impressed with (person 1) and (person 2). They do so many great things for the church. It feels like I can never be as good as them. Today I tried to spend time praying, but after a few minutes, my daughter fell and cut her knee, so I stopped to clean and put a bandage on it. Then it was time to take the children to school. After that, I went to the fields to work. On my way home, I stopped to visit the widow next door. She just lost her husband, and she is so bitter. I feel sad for her. We spent a couple hours talking while I helped her with laundry, and I prayed with her. She seemed happier, but I wish that there was more that I could do to help. If only I were more spiritual, then I could do more.

(Bowing head) Father, please forgive me for the ways I am not perfect. I want to live a life that honours You. Show me how to spend my time and how to love others as You want me to. I need Your help; I know I can’t do it by myself.

- This person acknowledges her limitations and depends on God to help her love others.
- We don’t have to be perfect. God desires that we offer Him what we have each day for His glory, doing this out of love.

Conclusion and Application

- We are to be salt and light, in order to bring glory to God.
- Good deeds done in love must start with a right relationship with God.
 - Without that we will become like the first two characters—doing good deeds without love and instead becoming proud or resentful—and God will not be glorified through our deeds.

Think back to the three people—who are you most like? Ask God to examine your heart and show you the answers to the following questions:

- Do I want God to receive glory and praise because of what I do? Or am I more concerned about others praising me?
- Am I seeking after God sincerely, or am I only doing the right things when other people are watching? How do I treat my family when nobody else knows? Do I really love or am I more interested in people thinking that I am holy?
- Am I able to truly love my neighbour, or do I need to ask God to change my heart so that I can love truly?

Pastor: Have people pray together that God will transform our hearts and actions to truly demonstrate His love to our communities.

Lesson 4: Removing Sin & Renewing Our Minds

Main Idea: To be salt and light in our communities we must take steps to overcome sin.

Optional Materials: visual aids from the original Salt and Light Module Lesson 4

Review of Lessons 1-3

We are to be salt and light to our communities in order to bring glory to God. Good deeds must start with a right relationship with God, so that we have love for others. Without love we may do good deeds, but it won't mean anything. We will become either proud or resentful.

Introduction

Let's look at the second part of Matthew 5:13.

'You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.'

Today we're going to talk about what happens if salt becomes un-salty.

Key Ideas

Sin makes us lose our saltiness

- Sin is like impurity in salt. It makes us un-salty and ineffective in our community.
- Sin is anything in your thoughts, words, or actions that is wrong, against God's will.

1 John 1:8

'If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.'

- We are all sinful. We keep sinning.
- We all need to know how to remove sin so that we can be made salty.
- Pray: *Lord, give us willing hearts and understanding of how to overcome our sin.*
- Over the next 2 lessons we are going to learn three simple steps to overcoming sin in our lives.
 1. Remove sin
 2. Renew our minds
 3. Replace bad with good

The first step to overcoming sin is to remove the sin

Identify the sin



- Ask God to show you a sin that He wants you to work on changing. (It may be something that we do or something that we fail to do.)

Psalms 139: 23–24

'Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.'



Confess the sin and be forgiven

1 John 1:9

'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'

- No sin is too terrible for God to forgive! He is faithful to forgive ALL of our sins.
- Confess to others. If we have sinned against someone else, a relationship has been damaged or broken by our sin. It is important that we confess and seek their forgiveness in order for that relationship to be restored as well.



Repent

- Repenting means turning around. It means committing to move away from sin and toward God's will. It is necessary to repent in order to not repeat sins.

Job 31:1

'I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman.'

- Job repented. God called Job 'blameless and upright' (Job 1:8), but Job still needed to make a commitment not to lust. God honours those who desire to overcome their sin.

The second step to overcoming sin is to renew our minds



Pray every day

- We cannot overcome sin by our own efforts alone.

Romans 7:19–20

'I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do – this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.'

- We need God's help to remove sin from our hearts. Praying reminds us of our dependence on God and of our commitments to Him. God will help us.

Matthew 26:41

'Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.'



Control your thinking

- Many sins are committed two times—once in the mind and the second time in behaviour. We need to control our thoughts in order to prevent a sinful thought from becoming a sinful action.

Romans 12:2

'Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing, and perfect will.'

2 Corinthians 10:5b

'...we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.'

Philippians 4:8

'Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things...'

- Confess sinful thoughts to Christ. Choose a new thought.
 - Example sinful thought: 'My family doesn't appreciate all I do for them.' Confess selfishness and then pray, 'God, I choose to work for You and Your glory. Help me not to expect thanks from my family, but to please You with my work and attitude.'
 - Repeat as often as the sinful thoughts arise.



Memorise scripture

Psalm 119:11

'I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.'

- Jesus quoted scripture in order to defeat Satan's temptations. If you don't know a helpful scripture, ask a pastor or another friend.
- Memorising scripture helps us control our thinking and keeps truth in our minds.

Conclusion and Application

- All of us have sin in our hearts, like impurities in salt. Not one of us is blameless and pure. Our sins take away our saltiness.
- God desires to forgive our sin and to help us remove it from our lives. This makes us salty again and allows us to be more effective in doing Acts of Love in our communities.
- To overcome sin we must remove the sin (identify the sin, confess and be forgiven, and repent) and then renew our minds (pray, control your thinking, and memorise scripture). This takes effort and time, but be encouraged. Jesus has already overcome sin and death! His power can overcome the sin in our lives, too.

Spend a minute asking God if there is a sin in your life He wants you to overcome. Ask Him to forgive you, and then repent and choose a verse you can memorise when you are tempted with that sin.

Let's pray: God, help us to remove the sins that You reveal to us. Let Your word and life renew our minds so that we can be filled with Your truth and love.

Lesson 5: Replacing Bad with Good

Main Idea: Replacing bad habits with good habits is necessary to overcoming sin in our lives.

Optional Materials: optional visual aids from the original Salt and Light Module, Lesson 5

Review of Lessons 1-4

- We are to be salt and light to our communities in order to bring glory to God.
- Without love we may do good deeds, but it doesn't mean anything.
- We all have sin in our hearts. We must overcome sin by removing it and renewing our minds.

Introduction

There is one more thing we must do to overcome sin.

STORY

There was once a man who was building a house a bit at a time. There was one problem: he did not live nearby. He would sometimes come to the house to find the neighbour's goats and chickens inside the house. The man completed the walls and blocked the entrance so the animals could not enter. Later, he discovered a family of rats nesting in the corner. He rid the house of rats and completed the roof. The next time he came to the house to work he found a neighbour was using the house to sell the local homemade brew to the men of the village. Furious, he demanded the woman relocate her business. He added a lock to the door.

The man realised that as long as his house was left empty, something would fill it. If he did not choose what would fill his house, it would be filled with unwelcome pests and people who were up to no good. He invited a quiet responsible couple to live in the house until his own family could move in.

- Our hearts and minds are like this man's house.
- We can't just get rid of our sin. We must replace our bad habits with good habits.

Key Ideas

The final step in overcoming sin is to replace bad habits with good habits



Flee from temptation

- Avoid temptation.
 - Overcoming sin is like a battle. TO win a battle, you need to know your enemy and you must know your own weaknesses.
- Resist temptation and trust God. God promises that He will help you stand against temptation.

James 4:7

'Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.'

1 Corinthians 10:13

'No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.'

Develop new habits



- In the place of sinful habits, develop new habits.
 - If I repent of getting angry when dinner is delayed, I can make a habit to ask my wife how I can help to get the work done.
 - If I've decided to stop meeting friends at the bar each evening, I can make a habit of spending that time with my children.
 - If I have a problem of complaining or being resentful, I can develop a habit each evening of naming three things I am especially thankful for from the day.

Be accountable



- Overcoming sin is difficult. We need help.

Ecclesiastes 4:9–10

'Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labour: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.'

- Find someone who will ask how you are doing with your temptation and encourage and affirm you when you make good choices in that area.
- Choose believers who are willing to share with you about their own struggles.
- As we develop good habits, it will become easier to overcome the sin next time. Every time we make the right choice, it becomes a little easier.

Practise doing the steps to overcome sin

Let's go through an example of how we might overcome the sin of complaining.

- First, remove the sin.
 - Identify the sin. 'I am complaining about my work. I should not do this'.
 - Confess and ask forgiveness. 'Lord, I confess that I complain about having to work so hard. Please forgive me'.
 - Repent. 'Instead of complaining, I will try to speak positively and be thankful'.
- Next, renew our minds.
 - Pray daily. 'I need help today to not complain. Please help me to be thankful and to work joyfully'.

- Control our thinking. 'When I complain, I am thinking only of myself. Instead, I want to think of how my work can glorify God. I want to think about Him instead of myself'.
- Memorise scripture. Philippians 2:14 says, '*Do everything without grumbling or arguing.*'
- Finally, replace bad habits with good habits.
 - Flee temptation. 'I always complain when I'm with _____. I need to either not spend time with him/her or tell him/her that I don't want to complain anymore'.
 - Develop new habits. 'When I'm tempted to complain, I will think of 3 things that I am thankful for'.
 - Give accountability. 'I will tell ____ about my desire to overcome complaining. I will ask him/her to hold me accountable. I will also seek to help _____ overcome sins if he/she will allow me to hold him/her accountable'.

Conclusion

- We are to be salt and light to our communities in order to bring glory to God.
- Without love we may do good deeds, but it doesn't mean anything.
- We all have sin in our hearts, which makes us un-salty. We must overcome sin by removing it, renewing our minds, and replacing bad habits with good habits.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Pray and ask God to show you a sin He wants you to overcome. Take a few moments to silently listen for Him to bring something to your mind. Then ask Him to help you follow the steps to overcome it. Make a plan.

Lesson 6: Becoming a Salt and Light Church

Main Idea: Transformation comes through regular, faithful obedience in all areas of life.

Review of Lessons 1-5

- We are to be salt and light to our communities in order to bring glory to God.
- Without love we may do good deeds, but it doesn't mean anything.
- We all have sin in our hearts. We overcome sin by removing it and renewing our minds, and replacing bad habits with good habits.

Introduction

- Imagine that someone has gone out into the forest (or bush or jungle) to get wood. He gets lost in the dark, and is looking for a way back to the village. He sees a glimmer of a fire in the distance and heads towards it, but as he hopefully walks, he sees no more light. He wanders in circles, getting farther and farther away from home, until he is completely lost in the morning.
- If he had seen the light of the fire consistently, he would have known where to go. His life would have been saved.
- As a salt and light church, our good deeds shine the light of God's love. We need to keep this light shining!

Key Ideas

God calls us to be faithful throughout our lives

The church at Thessalonica became an example for other churches.

1 Thessalonians 3:11-13; 4:1, 9-10

'Now may our God and Father Himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May He strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all His holy ones... As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more... Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. And in fact, you do love all of God's family throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more...'

- Paul commends the believers for their Acts of Love.
- He prays for them and urges them to increase their love more and more.

2 Corinthians 8:1-5

'And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.'

- Paul says that the Thessalonians (Thessalonica was in Macedonia) were eager to give because they were giving to God and to others.

Deuteronomy 5:32-33

'So be careful to do what the LORD your God has commanded you; do not turn aside to the right or to the left. Walk in obedience to all that the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess.'

- 'Walking' in obedience means we are not to stop. We are meant to follow and obey God our whole lives, not just when it is convenient.

God calls us to be faithful in all areas of life

Luke 2:52

'And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.'

- Jesus grew mentally (wisdom), physically (stature), spiritually (favour with God), and socially (favour with man).
- For each of these areas, people have different needs.
 - Wisdom – education, learning skills such as how to treat illnesses or manage money.
 - Physical – health care, stable homes, food security, clean water.
 - Spiritual – salvation, growing closer to God.
 - Social – marriage and parenting relationships, community relationships.
- These four areas form a model of how our families, our communities, and ourselves ought to grow.
- To see change, our Acts of Love should help with needs in all 4 areas.
- Our church has already served in some of these areas. We have _____ (*list some AOL the church has done*). But there are other needs in our community, such as _____. What Acts of Love could we do to address these needs? (*Give some ideas. Encourage your church members to talk to each other about ideas also.*)

Change comes through regular, faithful obedience in all areas of life

Listen to this true story of a church who applied the TCT lessons that we have been learning.

There is a village in a remote area. It is set far into the mountains and is very simple. The people in the village used to make rice wine and grow and smoke tobacco. They rarely worked, but were often drunk on the rice wine that they made. Hygiene in the village was very bad; they bathed once a month, rarely washed their hands, and had no latrines. Their clothing was ragged, and the children wore very little.

The villagers were poor. There was no road between them and the main road—only a walking path. Because of this, the people could only sell as much of their harvest as they could carry on their backs to the market. Since they couldn't sell much, they only used a little effort to grow crops in their fields.

The people in this village were Christians, but they had not learned much about God. They did not have a church leader, and no pastors would go to the area because the roads were impassable. To visit you had to leave your motorbike on the main road and walk for 3 hours, hoping that when you returned the motorbike was still there and hadn't been stolen! They didn't have a meeting place, and they were not growing spiritually.

The church heard about the TCT programme and begged the TCT leader in their area to include them in the training. For a long time none of the trainers wanted to go—it was such a long and difficult trip. And after they had walked to the village, the hygiene was so bad that they feared they would get sick. However, God spoke to one of the trainers, and eventually he agreed to go.

The church started studying the TCT programme. One of the first projects that God challenged them to do was to widen the walking track from their village to the main road—a distance of 10 kilometres through the mountains. They obeyed God and widened the road using hand tools. It was very hard work, but God blessed them. The larger road meant that they could sell more—no longer did they have to carry their crops on their back. They were also able to get the crops to the market while they were still fresh. As a result of this road their crop prices increased. Because they could now earn a good profit, they were motivated to work harder and drink less. The people began to work more in their fields, growing and selling ten times the amount that they used to!

Because the church applied the health lessons and taught them to the community, everyone now knows how to treat common illnesses, and everyone has a latrine, and a vegetable garden. The church also started a literacy programme. Seeing their motivation to learn, the government provided a school. God has also blessed them with electricity despite the fact that many villages between them and the electricity supplier don't yet have electricity.

This village is an example to so many around them of how God brings blessings when His people faithfully obey His command to love others. When they were asked after three years

how many Acts of Love they had done, it was more than they could count. Even when asked how many in the last three months, it was too many to list. Instead they explained that they do one or two Acts of Love a week and now it is part of their lifestyle. If they see something that needs to be done, they just go do it!

- This one church, with little knowledge of God, did what God showed them to do. They kept doing it, not only once, but regularly and faithfully.
- Through their many Acts of Love, God blessed the village with everything they needed.
- This church can serve as an inspiration to our church. We also can do many Acts of Love, serving in all areas of life. We can consistently apply what we are learning. We can do what God shows us to do.
- *Pastor: Invite church members to regular meetings to plan Acts of Love. Ask them to come to the first meeting with ideas of needs in all areas you talked about.*

The churches that have seen the most dramatic changes in their communities are churches that have committed themselves to doing all kinds of Acts of Love regularly, such as every month or even every two weeks.

Conclusion and Application

We are meant to be a salt and light church, faithfully shining God's light by regularly doing Acts of Love that address needs in all areas of life. When we do this, our community will glorify God and be transformed.

Pastor: Take some time to thank God for the impact of Acts of Love so far, choose some songs of worship or whatever is appropriate to celebrate in your church.

Lesson 7: A Part of the Body

Main Idea: We need to find ways to use our gifts to serve and encourage each other to serve as well.

Review of Lessons 1-6

- We are commanded to be salt and light to our communities in order to bring glory to God.
- Without love, good deeds don't mean anything.
- We overcome sin by removing it, renewing our minds, and replacing bad habits with good habits.
- Acts of Love should be done regularly—a variety of Acts of Love focusing on different areas of growth, and based on prayer.
- With God's power, a salt and light church can transform their community.

Introduction

- Think of a time when part of your body was not working correctly (example: pain in knees, weak eyes, digestive issues)
 - Affects the whole body! Hard to get work done, hard to enjoy life.

Key Ideas

Reminders of why we must serve

- God sent Jesus to die to reconcile the 3 relationships that were broken when Adam sinned—people with God, with each other, and with creation. We have been called to bring healing to all 3 relationships.
- People are important to God—so much so that He sent His son to die for them. We also should care for people.
- God said that He was not answering the prayers of the church because they had failed to care for the widows and orphans (Isaiah 58).
- When Jesus or Paul summarised the Old Testament, 3 times they did so with the teaching that we should love God and love our neighbour, and three times they just said to love our neighbour—because that is how we show love to God.
- In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the Good Samaritan looked after the man who had been beaten up and provided for him; he didn't preach him a sermon.
- In the teaching on the sheep and the goats, Jesus taught that we are to give food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, visit the sick or imprisoned, and clothe the naked. When we do it for another person, it is as if we are doing it for Christ.
- We have been called to build God's kingdom. That means we want more people to become Christians and we want Christians increasingly obeying God in every area of their lives.

- God has promised that, if we obey Him, He will bless us. He has given us guidelines to follow that will help us to improve our lives. We need to be obedient to Him.

We must all find ways to use our gifts to serve

1 Corinthians 12:12-20

'Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. Now if the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as He wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.'

- We are ALL members of the body of Christ.
- For the body to function well, every member of the church needs to be performing their role.

Ephesians 4:16

'From Him the whole body...grows and builds itself up in love as each part does its work.'

- A body grows best if every part does its work.
- The church grows best when we all use our gifts.

Romans 12:4-8

'For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.'

- We are each given gifts. What skills or talents do you have?
- We must use our gifts for God's glory.
- Give examples of opportunities to serve, including Acts of Love (ways people are serving now and where church still needs help).

We should encourage others to serve

Hebrews 10:24

'And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds...'

- Help people figure out what their talents are and how to use them.
- Invite people to serve with you.
 - Many people will not volunteer until someone personally invites them to. They may hear from the pulpit what is happening, but they just assume other people in the church will do it.
- Work together.
 - Gives accountability.
 - Builds relationships and unity.
 - Is more enjoyable.
- Recognise and thank people.
 - Romans 16 - a long list of names and things that those people had done.
 - Paul recognised their hard work and included their names!
 - Thanking people makes them feel valued.

When we serve others, we are serving Jesus

- Imagine what would happen if Jesus came to our village. Everyone would want to do something for Him. If someone said they were a Christian, and then didn't do anything, what would you think?

Matthew 25:40

'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of Mine, you did for Me.'

- When we serve the poor, we ARE serving Him!
 - Changes how we think about service.
 - Even if it is not recognised or thanked, it's important work.
 - A privilege and a joy to be serving Him.

Conclusion and Application

- We are all part of the body and must all use our gifts to serve.
- We must encourage each other to serve and serve together.
- When we serve others we are serving Jesus.
- Think of a way you can use your gifts to serve and a way you can encourage someone else to use their gifts.

Pastor: Invite people to the next AOL planning meeting and tell them when it will be (see Pastoral Planning Guide).

Pastoral Planning Guide:

Based on Salt and Light Lessons 7-9

How to Do Ongoing Education

One kind of Act of Love is 'ongoing education.' This practice spreads our knowledge to those around us so that more people can live as God intends. Here are ways that you as a pastor can do ongoing education.

- **Teach skills** – In addition to bringing spiritual teaching and encouraging the church, there may be opportunities for you to teach skills such as how to strengthen marriages or parenting. This can be done either during the sermon time or in a separate session after the sermon. Decide what skills you want to teach, and when you will teach them, and communicate this with your congregation.
- **Encourage small group study** – Small groups are a great place for church members to review the lessons that you are teaching or to pass the lessons on to others who may not have heard them. Encourage your small groups to review the TCT lessons after you teach them. Everyone from women's groups to youth groups can benefit from this.
- **Hold formal classes for community members** – You can adapt the lessons in the Health, Marriage & Family, and Money Management modules so that they can be taught after the church service or during the week. This allows the Christians and non-Christians to learn together, building relationships and opening doors for more interaction.
- **Informal Teaching Opportunities** – This is for all church members. A good way to encourage informal teaching is to reteach one lesson each week to the church so that people remember it and are able to teach it to those who they meet during the week.

APPLICATION

Take a minute or two to ask God which of these things He wants you to focus on. Quietly listen for the Holy Spirit to show you truth and give you ideas.

Steps For Planning Regular Acts Of Love

- **Meet regularly**
 - The church needs to be meeting regularly to focus on Acts of Love so that people don't simply get busy and forget about them. Before teaching lesson 7, meet with church leaders and decide how often to have AOL planning meetings. Try to meet a minimum of once a month. During lesson 7 you will present this information to the congregation.

- **Pray together**
 - Open meetings with prayer. It is only through God’s strength and wisdom that we can transform our communities. It is impossible without Him, but with Him we can truly make a difference. Never forget the importance of prayer; don’t be deceived into thinking that our actions are enough without it.
- **Assess needs and pray**
 - Each person should come to the meeting ready to discuss the needs that they see around them. Give time for people to share.
 - Lead the group in a time of prayer. Once you have asked God to provide wisdom and show you the needs He wants you to meet, take time to be silent. After about five minutes of silence, thank God that He is willing to lead and guide us. Pray that God will help you to make a plan that will bring Him glory.
 - Ask the group to share if any other ideas came to their minds while they were being silent. Add them to the list already shared. If not, continue with the ideas people already shared. See if any of them stand out as a good place to start. Help the group decide on a project.
- **Make a plan**
 - Remember that small activities done often are better than one large activity done once because:
 - Easier to do.
 - When the community sees constant service rather than just one large activity a year, they don’t forget.
 - Plans should use the resources God has given you and be manageable to complete in a short amount of time.
 - The *most* important thing is that your plans follow what God has shown you to do. He may tell you to do something that doesn’t make sense to you because it will bring Him glory when He accomplishes it.
 - Think through the following questions as you make a plan.
 1. When will you do the project?
 2. Are any resources needed? Materials? Tools? How will you get them?
 3. Do you need to invite people to be involved? Who will do that?
 4. Do you need any special permission? Who will ask?
 5. Are there any obstacles that might stop us implementing our plan? If so, what can we do to overcome these obstacles?
- **Pray and then implement**
 - Finish your meeting by doing a devotional (see below).
 - Then follow through with your plan.
- **Evaluate and pray to thank God** – At the NEXT meeting, see what impact there has been and offer praise to God for helping you complete the work.

Devotionals for AOL Planning Meetings

Devotional 1: The Importance of Prayer

Proverbs 3:5-6

'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.'

- As we plan, we must talk to God and listen to Him so that we know what He wants us to do.

Isaiah 55:8

'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways', declares the Lord.'

- The *most* important thing is that our plans follow what God shows us to do. He may tell us to do something that doesn't make sense to us, but when we obey it will bring Him glory when He accomplishes it.
- Only through God's strength and wisdom can we transform our communities. Don't be deceived into thinking that our actions are enough without God's direction and multiplication of our efforts.

Pray in each step of the planning, execution and evaluation of Acts of Love.

Devotional 2: Remaining Faithful

Matthew 21:28-30.

'What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.' 'I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go.'

- The first son did what the father wanted.
- The second son said yes, but he had no intention of being obedient.
- We need to remember that it is not enough to just make plans; we need to follow through on them.

Take time to pray, committing your plans to God and asking for His help in fulfilling them.

How to Mobilise Volunteers

- **Teach on the importance of serving**

We need to teach our churches about the importance of serving. If our people don't know about God's call to serve their communities, then we cannot be surprised if they don't volunteer to serve.

- **Invite people to be involved**

Many people will not volunteer until someone personally invites them to. They may hear from the pulpit what is happening, but they think other people in the church will do it.

Think of people who are not usually involved in serving or Acts of Love. When you have an Act of Love or other service opportunity that fits with their skills, take the time to personally invite them.

- **Create Opportunities**

For some people it's hard to see what they can do to serve. By organising Acts of Love, we create opportunities for people in the church to serve.

What abilities do people in your church have that they may not be using?
What AOLs could you plan that people with different talents could be involved in?

- **Work Together**

Encourage people to work together. It builds relationships and unity, and people will enjoy it more.

- **Make it enjoyable**

People are going to volunteer more, work longer, and be more involved when they enjoy what they are doing.

- **Recognise and thank people**

People like to help when they feel recognised and appreciated.

What are some of the ways that you have recognised and thanked people?
What else could you do, especially for those who are least recognised?

All people are motivated differently, so you should use a variety of ways, not just one. You want to build a serving atmosphere.

What ideas might work well in your church?

Pray for the church.

Choose three things to put into practice this month. Plan how to implement them.