

Teaching Guide for Deliver Us I: Recognizing the Influence of Evil on the Road to Redemption

I'm writing this guide without any idea on how you will use *Deliver Us I: Recognizing the Influence of Evil on the Road to Redemption*. It could be a one-on-one Bible study, a small group meeting in a home, a Sunday morning class or even as a resource for a sermon you will deliver. It might be the sole focus of your study or it could be one of many resources upon which you will draw.

What I am attempting to provide here is some supplementary information that might be helpful in any setting. I've included material I have used when teaching, scriptural references, observations of other authors and links to websites that will help you to gain further information. You may use these things in addition to questions that are highlighted in the text of each chapter. In regard to the information you find at the websites I've provided: I can't vouch for the fact that I am in 100% agreement with everything you find at the sites I've provided and you probably won't be, either. So, as we often say at recovery-group meetings, "Take what you can use and leave the rest behind."

Whatever your approach, I believe the most important thing you can do is get people to adapt the information to their own personal circumstances. This is most easily accomplished in a setting where individuals are free to share personal insights with each other. You, the group leader, preacher or teacher have the opportunity to create such an environment by first sharing some of your own shortcomings and struggles as they relate to the material. Your transparency will help others to follow suit.

In his personal teaching, Jesus often stimulated thought by asking questions. I attempt to follow His example in my own teaching, and you might try it, too. When a question below appears by itself, it was written with the idea that you could use it to ask to the group you are teaching.

If you would like to communicate with me about this book and the best way to teach it, you may reach me by e-mailing dumphrey@smu.edu. Please feel free to share teaching ideas you have used with the material from this book. If this information would be helpful to others, I will include it when I next update this PDF and also will cite the names of contributors.

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Chapter 1—The Source of Evil

I have sometimes used I Corinthians 13:12 as my theme for this study. I first read that passage followed by I Corinthians 13:4-13 to put the key verse into its proper context.

Here is some insight into verses 11 and 12 that may be helpful:

Vs. 11 from commentary: “The contextual meaning is to tell the Corinthians that certain thinking and behavior are appropriate for certain ages. Compared to the age to come, the present age is childlike. This reminder to the Corinthians, who believe they know far more than they actually do, anticipate the connection in 13: 12 about the poor reflection of reality experienced in the ‘now.’ It is only when ‘time will be no more’ that the Corinthians will fully recognize their earlier adolescence.”

“The function of this verse (12) is to challenge the readers at Corinth to recognize the relative inferiority of their current situation.” (Of living in a fallen world.) “By his twofold use of the “now/then” temporal contrast, the apostle is attempting to diminish the misplaced security some of the Corinthian believers have... By his references to the eschatological future (then) and its superiority, Paul hopes to shift the Corinthians out of their carnal thinking.”

(Source: Richard E. Oster, Jr., *The College Press NIV Commentary*, College Press, Joplin, MO, 1995, 323)

The idea that verse 12 refers to a divine encounter is evident in the way the verse is rendered in *The Message*: “We don’t yet see things clearly. We’re squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won’t be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We’ll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, know him directly just as he knows us.”

Question: Why don’t we now see things clearly?

Answer: Because we live in a fallen world. Adam and Eve had a face-to-face relationship with God, and lost that relationship when sin entered the world. We will regain that relationship when we enter heaven.

Deliver Us I, Chapter One spells out seven different views of Satan that have led to misunderstandings about the way the source of evil works in the lives of others. Have students give examples about their own perceptions of Satan as children, how those views may have changed over the years, and what accounted for the change.

Read aloud from your Bible the passages I used to describe Satan: John 8:44; Revelation 12:9; John 12:31; I John 5:19. Ask people to give examples they have witnessed that provide examples as to the truths of these passages.

Somewhere during your lesson, make sure to emphasize Matthew 7:3-5. Many Christians in the classes I've taught want to talk about the faults of someone else or how terrible things are in the world. Of course, people do terrible things because we all fall short of God's glory and live in a fallen world. If we really want to grow spiritually, we need to focus on the faults of the person we see in the mirror. Hopefully, when you are teaching, you can encourage people to confess some examples from their own lives by confessing some from your own.

Links to biblical information about Satan:

http://www.godandscience.org/doctrine/who_is_satan.html

<http://www.bible.ca/su-devil.htm>

<http://bible.org/seriespage/survey-bible-doctrine-angels-satan-demons>

This link lists all of the names for Satan used in the Bible:

<http://www.susancanthy.com/resources/biblists/namesatan.html>

Chapter 2—Playing God

The objective of this lesson is to demonstrate that Satan “played God” and has been consistent throughout history; he wanted to be God, failed at that, has never acknowledged this failure but wants us to follow in his footsteps.

A desire to “play God,” in one form or another, is at the root of every temptation we will ever face. This temptation is at odds with the First Commandment, “You shall have no other gods before me.” (Ex. 20: 3) Jesus later restated this as the greatest commandment, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” (Luke 22: 37)

To begin to demonstrate the above, I quote from two Old Testament passages (Isaiah 14: 12-14 and Ezekiel 28: 12-15) that describe the origins of Satan while at the same time providing insights as to what motivates the devil.

Occasionally, someone may resist the idea that these passages apply to Satan and point out, for example, that Isaiah 13 starts as “An oracle concerning Babylon” that includes both Isaiah 13 and 14. Ditto for Ezekiel 28, which starts out as a prophecy against the king of Tyre. To address these concern I usually do three things:

1) Before starting with Isaiah 14, I go to Isaiah 15 that starts with “An oracle concerning Moab” that covers chapters 15 and 16. Right in the middle of this oracle (Isaiah 15:16) is a prophecy that applies to Jesus. Thus, the oracle does not focus exclusively on Moab. Then, I turn to the beginning of Isaiah 13 that the description of Satan (Isaiah 14: 12-14) is found in the middle of the oracle concerning Babylon.

2) In regard to the Ezekiel 28: 12-15, I observe that “from the day you were created” in verse 13 could not apply to the king of Tyre named in verse 2 because he was a man. While Adam and Eve were created, all other people, including the king of Tyre have been procreated. Verse 13, then, must apply to someone who is not a person—an angel. Also not applying to a human being is “You were blameless in your ways” found in verse 15.

3) I read from the following from *The New International Dictionary of the Bible*: “While many theologians refuse to apply the far-reaching prophecies in Isaiah 14: 12-14 and Ezekiel 28: 12-15 to Satan, contending that these passages are strictly addressed to the kings of Babylon and Tyre, conservative scholars generally hold that they contain a clear revelation of Satan’s origin. These profound prophecies seem clearly to go much beyond any earthly ruler and harmonize with the scriptural picture of Satan’s close relationship with world governments.” (J.D. Douglas and Merrill C. Tenney (editors), *The New International Dictionary of the Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1987, 899-900.

Starting with this lesson and several that follow, I usually focus quite a bit on the Garden of Eden as I have discussed in the book.

The idea of “playing God” is the same as being guilty of idolatry or sinning. “Playing God” is used here because it is exactly what Satan did and any time a person sins, he or she is putting self-will ahead of God’s will, the very same as Satan.

When I teach this lesson, I ask participants to identify how many times Eve “played God” within the confines of Genesis 3: 1-6 (and comparing her words to God’s words from Genesis 2: 16-17).

I’ve identified six times where Eve “played God.” Here they are:

- Added to God’s word
- Subtracted from God’s word
- Followed her own judgment over God’s.
- She assumed that she needed food that was forbidden--God’s food wasn’t good enough.
- The wisdom God had given her wasn’t good enough for her. She sought more “wisdom.”
- Ate the forbidden fruit

I write these on the board and then ask group members to identify instances where they have added to God’s word, etc.

I also like to use Satan’s question from Genesis 3:1, “Did God really say...?” How many times do people ask that when they are looking for an excuse to do something they know that God did not say?

Besides the instance of subtracting from God’s word as I indicated on pp. 24 and 25, Eve also subtracted from God’s word in this way: “God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit *from the tree that is in the middle of the garden...*’” (Genesis 3:3, emphasis mine). There were actually two trees in the middle of the garden and focusing solely on the forbidden tree, she left out “the tree of life.” (See Genesis 2:9.)

Starting with the Chapter 2 subtitle, “How We Play God” on page 28, I have given many examples of how this might occur. Share with the class some examples of how you have “played God.”

After you have shared, ask your class participants to give additional examples of other possible ways of “Playing God.”

Here are some links relating to the fall of humanity:

<http://bible.org/seriespage/fall-man-genesis-31-24>

<http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/am/v4/n3/lessons-fall>

<http://www.enduringword.com/commentaries/0103.htm>

<http://carm.org/genesis-3-fall-and-adam-and-eves-sin>

<http://www.jacksequeira.org/beyond01.htm>

http://www.sljinstitute.net/sermons/old_testament/pentateuch/pages/genesis8.html

Chapter 3—Me-Me-Me

On page 39 I have a full quotation of Isaiah 14: 13-14. The big point is that each of the sentences begin with “I will” and there is no mention of God’s will. This pretty well illustrates the objective of this chapter. Namely, being influenced by Satan, we have a tendency to focus on ourselves (me-me-me) and not God.

Containing parallels to that passage is “The Parable of the Rich Fool” from Luke 12: 16-21. The quotations from this man are rife with first-person pronouns and the overall attitude of this man is found in is found in verse 19, but God’s attitude toward him is in verse 20. Jesus synthesizes the point of this lesson in verse 21.

Diotrephes was described as one “who loves to be first.” (III John 9) Read verses 9 and 10 to see the “fruits” of this perspective.

Many football games show players and audience members indicating “I’m number one.” or “We’re number one.” What do you think about a recent advertising campaign that shows various people saying, “I am second?”

In Genesis 3:6 Eve let her own vision supersede God’s vision, and people have been doing it ever since.

For a positive example of the Prophet Samuel acknowledging the superiority of God’s vision, see I Samuel 16: 6-7.

On page 42 I quoted I Samuel 15:12 about Saul building a monument to himself. Ask your group the question that follows: “What are some ways that people build moments to themselves instead of to God?” Lead this off with a couple of examples from your own life.

Asking the class about examples of Narcissism (pages 42-44) may yield some interesting results. Some ways this may be found in our culture includes tanning salons, obsessions with body image that lead some people toward anorexia and bulimia.

In my own teaching, I have often found that the quotes from Robert R. Brown (page 46) yield some interesting responses if put to students in a form of questions about society in general and themselves.

Some helpful links:

<http://preachersfiles.com/when-self-is-at-the-center/>

<http://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Topical.show/RTD/cgg/ID/1139/Satans-Influence.htm>

<http://www.biblebell.org/angels/satan2.htm>

<http://www.biblecenter.com/counseling/selfcenteredness.php>

This last one deals with how to live with a self-centered person and has some good information. It will be helpful if kept in its exact context but harmful if used as a checklist of things to look for in someone else.

<http://smulfsblog.blogspot.com/2008/02/how-to-live-with-self-centered-person.html>

Chapter 4--Liar

The big headline for this chapter is the quote from Jesus found in John 8:44 (quoted on page 53). The big question for every person is this: What lies do I believe?

From the beginning of his dialogue with Eve starting in Genesis 3:1, Satan was twisting God's words toward his own end. It concludes with the bold-face lie, "You will not surely die." (Genesis 3:4)

In between, as observed in the book, "Satan twisted God's words to put a different focus on the issue. Satan's insinuation took Adam and Eve from "You are free" (Genesis 2:16) toward the idea of "You have little or no freedom." I then went on to write, "It smacks of 'God is trying to keep something from you' and 'God is trying to take all the fun out of your life.'" (page 53)

You know that I subscribed to the above lie, and I believe that this lie is rampant in our society. You might get some interesting responses by asking your students how this lie is perpetuated in the world around them. And even, instances where they have bought into this very same lie. Of course, you need to start this by telling about a few lies to which you have subscribed.

The material starting with the sub-head "A Pretty Package" also may lend itself to plenty of discussion. For example, what was Eve offered? "You will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:5) The book gives a few examples of how sin is wrapped in a pretty package. Ask your group to come up with other examples.

I have personally come to believe that every possible sin has a "payout" that gives the appearance of being positive. Ask individuals in your group to name a sin that does not seem to offer something positive. Then challenge the rest of the class to see if they can identify the seeming upsides of that temptation.

Below are "Experiences that characterize the demonic:" Daniel Day Williams, *The Demonic and Divine*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1990

--fascination "The demonic quickens interest and excitement... The demonic possesses a mode of fascination that casts a spell over our attention, releases our passionate energies, and drives us beyond our will under the guide of fulfilling our freedom." p. 7

--distortion of perception "The demonic gains its power to shape, exploit, and ultimately destroy our personal being by causing us to see falsely. Later, set free from illusion, we may see we were taken in." p. 8

--aggrandizement "The demonic ecstasy feeds upon itself and demands more and more. This is partly because the demonic structure is swollen with the lust for

power. Its craving is insatiable because it feeds upon its power of domination.” p. 9

--inertia –they continue in a fixed direction—“have their own momentum, which is extremely difficult to stop.” p. 10

Two links to Bible verses about liars:

<http://www.openbible.info/topics/liar>

http://www.openbible.info/topics/lying_on_of_hands

Here are links to Satan as a liar:

http://www.teachingtheword.org/articles_view.asp?articleid=64887&columnid=6093

<http://www.cynet.com/jesus/Prophecy/misuse.htm>

<http://www.lookoutmag.com/articles/articledisplay.asp?id=1048>

http://www.cke1st.com/sr_devil.htm

The article at this link describes the lies about abortion:

<http://www.priestsforlife.org/brochures/original.html>

Chapter 5—Illusions of Power and Control

As recorded in Matthew 6:27, Jesus asked, “Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?” In regard to thinking about our own power, this is a good question to ask ourselves.

I was talking about this passage with a friend, and he looked at it from this perspective: “How much power did you have over when and where you were born? You could have been born in India or Haiti or Russian. You could have been born in 542 A.D. or 1846 or 2012.”

Read Matthew 6:25-34 to itemize the types of things about which people worry. What is the solution to worrying about these things?

Here is a link to some Bible passages that deal with worry:

<http://www.walkoutofworry.com/wisdom.html>

See “The Great Power” in Acts 8:9-10. According to Peter, what was really motivating this man? (Acts 8:23) How much power did this man really have? (See this link about him: <http://focusongod.com/Acts13.html>)

Contrast the Great Power’s power to the power demonstrated by Philip in Acts 8: 4-8.

A biblical character who wanted to show his power was Solomon’s son, Rehoboam. Read about him and the results of his power-play in I Kings 12: 1-19. Be sure to see what happened to Adoniram in verse 19.

Here’s a question that you might ask: How much power do you have compared to how much power God has? As a part of that discussion, see these passages: Isaiah 55: 8-9; Ecclesiastes 8: 7-8; 11:5; Job 36:22-26; Job 38:1 - 42:6.

This link will take you to 15 verses that describe God’s power:

<http://www.whatchristianswanttoknow.com/bible-verses-about-god%E2%80%99s-power-15-great-scriptures/>

If 15 are not enough, this link takes you to 132 passages that deal with God’s power:

http://www.openbible.info/topics/gods_power

This article describes how God’s power works in our lives today:

http://www.gospelway.com/christianlife/serve_successfully.php

These two are about God’s power over our personal circumstances:

http://www.clintonnc.com/view/full_story/9556254/article-God-wants-you-to-reign-over-your-circumstances

http://www.when2pray.net/Mobile/default.aspx?article_id=63854

The following section about the complexities of the universe and of a single cell in the body was written originally for Chapter 5 but in the end, there wasn't enough room for it in the book. You might use this material to aid in a discussion of God's power.

God's Work in the Huge and the Miniscule

As a young shepherd, there were undoubtedly many nights when David looked up at the night sky and contemplated the power of God.

He was drawing upon such experiences while composing Psalm 8:3-4, "When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?"

I'm not sure how David perceived the night sky when he penned those words some 3,000 years ago. Unless he received special revelation from God, David may have thought of stars as pinholes in the sky and the moon as something like a giant beach ball a few miles up.

Based on the use of sophisticated instruments for probing the depths of space, today we have even more reasons to be astounded at God's power. Scientists believe there are 350 billion galaxies in the known universe that contain 30 billion trillion stars. <http://www.atlasoftheuniverse.com/universe.html>

We reside in the the Milky Way Galaxy, and the next closest galaxy to earth is the Canis Major Dwarf Galaxy, located 25,000 light years away. <http://www.universetoday.com/21914/the-closest-galaxy-to-the-milky-way/> (A light year is the time it takes for light to travel in one year. To put this in perspective, it takes 8 minutes and 20 seconds for light to travel the 93,000,000 miles from the sun to the earth.) <http://www.universetoday.com/15021/how-long-does-it-take-sunlight-to-reach-the-earth/>

The closest major galaxy is Andromeda, 2.6 million light years away. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andromeda_Galaxy

The farthest known galaxy when this book was going to press was measured at a distance of 13.2 billion light years.

<http://www.spacetelescope.org/news/heic1103/>

And what lies beyond that galaxy, only God knows.

It boggles the mind to attempt to comprehend the enormity of our universe. On the other hand, a psalmist referred to God in writing, "He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name. Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit" (Psalm 147:4).

Scientists believe that our universe started from a speck that was “infinitesimally small, infinitely hot, infinitely dense.” <http://www.big-bang-theory.com/> In other words, a single grain of sand would be colossal in comparison.

One short-coming of science is that it does not recognize something coming from nothing. <http://www.gotquestions.org/creation-ex-nihilo.html> Theologians say that God created the earth ex nihilo; this is a Latin phrase which means “from nothing.” <http://www.gotquestions.org/creation-ex-nihilo.html>

Does it take more faith to believe that God created the universe or that something that measures more than 13.2 billion light years in distance came from that infinitesimal speck?

David also contemplated his physical being when writing, “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well” (Psalm 139:13-14).

Again, unless David received a special revelation from God, he would have had no idea about the complexity of his own body.

The idea that living things are made up of individual cells was not discovered until 1665 A.D. We now think of cells as “the building blocks of life.” One expert estimated the number of cells in a human body as between 60 and 90 trillion. <http://askabiologist.asu.edu/explore/building-blocks-life>

Now let’s look at the complexity of one single cell.

The truth is that the simplest living cell has over one trillion molecules in it. That is more than 1,000 times 1,000 times 1,000 times 1,000 or 1,000 times one billion. All of the molecules in that cell have to be in just the right place at the right time or the cell will either malfunction or not function and die. Think of it this way, there are from 500 to over 1,000 times more molecules in the simplest cell than there are people on Earth and, unlike the people on Earth, all of the molecules must be in exactly the right place at the right time or it won’t work.

When we consider that most galaxies have between one and ten billion stars and that, if each star in a galaxy had one of these planets orbiting it, it would take 500 thousand galaxies of such planets all linked together and interdependent to equal the complexity of one human.

<http://hauns.com/~DCQu4E5g/Complexity.htm>

Is it any wonder Paul penned these words, “No one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God”? (I Corinthians 2:11)?

Chapter 6--Denial

My definition of denial is this: it occurs “when people lie to themselves and then believe their own lies.” These passages relate to that problem: James 1: 23-24, Psalm 36:1-5

These links focus on self-deception in the Bible:

<http://www.cgg.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Library.sr/CT/BS/k/84/Overcoming-Part-1-Self-Deception.htm>

<http://www.xenos.org/teachings/?teaching=639>

<http://www.bibletrektoday.com/2011/11/18/avoiding-self-deception/>

<http://frankleeyk.blogspot.com/2010/10/dangers-of-self-deception.html>

<http://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Topical.show/RTD/cgg/ID/51/Self-Deception.htm>

Discuss the scriptures cited on page 85, asking your group for examples.

According to II Corinthians 4:3-4, “And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

Here are some links to insights on this passage:

<http://www.michaelgrahamministries.org/other/deception.html>

<http://www.richardajordan.com/Sermons/950226.htm>

http://www.thehousetoday.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=55:the-god-of-this-age-has-blinded-the-minds-of-unbelievers&Itemid=94

Here are 200 verses about spiritual blindness:

http://www.openbible.info/topics/spiritual_blindness

“They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie.” II Thessalonians 2:10-11

Here are some links about that passage:

<http://www.godlikeproductions.com/forum1/message872857/pg1>

<http://truedsicerment.com/2007/12/10/the-strong-delusion-of-god/>

<http://bible.org/seriespage/third-explanation-deception-delusion-and-divine-judgment-day-lord-2-thes-29-12>

The quotation from the confessed sex addict on page 84 describes the futility of looking in the wrong place for one’s ultimate satisfaction and meaning. Ask your group how they might come to a similar conclusion with a hobby, work, money, you name it.

The four points about denial in this chapter and itemized on page 87 would seem to make for some fruitful discussion, particularly if you start it off by talking about how some of these points have applied to your life.

One time when teaching a Sunday morning high school class, I shared my first-person story of alcoholism. One particular student may have been looking for a loop-hole. “If alcohol started doing that to me,” he told the class, “I would recognize it and then stop drinking.” Based on what you know about denial, how do you evaluate the student’s suggestion?

The sequel to *Deliver Us I* is *Deliver Us II: Discovering Your Idols on the Path to the Promised Land*. It has a chapter titled “Denial by the Nile” which describes in detail the denial of Pharaoh regarding the plagues on Egypt and liberating the children of Israel.

How is denial evident in the person with a blank in his/her eye who focuses on the speck of sawdust in someone else’s eye? (See Matthew 7:1-5)

Chapter 7--Animal

The following passages contain references to animals that might be used as springboards to discussion: Jude 8-10; Romans 1:18-25; Proverbs 26:11.

The psalmist Asaph called himself a “brute beast” (Psalm 73: 22) Why? The answer is in Psalm 73:3. Read this Psalm in its entirety with your group and ask if any have succumbed to the same problem as Asaph. If yes, how would that make them “brute beasts?”

When attacking animals that will serve as their prey, hawks often go for the eyes. Once its eyes are pecked out, the blinded animal has no chance of escape. I’ve observed the same phenomenon when fishing with live shrimp as bait. Larger fish swallow the shrimp in a single gulp but smaller ones first eat the shrimp’s eyes. How does Satan use a similar strategy?

Pursue the questions posed on page 104 and 105 of the book.

Also, the react vs. respond questions should bear some fruit (page 108). On this subject, see these verses: Ecclesiastes 10:4; Proverbs 12:16; 26:4: 29:11.

Below are some verses demonstrating how people are set apart from the rest of God’s creation, including animals.

Creation of Humankind

God’s command is personal: “Let us make people” (Gen. 1: 26)

Humans are made in God’s image. (Gen. 1: 26)

God breathed into Adam’s Nostrils (Gen. 2:7)

God specifies gender: “Male and female he created them.” (Gen. 1: 27)

Creation of Everything Else

God’s commands are impersonal. “Let there be light.” (Gen. 1:3)

Creatures are made according to their “own kind.” (Gen. 1: 25)

No other record of this.

God doesn’t specify gender.

Humans are given the responsibility to be “masters over all life.” (Gen. 1: 26)

No creature has mastery over any part of God’s creation.

The chapter contains information about Darwin’s theory and its implications to us today. Here are some links to additional information:

<http://www.icr.org/article/449/>

<http://www.clarifyingchristianity.com/creation.shtml>

<http://www.christiananswers.net/q-aig/darwin.html>

<http://biologos.org/questions/christian-response-to-darwin>

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/january/24.67.html>

The article below describes how the Vatican now believes that Darwinism is compatible with Christianity. My own personal belief is that it is not compatible with Christianity and attempts to get them to mesh end up as deism. Further, Darwin’s theory is not scientific.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/4588289/The-Vatican-claims-Darwins-theory-of-evolution-is-compatible-with-Christianity.html>

Chapter 8--Backward

The Pharisees had things backward. Read **Matt. 9: 32-34** A demon-possessed man was unable to speak; he regained his ability to speak after Jesus drove out the demons. “The crowd was amazed and said, “Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.” But the Pharisees said, “It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons.”

Luke 18: 10-14—For insights into this parable, see <http://www.trinityurcvisalia.com/sermons/lk18v09-14.html>

“For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings” (Hosea 6:6). How did the Pharisees get this backward? How can we get it backward?

The two paragraphs below focusing on the Pharisees having things backward come from <http://library.generousgiving.org/articles/display.asp?id=328>

“Clearly, God cares more about our hearts than the amounts of money we give. But if we really share God’s mercy for others, won’t this also be reflected in how much we give? Mercy is a dynamic standard that aligns our giving with the specific nature and needs of those we are trying to help. This is where the Pharisees got things backward. They majored in the minors by focusing on “religious motions” rather than the actual needs that their giving was meant to meet. They allowed static standards like the tithe to become the measure of their mercy rather than allowing mercy to shape the way they used their money (cf. Matthew 23:23; 9:13; 12:7). Jesus’ criticism of the Pharisees’ merciless “generosity” is one of many New Testament passages that emphasize God’s desire for “mercy, not sacrifice” (cf. Psalm 40:6-9). If our giving is out of rote obedience instead of compassionate care, we have missed the point and become like the Pharisees whom Jesus castigated so fiercely.

“In the end, mercy has little to do with fixed percentages of our incomes. Instead, showing mercy to others is about responding to the needs we encounter—a standard which will always challenge us to greater levels of generosity, not less. After all, it was Jesus’ love and compassion for us—not indifferent obedience to God—which led him to give up everything, even his own life, for our sakes.”

On page 120 I did a backward rendition on the great passage on love found in I Corinthians 13. Below that, I cited some scriptures for readers to flip around. Challenge your group to come up with other scriptures for them to turn around to discover the way Satan would wish to guide them.

Here is a link to information about the satanic bible:

<http://www.gotquestions.org/Satanic-bible.html>

This link deals with “the occult law of reversal”:

<http://www.ih2000.net/chembio/occult.htm>

Chapter 9—Self-Destruction

On page 124 I quoted the curse on Adam of living in a world where he and Eve had separated themselves from God. Since this fallen world is all of us have ever known, it is easy to think only in terms of it. Discussion questions (related to material on page 126) might revolve around the ramifications of living in a fallen world compared to a face-to-face relationship with our Creator. In our day-to-day lives, what are the effects of residing in such a world? How does the fallen world affect our world-view? What evidence do we see in our own lives that we are self-destructing? What behaviors on our part cause us to self-destruct? Despite our own best efforts, why are we still condemned? What are our perspectives of dying? How can we be sure to avoid the second death?

Destruction is mentioned twice in II Peter 2:1-3. Read this passage to find out why. How does something similar occur in the 21st Century?

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it” Matthew 7:13-14. Here are some links to further discussion on this passage:

<http://bible.org/seriespage/highway-hell-matthew-713%E2%80%9314>

<http://www.amazinghope.net/wide-is-the-path-to-destruction-narrow-is-the-way-to-heaven/>

<http://kingdomsaint.blogspot.com/2011/05/narrow-road.html#!/2011/05/narrow-road.html>

<http://wernerbiblecommentary.org/?q=node/299>

<http://bible.org/seriespage/most-likely-succeed>

<http://heargodspeak.blogspot.com/2010/01/matthew-713-14-two-roads.html>

“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.” Galatians 6:7-8 Here are some links to insights on this passage.

<http://bible-truths-revealed.com/Galatians.html>

<http://www.prca.org/sermons/galatians6.7-8.html>

<http://bible.org/article/seven-laws-harvest>

<http://www.biblestudytools.com/nirv/galatians/passage.aspx?q=galatians+6:7>

-8

“Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.” Proverbs 16:18 Here are some links to comments on this passage:

http://www.letgodbettrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/16_18.php

<http://www.family-times.net/commentary/pride-goes-before-destruction/>

http://rediscoveringthebible.com/Prov16_18-19.html

Page 127 mentions the demon-possessed man cutting himself and modern-day “cutters.”

Check out the following link for a discussion of teens cutting themselves in relation to prophets of Baal cutting themselves in I Kings 18: 25-29:

<http://andrewtwhite.com/2011/05/19/hotbed-issue-for-teenagers-cutting/>

Here is another link in relation to Baal and the cutters:

http://www.google.com/#hl=en&output=search&client=psy-ab&q=prophets+of+baal+cut+themselves&oq=prophets+of+baal+cu&gs_l=hp.1.0.0j0i30.2696.8948.1.11290.19.16.0.1.1.0.248.3078.0j11j5.16.0.les%3B..0.0...1c.dbajdUHizuk&psj=1&bav=on.2,or.r_gc.r_pw.r_qf.&fp=b08392199fbe3ee9&biw=1024&bih=592

Name some ways that Christians may serve as self-destructive influences in the lives of others. Are there certain times when this is more apt to occur? (When you are angry or tired, for example.)

Here are some links to “the second death” from Revelation 21:8

http://www.jesus-is-savior.com/Believer%27s%20Corner/Doctrines/second_death.htm

<http://www.goodnewsaboutgod.com/studies/seconddeath2.htm>

<http://theologica.ning.com/profiles/blogs/what-does-revelation-218-teach>

<http://www.enjoyinggodministries.com/article/14-reflections-on-the-second-death-revelation-211/>

Chapter 10—A Moment of Clarity

See Psalm 119: 5, 18, 67, 71

What does it take for someone with strongly held beliefs to change his mind and accept new beliefs that are contradictory to the old ones? That's what this chapter is about.

The idea of “selective exposure,” defined below, tells why people select to expose themselves to information that is already a part of their belief system.

Selective exposure is a “concept in media and communication research that refers to individuals’ tendency to favor information that reinforces pre-existing views while avoiding contradictory information. In this theory people tend to select specific aspects of exposed information based on their perspective, beliefs, attitudes and decisions. People can determine the information exposed to them and select favorable evidence, while ignoring the unfavorable.” This theory has been explored using the cognitive dissonance theory, which suggests information consumers strive for results of cognitive equilibrium. In order to attain this equilibrium, individuals may either reinterpret the information they are exposed to or select information that are consonant with their view.”

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selective_exposure_theory

As an example, I wrote my masters thesis on the audience of religious television programs. Based on the idea of selective exposure, who would you predict would watch them? If you said that religious people are more apt than non-religious people to watch them, you are correct.

The same type of phenomenon was true in my personal life. Despite the fact that when I was age 26 a doctor told me I had an enlarged liver due to drinking (which would lead to cirrhosis), I could not comprehend the truth and continued drinking because for the past several years I had viewed alcohol was a friend.

My denial also guided me in refusing to act on the truth.

Ask your group what has brought about changes in attitude in their own lives or in the lives of others they have observed.

The moment of clarity is the “ah-ha” moment, a time when our eyes are opened to the truth. In the book I’ve described three things that lead to a moment of clarity. It would be helpful to go over the passages and show how these came about.

1) Discomfort and pain

Discuss the pain of the lost son starving to death in a pig pen (Luke 15:11-32), the blinding of Saul (Acts 9:1-18) and King Manasseh (II Chronicles 33:1-3, 9-16). In what ways have pain brought about positive changes in our life or in the lives of people you know?

2 Intervention

There are several biblical examples of successful and unsuccessful interventions are discussed on pages 146-150. You may use this passage in conjunction with them: Proverbs 29:1 “A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed—without remedy.”

The concept found in Matthew 18:15-17 discussed on page 147 is important to discuss from the standpoint of the two questions I posed near the bottom of that page. The notion of righteous indignation, such as demonstrated by Jesus in John 2:12-17), may be discussed here. (Also Google “righteous indignation.) Do we as Christians really believe we are capable of righteous indignation or are we too driven by ego?

Acts 16:22-34 relates the story of a jailer who was baptized after witnessing a miracle that involved Paul and Silas. Did his change of heart result from pain an intervention, neither or both?

3 Self-examination

As I observed in the book, three things precede a moment of clarity. I believe that for people fairly deep in denial, one or both of the first two (discomfort and intervention) lead toward the third one, (self-examination). Under what kind of circumstances would a Christian person need to feel discomfort or be subject to an intervention in order to examine self and have a moment of clarity? Why might discomfort/pain or intervention be unnecessary for a person attempting to lead a Christ-like life?

In regard to self-examination, I focused on I Corinthians 11:26-32, but there are plenty of other biblical examples that you may use. Here are a few: Psalm 8:1-9, 34:1-22, 51:1-19, 119:59, 139:1-24; 2 Corinthians 13:5; James 1:23-25; John 17:17; Philippians 4:6-7; Ephesians 5:26; Exodus 3:1-22.

Here are two links relating to moment of clarity and the Bible:

<http://offthecuffchristian.com/tag/moment-of-clarity/>

<http://www.sheridanhouse.org/web/resources/daily-devotion/a-moment-of-clarity/>

Chapter 11—Repentance and Confession

It is important to point out the definition of repentance toward the bottom of page 156 along with the quotation from II Corinthians 7:10 on page 157 along with the question about the difference between Godly sorrow and worldly sorrow.

Here are some good links that discuss repentance and give plenty of biblical citations to back them up:

<http://www.acts17-11.com/repent.html>

<http://www.jesus-is-savior.com/Books,%20Tracts%20&%20Preaching/Printed%20Sermons/Dr%20Curtis%20Hutson/repentance.htm>

<http://www.bible.ca/g-repentance.htm>

Peter preached about denial and repentance as found in Acts 3:17; also see Acts 5:31 and Romans 2:1-10.

What do these passages have to do with repentance and confession? Psalm 51: 1-6, 16-17; Romans 7: 14-25\

Here are some scriptures relating to confession:

1 John 1:9; James 5:16; Proverbs 28:13; James 4:17; Romans 3:23 Acts 17:30; II Peter 3:9; I Corinthians 10:13; Acts 19:18; Galatians 2:20; Titus 3:5 Acts 16:31

Here are some good links to confession:

<http://www.bible.ca/g-repentance.htm>

<http://www.unlockingthebible.org/confession-bible-verses-confessing-sins/>

<http://www.christinyou.com/pages/confession.html>

Chapter 12—Humility and Pride

For quite some time I've been thinking about the way we see ourselves, compared to the way others see us. For example, I've asked questions like these:

Who is a bigger nerd? Someone who knows he's a nerd and others think so, too. Or, someone who thinks he's really a cool guy but others think he's a nerd.

OR

Who is more insane? Someone who knows he's insane, Or, someone who thinks he's completely sane but is judged by society as being insane.

Barney Fife from the old Andy Griffith show and the short story about Walter Mitty both serve as good examples in a wide gap between their actual selves and the way others perceive them.

On page 167 in the paragraph that starts “People like this...,” I have given one example. After it was too late to make changes in the book, I read that paragraph and regretted that I did not more examples of “people like this.” You might ask your group to give further examples of such people.

Now ask the class to describe differences they’ve discovered between the way others see them and the way they see themselves.

I was discussing this phenomenon with a friend who told me about the Johari window which adds some dimensions to the ideas I was having. According to this concept, there are four categories regarding the way we think about ourselves:

1) the things we see and others see; 2) things about ourselves of which we are unaware but that are observed by others; 3) things about ourselves that neither we nor others are aware; 4) things we know about ourselves that we keep from others. For more information on this, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johari_window or Google “Johari window.”

You may use any of the above ideas to kick off your discussion of Chapter 12. I have used these discussions before, and people usually find them interesting.

After the above discussion, you might discuss the material relating to *The Three Christs of Ypsilanti* that told about three patients at Ypsilanti State Hospital in Michigan (which has since been torn down) who each thought he was God. After being kicked out of Eastern Michigan University, located in Ypsilanti, I worked for several months as an orderly at Ypsilanti State Hospital and the Milton Rokeach book had already been published at that time.

After discussing the above, you need to get to the idea that what we really care about is not the others see us but the way God sees us. You may use that as a stepping-stone to discussions of humility and pride, Jesus exemplifying absolute humility and Satan demonstrating the ultimate in pride.

Another possible way to start to this session would be to ask people to define both pride and humility.

It is important for people to probe the idea of how pride in the negative sense manifests itself in their own lives. Do you ever take credit for things that God has done for you? Do you harbor thoughts that you can be saved by your good behavior or good works? What part do you play in your own salvation compared to the role of Jesus?

Here are some links to pride:

<http://www.gotquestions.org/pride-Bible.html>

<http://www.keyway.ca/htm2002/20021231.htm>

<http://www.wordofhisgrace.org/pridebist.htm>

<http://www.christinyou.net/pages/pride.html>

The following link cites 200 biblical passages dealing with pride:

<http://www.openbible.info/topics/pride>

Following are some links to humility:

<http://bible.org/seriespage/humility>

<http://gardenofpraise.com/godseg16.htm>

<http://www.characterjournal.com/html/humility.htm>

<http://www.gospelway.com/christianlife/meekness.php>

<http://jmm.aaa.net.au/articles/2267.htm>

<http://www.biblicaltraining.org/humility/major-stories-bible>

This link will take you to 91 Bible verses about being humble:

http://www.openbible.info/topics/being_humble

Here are 20 passages relating to humility:

<http://www.whatchristianswanttoknow.com/bible-verses-about-humility-20-scriptures-on-being-humble/>

