

Simple Sundays

**How Can I
Honor God
in My Life?**



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Main Idea

We must learn to uphold God's image and to use the power that God gives us. We must uncover our individual faults and assets and balance them to reach our potential as members of the faith community.

You Will Need

Bibles, pens or pencils, empty cereal boxes, colored construction paper strips, glue, paste, or tape, plastic zipper bags

Faith Statement

Ignoring God's commandments, we violate the image of God in others and ourselves.

—A Brief Statement of Faith

Background

Jeremiah 5:20–31 illustrates how Christians can be unified through both their good and sinful practices. The text itself, though written centuries ago, expresses God's concerns to the Judahites about their actions, which violated the image of God, as they misused God's power. The passage describes some of their violations against God's commandments and against God's covenant with us.

In this Scripture passage, the Judahites are described as a "foolish and senseless people" who cannot hear what is said to them and cannot see what is presented before them. Their sins are numerous: They are greedy, rebellious, stubborn, and cruel, and they refuse to acknowledge the might and grace of God, which is in direct violation of the covenant. This abuse of the power of choice is bound to upset and disappoint the Creator. When we human beings throw the covenant with God off-balance, we also upset the laws of ordered life.

So what is to come of this violation of God's image? What is to come of this misuse of power? For the Judahites, it resulted in a drought. Today, this reevaluation of our role in God's faith community allows us to correct our mistakes first as individuals, and then as a whole community.

You and Your Youth

You may want to begin this session with a brief game or a sharing time, possibly to discuss what has happened over the past weekend. Make sure that the participants are relaxed before they begin this session. If someone expresses discomfort or difficulty with any of the activities, you might find an alternative for them—maybe have them first look at the habits of someone close to themselves in order to provide them with some personal distance. Above all, the most important thing for you to do is to make sure that they feel welcome and comfortable in the group.



Enter

Learn names, encourage interaction, and laugh together as the session begins.

Finding the Ingredients

Paper

Think about times in your life when you misused the power God has given you in your home, at church, or at school. What did you do exactly? Why did you do it? Did you regret it? Did you ever do anything like it again?

On a piece of paper, make a list of a few of these times and the types of bad habits or qualities that you think these instances are an example of. After everyone has finished, write the bad habits or qualities that everyone has come up with on one list. As a group, make a list of good qualities or habits that could counteract the bad ones and put it on the wall.

Opening Prayer

○ God, remind us of our calling as members of your faith family. Be with us as we identify the habits that we hold as individuals that both further and hinder your plans for us. Help us to find balance between habits as we may better serve you. Amen.



Explore

Study the Bible

Bibles

Listen as different people from the group read aloud each of the verses from Jeremiah 5:20–31. Then discuss the following questions:

- Why are God's people described as people with a "stubborn and rebellious heart" and as "scoundrels"?
- What is the "appalling and horrible thing" that has happened in this passage?
- Why is God disappointed in God's people in this passage?
- What do you think God expects of God's people?

Make a list of qualities that you think might make God proud or might counteract the qualities quoted in this passage.

Making a Balanced Meal

Glue, paste, or tape, construction paper, cereal boxes, plastic zipper bags

Make sure everyone has a few strips of construction paper and a few cereal boxes. On strips of the same color, write down one bad or one good habit. (You will write the same habit on several strips.) Paste one strip on the cereal box as a label and put the other strips with the same habit inside. Once all the cereal boxes are labeled, give everyone a plastic zipper bag and put all the cereal boxes on a table. Go around the table and choose which habits on the boxes you think you have and take that strip out of the box and put it in your bag. Then as a group discuss the following:

- Are they mostly good habits or mostly bad ones?
- What makes you think that you have these habits?
- What kinds of qualities could counteract the bad habits that you have?
- What kinds of things could you do to make those qualities part of your life instead of the bad ones?

After everyone has spoken, make your habit strips into a rainbow fan and put them on the wall—you'll refer to them again in a future session.



Express

These discussions are an opportunity to apply the Scripture to our lives. If you do not seem to relate to these situations, then modify them to make them relevant to your own life.

Youth Issue

Every day, people in our community of faith violate the image of God in the things they do. In what ways have you seen the image of God violated or God's power misused by your peers? Come up with a few examples and discuss them with the rest of the group.

Action Steps

Continuing with your discussion from Youth Issue, write a short list of ways that you can hold to counteract the bad habits of your peers. What can you do to help them? Make it your goal to help someone you know who is doing something to violate the image of God or who is misusing the power God has given them.



Exit

Closing Prayer

○ God, we have learned more about who we are in your eyes and what our responsibilities are. In the coming week, help us be true not only to the power you have given us and to your image, but also to the things that we have learned today. In your name, we pray. Amen.