

Loving the Hurting

Cheryl Harris

PURPOSE: In this lesson, we will seek to learn that the people who are hurting and are most in need of love are right around us and all over the world

MUSIC: Hymns of Heritage & Hope #540 “Let Your Heart Be Broken,” #208 “How Deep the Father’s Love,” #3 “All Creatures of Our God and King,” #24 “Be Still My Soul,” “Alive, Alive Forevermore” from Integrity Music or “You Lift Me Up” by The Afters. If it is not possible to sing, read the words together.

SCRIPTURE: Luke 10:30-35; 1 John 3:11-15, 16-18

PREPARATION:

Skit: Run off a copy of the opening skit and assign the needed readers. You may choose to make signs for the various characters to wear during the skit. Keep these signs to use in all the other skits.

Music: If using music, acquire enough hymnals for each person to have one. Optional: Have a recording or an instrumentalist play accompaniment.

Scripture: Have Bibles ready for use. Assign Scripture pieces at the start, to make reading through them smoother. Ask someone to have the Scripture 1 John 3:16-18 open to read when asked.

Hook

This devotional will focus on Loving the Hurting. In the Scripture about the Good Samaritan, this person was the person on the side of the road.

Invite the people who are in the skit to go over to the side of the room and come in as their parts are read. If you have a small group, you may ask them to stay seated and just get up and act out their parts as appropriate and then be seated. The person who is acting out the man who is beaten does not have to get on the floor, but may sit in a chair or recline on a couch. The point is to have each person walk by, and then go to the other side.

This devotional will focus on the hurting. At the end of the reading, the character who is the injured one will stand and share her part. The narrator may be the one giving the devotional or it may be someone else. The narrator should read the Scripture slowly enough for the actors to play their roles.

To introduce this lesson, share the skit below: **Loving the Hurting**

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

“What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

He answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

The injured man will look at the audience and say,

“Well, it happened again. No matter where I am, no matter how hard I work, no matter how hard I try, one more time I am beaten down. Is it because I look weak? Is it because I am smaller, or taller, or poorer, or richer? Is it because I am different? Or is it because I just blend in with the crowd so no one notices me at all? I’ve tried fitting in with the rest, but I couldn’t figure out how. I’ve tried being ‘big and bad,’ so people would leave me alone, but obviously there is always someone else who is bigger and meaner. I’ve tried being invisible. I look down rather than at others. I hide my face and never seek attention. Sometimes that works, but I am so lonely. You know it’s really hard to say this, but being

beaten today was almost a blessing. For once, someone came along and was kind to me. Someone noticed me, someone cared.”

Book

READ: 1 John 3:11-15

ASK: How do we know that Cain was not loving? (He killed his brother. He was a child of the evil one and did evil things.)

ASK: Why does John caution his readers to not be surprised if the world hates them? (Those who follow after the evil one will hate those who are good.)

ASK: If it is possible, John gets even blunter saying that if you hate another believer and don't grow in love, you are not saved and will not live eternally.

READ: 1 John 3:16-18

ASK: What do we understand about love when we learn that Christ gave his life for us? (We must give our lives for other believers.)

ASK: How is love shown when it is sincere? (Empty words are not love. Sincere love is shown in our actions.)

Look

One modern Christian song that I really love from The Afters is titled “You Lift Me Up.” I identify with the song because I am a private person and rarely let others know how much I am hurting. I take it to God, which is the message of the song. However, I have learned a lesson about that through editing this program kit, some wisdom that is NOT reflected in the song. GOD OFTEN USES HIS PEOPLE TO COMFORT AND LIFT EACH OTHER UP. We are called to love and encourage one another throughout God's Word.

READ 1 John 3:16-18

ASK: Why does John say we are to lay down our lives for and share our possessions with our brothers and sisters? (We are to love our brothers and sisters as Christ loved us. In other words, his sacrifice was not only to restore us to fellowship with the Father, but it was also to teach us how we are to love.)

ASK: In what ways are we to love? (We ought to lay down our lives, sometimes literally, but more often our time, and share material possessions with a brother or sister in need. We are NOT to love only with words or speech but also with actions and in truth.)

Took

ASK: How do you respond when you are weak, personally, physically, mentally, socially or emotionally? (Encourage each other as people share their answers. Leader, be prepared to start the sharing if no one volunteers quickly. You can also use the author's testimony below.)

PERSONAL TESTIMONY: I have been struggling with my health since 2019. It started with what appeared to be a simple ear infection. Even though the infection went away, the ringing did not. It interfered with my sleep and my ability to hear people. Then COVID threw a wrench into the whole mess. It laid me low for a whole month, and I have never fully regained my stamina since then. I have blamed myself for not trusting God enough for healing, for being too weak and even for crying when it was too much to handle. What I have gained instead of healing (yet) is a new respect for people struggling to find medical answers and a new sympathy for those fighting long-term illnesses.

ASK: What helps you the most when you need help? (Some answers may include: a hug, time with a friend or family member, rest, time off or away, a helping hand, etc.)

ASK: Who do you know who needs a helping hand or a loving prayer right now? (Allow answers and sharing.)

Encourage all present to pray for each other.

Close with one or more song(s) of your choice. "Bind Us Together" would be a good choice, #426 in Hymns of Heritage & Hope.

Shared by: Cheryl Harris lives in a trailer in the woods in Ashland, Maine nearby the school where she works. Her husband, William Harris, has joined her at the school and serves as a bus driver, coach and custodian. They share their home with three pets: their beagle-boxer dog Daisy; clever tuxedo cat Doria; and lovable, fluffy tabby cat Ariel.