

## TEACHER PREPARATION

### KEY CONCEPTS

1. There is more to life than the eye can see.
2. There are strong forces working within each of us that often make it much harder to avoid the dream breakers.
3. There is an invisible aspect to each of us. It keeps us from reaching our dreams and lures us into thinking and feeling – and even doing – things we know are going to hurt us.
4. This destructive aspect has been called by various names, including obstinacy, rebellion, selfishness, and sin.

### OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

1. Argue against the idea that only what can be seen is real.
2. Accept the notion that there is a compelling aspect inside each person motivating negative behavior and making healthy decisions difficult.

### MATERIALS / PREPARATION

**In the Box:** The Grandmothers' Letter, a bar of soap, and a microscope (or photos or diagrams of microorganisms taken looking through an electron microscope of viruses, bacteria, chromosomes, etc).

- **Target Practice Activity (and options):**

There is an activity in this lesson where students throw “balls” made of wadded-up paper. There are two options for this activity. If you choose Activity A, you will need to use a fan capable of blowing the paper balls off course. This activity is a little easier to set up and may take a little less time than Activity B, so it is recommended that you choose Activity A, if you have access to a fan. If you choose Activity B, you will need to recruit a student helper to secretly assist you during the second part of the game.

For either activity, you will need to crumple up three pieces of paper to make three similar sized paper balls.

Note: Smaller balls will work better in Activity A, and larger ones will be better for Activity B.

**Activity A: Target Practice (With Fan)**

In this activity, students will try to hit a circle drawn on the board or taped to a wall. Be sure you practice with the balls and target to get a good idea how far away to position your students from the target. Once you have established the farthest distance at which a student is likely to be able to hit the target, set up an electric fan so that it blows continuously across the front of the target. The object is to make it nearly impossible for anyone to hit the target while the fan is blowing. (If you can't make this work in practice, you may need to choose Activity B.)

**Activity B: Desk Lob (With Guard)**

In this version, you lob the same balls of paper into a trash can hidden behind a desk or some other large object. The object is to get the balls into the trash can without seeing the can. You will help the students by telling them after each attempt whether the ball was "in", "long", "short", "left", or "right". As in Activity A, you need to practice before class to see how far back to position the students. In the second phase of this activity, a student "guard" will sit or lie hidden next to the trash can and bat the balls away. You will need to choose this student in advance and brief him or her.

- **For GOING DEEPER section:** You will need a large transparent glass container filled with clean, clear water. You will also need a small quantity of food coloring, dye, or ink to pour into the water. A red liquid may show up most easily. You could also ask a chemistry teacher to suggest a liquid that would quickly react and change the color of water or other clear liquid in an obvious way.

# LESSON

## BEGINNING THE LESSON

### INTRODUCTION

In the last several lessons, we have been looking at the deep personal issues that can play a role in our decisions about drugs, alcohol, and premarital sex. In the last lesson, we looked at personal boundaries and how to establish them. Early in this course, we learned various physical facts about these three issues.

The writers who developed this course are convinced that there is another area of life that can have a great influence on what we choose concerning drugs, alcohol, and premarital sex. That area is the spiritual dimension of life.

As before, the Grandmothers' Letters will lead us into an exploration of this new area.



### STORY 6 MINUTES

*[Read the following letter from the grandmothers.]*

As Sasha and Dima waited for Natasha to arrive, they noticed an old-fashioned microscope sitting on the teacher's desk. "Do you know when the microscope first became a useful instrument of science?" asked Tatyana Alexandrovna.

"Never thought about it," replied Dima.

"Are you going to tell us you pulled that thing out of our grandmothers' box!?" asked Sasha.

"No, the microscope was my idea," said the teacher. "Here is what your grandmothers included for this lesson." And with that she brought out a bar of soap.

"Soap?" said Dima and Sasha together.

"Don't bother about the soap just yet. Let's concentrate on the microscope, and soon all will be clear," continued Tatyana Alexandrovna.

"Centuries ago, there were many amateur scientists trying to perfect this promising invention. One such person was a man named Lister. He was a wine merchant, and his son became one of the most famous surgeons the world has ever known."

"Never heard of him," joked Dima.

"Ah, but at least one of your grandmothers knew of him! In fact, their next letter tells his story," said the teacher.

"How would our grandmothers know about such a person?" asked Sasha.

"How would our grandmothers know what?" said Natasha as she walked in.

"I think I'll let them answer that question for themselves," said the teacher.

Dear Ones,

*One of the recurring themes that we've been trying to convince you of is that there is more to life than the eye can see. Our motives for what we do are often unclear, even to ourselves. The effects of drugs, alcohol, and premarital sex go far deeper than anything we can measure or test. And there is an unseen world surrounding each of us that we ignore at our peril.*

*You might be tempted to think of us as superstitious old women when we speak of a spiritual reality. We wouldn't be the first, nor are we likely to be the last, to meet resistance to the notion that the unseen profoundly affects that which is seen.*

*As you know, our Yelena is a medical doctor. My, the hours she spent poring over her medical books! Of course, she wasn't the only one to pick up a thing or two about medicine. We still remember that morning over tea when Yelena recounted the following bit of history to us. It points out the life-and-death consequences of failing to take an unseen world into account.*

*In the 1840s, medicine took a major turn. For the first time, surgeons could safely render their patients unconscious because of the breakthrough in anesthesiology (substances like ether). They could then put their patients to sleep during an operation. This meant that surgeons could operate on a host of ailments that had once been beyond their reach, and the number of surgeries skyrocketed. However, of the people who lived through the surgery itself, only six out of ten survived the infections that set in after surgery. Gangrene, septic poisoning, and other bacterial infections claimed the other four often as doctors routinely operated in filthy conditions, moving from one patient to the next without so much as wiping the blood off their hands. Most doctors looked at surgery pretty much the way an auto mechanic looks at repairing cars – you take the part out, fix it or patch it, and put it back in.*

*Nearly 20 years later in 1864, Joseph Lister, an English surgeon in Glasgow, Scotland, began to read the theories of France's greatest scientist, Louis Pasteur. The microscope had finally reached the point where scientists could put it to use, exploring the previously unseen world of microorganisms. Pasteur theorized that these microorganisms might be the cause or carriers of all the infections that plagued the medical world. And so Joseph Lister began to seek a practical application to Pasteur's theory.*

*Before long, Lister was urging his colleagues to take up a radical new practice in the world of medicine: "Wash your hands and instruments before you operate!" It was such a simple answer to the complex problem of infections – too simple for many of his colleagues. They mocked him and refused to take his advice of simply washing their hands. "Unseen world of tiny things crawling around, indeed!" During the next decade, thousands continued to die in the aftermath of what we now think of as minor operations – all for the lack of one simple procedure – "wash your hands." I'm sure it must have sounded as absurd to them as the notion that auto mechanics should carefully clean the grease from under their fingernails before they work on the next car.*

*For the next 30 years, Lister championed the use of antiseptics by all surgeons. His innovations and improvements in antiseptic techniques eventually won him international recognition. Many of the common practices of medicine today come from the dedication of Joseph Lister: sterile catgut for sutures, gauze dressings, and pinning together fractured bones, just to name a few. All because he took the unseen world seriously and took steps to live in light of it.*

"Now you know why your grandmothers included a bar of soap in their box! Or maybe you don't?" said Tatyana Alexandrovna as she set the letter aside.

"This isn't a lesson in hygiene, is it?" asked Sasha.

"No, it's not," replied the teacher. "It is actually a lesson on seeing and believing."

"I don't believe I see the connection," said Natasha. Sasha and Dima nodded in agreement.

"I think that's why your grandmothers included more than just the story of Joseph Lister in this lesson," said Tatyana Alexandrovna.

## EXPLORING THE LESSON



### MICROSCOPE/ SOAP EXPLORATION

7 MINUTES

We'll continue the story later in the class, but first let's spend a few minutes exploring Lister's discovery.

*[If you have access to a microscope and can demonstrate the ability to see microorganisms, or you have a photo of microorganisms taken through a microscope, then take a few minutes to show your students some. If not, continue with the following input and activity:*

*From the box, take out a bar of soap and ask how soap might connect the story of Joseph Lister with seeing and believing. Accept students' guesses.]*

**When we wash our hands with soap and water, we can see the dirt leave our hands, and our hands look and smell clean. We don't see the microorganisms that are killed by the soap, but they die by the millions. So why do you think many children and some adults don't wash their hands often?**

*[Accept guesses.]*

**A lot of people think that "seeing is believing". It is difficult for them to believe anything they can't see with their own eyes. That may have been part of the problem with many of the doctors who lived in the time of Lister. It was just too hard to believe that something invisible was killing so many people.**

**Yelena, the doctor, has left some more for us to read.**



### STORY CONTINUES

2 MINUTES

*[Continue reading the letter:]*

*When I was your age, I was curious about everything! I was fascinated by plants and animals. But the thing that I found the most intriguing was the human body. I think that's why I wanted to study medicine. I wanted to know how everything worked. And of course, the further I went in school, the more I was taught that science could tell us everything we needed to know.*

*I trusted that scientific knowledge was the answer to every question and the solution to every problem. I continued thinking this way until, as I wrote about earlier, I found myself addicted to drugs. Don't get me wrong. Knowledge is a valuable possession, and we all three have tried to impart much of what we know about drugs, alcohol, and premarital sex through these letters. But, as I learned the hard way, even a precise scientific knowledge of drugs did not keep me from being addicted. There were some powerful things going on under the surface of all our lives.*

*Through often painful experiences, we've discovered that our parents and our husbands have had a powerful, and often hard to see, effect on each one of us. We realized that there are strong forces working within each of us that often make it much harder to avoid the dream breakers.*

*But even understanding these forces was not enough. Like Lister, I began to realize there were even more potent invisible forces at work in each of our lives. I've told you that Olga's prayers played a crucial role in helping me stop abusing drugs. Prayer is one example of a compelling, but invisible, force.*

*But I also discovered there were invisible dangers that, just like Lister's bacteria, could harm and even kill. My addiction to drugs convinced me that, even when I know the intelligent, wise, and right thing to do, there is something inside me, some destructive principle, that pulls me toward wrong and destructive choices.*

The teacher put down the letter and smiled. "Before I finish reading Grandmother Yelena's letter, she has a game that she wants you to play, which will help illustrate what she means by an invisible force that can keep you from doing what you want."

 = 15 minutes

## TARGET PRACTICE

15 MINUTES

### Activity A:

#### Target Practice (With Fan)

If time is limited, begin with fewer players, perhaps five, or you could give each player only two tries on each turn.

For example if Yelena, Natasha, and Yuri hit the target on one round, but none (or only one) hits the target in the next round, then decide the "finalists," based on how many times they hit the target in the previous round. So, if Yelena hits three times, Natasha twice, and Yuri only once and in the next round all three miss each time, Yelena and Natasha become the finalists. If all three are the same (or the bottom two are tied), have all three (or the two who are tied) compete again until one gets more hits on a turn.

**Let's play the same game that the students in the story were asked to play.**

*[INSTRUCTIONS TO THE TEACHER: Depending on which choice you have made for this activity, follow the directions for either activity "A" or "B".]*

**This game is going to test your skill in hitting the circle I've drawn on the board using these balls of paper. I'll need 10 volunteers to play the game.**

**Each of you will get three tries to hit the target. If you hit the target at least once in the three tries, you'll move up to the next level, where we'll try it from farther away. When any player misses with all three balls, he or she is eliminated. We'll continue this until we have only two contestants left in the game.**

*[Note to teacher: As long as you have three or more contestants, keep moving them back farther from the target. If the last three (or more) are eliminated on the same round, then take the two with the most "hits" on the previous round.]*

**Now that we have our two finalists, we are going to make the game a little more challenging for them.**

*[Move the fan into place and turn it on.]*

**Now we'll let both of our finalists try, alternating turns.**

*[If both fail, declare them both to be winners, because doing it with the fan is nearly impossible. If one should hit the target, despite the fan, declare him or her the winner, and make a point of how amazing a feat it was to be able to hit the target with the interference of the fan.]*

**Activity B:****Desk Lob (With Guard)**

If time is limited, begin with fewer players, perhaps five. Limit each player to two tries if time is a concern.

For example if Yelena, Natasha, and Yuri get one in on one round but then none (or only one) gets it in the next round, then decide the “finalists” based on how many times they hit in the previous round. So, if Yelena gets it in three times, Natasha twice, and Yuri only once and in the next round all three miss each time, Yelena and Natasha become the finalists. If all three are the same (or the bottom two are tied), have all three (or the two who are tied) compete again until one gets more hits on a turn.

This game is going to test your skill in lobbing these balls of paper into the trash can hidden from view on the other side of the desk. I’ll need 10 volunteers to play the game.

Each of you will get three tries to toss the balls into the can. If you get it in at least once in the three tries, you’ll move up to the next level, where we’ll try it from farther away. When any player misses with all three balls, he or she is eliminated. We’ll continue this until we have only two contestants left in the game. After each throw, I will say “in”, “long”, “short”, “left”, or “right”.

*[Note to teacher: As long as you have three or more contestants, keep moving them back farther from the target. If the last three (or more) are eliminated on the same round, then take the two with the most “hits” on the previous round.]*

**Now that we have our two finalists, we are going to make the game a little more challenging for them. We are going to ask the two finalists to go to the back of the room [or just outside the door] for a moment while we set up the new challenge.**

*[Quietly, out of sight of the contestants, position the student you have recruited so he or she is sitting or lying next to the trash can, out of sight of the contestants. Warn the rest of the class not to give away what has changed. Part of the challenge is trying to perform without knowing everything about the situation.]*

*As the contestants try to lob the balls into the can, the student “guard” should quietly bat the balls away. You should continue to call out “in”, “long”, “short”, “left”, or “right”, indicating where the ball goes after the guard bats it away. Let each finalist have three chances.*

*When each has tried three times, bring him or her around the desk and show them what the guard has been doing. If both have failed each time, declare them both to be winners, because doing it with the guard was nearly impossible.*

*If one should hit the target, despite the guard, declare him or her the winner and make a point of how amazing a feat it was to be able to hit the target with the interference of the guard.]*



**= 30 minutes**





## DISCUSSION

5 MINUTES

*[Whichever activity you've done, end with these comments:]*

**You can see how much harder this game – or anything – is to do when you have interference, especially invisible interference!**

**Now let's see how our students in the story handled the game.**



## STORY CONTINUES

5 MINUTES

*[Continue reading the story:]*

"Hah!" said Natasha, "I almost got it, even with that sneaky trick!"

Sasha looked sullen. "It doesn't seem fair. I was doing so well before . . ."

"You're right, Sasha," said the teacher. "It doesn't seem fair. And I think that's part of what the grandmothers wanted you to realize. Let's read the rest of Yelena's letter."

*There were many times when each of us felt a little like you probably did playing that game, dear ones. I was really enjoying my work as a doctor when I began to slowly realize that something invisible was sneaking up on me and hurting my chances of hitting the target of my dreams in life.*

*And the scariest part was that it was something inside of me that I couldn't see or even understand. Eventually, I asked Ludmilla what she thought about my problem. She thought my problem must have something to do with my family. By then, she was realizing that many of her own problems had their roots in the conflicts between her parents when she was young.*

*Together, Ludmilla and I asked Olga what she thought.*

*"We're convinced there is some invisible principle living inside each one of us," we told her. "It pulls us away from our dreams and lures us into thinking and feeling and even doing things we know are going to hurt us."*

*At first, Olga said nothing, but just smiled.*

*I was actually a little upset with her. It didn't seem like she was taking what we said very seriously.*

*"Look," I said. "This may be funny to you, but it certainly isn't to us! How would you feel if you discovered there was a powerful force inside you that you couldn't control – that actually seemed to be controlling you?"*

*Olga's face grew serious. "I wasn't taking your insight lightly. In fact, I know exactly what you are feeling. In fact, that negative force is inside of me, too."*

*"It is?" said Ludmilla, incredibly.*

*"Yes," continued Olga. "In fact, I think everyone struggles with the exact thing you are talking about."*

*"They do?" I asked. Olga nodded.*

*"But what do you think it is, exactly?" I said, shaking my head. "This is one malady that is beyond my ability to diagnose."*

*Olga looked at us thoughtfully for a moment, as if trying to gauge how much we were ready to hear.*

*"I guess it's been called many things over the years," she said. "Some call it obstinacy. Others would consider it rebellion or selfishness." Olga paused and then continued.*



*“But I think the best name for it is also one of the oldest. What you are talking about – that destructive principle inside you – is what Christians call ‘sin.’ ”*

*I don’t know whether Ludmilla was as surprised as I, but immediately she shook her head negatively.*

*“We know you are a very religious person, Olga, and we respect your beliefs. We really do. And I know that you tend to see everything in religious terms. But even if I were as religious as you are, I don’t think I’d call this inner struggle, ‘sin.’ ”*

*“Yes,” I chimed in, “isn’t sin doing bad things, like lying, stealing, and murdering? We’re not talking about anything like that.”*

*Olga smiled at us again. “I agree that most people look at sin just as you do. They think sin is just a name for the very bad things some people do, like murder, rape, or terrorism. But I’ve learned that sin is a force, a pull that lives inside each one of us. It pulls us toward the dark side of life, even when we know better and want to do better. And ultimately, sin is our desire to live our lives separate from God.*

*Of course, that was only the beginning of many conversations about the thing inside each of us that pulls us down and keeps us from our dreams. Together, the three of us began to explore more deeply this inner invisible world, the good parts of it as well as the bad.*

*It is because all of us have learned something about this hidden, spiritual world that we have written you a few more letters. I was rather late in coming to understand how this hidden world works. I hope you don’t have to make foolish mistakes like mine before you investigate the most important dimension of your lives – the hidden, spiritual dimension.*

*The things we will share with you in the next few letters will be the most crucial elements in making your dreams come true.*

*Until then, remember that we love you, our dear ones,*

*Your Grandmothers*



**= 40 minutes**

## ENDING THE LESSON



### SUMMARIZE

5 MINUTES

Write students' suggestions on the board as they mention them.

Before dismissing your students, remember to dictate the Parent-Teacher questions to them.



= 45 minutes

In this lesson, we've begun to look at the idea that there may be a hidden, spiritual world, which, much like Lister's unseen world of bacteria, influences everything we say and do. Let's list together some of the things people do that are not ideal – things that hurt other people or damage the world around us.

I'd like you to explore this idea of the personal impact of the hidden, spiritual world by describing on paper an instance of hurting someone or being hurt by someone, then experiencing the feeling that the behavior was just wrong. For example, maybe someone told a lie about you. The result was that you felt betrayed and angry. Or maybe someone teased you and you felt small and hurt. You will not be asked to show anyone what you write. I'll give you about five minutes.

Next time, we will continue exploring the unseen world of the spirit.

## RESOURCES

### GOING DEEPER

The Grandmothers' Letter today introduced the idea that the negative force in the world is what the Bible calls "sin". Today, we are going to look at two verses that talk about this problem of sin. The first is Romans 6:23.

*[Read this verse from your Bible or read the following paraphrase, or both:]*

**"You get what you deserve when you sin. It is death! But God's free gift is life that lasts forever. It is given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ."**

This passage claims that the natural result of sinning is death. With that in mind, I want to ask you a question, but I don't want you to answer out loud or raise your hand. I just want you to think silently what your answer would be. The question is: "Do you consider yourself to be a sinner?"

Now, I'd like to ask another question, but this time I'd like to hear your answers out loud. My next question is: "How bad a thing would you have to do before you would consider yourself a 'sinner'?"

*[Let several respond and then continue.]*

Now I want to ask another "silent" question – just quietly think about your answer. The question is: "Have you ever sinned?"

The reason I've asked these questions is that people have various ideas about what it means to sin and about what it means to say someone is a sinner.

However, the Bible is quite clear in its explanation of sin. According to the Bible, sin is anything we do or say or even think that displeases God. It is anything that is less than what He wants for our lives.

The Bible also says that it does not take very much sin to make us sinners.

## “INK” IN CLEAR WATER ACTIVITY

I'd like to illustrate the biblical view of sin with a little demonstration.

*[This demonstration will need to be prepared and practiced in advance. The purpose is to show how a small quantity of liquid can quickly transform the appearance of an ordinary container of water. You will need a large transparent glass container filled with clean, clear water. You will also need a small quantity of food coloring, dye, or ink to pour into the water. A red liquid may show up most easily. You could also ask a chemistry teacher to suggest a liquid that would quickly react and change the color of water or other clear liquid in an obvious way.]*

Many people believe that if your good deeds outweigh your bad deeds, then you are basically a “good person”. However, if your bad deeds overbalance the good, then you are a bad person or a “sinner”. We might call this the balanced scales view of sin. Many believe that this is what Christianity teaches. Others, like Yelena in the story, used to believe that only really bad things like murder or rape would count as sins or make a person a sinner.

Neither of these views is the biblical one. Instead, Christians believe it is more like this:

Here I have a glass (or jar) of pure, clear liquid. Let's say this jar represents a perfect, morally good person. I also have a colored liquid. How much of this colored fluid do you think I would need to put in the jar before the liquid was no longer clear and pure?

*[Let several guess.]*

Well, let's try it and see.

*[Drop in a small amount that you know is enough to dramatically change the color.]*

This is more like the biblical view of sin. All it takes is a little drop of sin to pollute us and make us “sinners”. And according to the Bible, it doesn't take some big, horrible, nasty sin like murder to ruin our lives. Even polite, socially acceptable sins like little lies or a little gossip is enough to make us “sinners”. With that in mind, I think we are ready to read our second verse from the Bible.

*[Read this verse from your Bible or read the following paraphrase, or both:]*

**“For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard” (Romans 3:23, NLT).**

So the Bible paints a discouraging picture of the human race. Every human who has ever lived has sinned. That is, all fail to live up to what God wants for them. According to the Bible, everyone in the human race is a sinner.

*[Note to the teacher: The Bible gives one exception – Jesus Christ is “without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).]*

So, the biblical solution to the human problem of sin is not for us to try to make up for our sins by doing more good deeds. During the next two lessons, we will look at what the Bible does present as God’s solution to our problem of sin.

## FOCUS POINT

Be sure to leave time for discussion at the end of the learning activity so your students can discuss the connection between the learning activity and the lesson. Listen to see whether they seemed to understand the key points listed. If you sense that one or more of these points may have been lost, be sure to guide the discussion to make sure they get these main ideas.

1. Christians do *not* believe that any number of good deeds can make up for even one small sin.
2. The Bible teaches that every one of us has sinned and therefore is a sinner.

## PARENT-TEACHER CONNECTION

### For Family Discussion:

1. Tell your adolescent about some things you were taught when you were younger but no longer believe to be true.
2. Share with your adolescent some of the things you cannot see, but believe are true anyway.