



TEACH IT TALK SESSION 7

This talk guide is just that: a guide. It's not intended to be a manuscript to read aloud. It's here to give you ideas, structure, and stories to blend with your personal study (Prep It) as you prepare your talk.

The content complements the other Teach It guides and allows you to give a talk on the same topic students are studying in other settings, such as small groups, without too much overlap.

1. Materials (Optional)

- The book *The Sneetches and Other Stories* by Dr. Seuss
- Video clip: the cartoon version of *The Sneetches* from a video sharing Web site, such as YouTube—The DVD version of *Dr. Seuss: Green Eggs and Ham and Other Favorites* contains *The Sneetches* and may be found at your local library.

2. Optional Openings

BOOK READING

Open by reading aloud the Dr. Seuss story *The Sneetches*.

VIDEO CLIP

Show the cartoon version of *The Sneetches*.

QUOTATIONS

Share a few of the following quotations to introduce the idea of sticking with something challenging rather than taking the comfortable path as Demas did.

Courage is being scared to death but saddling up anyway.

—John Wayne (1907-1979, Academy Award-winning American film actor)

There is no inherent problem in our desire to escalate our goals, as long as we enjoy the struggle along the way.

—Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1934-present, American psychologist, author of *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*)

Men can only be happy when they do not assume that the object of life is happiness.

—George Orwell (1903-1950, English writer and journalist, author of *Animal Farm* and *1984*)

PERSONAL STORY

Tell a story that highlights tension between people. Here's an example:

During my senior year of high school, we played our last two football games on Friday afternoon instead of Friday night. There were so many fights between members of our school and some of the other schools that they had to move the games to the afternoons—I guess it's easier for officials to see pre-fights brewing in the light of day and nip them before they become full-fledged fights.

Our team finished that year 12-1, and we would have played for the state championship if it weren't for a missed field goal in overtime. It should have been the greatest year for football in our school's history. Instead we played in front of afternoon crowds in the sunlight. It just didn't feel right. High school football felt right when we played under the Friday night lights in front of a packed house of cheering fans. This just wasn't the same.

Looking back, it just seems silly that people were fighting because they went to different schools. They were fighting over whose school was better, whose team was better, and whose team was tougher. It was ridiculous, and it ended up ruining our year.

It's probably not a bad thing that we love our schools, hometowns, or our country. These are all good things. But it's silly if we grow to dislike someone else because they were born in another city or country. It's crazy that we get so mad at people because they cheer for the rival team. It's a game. We're all just hoping our team wins. That really should be the extent of it...but it's not.

People are afraid of something different. Sometimes—and this is pretty common—people like to make fun of or demean other people because they think they'll raise themselves by lowering everyone else. If you're in a room and you feel like the least popular person, well, start making fun of someone and soon you'll be the *second* least popular person. Maybe people will even jump on your side, and you'll be the leader of the insulters.

It's sad when people are demeaning, but this is really how people act. I've done it. Many of us have. Call it insecurity, defensiveness, or whatever you want, but it's not right. And I think people do this a lot with the gospel.

Let's face it—many people don't understand the gospel or its followers. They might even be a bit afraid of it, thinking the followers of the gospel are out to get them—to “win them over.” So they demean it and make fun of those who follow the message of the gospel. If you can ridicule a cause so easily, then it must not be a cause worth paying attention to. This helps them feel more justified in choosing not to believe in Jesus. This might sound a little crazy, but it's something that even happened in the Bible.

OPTIONAL MIX-INS

You may want to point out a few expositional points about 2 Timothy:

-Paul mentioned several people in 2 Timothy who walked away from the faith.

-Some of these people had actually worked with Paul and helped him.

-Some not only wandered away, but people, such as Hymenaeus and Philetus, actually opposed the work of the gospel and worked to turn others away.

-Scripture tells us how to handle these kinds of situations: restore gently (Galatians 6:1), don't repay evil for evil (Romans 12:17), love and pray for your enemies (Mathew. 5:44), be merciful to the doubters (Jude 1:22).

3. Digging In

Continue—

Here are a few examples of situations when friends walked away from Paul:

You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes. (2 Timothy 1:15)

Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some. (2 Timothy 2:16-18)

Ask students to shout out the most famous place their name has appeared. Here are some possibilities if you need to prime the pump:

- a professional team's stadium scoreboard
- a city newspaper
- a school paper or Web site
- employee of the month sign
- honor roll
- school absentee list
- Google

Continue—

Can you imagine what it would be like to have your name in the best-selling book of all time? A guy named Demas, a normal run-of-the-mill guy like you and me, was mentioned three times in the Bible—the best-selling book of all time. Twice he was mentioned as being a fellow worker with Paul, sending greetings to fellow believers (Colossians 4:14; Philemon 1:23-24). But in 2 Timothy his mention isn't so hot. In 2 Timothy 4:10, Paul wrote, "Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me."

Demas went from being a right-hand man to actually *deserting* Paul—and, we're also guessing, Jesus. That's a big turnaround.

4. Taking It Inward

Continue—

Have you ever had a Demas moment?

I remember when I was a new believer and I struggled with how to share my faith. I told more people than I'd like to admit that they were going to hell and that everything they believed was wrong. I quickly learned that that technique wasn't getting me into the deep spiritual conversations I wanted to be having with people. So I backed off. I backed off so much that I became a crusader against all that was evangelical. I didn't want to fall into the trap of the turn-or-burn crowd, so I became the leader of the let's-all-just-be-happy crowd.

I was so afraid of offending people that I all but denied my faith. I joined in with the crowd when it came to lifestyle choices that didn't really fit my beliefs. I spoke differently than I do now, acted differently, and generally tried so hard to blend in that I forgot my true identity—a child of God. I fell back in love with the world. It's a strong pull if you forget just how awesome it is to know the One who loves us beyond measure. I pulled a Demas. Actually, I pulled a *me*. I fell into an old, bad habit—loving the world.

Do you have any friends who are more attracted to the world than to God? Are you more attracted to the world than to God?

5. Wrapping It Up

Finish with—

It goes back to the piece of charcoal we talked about last week (Session 6). If you take a burning coal out of the pile of charcoal and set it on the edge by itself, it will cool off. That's possibly what happened to Demas. He got himself isolated from the friends who could keep him on fire for the Lord, and he fell back in love with the world. And his final mention in Scripture, for all the world throughout all the ages to see, is that he loved the world instead of God and that he deserted Paul.

Don't let that be your legacy.