



THE FAKE CAMPAIGN: SMALL GROUP SERIES

Sandi Asker

Small Group #1: Fake Life, or the Real Thing?

Luke 18:9-14

ICE BREAKER

Something fun!

INTRO

We are in a three week series about fake things versus real things.

RESPONDING TO “HOW ARE YOU?”

Normal American greetings go something like this: “Hi! How are you?” How do you normally respond? Why? How often do you share how you *really* are?

Today we are going to read a passage that contrasts two men who stood before God, praying.

Read Luke 18:9-14

New International Reader's Version (NIRV)

⁹ Jesus told a story to some people who were sure they were right with God. They looked down on everybody else. ¹⁰ He said to them, “Two men went up to the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee. The other was a tax collector.

¹¹ “The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself. ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people,’ he said. ‘I am not like robbers or those who do other evil things. I am not like those who commit adultery. I am not even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week. And I give a tenth of all I get.’

¹³ “But the tax collector stood not very far away. He would not even look up to heaven. He beat his chest and said, ‘God, have mercy on me. I am a sinner.’

¹⁴ “I tell you, the tax collector went home accepted by God. But not the Pharisee.

Everyone who lifts himself up will be brought down. And anyone who is brought down will be lifted up.”

Background

A Pharisee was a religious, highly respected person in Jewish circles. They interpreted and followed the Jewish laws strictly. Fasting and giving ten percent (tithing) were highly valued habits.

Tax collectors were hated members of the Jewish religious society. They worked for the Romans, their oppressors. They were responsible for collecting taxes from their fellow Jews. They charged extra and pocketed it. Everyone knew they were dirty.

1. What do you notice about the first man? What does he think of himself?
2. What do you notice about the second man? How is he different from the first?
3. What makes the second man, the tax collector, acceptable to God?
4. What does it mean for us to “lift ourselves up”? Can you think of an example of this?
5. Jesus promises those who think too highly of themselves will be brought down, or humbled. Can you think of any modern day examples? *(Leader: consider Lance Armstrong, Tiger Woods, Oscar Pistorius, Reese Witherspoon)*
6. Do you know any humble people? What makes them humble? *(Leader: working definition of humility: “to avoid putting yourself above other people, and instead to recognize and affirm what others can teach you.”)*
7. What do you think helped the tax collector be authentic with God? What brought him to God to ask for mercy and help?
8. Would you be willing to quit faking it in an area of your life? How could you ask God for help there? Can we/this group help somehow? What if you once per day, you shared one thing surprisingly honest about yourself with someone else in the room? That is the kind of community I want us to become this year!
9. Turn over your paper. This is just for you. Write down four phrases.
 - My fears
 - My past
 - My family
 - My anger

After you write these, write a sentence about yourself. Something you know about yourself, but you don't want to share with others.

Small Group #2: Fake Friends vs. the Real Thing

Mark 2:1-12

INTRO

Did you ever have a “friend” you realized really wasn’t your friend? How could you tell? We are about to read a story of 4 men who paint a picture of true friendship. As we read it, imagine you are one of the crowd inside the house, watching all of this unfold.

Optional: Urbana Tap Dance of this story <https://vimeo.com/56505529>

Read Mark 2:1-12

Contemporary English Version (CEV)

Jesus went back to Capernaum, and a few days later people heard that he was at home.

²Then so many of them came to the house that there wasn’t even standing room left in front of the door. Jesus was still teaching ³when four people came up, carrying a crippled man on a mat. ⁴But because of the crowd, they could not get him to Jesus. So they made a hole in the roof above him and let the man down in front of everyone.

⁵When Jesus saw how much faith they had, he said to the crippled man, “My friend, your sins are forgiven.” ⁶Some of the teachers of the Law of Moses were sitting there.

They started wondering, ⁷“Why would he say such a thing? He must think he is God! Only God can forgive sins.” ⁸Right away, Jesus knew what they were thinking, and he said, “Why are you thinking such things? ⁹Is it easier for me to tell this crippled man that his sins are forgiven or to tell him to get up and pick up his mat and go on home? ¹⁰I will show you that the Son of Man has the right to forgive sins here on earth.” So Jesus said to the man, ¹¹“Get up! Pick up your mat and go on home.”

¹²The man got right up. He picked up his mat and went out while everyone watched in amazement. They praised God and said, “We have never seen anything like this!”

1. If you had been one of the four friends, how would you feel when you couldn’t get inside the house?
2. Why dig a hole in the roof? (*Houses in these days had flat roofs, accessible by a stairway. The roof would have been layered with timber, branches, clay tiles and clay. Rain and age would have made it water proof. It was possible but still a hard task to dig an opening. This shows an amazing amount of persistence friendship.*)
3. How does Jesus respond to the hole in the roof? What does this tell us about His attitude towards the men and the man on the mat? (*Jesus saw their faith: meaning the way they treated their friend on the mat illustrated their faith in Jesus.*)

4. These 4 friends had just carried their friend some distance and then dug through the roof to get him to Jesus. They had expected Jesus would heal him and instead, Jesus speaks of sin and forgiveness. Why? *(Not only did their friend get healed due to their persistence, he was transformed spiritually. This man had more than just physical needs. He needed Jesus and a restored relationship with God.)*
5. The teachers of the Law were known to be righteous and religious people. How does Jesus respond to them?
6. If you were one of the 4 friends, how would you respond to Jesus?
7. Jesus knows our physical or obvious needs, but He also knows about our sins and wants to forgive us. What do you need forgiveness for?
8. We want to be the kind of community that brings each other to Jesus. Sometimes you will be weak and struggling one who needs others to help you come to Jesus. Sometimes you will do the carrying. But we have to be honest with each about our struggles in order to live this out. Are you willing to do that?
9. Some of your friends don't know Jesus. Think of two friends here at school whom you could pray for this week, and carry them to Jesus in prayer.
10. Sometimes it is easier to identify the kind of friends we want in life. How about this week we think instead about the kind of friend we want to be to others? If we start being a real friend, we will get real friendships back.

Small Group #3: Fake Love vs. the Real Thing

John 4

INTRO

Has anyone ever confronted you about an issue in your life? How did they do it well? What made you listen? What turned you off?

Watch an interpretation of our passage to start today.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q49BbfgJbto>

What stood out to you from that clip?

Read John 4

⁴ Jesus had to go through Samaria. ⁵ He came to a town in Samaria called Sychar. It was near the piece of land Jacob had given his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there. Jesus was tired from the journey. So he sat down by the well. It was about noon.

⁷ A woman from Samaria came to get some water. Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" ⁸ His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.

⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew. I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" She said this because Jews don't have anything to do with Samaritans.

¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "You do not know what God's gift is. And you do not know who is asking you for a drink. If you did, you would have asked him. He would have given you living water."

¹¹ "Sir," the woman said, "you don't have anything to get water with. The well is deep. Where can you get this living water?"

¹² "Our father Jacob gave us the well. He drank from it himself. So did his sons and his flocks and herds. Are you more important than he is?"

¹³ Jesus answered, "All who drink this water will be thirsty again. ¹⁴ But anyone who drinks the water I give him will never be thirsty. In fact, the water I give him will become a spring of water in him. It will flow up into eternal life."

¹⁵ The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water. Then I will never be thirsty. And I won't have to keep coming here to get water."

¹⁶ He told her, "Go. Get your husband and come back."

¹⁷ "I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands. And the man you have now is not your husband. What you have just said is very true."

¹⁹ "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our people have worshiped on this mountain for a long time. But you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

²¹ Jesus said, “Believe me, woman. A time is coming when you will not worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know. We worship what we do know. Salvation comes from the Jews.

²³ “But a new time is coming. In fact, it is already here. True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. They are the kind of worshipers the Father is looking for.

²⁴ “God is spirit. His worshipers must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

²⁵ The woman said, “I know that Messiah is coming.” (He is called Christ.) “When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

²⁶ Then Jesus said, “I, the one speaking to you, am he.”

1. Jesus initiates this conversation but would have been easier to ignore this woman. What barriers did He overcome? (*He was tired. It was hot [noon]. Gender. Ethnicity. Her initial response seems as though she is not interested in conversation*)
2. After the water cooler talk, Jesus brings up her relationship status. Where does she seem to be faking it? What is the woman really thirsting for? (*Her 5 relationships either speak of heartbreak–death and divorce–or loose living.*)
3. Jesus leaped over barriers and then challenges her on an intimate level. No way was He faking it through this conversation. Why do you think He did this? How do you see Him speaking the truth in love?
4. Where do Christians tend to fake it? If Jesus had met you at the well, what might He bring up with you?
5. What promises does Jesus make here regarding her thirst? How do you respond to that?
6. The woman then changes the topic to religion. What does she claim the Jews believe? What misconceptions get cleared up for her?
7. The faithful were awaiting a Messiah, a conquering King who would restore the Kingdom of Israel to power and glory. What does the text suggest she felt when Jesus claimed to be the Messiah? (*The fact that He reveals Himself so openly seems to indicate He cares deeply, loves this woman. Perhaps she realizes this.*)
8. How do you respond to Jesus’ claims in this study? What do you believe about Him?

9. This week practice starting each day by admitting the places deep inside where you crave love, friendship, acceptance, admiration, intimacy, etc. Bring this to Jesus and ask him to satisfy your deepest longings.

You may wish to have a 4th study in the series. Otherwise you might want to close with, "As Jesus meets our thirst, we have good news to offer those around us. The woman rushes back to her village and they all come with her to meet this Jesus, triggering one of the most amazing revivals in the Bible."

If this is the fourth study, summarize or read the whole chapter as an introduction:

²⁸ The woman left her water jar and went back to the town. She said to the people, ²⁹ "Come. See a man who told me everything I've ever done. Could this be the Christ?" ³⁰ The people came out of the town and made their way toward Jesus.

³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from the town of Sychar believed in Jesus. They believed because of the woman's witness. She said, "He told me everything I've ever done." ⁴⁰ Then the Samaritans came to him and tried to get him to stay with them. So he stayed two days. ⁴¹ Because of his words, many more people became believers. ⁴² They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said. We have now heard for ourselves. We know that this man really is the Savior of the world." ⁴³ After the two days, Jesus left for Galilee.

1. Why did the woman leave her water jar? How is it also symbolic and related to her love life? (*She found Someone who knew all of her secrets and still engaged with her, conversed with her and cared for her.*)
2. It might have been easier for the woman to simply sit with Jesus and enjoy what she knew and now believed. What barriers did she overcome to share her testimony with her neighbors and strangers in the city? How did she love them as she had been loved?
3. What does it mean that Jesus is the Savior of the World?
4. There are many invitations in this passage. Which are you ready to receive?
 - Jesus offers living water, eternal life. Are you ready to receive that?
 - Before Jesus finishes this conversation, He addresses a barrier in the woman's life: her relationships. Are you willing to bring those to Jesus?

- God is looking for true worshipers. Are you ready to worship Him in spirit and truth?
- Jesus just doesn't save us, He is the Savior of the World. Do you believe that?
- This woman quickly was transformed by her meeting Jesus. She created a domino affect of others meeting Jesus. Will you follow her lead, regardless of the barriers that are in place?

5. Who are a few people this week you can invite to check out Jesus?