



# COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Vibes / Week 4

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

## BOTTOM LINE

**Because of Jesus, guilt doesn't have to be the boss of you.**

## GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students recognize when guilt is controlling them and invite them to trust Jesus instead.

## SCRIPTURE

*Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it (Proverbs 4:23 NIV).*

*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:1-2 NIV).*

*For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering (Romans 8:3a NIV).*

*And so He [God] condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Romans 8:3b-4 NIV).*

## TEACHING OUTLINE

### INTRODUCTION

- If we aren't careful, our vibes and emotions can take control of us.
- **What would you do if you knew you would never get caught, and there would be no consequences?**
- We all have the potential to think some wild thoughts.
- We're all experts at monitoring our behavior so that only the good stuff is seen for the most part.

### TENSION

- It's important that we learn how to monitor our emotions because our emotions have a big impact on the way we treat ourselves and other people.
- *Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it (Proverbs 4:23 NIV).*
- What comes out of you comes from your heart.

- We all have stuff inside of us that's not great. And when that stuff comes out of us, and we do or say something that's not great, the result is usually a different emotion that can end up controlling us.
- It's called guilt.
- Nobody likes to feel guilt. So instead of doing something about it when we feel it, we stuff it away.
- Guilt creates a debt/debtor relationship with others. In other words, it creates an "I owe you" out of a relationship.
- Carrying the weight of guilt throws us off balance.
- When we don't deal with guilt, it grows and evolves into anger.
- The truth is, we're all guilty of something.
- We're all also in danger of letting our guilt become anger, and our anger turning into us being defensive.
- Eventually, we realize that even though this thing is in the past, it's not completely gone.
- Jesus offers a different way, a way to no longer be controlled by our guilt, shame, or anger, and that's what we're going to talk about for the next few minutes.

## TRUTH

- Paul was ashamed of his past and felt guilty.
- The early part of his life—before he became known as the apostle Paul—he was known as Saul of Tarsus.
- Saul spent his time hunting down followers of Jesus so that he could arrest them and have them tortured, imprisoned, or even killed.
- There's no question that he dealt with regret and guilt, knowing what he had done and remembering the faces of people he had arrested or killed.
- What makes his story so amazing is that he doesn't distance himself from his past.
- *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:1-2 NIV).*
- There is freedom in owning up to God what you said or did. When you call it what it is, that weight comes off.
- *For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering (Romans 8:3a NIV).*
- **Because of Jesus, guilt doesn't have to be the boss of you.**
- *And so He [God] condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Romans 8:3b-4 NIV).*

## APPLICATION

- When you decide to take God at his word, when you trust that Jesus is who He says He is and did what He said He was going to do, a few things happen.
  - 1. You are no longer allowed to condemn yourself or punish yourself.**
  - 2. Your guilt will remind you, but it will not define you.**
  - 3. You don't get to condemn others for their mistakes.**
  - 4. You are free to make things right with the person you hurt, without excuses or an expectation of getting something back from them.**
- Don't let pride, fear, or worry be the thing that keeps you from righting the relationship.
- Maybe the best thing you can do to let the guilt vibe go is to humble yourself and seek forgiveness from the person you hurt.

## LANDING

- As long as we hold on to the guilt, we are letting our past define us. And Jesus came to change that.
- Because of Jesus, guilt doesn't have to be the boss of you. And it doesn't have to be the boss of the people around you, either.

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## INTERACTIVE

This Interactive happens in the Tension section (see for more details).

For this Interactive, you'll need...

- One glass jar
- Bag of Skittles (enough to fill the jar with Skittles)



# TEACHING SCRIPT

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## BOTTOM LINE

**Because of Jesus, guilt doesn't have to be the boss of you.**

## INTRODUCTION

1.5 MINUTES

We have been talking about our vibes and emotions and how, if we aren't careful, they can take control of us. And since none of us like being controlled, handling our emotions is something we want to get better at.

As we continue this conversation today, I want to ask you a question. Are you ready?

**What would you do if you knew you would never get caught, and there would be no consequences?**

Let me say that again...

What would you do if you knew you would never get caught, and there would be no consequences?

Now, I want you to turn to the person next to you and share what you said...JUST KIDDING!! Don't say anything. I don't think we need to hear each other's answers to that!

I imagine that some of you had stuff come to mind that surprised even YOU. Maybe something popped in your brain, and you were like, "Thank goodness, there are no mind readers in here!"

The truth is, we all have the potential to think some wild thoughts. We're just smart enough not to talk about it. We're all experts at monitoring our behavior so that only the good stuff is seen for the most part.

## TENSION

8 MINUTES

And while we've learned to monitor our behavior, the problem is that we've never really learned how to monitor our emotions—our hearts, where the emotions come from. And like we talked about last week, it's important that we learn how to monitor our emotions, because our emotions have a big impact on the way we treat ourselves and other people. And that's a big deal to Jesus.



*(Communicator note: Have a glass container full of Skittles ready to illustrate that, in our lives, what we are filled with is what we pour out.)*

Say something like this:

*Think of it this way. Tipping this glass container over doesn't determine what comes out. What is already in here determines what comes out. If Skittles are inside, then Skittles are coming out. Shaking this doesn't determine what comes out of here. Shaking this exposes what's already in here. The same is true with our emotions. They are inside of us. The question is, how do they come out?*

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Which is why I think what King Solomon said is so important. In a book from the Old Testament, Proverbs, he said this...

*Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it (Proverbs 4:23 NIV).*

What Solomon was saying is what is going on inside of you is important. Why? Because what comes out of you comes from your heart. We can all try to watch our actions and monitor our behavior, but that's not the real problem.

The real problem is taking care of what's inside. Because good or bad, whatever is inside is coming out, just like the jar of skittles. And let's be honest with ourselves, we can all admit that we have some problems on the inside, right? Most of us can quickly think of things we've done, said, or thought that no one else is allowed to know about. Because we all have stuff inside of us, that's not great. And when that stuff comes out of us, and we do or say something that's not great, the result is usually a different emotion that can end up controlling us.

I'm talking about **guilt**.

Guilt is a loaded word because there are different kinds of guilt...

One is false guilt. That's the guilt you feel when you aren't guilty. You feel bad about something you didn't do or feel bad about something that wasn't a big deal.

Then there is actual guilt, and this is what we're talking about today. This is the kind of guilt you feel when you did something you shouldn't have done, or you said something you shouldn't have said. It's when you hurt someone who deserved better. Feeling this legitimate guilt isn't a bad thing in and of itself. But it becomes a problem when something you've done in the past becomes a part of your identity.

Let's be clear: Nobody likes to feel guilt. So instead of doing something about it when we feel it, we stuff it away. And we have messages that we say to ourselves about the thing we feel guilty about. Things like...

- **I wasn't the only one.**
- **I was going through a bad phase.**
- **It's not my fault.**

And we tell ourselves these stories to make the guilt less powerful—so we don't feel quite as bad. But here's the thing. When we make excuses for our guilt or pretend like it's not a big deal, the guilt doesn't go away—we actually end up giving our guilt more power.

Think about it. Guilt creates a debt/debtor relationship with others. In other words, it creates an “I owe you” out of a relationship. Why? Because we have taken something from them. When we hurt someone else, we take things like...

- Their reputation.
- Their trust.
- Their self-esteem.

And so we owe them. We even say things like, “I owe them an apology.”

But the thing is, we don't see guilt as a debt to pay back. We experience guilt like a weight. And when we carry around a weight, it throws us off balance. Carrying the weight of guilt throws us off balance. Which explains why, when we fix a relationship and make it right, we sometimes say, “I feel like a weight has been lifted off my shoulders.”

But that's not all! The other tricky thing about guilt is it doesn't stay with the person we feel guilty towards. You may feel guilty about how you talked to your stepmom, but then you'll bring it with you when you are hanging out with your friends, and all of a sudden, what happened with your stepmom now has you in a bad mood with your friends.

See, when we don't deal with guilt, it grows and evolves into anger. Anger at ourselves for behaving a certain way. Anger at not being able to move past it. And the thing about anger is it doesn't stay inside of us: it eventually comes out.

The truth is, we're all guilty of something. So, we're all also in danger of letting our guilt become anger, and our anger turning into us being defensive. We don't like people pointing out where we may have gotten it wrong. And there's a reason for that. If we own up to our guilt and admit that what we did wasn't okay, we'll see what we did for what it was: sin. And that leaves us feeling condemned, convicted, and judged. In other words, we'll feel bad because we'll see that we did something bad, and we can't undo it. We can't un-say that thing or un-talk that way or un-treat someone that way. Eventually, we realize that even though this thing is in the past, it's not completely gone. It's still there as a part of our story.

Here's the good news. You don't have to be defined by your past. And you don't have to deny it, either. Jesus offers a different way, a way to no longer be controlled by our guilt, shame, or anger, and that's what we're going to talk about for the next few minutes.

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## TRUTH

7 MINUTES

I want to look at something the apostle Paul said. And it's important that we know who said this because Paul had more regret and guilt than all of us in this room combined. He wasn't just a preacher trying to make a point. He lived it. He was ashamed of his past and felt guilty. Because of the early part of his life—before he became known as the apostle Paul—he was known as Saul of Tarsus. And Saul spent his time hunting down followers of Jesus so that he could arrest them and have them tortured, imprisoned, or even killed. He did more than just let this happen. He made it happen.

But then, Paul's life changed, and he became a follower of Jesus. Instead of killing Jesus' followers, he made it his life mission to encourage more people to follow Jesus. But his past was still his past, and it's likely that he had to face the families of people he went after before he followed Jesus. There's no question that he dealt with regret and guilt, knowing what he had done and remembering the faces of people he had arrested or killed.

But what makes his story so amazing is that he doesn't distance himself from his past. He doesn't run away from it, tries to hide it, or deny it. He doesn't make excuses like, "Well, that was before I met Jesus, so it doesn't really count."

Instead, he told his story and owned it. And he wrote about it in a letter to Christians living Rome...

*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:1-2 NIV).*

In other words, he tells people that because of Jesus, something new happened. You don't have to pretend that you didn't do anything wrong. There is freedom in owning up to God what you said or did. When you call it what it is, that weight comes off. You can stop running and making excuses. You can let all of that go and find freedom.

How?

Paul tells us...

*For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh... (Romans 8:3a NIV).*

Meaning, all the law could do was show us how we got it wrong. It points out the ways we've messed up. But it can't fix anything for us, it can't take that weight away, and it definitely doesn't give us freedom. But that can be found! So Paul goes on...

*For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering (Romans 8:3a NIV).*

Meaning, Jesus had no guilt. He did nothing wrong. He came and lived the perfect life. And He died a criminal's death so that we can be free. We have every reason to feel guilty. Jesus has none. And yet, Jesus is the one who died. And because of that, we no longer have to feel guilty.

Think of it this way...

Because of Jesus, guilt doesn't have to be the boss of you.

We can live guilt-free. Jesus took it all. It's like He's saying, "Bring all of your guilt over all the stuff you've ever done. Own it. What you did was wrong. It wasn't okay. We both agree that you messed up and are guilty. But that is not the end of the story. I don't see you that way anymore. And I don't want you to see yourself that way, either. I want you to see yourself the way I do."

Paul wraps up the thought by saying...

*And so He [God] condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Romans 8:3b-4 NIV).*

Paul is saying, "God has made the relationship between you and Him guilt-free. You are guilty because you did something you shouldn't have, we all have. But you are not condemned, and that guilt doesn't define you anymore. What Jesus did on the cross defines you. Jesus took the guilt on Himself, and now you're free."

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## APPLICATION

## 4 MINUTES

Here's the thing. The way Paul writes is a bit confusing. And if you're sitting there thinking, "What does this even mean?" I get it. But I don't want us to miss this because it sounds confusing. When you decide to take God at his word, when you trust that Jesus is who He says He is and did what He said He was going to do, a few things happen.

1. **You are no longer allowed to condemn yourself or punish yourself.** Guilt is not the boss of you. You belong to God. And God says that you are not condemned. So when that voice of shame and guilt tries to weigh you down, you can say, "Jesus took care of that for me. That's not who I am anymore. I belong to Jesus."
2. **Your guilt will remind you, but it will not define you.** Meaning, what you did doesn't disappear. You may have some lessons to learn. But that thing you did? The thing you said? It isn't WHO you are. Let your past be the thing that marks a change in you. Let it lead you to show gratitude to God for who you are now.
3. **You don't get to condemn others for their mistakes.** When you realize what Jesus has done for your guilt, you understand that He's done the same things for others. You don't get to judge, hate on, or criticize others for their mistakes. Your past makes you perfectly positioned to love everyone else despite their mistakes.
4. **You are free to make things right with the person you hurt, without excuses or an expectation of getting something back from them.** This is big. Sometimes we think that when we do something wrong, the most important thing for us to do is just pray, ask God for forgiveness, and everything is fine. But it's not always fine. Jesus cares about making it right—not with Him, but the person you hurt. So go ahead and pray for forgiveness, but then go out and make it right with the other person. Whatever you took from them—trust, friendship, self-esteem—own it. And here's the thing. It's possible that your willingness to be humble and approach that person will do more than just keep the guilt from controlling you. It will allow them to deal with the hurt and emotion inside of them that they may not have even known they had.

In fact, what if that's the reason you're here today? What if someone is waiting on you to make the first move and make things right? What if that's the way forward and the way out of the weight of guilt? Don't let pride, fear, or worry be the thing that keeps you from righting the relationship. Maybe the best thing you can do to let the guilt vibe go is to humble yourself and seek forgiveness from the person you hurt.

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## LANDING

### 1 MINUTE

I get that it's scary. But remember, as long as we hold on to the guilt, we are letting our past define us. And Jesus came to change that. Our past can remind us, but it will not define us. Maybe today is the day that changes.

Maybe today is the day you really understand that because of what Jesus did for you, you are no longer condemned. Guilt is not in control. That vibe is not going to call the shots. There's no room for the vibes of guilt, shame, embarrassment, and pride. Because of Jesus, all of that is gone.

As we head out, let's remember that and pass that same love on to others, despite their mistakes. Because of Jesus, guilt doesn't have to be the boss of you. And it doesn't have to be the boss of the people around you, either.



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS