



02.SEEING OURSELVES CLEARLY

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

GOAL:

The goal of this lesson is twofold:

1. *This small group lesson is designed to help you and your students go deeper into how we tend to filter ourselves.*
Students will read a story about a woman who found freedom from her filtered life, then have the opportunity to begin identifying some of their own filters. God made us as his image-bearers, so he wants us to have a clear picture of who we are as his children.
2. *It is also designed to make it easy for you to facilitate and teach students to see themselves the way God sees them.*
That is why the Small Group Leader Guide is packed with easy-to-use instructions, timeframes, and questions that promote thinking and draw out real responses.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- A copy of the Small Group Leader Guide for you and any other facilitators.
- A Student Book for each participant.
- Be sure to check out the Live It Out section ahead of time to prepare. You'll need:
 - each student's personal smart phone, blank paper, pens

TEACHER PREP VIDEO:

Don't forget to take a minute and watch the teacher prep video found in your DNow Studies account. It's a short video that will take you through some of the need-to-knows before you dive into this lesson with students.

WHAT'S INCLUDED: Small Group Leader Guide or Student Book

This table outlines the parts of each lesson and provides an approximate timeframe that you can adapt to meet the needs of your group.

Lesson Elements (and brief description)	Included in Small Group Leader Guide	Included in Student Book	Approximate Timeframe
LARGE GROUP TALK REVIEW W/OPENING QUESTIONS Recap the teaching. Get discussion going by sharing answers from the end of the Large Group Talk.	✓	✓	3–5 minutes
A SECOND LOOK A look at seeing clearly in current, everyday life—followed by discussion questions.	✓	✓	10–15 minutes
A LITTLE DEEPER Dig into Bible passages that were not in the Large Group Talk. See what else Scripture says about this topic.	✓	✓	10–15 minutes
LIVE IT OUT An experiential activity to help students reinforce and internalize the lesson—followed by discussion questions.	✓		15–20 minutes
APPLY IT A practical application for students to do this week.	✓	✓	2–3 minutes
STUDENT DEVOTIONAL A short devotional for students to do on their own.		✓	

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SMALL GROUP SESSION TWO: SEEING OURSELVES CLEARLY

LARGE GROUP TALK REVIEW

Take a minute to review what students just learned in the Large Group Talk. Have them pull out their notes, and ask them to share what their answers were for the two questions found on **page 12** of the Student Book (see below). Consider having students share their answers with a partner, and then ask for two or three volunteers who might want to share with the whole group.

Question 1: In what ways do you filter the image of yourself to the world? Do you give people an accurate or inaccurate picture?

Question 2: What in your life most influences the way you see yourself?

A SECOND LOOK

*Read this story together and answer the following questions, found on **page 14** of the Student Book.*

Linda Dillow and Juli Slattery, in their book *Surprised by the Healer*, tell of a woman named Angel and her story of personal and spiritual healing.¹ Angel was a self-proclaimed drug addict, liar, and prostitute for many years. She had a low view of men and of herself. She filtered her image, so to speak, showing a tough exterior to hide her fear and shame. She says, “So I didn’t tell anyone [that I was weak] and instead stuffed it alongside all the other harmful things that were happening to me.”² For a long time, Angel didn’t have the truths of Scripture guiding her into an understanding of who God is and who she was. But through God’s power and grace, Angel was able to see Christ’s love for her through Christ-followers around her. She became a Christian and now loves the Bible and telling others how God transformed her life—she is now a child of God! Angel was able to stop hiding behind her protective filters and rest in Christ’s love for her.

Discuss:

- When do you most often filter—or are tempted to filter—your image? In person with someone you don’t know well? On social media? Some other context?
- What is the image you want others to see? Does it tend to make you feel better or worse than others?
- On a scale of 1–10 (10=most aligned), how well does your self-image align with who God says you are?
- What prevents you from seeing yourself the way God sees you?

A LITTLE DEEPER

You’ve seen how important it is to have a clear view of ourselves—that we are sinners in need of a Savior, but also loved and invited by God to be His children. Let’s dig in a little deeper to understand how we are supposed to think about ourselves.

Read each Bible passage and answer the questions, found in the Student Book on pages 15 and 16:

ROMANS 12:3

“For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.”

Background Note: The apostle Paul is reminding the church in Rome how to live rightly as Christ-followers. He knows that it's human tendency to see ourselves incorrectly, with either too high or too low a view. That's why he calls the Romans to think about themselves honestly and objectively. His message is just as relevant today as it was then—not just because it's God's Word, but because humans struggle with the same issues no matter what century they live in!

Discuss:

- What do you think the phrase “think with sober judgment” means?
- How does thinking with sober judgment about ourselves look different than thinking of ourselves too highly?
- How does correct thinking about ourselves affect our relationships with others and with God?

1 JOHN 3:1

“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.”

Background Note: Sometimes people seemingly reject us because we are different (because of Christ). Instead of focusing on all the people that don't accept us or like us, we can focus on our privileged position as beloved children of God. He has adopted us as sons and daughters and treats us according to his perfect love.

Discuss:

- If you are a child of God, how have you experienced the world not knowing you (in other words, rejecting you because of Christ)?
- What are some ways to look past others' opinions of you and focus on the truth instead?
- Why is it helpful to focus on the truth instead of what other people think?

2 CORINTHIANS 10:3-5

“For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.”

Background Note: The apostle Paul is reminding the Corinthian church to destroy the things among them that go against what God says. In relation to our self-image, we can take our incorrect thoughts captive by admitting them to God and asking him to help us bear Christ's image well.

Discuss:

- What strongholds do you think the apostle Paul could be referring to, according to these verses?
- As God's image-bearers, how would arguments and lofty opinions destroy our testimony to Christ?
- What do you think it looks like to “take every thought captive to obey Christ” when it comes to how we see ourselves and how well we bear Christ's image?

LIVE IT OUT: Discerning Our Filters

What you'll need: each student's personal smart phone, blank paper, pens.

Say Something Like: It's helpful to see where we come short of understanding who we really are. And that takes discern-

ment—knowing what is true and what is not. Let's use this activity to help us discern how we portray ourselves to others and then evaluate that image with truth from God's Word.

Instructions:

1. Ask the students to take out their smart phones and pull up their favorite social media app.
2. Have them look at the last five posts they've published. **Say something like:** *If a stranger saw your last five posts, what would they assume about you?*
3. Give the students a few minutes to write down the assumptions that this stranger might have of them.
4. Ask for 3–4 volunteers to read what they've written for the group.
5. Have the students write a response to the stranger about who they really are. **Say something like:** *The stranger only knows a few things about you, so write down a few things that might counter the posts that you have. "Unfilter" yourself. And make sure to include an explanation of who you are in Christ, perhaps with a Bible verse to back it up.*
6. Have 3–4 students share their response to the stranger out loud.

Debrief:

- Did seeing your last five posts and the image it portrayed surprise you?
- How did comparing your filtered image to your non-filtered image help you see where you can change your thinking?
- How might God be asking you to change something in your life—whether that be posting more authentically, memorizing a verse or two that'll help remind you who you are in Christ, etc.?

APPLY IT

What is one way you can exercise faith this week to work toward a clearer view of yourself?

Be specific:

What are you going to do?

When are you going to do it?

Is there someone who can keep you accountable?

Leader's Note: Whenever students make applications, challenge them to be specific. It's one thing to say, "I'm going to trust God more." The truth is, our students won't really know if they did this, or if they grew in trust over the week. It's another thing to say, "Every morning this week before I eat breakfast, I'm going to tell God that today is his and that I trust him, and I'm going to ask him to give me the strength to replace worries with trust." Challenge your students to answer the questions under the "Be Specific" section. You can even have them pair up, share their applications, and ask for accountability from their partner.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Schedule: Let students know what's happening next in the schedule and what they need to do or bring with them.

Student Devotional: The Student Book contains a short devotional for students to do on their own. Remember to point this out to students and let them know if and when this fits into the schedule of the weekend. The devotional that corresponds with this lesson is found on **page 37**.

¹⁸² Dr. Juli Slattery and Linda Dillow, *Surprised by the Healer* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2016), 91–102.