

I AM - The Greatest Battle of Your Life

Unit 5: Accountability

Lesson 5: Test It

The Cave of Wisdom

The Cave Opening: The Burning Bush - You get what you measure or test.

Welcome back to the cave of “Gangrene Actions”. Throughout this unit, we have seen various Bible and modern characters follow the steps of Accountability: See It, Own It, Solve It, and Do It. But how did they know the steps resulted in God’s Dream being done? So far our Accountability journey has been like getting on a treadmill to condition our bodies. But unless you measure your progress, you may be doing no good or even harm to your body.

That’s why it’s best to measure your heart rate and blood pressure while you are working out and use a cutoff devise for safety. These are good measures, but do they yield the result you want: weight loss or increased endurance. So you add measures, like time and speed of the workout. A slow walk for five minutes probably will not help you reduce weight, but you will not know for sure until you get on a scale!

The early Christians were much like this exercise. They had seen their spiritual condition, owned their sinful life, solved their lost condition by believing in Jesus as Lord, and were trying to live a Christian lifestyle. But there were some leaders in the congregation who were teaching ideas which were not in alignment with the message of the Apostles. These teachings included that there was no resurrection of the dead or

it had already occurred or that one could live any way they desired because they were saved by Christ's sacrifice.

Paul called these teachings "Gangrene Actions" because if not tested, they would lead to the destruction of the spirit. The Christians had to test teachings against the Word of Christ to find these infections and remove them from their life action plans. You must do the same, even now at your young age.

Circle of Fire: Test teachings against a standard.

Scripture: Romans 12:2; 2 Timothy 2:16-18.

Romans 12:2 (New International Version)

²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

2 Timothy 2:16-18 (New International Version)

¹⁶Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. ¹⁷Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, ¹⁸who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some.

Biblical Character: Hymenaeus and Philetus

How would you like to have your name written down and published to be seen for thousands of years as someone who is wrong? Paul generally did not name individuals who were wrong, but in this instance the errors were critical to the faith. Without the resurrection to eternal life, the sacrifice of Jesus is a lost cause.

Why would anyone sacrifice their life to give others eternal life if there were no resurrection to eternal life! Paul wrote Timothy to call out these individuals and correct the error of their teachings. It was left to

Timothy, however, to make the corrections. The errors were a “gangrene” faith condition of great destructive power. Paul held these teachings up against the teachings of Christ to test them and found them false. You must do the same in your life’s belief system. In our next unit, we will discuss belief systems in more detail. For now, let’s focus on the next Accountability process step: Test It.

Have a member act the part of a new Christian. As the teacher, you act the part of Hymenaeus. Teach the concept of past resurrection. See Appendix 4 Skits for a sample script. Although Hymenaeus and Philetus had claimed to be Christians; they did not depart from iniquity. They taught that we "spiritually" pass from death to life, but because the physical body is "evil" it will not be raised from the dead. Therefore, it did not matter how one behaved, the evil body could not be saved. They taught that the resurrection of Jesus was the only resurrection.

Show the video “The Shepherd is the Lamb”. This is a music video arrangement, but the words tell a story that is our test of our actions: Do my actions follow the example of Christ to become the lamb to others? To do this, you must give of yourself to help others to do the Accountability process, beginning with “seeing” the need for Christ in their life.

Modern Character(s): The Duke staff. Show the video: “Doing Good in the Neighborhood”. This video shows ways that the staff at Duke helps to meet community needs. These are adults, but Middle School students can also participate in projects to better their community and open doors for the teaching of the Gospel. Time permitting; show the video “The Part Where You Let Go”. This video shows how little good deeds can lead to many more good deeds being done.

Show the video: “Maggot Cure”. This is a video from Animal Planet and is a little freaky, but this age group enjoys freaky stuff! This method is a cure for gangrene. Note that gangrene behavior can require some pretty freaky cures. The best cure is to avoid the gangrene from occurring. In 2 Timothy, Paul tells us to *“¹⁶Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly.”* The same is true of sin in our lives. It can be like gangrene to the spirit and must be removed.

To provide a little shock effect to this lesson, try cooking a small amount of rice and placing it inside a piece of gauze; then show a quick glimpse of the gauze and rice to a member and place it on their arm. In a dark cave, this was very impressive and brought forth a few screams!

The Tribe: All actions are not automatically correct. We must test ideas against the life and word of Christ for results to meet God’s Dream and not become gangrene spiritually.

Craft: “The Inspector”: Things can look much different when seen under magnification. Use this magnifier as a reminder to check your actions closely to make sure you are doing what Christ would do. Place a Bible sticker on one side of the handle and a verse sticker on the other that reads: “Test actions versus God’s Dream for your life.” See Appendix 8 Craft for instructions and material.

Recreation Activity: Check and Double Check

See Attachment 6 Recreation for instructions and picture puzzles.