

## Why Does God Want Us? (The Gospel) – Seventh Grade

*In this session, we want to point students to the truth of the Gospel. We want to help develop and enrich their understanding of the Gospel past merely “Jesus died for my sins” and into a rich biblical theology that becomes a bedrock of their lives and faiths. Our understanding of the gospel directs and influences so much of our identity, our sense of calling, and our view of God. A right understanding of the Gospel is crucial!*

### Introducing the Topic

*During this portion of this session, we want to help students unpack what they already think and know about the Gospel, and we also want to begin to open them up to thinking about it ways they haven’t before! This is an important time to encourage honesty and openness in your students!*

-When you hear the word “gospel”, what do you think of?

-If you had to define that word to someone, how would you do it?

-What are the important, key parts of the gospel? *(Work with your group to come to consensus on what the core components of “the gospel” are, write them down so you can all look at them together! Coach your group towards some form of the core truth that “Jesus died to save us from our sins, if they don’t get there themselves)*

-Why do you think Jesus died for our sins? *(Don’t let them just give “church answers”, go three questions deep! Keep asking why!)*

### Scripture Study

*As you transition to the Scripture Study portion of this session, remind students that Scripture is where we turn for truth. We want to continually reiterate that we study Scripture not just for the “Christian take” on a matter, but God’s revealed word, given to us out of love for our good.*

-Explain to students that often, people say things like, “Jesus died for us because He loves us”. And that is TRUE, but if we never expand our understanding past just that, we might find ourselves worrying that Jesus will take back His sacrifice when we aren’t acting very lovable. But one of the most important and most stress-relieving parts of the Gospel truth is that Jesus didn’t die for us because of who we are, but because of who God is. We’re going to look at what the Bible says to help understand that idea a little more.

-Let’s start with the most popular bible verse, John 3:16. Read it out loud together!

-Why does this verse say that God sent Jesus to die?

-So, if God sent Jesus because He loves us, why does God love us?

-Pause here, and give students a moment to try and answer that question for themselves. Why does God love us?

-Let's see how the Bible answers that question. Read 1 John 4:7-12 together.

-What sticks out to you in this passage? What do you hear it saying?

-How do these verses describe God?

-What does this verse say show the love of God?

-Does God's love depend on our love?

-God showed the world who He was through Jesus, how does this verse say God continues to do that today?

### Practical Application

*This topic may seem elementary, but the implications of getting this right or wrong are massive in the life of a believer. During this portion of the session, we want to help students begin to unpack the implications of this truth, and in doing so, maybe begin to uproot some misbeliefs in their lives.*

-Having read those passages, how would you answer the question: "Why did Jesus die for us?" (Ask for their genuine answers, but help point them to some paraphrase of this: God sent Jesus to die for us to show the world who He is, that He is love.)

-Love is who and what God is. Just like He is also justice, and mercy, and grace, God cannot be anything other than love to us, because that would mean He stopped being God. Since love is who God is, what does that mean for us? (We want students to understand here that the fact that God is love means His love for us isn't dependent on our behavior or performance.)

-So do we need to do certain things to accept God's love for us as shown in the Gospel?

-Do we need to act a certain way? Do we need to clean up in any way?

-Can we ever lose God's love? Why or why not?

-Our culture promotes a lot of striving and trying, we are always trying to look the best, perform the best, succeed the most. What do you think our culture is chasing? What would God say to that you think?

-How do we try to earn God's love that we already have in our own lives?