

## Engaging Gospel Doctrine (Episode 85.2)

### LESSON 8 (STUDY NOTES)

#### [Living Righteously in a Wicked World](#)

Hook	There is plenty of wickedness to go around in this lesson, but close reading challenges expectations. We will see the dark side of “The Good Book” If we take the Bible s a moral guide, how do we distinguish the “do’s” from the “don’ts”?
Goal	Class members should use the “challenge and be challenged by the scriptures” approach to engage authentically and constructively with difficult ideas and life lessons brought up by the assigned scriptures.
Overview	(see below)
Conclusion	

Clarify and define the focus of the lesson “living righteously in a wicked world”, so focusing on what influences around us make it difficult to live according to our principles and how we can overcome those influences. The same themes will be focused on in the reading. This is going to be one of the edgier episodes even in the Sunday School portion, because with the assigned passages more harm is done by ignoring or glossing over the challenging, even horrifying content.

#### II. Literary and Historical: Other Reading

\*Other Character vignettes

\*The Bible and Homosexuality

Lev. 18:22: You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.

Sodom and Gomorrah from a literary and historical perspective

49 Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.

50 And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw *good*.

Other character notes:

### III. Critical and Ethical: Study Notes

“Challenge and be challenged by”--ethical critique of the characters in these chapters. What do we make of Abraham’s behavior?

- What conclusions can we make about scripture from these chapters? (Bible and **JST**) (save this for Part II)
- Larger issue of how we ethically evaluate scripture and its characters (if we let scripture be flawed and messy it can be used for good, vs. assuming all scripture is good and coming to horrific theological conclusions)

What is “wickedness/sin”? What is “living righteously”? (touch on Euthyphro’s dilemma) (Is whatever God commands good, or does God command what is good?)

How is the world doing? (In what ways do we live in a “wicked world”?)

Homosexuality in historical and social context

What factors influence our ability to “live righteously”? (Psychological/physiological, social, environmental)

Some examples: (Could have good discussion about this)

Inborn/inherited challenges, but those don’t fit into the “wicked world” category

Abuse and other failures of caregiving, lack of role models

Addiction

Cultural messages (entitlement, lack of personal responsibility and duty, consumerism, dissatisfaction, comparison)

Lack of education/awareness of better alternatives

“Credit card culture”

Negative social influence (this and larger cultural messages are KEY to this lesson)

Conclude with engaged discussion on the lesson’s theme (how do you live your principles if your environment is antagonistic against those principles)

(Will be posting quite a few resources about the world not being as bad as we sometimes think, and actually getting better, including GA quotes)

Resources

How social contexts influence our decision making: (find something good)

<http://petejenkins.com/great-ted-talk-on-using-peer-pressure-to-change-behaviour>

## Introduction to the Handbook of the Sociology of Morality

### Soul Searching

<http://www.nomorestrangers.org/sodom-and-gomorrah-arrogant-overfed-and-unconcerned/>

Clean these up and put them in resources about

Resilience in the face of adversity: [http://www99.mh-hannover.de/aktuelles/projekte/mmm/englishversion/fs\\_programme/speech/Rutter\\_V.html](http://www99.mh-hannover.de/aktuelles/projekte/mmm/englishversion/fs_programme/speech/Rutter_V.html)

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2012/04/the-merciful-obtain-mercy>

<http://www.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.lds.org%2Fesign%2F1993%2F03%2Fthe-lords-side%3Flang%3Deng&h=wAQFnTSnM>

<http://www.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.lds.org%2Fgeneral-conference%2F1995%2F04%2Fapostasy-and-restoration%3Flang%3Deng&h=iAQFtVvbb>

<http://www.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.lds.org%2Fesign%2F2012%2F08%2Fstanding-together-for-the-cause-of-christ.p1%3Flang%3Deng&h=-AQG9ybTL>

<http://www.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Frsc.byu.edu%2Farchived%2Fglobal-mormonism-21st-century%2F20-church-cross-cultural-world&h=VAQG0K9Hj>

Is the world getting worse? Mormon Matters

<http://mormonmatters.org/2012/01/17/70-is-the-world-getting-worse/>

Is the world getting worse? Feminist Mormon Housewives

<http://feministmormonhousewivespodcast.org/episode-48-is-the-world-getting-worse/>

How the world is getting better, BigThink

<http://bigthink.com/the-evolution-of-enlightenment/the-world-is-getting-worse-and-other-lies>

TED Talk on the abundant future

[http://www.ted.com/talks/peter\\_diamandis\\_abundance\\_is\\_our\\_future.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/peter_diamandis_abundance_is_our_future.html)

Why things aren't getting worse, Patheos

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/thePangeaBlog/2011/12/13/hell-in-a-handbasket-why-things-arent-getting-worse/>

RadioLab, The Good Show

<http://www.radiolab.org/story/103951-the-good-show/>

Social Media, Political Change, and Human Rights

<http://lawdigitalcommons.bc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1667&context=iclr>

(Will need to get PDF)

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1348/147608303322362497/abstract?deniedAccessCustomisedMessage=&userIsAuthenticated=false>