

# Session 4

## Consistently inconsistent

**Aim:** To get the group to think about how their lifestyle, the things they do, affects their witness.

### Objectives:

*At the end of the session the group should:*

Understand that their witness is affected by their actions.

Be beginning to think about how to live to please God.

### Personally Speaking...

*If they ever hand out cards for hypocrisy and inconsistency I will be there at the front of the queue. It is easy to identify with Paul when he calls himself "chief amongst sinners" in 1 Timothy. When he talks about doing the things he doesn't want to do instead of the things he does (Romans 7:19) I also find it hard not sympathise.*

*The best advert for Christianity is a Christian, sometimes though I wish that I could switch channels or paste over the billboards in my life. I want to live a life that glorifies God and is attractive to those who don't know Christ but my actions often speak louder than my words and those actions sometimes say the wrong things. As I wrote this session my hope was (and is) that God would show me where I am inconsistent and hypocritical and help me change.*

## The Session:

### Warming Up - The life of...

Break the group up into four teams (or a multiple of four if the group is large.) Photocopy the 'The life of...' handout, enlarge it if you can do so on your photocopier. Then cut it into four along the long dotted lines - you should end up with four sheets from one photocopy.

Give each team one sheet, tell them not to write until you have finished explaining! The teams must all answer the first question on their sheet, fold the paper over to cover their answer and

then pass the sheet to the team on their left. On their new sheet they answer the next question and pass it on until all four questions are answered. The sheets are then unfolded and read out. Point out that humour rates infinitely higher than innuendo or vulgarity. For instance, the person at weekends may "dress up in a mask and cape and fight crime as 'Raisin Man - Defender of Grapes everywhere'." When all the sheets have been read out and composure regained say to the group that just as they looked at the picture of the person and made decisions about what they thought the person might do or say, so people will look at them and make decisions about them. In their case though there will be words and actions that will back up what people may have already thought.

### The Biblical Perspective - Light Relief.

*Matthew 5:14-16.*

The passage in Matthew comes as part of Jesus' "Sermon on the mount". In these verses Jesus uses the imagery of Light as an example of how Christians should behave. The Christian is like a light to the rest of the world and like the city on the hill is highly visible to those around. His or her actions will be seen by all people. Christ doesn't expect us to try and hide our Christianity like a "light under a bowl".

Ask one of the group to read out the passage from Matthew.

Questions to ask the group. Try to encourage discussion - it is surprising the number of opinions you will get if you ask. They will each have a slightly different perspective that can open some interesting alleys. Some may be off beam but don't let this fluster you - correct them gently without making them look like fools!

What do you think Jesus means when he calls us "the light of the world"? Jesus applies this to himself in John 8:12, is there a connection?

If we are supposed to be like cities on hills how

will our lives be affected? Why do you think you might want to put a light under a bowl? how does that relate to us?

How can the things that you do lead others to “praise your Father in heaven”? What sort of things do you do that would cause people to reject God? Point out that it is not just actions, attitudes and habits get noticed by other people and can be something they will use against us in a “call yourself a Christian then why do you...” way.

The last question can be used as a ‘thought provoker’. The group may not (they may though) wish to share their thoughts on that one - this session isn’t a linen airing session!

### **Pulling It Together.**

If you feel it is appropriate after the bible study it may be worth talking about forgiveness and how we can come to God with the wrong things we have done, the bad attitudes and habits that might have been identified at the end of the study. Two key verses that you may wish to use are :

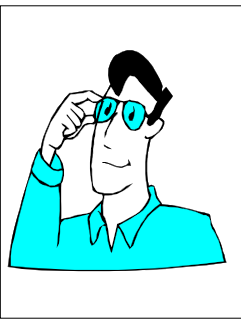
*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. - 1 John 1:9.*

*As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. - Psalm 103:12.*

If you used the last question to provoke them to think about how the things they do can turn people off from God it may be worth following on by asking them to think about how they would change those things. What would they, and can they, do differently?

Finish off by praying with the group. Some may wish to spend a bit of time in quiet asking God for forgiveness and asking him for help to make the changes that they want to make in their lives. Some of the group may find this session difficult as the intention is to challenge them to think about the things they do - that is usually uncomfortable, whether you are 16 or 60.

# THE LIFE OF...



1. What is the person's name?
2. What is their occupation?
3. What is their 'Catchphrase'?
4. What do they do at the weekend?

- |    |      |
|----|------|
| 4. | fold |
| 3. | fold |
| 2. | fold |
| 1. | fold |

# THE LIFE OF...



1. What is the person's name?
2. What is their occupation?
3. What is their 'Catchphrase'?
4. What do they do at the weekend?

- |    |      |
|----|------|
| 4. | fold |
| 3. | fold |
| 2. | fold |
| 1. | fold |

# THE LIFE OF...



1. What is the person's name?
2. What is their occupation?
3. What is their 'Catchphrase'?
4. What do they do at the weekend?

- |    |      |
|----|------|
| 4. | fold |
| 3. | fold |
| 2. | fold |
| 1. | fold |

# THE LIFE OF...



1. What is the person's name?
2. What is their occupation?
3. What is their 'Catchphrase'?
4. What do they do at the weekend?

- |    |      |
|----|------|
| 4. | fold |
| 3. | fold |
| 2. | fold |
| 1. | fold |