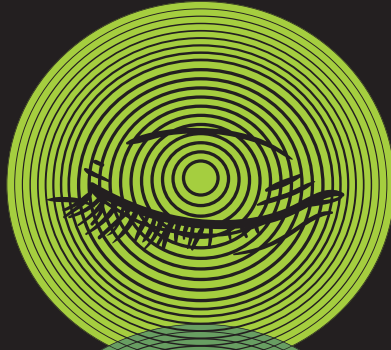
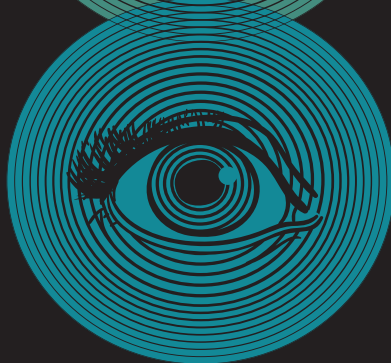


Brock Gill



DON'T BELIEVE YOUR
YOUR EYES



Discover the Truth Behind How God Sees You

DON'T BELIEVE
YOUR EYES

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INTRODUCTION

You have been lied to. It may be hard to believe, but you may have actually been tricked just moments ago. Look back at the cover of this book. Did you catch it?

Your eyes lied to you. Your eyes, in partnership with your brain, read, “Don’t Believe Your Eyes.” But it doesn’t actually say that. Take a third look if you need. Once you see the truth, you’re never able to see it wrong again. It’s so obvious now. You think, “How could I possibly fall for that?”

I have spent much of my life studying the art of illusion. As a sleight-of-hand artist, I love finding ways to mix psychology and dexterity to trick the eye. The eyes are easily deceived. Through methods of misdirection and the principles of illusion, I have found that it’s simple to fool the eye. But what I find most interesting is that it’s actually more than the eye itself that is being fooled—it’s the brain. The art of perception has become my favorite subject to explore.

Our eyes play tricks on us all the time. But the truth, once you know it, sticks with you. That’s the goal of this book. We want you to have an “aha!” moment each week—to see the truth and not be tricked by deception. Our eyes are easily deceived. Our hearts are easily deceived. But the truth of God shines light on our hearts and illuminates the path.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Whether riding a motorcycle blindfolded or escaping underwater from a labyrinth of chains, Brock Gill is always living on the edge. Having toured in over 20 countries since 1997, Brock has one clear and evident purpose: sharing the love of Jesus with the forgotten, the broken, and the hopeless.

Brock is the founder of Brock Gill Creative, a nonprofit organization that trains and sends creative evangelists into developing countries to share the gospel. He is the host of the 2006 BBC documentary, *The Miracles of Jesus*, and the author of *Feed the Dog*, released in 2017. His passion is to make sure every person on earth hears this message: “You are loved.”

HOW TO USE

In this book, you will find seven weeks of group sessions and personal study. Each session consists of a group guide followed by three days of personal study. As you begin your group time, watch the video for an introduction and illusion performed by author, Brock Gill. There is also a leader guide included in the back of this study with some helpful tips to use during group time. As you close group time, encourage students to complete the personal days that follow the group sessions. Once students have completed this study, they will be able to recognize the lies our culture tells us and replace them with the truth of God's love.

BIBLE STUDY BOOK

Listed below are the different elements in the Bible study book.

Group Discussion

Questions and personal connections are provided to help guide the conversation.

Personal Study

Three days of personal Bible study will help reinforce the theme and provide an opportunity to study passages not covered in the group discussion.

Leader Guide

The leader guide at the back of the study provides ideas for activities and deeper group discussions.

SESSION OUTLINE

Design your group sessions to fit the space, time, and needs of your group. The following is a sample group session outline that you can adapt.

1. Press Play

Review the material in the previous week's personal Bible study and watch the video.

2. Start

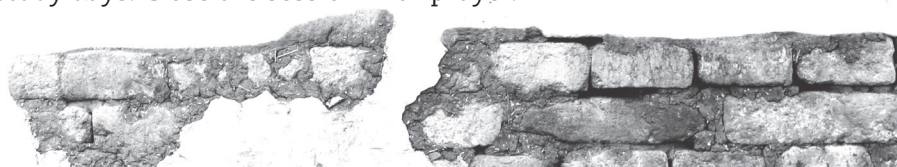
Begin the discussion by answering any questions students may have about what Brock shared in the video.

3. Encounter

Foster conversation among the group using the Scripture and discussion questions provided.

4. Connect

Answer some final questions together and spend some time looking at the upcoming personal study days. Close the session with prayer.



Session 1

BROKEN



START

I was ten years old when I got the news. My parents sat me down and told me we were moving to a new city in a different state. At the time it didn't seem like that big of a deal. I would soon realize I was wrong.

When we moved from our home in Louisiana to a new city, I quickly realized that making friends was difficult. I began to experience loneliness and sadness like I had never experienced before. The next few years were filled with difficult times: I was bullied, made fun of, teased, tricked, and beat up by bigger, more popular kids. I felt the pain of not fitting in.

I tried to hide that I was the new kid who didn't dress or talk the same. But no matter how hard I tried, I still felt like no one loved me and I was broken. I remember many times as a teen having thoughts of suicide and even went as far as making plans to end my own life. I was so broken and felt no hope. I began to believe the lies inside my head that I was worthless, would never amount to anything, that no one cared for me, and that I had no hope of a happy future. I found myself asking the question, "Am I loved?"

Have you ever experienced a time in your life where everything was broken?

You don't have to raise your hand—just think about it for a moment. Have you ever felt broken—not good enough, in need of repair, beyond hope?

We all experience it on some level. A quick glance around the room—maybe even the room you're sitting in right now—will get in your head pretty quickly.

I'm not as pretty as she is.

I'm not as talented as they are.

I'm a mess compared to him.

Turn on the TV—or just wait for an ad to roll—and you'll hear something similar.

Vote for me; I'll fix this.

Buy this product; it'll restore your confidence.

Take this quiz; it will show you where you belong.

In no time flat, you internalize the message: *I am broken*. You might not even notice it always in the background of your mind, coloring your interactions, changing the way you think about yourself. I am broken.

What are some ways the world tells us we are broken? What are some ways it promises to fix us?

For some people, probably even people sitting in this room, you don't have to be told anything to believe that you're broken. You can point to the exact moment in time that you broke. It was something you did. Something someone else did to you. From that point on, you became "that person who _____." That person who is broken.

We're going to look at a woman today who fully believed that she was broken and that she'd live the rest of her life broken. Repair was completely out of the question; she just wanted to survive.

And we're going to see why nothing could have been further from the truth.

ENCOUNTER

» **Turn to John 4. Have a volunteer read the first six verses out loud.**

To anybody living in Israel at this time, there were two kinds of people: Jews and Gentiles. Jews were people "like them." They had the same stories, the same beliefs, the same things they thought were important. The Gentiles were a little different. Jews avoided Gentiles at all costs. They called them dogs. Unclean.

What divisions exist in our world today? In general, how do we see people today treat those who aren't like them?

John 4:1-6 tells us that in order to get to Galilee, Jesus had to go through Samaria. Israelites were not particularly fond of Samaritans. Samaria had a lot of people who were both Gentile and Jew. To the Jews, Gentiles were dirty—they had Gentile blood. To the Gentiles, Jews were outcasts—they had Jewish blood. They each had their own religion, their own rules, their own temple.

We have a word for the attitude the Jews had for the Samaritans: prejudice. They believed certain things about them regardless of whether or not it was true.

Where do we still see prejudice today?

Keep those people in mind, because Jesus is about to meet someone like that.

» **Read verses 7-15 aloud.**

Remember what verse 6 told us? It's about noon when this encounter happens. The heat of the day. In Israel.

Every day, in the cool of the morning (usually before the sun came up), women carried big jars to the well in the middle of town to get enough water for the entire day. But not this woman. She waited until the sun was high in the sky, when there would be the fewest number of people around. And she saw a man there. A Jewish man. And he asked her for water.

Already, she was probably internalizing everything she'd come to believe about herself. She was a Samaritan—this Jewish man was probably already looking down on her for that. She was a woman—this Jewish man was definitely looking down on her for that. She had wanted a conflict-free trip to the well, but it was now too late for that. And on top of everything else, he was saying some confusing things.

Have one person read the woman's questions and another person read Jesus' responses. What are your reactions to the way He is answering them?

It had been pleasant up to now. But then things took a turn for the worse. Jesus steered them into the territory that she was desperately hoping to avoid. He reached out and touched the open wound she'd been hiding.





» *Out loud, continue their conversation by reading verses 16-18.*

**How does Jesus' statement in verse 16 change the tone of the conversation?
How do you think the woman felt talking about this?**

We now see the full picture of what this woman was feeling when she hoped for a hassle-free day of chores. All of her dirty laundry was out in the open. Her brokenness on full display. She was isolated, alone, nursing the hurt of failed relationships.

Knowing what you know about this woman, what do you think Jesus' statement in verses 13 and 14 means?

The woman at the well probably felt her whole life was like a jar with cracks in the sides. She'd keep trying new things to fill herself up, to feel whole, but the water would always spill out. Nothing ever seemed to stick. No number of relationships could fill that void. No number of trips to the well could keep her topped off.

How do you think this woman was trying to fill these "cracks"?

How have you seen people around you trying to fill theirs?

When have you tried to fill yours with something that didn't hold up?

Jesus' answers to the woman's questions might have seemed strange at first. She heard about water that will make you never be thirsty again and she immediately thought of the jar she was holding in her hand. But Jesus was directing her to something bigger than that. He used her physical need for water as an illustration for a bigger need. A spiritual one. She was trying to quench her spiritual thirst with liquid water.

How does Jesus' "Living Water" satisfy us in ways that physical things can't?

What I find beautiful about this story is what happens after the woman encounters Jesus. In verse 28, she leaves her water jar behind, goes back to the city, and tells everyone about the man she just met. They all come to see Jesus and many become followers of the Savior of the world.

He offers the same thing to us that He offered to her: living water, more powerful than the brokenness we feel, more potent than the empty things we try to fill ourselves up with. There is no brokenness that Jesus is not equipped to handle.

CONNECT

There are two different people sitting in this room: those who haven't received the water Jesus gives and those who have.

For those in the first group, you are going to get to see Jesus first-hand over the next seven weeks. You will get to walk alongside Him and see how He interacts with people who aren't all that different from us. You will get to see how He mends broken people. You will get to taste the kind of water He provides.

For those in the second group, you have an opportunity. You are part of a mended generation made whole by Christ. But that carries some responsibility. It means that you interact with the world around you not as someone broken and in need of repair, but like the person who has found the repair. It changes how you treat the people who are different than you are. It changes the way you view the disadvantaged and downtrodden. It changes the way you see yourself—not as someone broken, but as someone who has been made whole.

How does Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well relate to us today?

What do you think a plausible next step for yourself might be, no matter where you are right now?

In Jeremiah 2:13, Jeremiah says that the people of Israel had committed two evils:

1. *They have forsaken God, the fountain of living waters.*
2. *They have made cisterns for themselves that are broken and can't hold any water.*

When Jesus showed up at the well and met the woman drawing water there in the middle of the day, He found someone who had also done exactly that. She did not know God. Her own personal well was cracked and split and no matter what she did to try to fill it, she was always running on empty.

She is no different than any of us. If there's one thing we're good at, it's trying to fill ourselves up with things that won't satisfy us.

Blaise Pascal was a philosopher who once wrote, in not quite these words:

There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of each person which cannot be satisfied by any created thing but only by God the Creator.¹

Does this quote ring true to you? Why or why not?

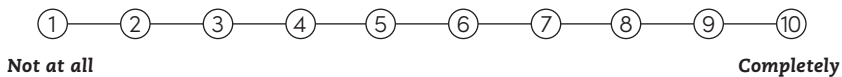
What are things that you use to try to fill this vacuum?

God created us to have community with Him. He wants us to know Him, to walk with Him, to love Him. He gave us that "vacuum" because it reminds us that we need Him constantly. He's the only one who fits there. But when we start trying to put other things in the place He should be, it is easy for us to give in to the overwhelming thought: I am broken.





On a scale from 1-10, with 1 being “not at all” and 10 being “completely,” how broken do you feel you are?



Why do you feel that way?

Different people will answer this question differently for a billion different reasons. For some, it's because of something that happened to you, or it's because of something you've done. For others, it's that you always feel as though you have an itch in the back of your soul that you can't scratch. Drugs don't scratch it. Relationships don't scratch it. Popularity and a following don't scratch it. You get everything you want and none of it ever seems to complete you.

Jesus knows this about us. He knows how we're wired. He understands that we're going to try to throw anything we can at that hole to putty it over when all we need to do is let Him take it over. Let Him be what He said He was: a fountain of living water that will make you never thirst again.

Search your own heart. How can you pray today that Jesus would fill the hole that tells you you're broken?

Have you ever been downtown in the busiest part of your city and watched the way people move on the sidewalks? It is fascinating to watch because just about everywhere, the same things happen: people gather and wait at crosswalks. They walk faster when the crossing hand starts blinking. And they tend to swerve out of the way when they see someone sitting on a stoop, cup on the ground, asking for money.

If you had been around 2,000 years ago, you would have noticed something similar with a specific group of people. The lepers. Lepers were people who had contagious skin diseases and, to put it frankly, their lives were terrible.

First of all, they weren't allowed to touch anybody else. For the entire time they were sick, they couldn't experience the touch of another person. Second of all, they weren't allowed to take part in any of the activities everyone else could. They were social outcasts. Third of all, whenever people looked at them, it was with disgust. People crossed over to the other side of the street to avoid them.

They were, for all practical purposes, broken.

Have you ever felt like a social outcast? What made you feel that way? How did it affect you?

» ***Open your Bible and read Matthew 8:1-4.***

Notice that there are some very interesting things that happen here. First, a leper walks up to Jesus. Remember what we said above about lepers? They weren't allowed to be anywhere near other people. But this leper walked straight up to Jesus and something important happened: Jesus didn't back away. This leper's brokenness didn't scare Jesus.

Notice the second thing that happened: Jesus reached out and touched him. According to the laws of the day, it was illegal to touch a leper. But the leper's brokenness didn't scare Jesus.

Look at the final thing that happened: the leper was healed. Cured. Whole. He was once again able to visit the temple. He was once again able to rejoin society. He could be around people without them dodging him and looking down on him with scorn. No amount of medical treatments, wishful thinking, or desperation could fill the void in this man's life ... until Jesus came around and made him whole.

This same Jesus is available to you today, waiting for you to do the same thing this leper did.

In the verse below, I want you to put your name in the first blank and then fill in the blank at the end with whatever you feel needs to go there.

**And behold, _____ came to Jesus and knelt before him, saying,
“Lord, if you will, you can make me clean from my _____.”**

» Spend a few minutes in prayer asking Jesus to make you clean.



As part of a mended generation, we have a pretty cool opportunity: we get to demonstrate to a broken world what it looks like when a broken person meets Jesus.


Think back to the woman at the well. She had nothing working in her favor. All of her relationships had failed. Her reputation was in the trash. She wasn't living, she was just *surviving*.

And then she met Jesus. And that's when everything changed.

This is just speculation. But what do you think her life was like after she met Jesus? How do you think her opinion of herself changed?

It's not a stretch to say that brokenness is rampant in the world around us. But we don't have to be part of the brokenness, part of the darkness. Instead, we can stand with flashlights in our hands to point people toward the only one who can make us whole. The only one who can satisfy.





Take a look at some of the ways the world around us is broken. How have you seen each of these in your own life? What do you think that we, as believers, can do to address it?

» **Racism**

» **Addiction**

» **Depression**

» **Violence**

» **Tragedy**

The first step, before we can do any of this, is to address the central lie at the heart of this issue: *I am broken.*

Jesus came to make sure that you know the opposite is true. You are not broken. You are so much more than that: you are loved. And the one who loves you most is already here, already capable, already standing and waiting for you to ask, as the leper did in yesterday's study, for Him to make you whole.