



GEEKS UNDER GRACE

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Ghost In The Shell (2017) | Human Programming | BIBLE STUDY

This film has been rated PG-13 for intense sequences of sci-fi violence, suggestive content, and some disturbing images.

For this particular study, you will need small pieces of paper (sticky notes work well), pens, and a way to destroy that paper. Maybe we've played too many videogames, but we find fire to be the most visually effective. You can also tie the papers to helium-filled balloons, rip them into tiny pieces, or flush them down the toilet.

PRESS START

In the movie, *Ghost in the Shell*, everyone has some form of cybernetic enhancement. To start things off, ask the group: **If you could cybernetically enhance one thing about yourself, what would it be? Why?**

EQUIP

Similar to the shells in the movie, we have also been hacked and reprogrammed. We were created and wired in the image of God, but sin has corrupted that creation worse than the Hanka robotics company corrupts Major and the ghosts before her. Much like Major, nobody really knows they have even been reprogrammed in the first place. From birth, the world trains us in the ways of the world, rewriting what we're meant to be. The cost of our defectiveness is death, but Jesus has deleted those old "files" and rewritten our programming according to His perfect ways.

As a group, write down your "defects" on pieces of paper. What things are programmed in you that need to be rewritten? What sins do you struggle with? Fold the paper and bring it to your leader.

LEVEL UP

Ephesians 2:2-10 *And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works,*

which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

You were created in Christ Jesus for good works, but striving to live like Jesus is a process that takes time. Unlike the AI in *Ghost in the Shell*, this lifestyle transformation isn't instantaneous and plenty of temptations try to undermine it. As humans, we like shortcuts. The "right way" takes time, and there isn't any immediate reward in it. Sin creates a shortcut for your needs and desires, creating a "fix" that temporarily and insufficiently fulfills them. We know what not to do, but shortcuts are easier; when our needs and desires are put under pressure, we tend to do what's easy.

Romans 7:19 *For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.*

The good news is that Jesus knows what your end-product looks like. By following Jesus, you have already been formatted and created in His image. You are a new creation. You know the end-result; now, you just have to push towards it.

MOD

Ask: What are ways that you resist sin?

Ask: What are ways, as a group, that we can help each other to resist sin?

Earlier, we all wrote down our "defects"--the sins that we struggle with and need to destroy. So, now, we're going to destroy them! **The leader of the group can either put the papers in a bowl and set them on fire, tie them to helium-filled balloons and release them as a group, shred them, or flush them down the toilet. Whatever you choose to do, just destroy them or let them go in some way.**

Let this be a visual reminder to you that your sins are no more. Jesus has wiped them clean from your "hard drive." The world will continue to try to reprogram you. It's not enough just to flee from this programming, but to pursue the programming Jesus has in mind for you. To only flee from the programming of this world and not pursue Jesus is to leave yourself as an empty shell, ready to transform into whatever is fed to you. It will always be a process, but never stop programming yourself in righteousness.

PRAY

Sin is weakest when it is brought to light. **For the next couple of minutes, silently give your sins up to Jesus. As a group, pray for each other's struggles. Pray that each person fully commits themselves to God and that**

they have the discipline and courage to flee from wicked ways. Be specific (rage, self-worth, pride, porn addiction, self harm, etc.) Don't call people out, but rather pray for these common issues and others you know many in your group struggle with.

THE NEXT LEVEL

Colossians 3:12-17 *So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.*

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