

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness."

2 Timothy 3:16

YEAR 1 BOOK 3

Junior 2 Year 1 Book 3

YEAR 1 BOOK 3

JUNIOR 2

Teacher's Guide

Christian Living (1)

G.A. of the True Jesus Church

U.S.A



THEME:

Christian Living (1)

General Assembly of the True Jesus Church

[HTTP://WWW.TJC.ORG](http://www.tjc.org)
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JUNIOR 2

Teacher's Guide

"But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."

Jas 1:14, 15



THEME:

Christian Living (1)

THEMES

Christian Living (1)

Unit 1: Christians and Personal Life

In this section, students will be prompted to think of God's love for them, and the need for them to consider God in every aspect of their lives. Through the lessons, they will be reminded of how to lead a Christian life-style, one that is prayerful and joyful.

They will also consider the importance of service to the Lord in their daily lives as well as planning for their future.

Unit 2: Stewardship

Being Christian is not simply a status in name. A true Christian is one who puts biblical principles into practice in his or her life. He or she will know that it is more important to hold on to the teachings and principles of the Bible than to conform to the world. He or she will not compromise the teachings of God for convenience or gains in this world. J2 students are at a crucial age where a lot of life-long principles are being forged. It is important that they recognize their special status as God's people.

The Bible also gives very practical teachings about wealth management. For example, in Matthew 19:16-22, Jesus Christ taught the rich young ruler about the need to prioritize God before his own wealth. Our students should also realize that all that they have on earth are gifts from God, and they should freely share those gifts.

Unit 3: Life's Challenges

God had not meant for His chosen ones to live like hermits, out of touch with the world. In fact, when He first called Abraham, He told him that through him, all the families of the earth shall be blessed (Gen 12:3). Yet, the hardest part about living on earth is actually dealing with interpersonal relationships successfully, and in accordance to God's teachings. In this section, the students will learn some biblical wisdom regarding how to dwell amicably with others.

Unit 4: Speech

"For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body." (James 2:2)

This verse tells it all: Bridling our tongues might well be the hardest lesson to master in our spiritual cultivation. Our world today is full of lies and ungracious words. We have to shine as lights by manifesting good speech in our dealings with people. It is not always easy, but at least, as Christians, we should be consciously trying all the time. The lessons in this section will highlight to the students important pointers about exercising control over the tongue. At the very least, they will be made aware of the importance of bridling this tiny faculty of the body.

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WELCOME TO THE J2 CURRICULUM

This Teacher's Guide has been designed to help the teachers plan the class and become more effective in the teaching ministry.

Because of the impact of God's word, it is our prayer that we see our students understand and apply the Bible to their lives. Our ultimate goal of this curriculum is to see lives transformed. Here you'll find the materials you will need to teach the unchanging truth of God's word.

This Curriculum
Includes:

LESSON TITLE

Getting Your Spiritual Life in Shape

LISTED SCRIPTURES

Eph 6:13 – 18; Ex 33:17 – 23;
34:28 – 33; Num 12:6 – 8

LESSON AIM

- 1) To examine the important elements of spiritual growth
- 2) To discover how to win the battle between the spirit and the flesh
- 3) To implement a plan to get the students' spiritual lives in shape by using specific goals

MEMORY VERSE

"That you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world"
(Phil 2:15) (NKJV)

BIBLE READING FOR THE WEEK

Eph 1-2

All of these sabbath lessons are built on:

1. (Not listed in the Student Workbook) **BIBLE BACKGROUND**
Extra resource related to the lesson for the students and teachers to know.
2. **WARM UP**
Something to capture their focus to get them started.
3. **BIBLE STUDY**
Lead your students in discovering the timeless truth of God's word through inductive Bible study.
(Student Worksheet is only in outline form)
4. **CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING**
Find out if the students comprehend the information that is being presented. Teachers can check for understanding in different ways. One way is to ask them questions related to what they've just learned.
5. **LIFE APPLICATION**
Help each student apply God's word to his/her life as the Holy Spirit leads him/her. Encourage students to come up with a plan of action to practice what they've learned. How are they going to implement their plans? When are they going to apply it?
6. **REFLECTION AND PRAYER**
Ask them to share with you what sticks in their mind after the lesson, before the concluding prayer.



A Reminder!

Unit goals and teacher devotional are listed before each unit. Bible reading for the week and the memory verse are listed in each lesson. Be sure to read through each lesson before you plan and teach your class.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR TEENS



It is important to teach teens in order to equip them with a strong foundation of good, solid faith. This generation that we are working with is searching for answers to truth. Although they may have many ups and downs in their lives or lack spiritual depth, they do want to know who makes a real difference in the real world.

Teens live in a time when believing in God is considered ridiculous. They also live in a world that is in constant violation of God's laws. Some of the results of this are health epidemics, environmental devastation and domestic violence. Therefore, they are faced with important decisions each and every day. What they decide can ultimately affect their values, faith, education, choice in friends, occupation, marriage, and church-life. In addition to

these complexities, teens may be struggling with peer pressure, fashion expectations, substance abuse issues, family/relationship problems as well as issues of identity and self-concept. In other words, they are rocked with change, whether spiritual, emotional, social or physical.

Teens need something or someone to rely on, anything that they can look up to as their standard. Our job, then, is to lead our teens to see a powerful God in this ever-changing world. Surprisingly, teens want to be "spiritual," despite all the hype around them. Therefore, they need to hear personal testimonies, Bible truths, how God's love has touched the lives of other people and what kind of hopes we all have despite living in an often senseless world. The question we need to answer as we teach is, "How can we affirm their faith in a God who loves and cares for them like no other?"

TEENS' DESIRES (I)

1. Love and Acceptance

Teens have a great need for acceptance by their peers, and they care about what others think of them. They are worried about how others perceive them physically (attractiveness: too tall, too short, too fat, too thin, the notion of sex) and mentally (intelligence: being too smart or dumb). They also look to peers, teachers, sports figures and media personalities as role models. Therefore, the way teachers express their faith and belief will be a positive witness for them.

2. Relationship with God/Finding Faith

At this age, teens will no longer come to church simply because their parents tell them to. They should be beginning to develop their own relationships with Jesus Christ. Although their reasoning skills will cause them to question what part God and the Bible play in their lives, it is important for teachers to continue to challenge them to make time for prayer and devotional life outside of the classroom and church so that they will be able to establish their own faith. Their spiritual goal is to find mean-

ing and purpose in their lives through Jesus Christ.

3. Personal Experiences With God

Up till this point in their lives, teens probably have yet to have many personal experiences with God. Their devotional life has likely consisted of attending church services, going to classes and praying before going to bed. While this regularity is good, it is not enough. Now is the time to encourage them to pray consistently so that they may realize the roles God is playing in their lives. Share with them personal testimonies that will touch their hearts. Soon, they will begin to see God as a personal friend, comforter and advisor.



TEENS' DESIRES (2)



4. Purpose in Life/True Fulfillment

Teens want to know who they are. At this crucial age, they are beginning to ask themselves, "What is my purpose in life?" and "What does it all mean?" A teenager needs to see himself as a separate and a worthwhile person in order to attain a successful transition into adulthood. Their drive for independence is strong and they feel a need to prove themselves as capable individuals. Some parents may have a difficult time letting go and end up being over-controlling because they find this "growing up" threatening. As a result, the teenager may end up rebelling. As teachers, we need to show support and encouragement, and provide helpful advice. We also need to affirm their talents and abilities to let them know their self-worth. Teenagers do respect parents and

adults who show consistency and structure. As they make their own decisions and learn from their mistakes, it will allow them to find their own identities and seek out what it is they believe in. When they are able to do so, they can also become faithful to their beliefs and values.

5. Purity and Holiness

Perhaps because of their young age and their lack of experience in the real world, teens often feel they can overcome anything if they try hard enough. "I can handle it," they might think. "It may have happened to them, but it won't happen to me!" In one sense, it is great to have confidence. However, when they are faced with real temptations, they may also be unprepared to deal with the issues with a clear head. While we don't need to bombard them with stories of people who have failed to remain pure and holy, we do need to let them understand the reality and difficulties. Challenge them to think about what is important to them and encourage them to stand firm in what they believe.

HOW DO I EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE WITH MY STUDENTS?

1. Greet every student at every class session

A friendly and sincere greeting communicates undivided attention. "How's it going?" expresses genuine concern. "It's great to see you" can transform anyone's day. Your greeting may take only 30-40 seconds, but your students will deeply feel that you really care.

2. Send an occasional card/email or pick up the phone to find out how someone is doing

Saying, "I was wondering how you were doing," will make a big difference in someone's life. An investment of four or five minutes and the price of a postage stamp can literally make a teenager's day come alive.



3. Open your home for fellowship or special events

Our greatest memories result from serving the Lord together through fellowship and special services or events. Every fellowship or meeting will provide a new opportunity to "reach out and touch someone."

4. Pray with them

Teens need to know that their teachers are constantly praying for them. Even though they may be very busy with their daily chores, always remind them that praying together at a certain time is the only way to draw wisdom and strength from God.

In this 21st century, 99% of the youth communicate via email every day! With the help of the internet, many people have found a great way to keep in touch with those they normally wouldn't be able to talk to and with those who live far away.

As an RE teacher, using email to reach out to our students is a wonderful way to **build relationships**. Since



you know your students already, send out an email that goes a little deeper than greetings and

praise. Perhaps you could ask your students a thought-provoking question about what goes on in the world, about what he or she believes in, about relationships within their families, or maybe begin with a gentle question about their relationship with God.

The truth is, your students love to find email in their boxes even though you and your students don't really talk frequently. At the very least, consider sending your students an occasional encouraging email or e-card to let them know that they are in

your thoughts or to wish them well on a test or sporting event. You can even make your student's day with a quick note of praise or a written pat on the back.

In order to reach out to your students effectively through email, keep your message brief—two or three short paragraphs is sufficient. And believe it or not, sometimes only a sentence is required. Living in this fast-paced society, not many of us want to scroll through a book-length email. Also, it is very vital to respond to messages within a day or two. Your students look to you for support and guidance. You will easily lose their confidence in you if a week goes by with no feedback.

Last but not least, try to use a gentle tone in your email. Let them know that you are always there, especially when you notice that one of your students is sick or simply feeling low spiritually. Quote Scripture sparingly and use liberal doses of humor. Teens do not respond well to teachers who always condemn. **Be there, and be an example.**

Email is a great door to communicating with your students. May God help us strengthen the faith of our students and nurture understanding with God's word.

HOW CAN I GET THEM MOTIVATED & TO STAY INTERESTED?

You can involve...

1. a game or debate
2. a video clip
3. brainstorming sessions
4. a poster
5. interesting questions and news stories
6. a touching testimony or hymn
7. quiet time for them to reflect
8. arts and crafts



When you deliver your lesson, it can be through...

1. lecture style
2. an in-depth Bible study
3. a skit
4. a meaningful and relevant video

Teachers can check for understanding by...

1. asking the students to share what they have learned
2. asking questions about the Bible study
3. asking the students to come up with a good moral for the lesson
4. asking which one of the characters they would have wanted to be had they been a part of the scene
5. asking the students to apply the Bible study and to make relevant connections to their own lives

MEMORY VERSE CONTEST

Do you know that working on **memory verses** together in class can provide excellent teachable moments about the word of God? Most people think that J2 class students already know many of the verses in the Bible. However, that's not necessarily true. Therefore, we as RE teachers should emphasize this part of the lesson more than others. Why? Because memorizing the Scriptures can help students **resist temptations** and **build a stronger faith**.

Make sure that it's something that involves the **both** of you. Think about challenging your students to memorize the memory verse with you each week. Maybe you could suggest that both you and the students recite all 13 verses by the end of the quarter. This is a great way to motivate your students. Perhaps you could challenge your students to a contest. Make it a real challenge and see who can memorize the

most verses by a certain time. If everyone wins, take your students out for ice cream or even out to lunch.

Since you need to recite the memory verse from week to week, you can spend more time talking about it with your students. Let the word of God impact them in their daily lives and be a part of their lives too. After a period of time, you will definitely see the lives of your students flourish just as God intended. The key point is that if your students see that you are serious about memorizing Scripture yourself, they will see that it is a **vital way of growing more like Jesus Christ**. May God strengthen our hands as we continue to serve Him.

BIBLE READING FOR THIS QUARTER

1. Mt 5-7; Col 1-4
2. Acts 1-6, 16
3. Lk 1-7
4. Gen 6, 18, 39; Dan 1-4
5. Gen 10-17
6. Gen 14; Mal 3; Mk 9-10; Lk 16-17; Mt 26
7. Ps 23; Mt 28-29; 2 Tim 1-4
8. Ex 14-20; Num 11-14, 16, 20
9. Gen 37-50
10. Mt 4-10
11. Jas 3; Prov 10, 15, 25, 29; Mt 12; Eph 5; Col 4
12. Mt 12-15; 1 Kgs 21; 2 Kgs 5; Acts 5

MEMORY VERSES FOR MARCH, APRIL AND MAY

1. "Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?" (Mt 6:30)
2. "That you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God." (Col 1:10)
3. "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come and the years draw near when you say, 'I have no pleasure in them.'" (Eccl 12:1)
4. "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Rom 12:2)
5. "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mt 16:26)
6. "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth . . . for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Mt 6:19, 21)
7. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me." (Ps 23:4)
8. "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." (Prov 15:1)
9. "Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another, even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do." (Col 3:13)
10. "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death." (Jas 1:14, 15)
11. "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers." (Eph 4:29)
12. "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned." (Mt 12:36, 37)

unit
1

Goals

In this section, students will be prompted to think of God's love for them, and the need for them to consider God in every aspect of their lives. Through the lessons, they will be reminded of how to lead a Christian life-style, one that is prayerful and joyful.

They will also consider the importance of service to the Lord in their daily lives as well as planning for their future.

Teacher Devotional

We can practically assume that all of us would, without a doubt, claim that we are true Christians, belonging to God and His true church. However, how many of us actually live every second of our lives conscious of this status that we have? How often do we actively seek to do what is pleasing in the eyes of God, and how aware are we of God's availability for us when we need help? In planning for ourselves, does God play a major role in our decision-making?

Putting God as a priority in life is in fact a big challenge. It often means giving up things we like, sacrificing our time and making difficult choices. Are we ready to lead a truly godly life-style?

Living a Life Meeting God's Requirement

*"He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"
(Micah 6:8)*

Lesson 1

Does God
Care About Me?**Listed Scriptures**

Mt 6:30-33; Col 1:16, 17

Lesson Aim

- 1) That the students will trust God in the midst of specific and complex situations in their lives
- 2) That the students will truly understand God cares about even the smallest details of His creation

Memory Verse

"Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?" (Mt 6:30)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Mt 5-7; Col 1-4

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



Jesus Christ, God, our creator was called the "first born over all creation" (Col 1:15). In other words, Jesus Christ is heir to the universe. Notice in the Book of Genesis that God liked what He made. He called them "good" (Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25). He concluded His creation as "very good" (1:31). Therefore, we can see that God took a personal interest in creation, and He still does. He is here to care for the universe and His creation.

In Matthew 6:30, the Lord Jesus said that God even blesses the short-lived "grass of the field" by beautifying it—how much more will He bless us? After all, we are made in His image. We are definitely more precious and important to Him than any other part of nature. He never turns His attention away from us. Thus, we should strive to trust in God's care for us.



In Shakespeare's play *Macbeth*, Macbeth thought he had it made. He'd just murdered the king and moved up from the rank of general to take the king's crown. Yet, Macbeth was miserable. His life had no purpose or joy. To put it in his words, life was a "tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Albert Camus, the French writer, compared life to the situation of Sisyphus, a character in Greek mythology. Sisyphus was condemned to roll a stone up a long hill. Every time he just about got to the top of the hill, he would slip. The stone would roll all the way back down the hill, and he would have to start all over again.

Let your students talk about the two quotes about life and futility. Now, have each student come up with his own definition of life and futility.

B I B L E S T U D Y



God Cares for Us

A . Matthew 6:30-33

Matthew 6:30 – 33 is part of the Sermon on the Mount. It is one of the earliest messages given by our Lord Jesus when He was on earth. Spoken in an almost straightforward style, the sermon actually carries with it many deep spiritual teachings. It teaches believers a lot about how to lead our lives in accordance with the expectations of God, our relationships with God and with our fellow human beings. If believers of the Lord Jesus can truly live out what is preached in this sermon, they can be sure that they are on the right path with God and with man.

1. What feelings do you think people were having that prompted Jesus Christ to say this? (Mostly anxiety. They were worried about their future need for food and clothes.)
2. Why does Jesus Christ rebuke the people for their lack of faith? (They are miss-

ing the truth. God said that He would take care of the "less valuable" aspects of His creation. Why should He not take care of human beings?)

3. Why should we tell God about our needs when He already knows what they are? (By telling God our needs, we acknowledge our dependence upon Him and indicate our trust in Him to meet our needs.)
4. What other things could we pursue instead of God's kingdom and His righteousness? (We could pursue power, material wealth or social status. What we really crave from these things is the security they promise. But they cannot satisfy us. Only God can meet those deepest needs; that's why we should seek His kingdom and His righteousness.)

B . Genesis 21:10-20

Matthew 10:29, 30 tell of a very comforting assurance from the Lord Jesus Himself: "Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than sparrows." It is easy to imagine that we're too insignificant or too unworthy for God to pay attention to us, but the truth is, God cares even for the littlest ones!

Hagar was one of Sarah's maids. As a maid, she had no position whatsoever in the household of Abraham. What was worse was the fact that she was an Egyptian. As a foreigner, she probably felt completely out of place in the household (although it is probable that other maids/servants were not Hebrew).

When Sarah picked her to be a concubine for Abraham, it must have been a great shock for her. But when she bore Ishmael, she probably gained much confidence about her position in the household, especially when Sarah was barren. Nevertheless, Sarah was still the mistress of the household. In fact, she gave birth to a boy, Isaac, later on. Hagar ultimately lost her place in the household and at the request of Sarah, Abraham sent her and Ishmael away.

It was out in the wilderness that God's mercy and compassion was seen. About to die of thirst, Hagar sat down to cry, lamenting her fate as well as that of her poor little boy. She even put him down and went away at a distance, not willing to personally witness the death of her own son. God saw all this. God's heart was moved by her plight. He heard the cries of the little Ishmael. So, God opened Hagar's eyes and she found a well. Because of that, she and her son did not die of thirst. Even though Hagar was a gentile, a maid, God's compassion extended to her and her son. From this, we can be assured of God's mercy on us all.

Suggested questions to guide the discussion:

1. How was the status of Hagar and Ishmael inferior in Abraham's household?
2. Whom did Hagar cry out to for help? (No one, she merely sat down and wept.)
3. Who else was crying?
4. What was the result of young Ishmael's cries?

C. Mark 12:41-44

It was a crowded day at the temple. People were coming and going to worship and to offer their sacrifices. Amidst the crowd, in a little quiet corner, our Lord Jesus sat Himself down. Across from the corner, people were jostling one another as they moved towards the offering box and then turned back to try to leave the crowded place.

It was in the middle of all this commotion that the old woman quietly moved up to the box, dropped her two little copper coins, and then left. No one noticed her. Why should any one have noticed her? She was not wearing any expensive garments that singled her out as someone notable. Neither did she attract any attention to herself. After all, she only had two copper coins to offer. What was there to let anyone know about?

But, our Lord Jesus saw it all. The amount the old woman offered was not an issue with the Lord Jesus. It was her heart of offering; the two insignificant copper coins were all she had to give. But, it was precisely because the two coins were all she had to give that her very act of giving became very significant in the sight of our Lord Jesus. Our Lord Jesus is the God who sees the heart, and the old woman's heart of offering brought her the attention of the only one that really matters – God Himself!

Suggested questions to guide the discussion:

1. Was the woman whom Jesus Christ praised an honorable woman whom people would pay attention to?
2. Why do you think Jesus Christ noticed her?

D. Luke 19:1-10

When the Lord Jesus was entering Jericho, multitudes gathered to try to get a glimpse of this "prophet" whom they had recently heard much about – His miracles, His teachings. Lost in this crowd of people was a man named Zacchaeus. He wanted so much to see the Lord Jesus that he even climbed up a tree. As an adult, in the middle of a busy city, tree climbing was not really an honorable thing to do in public. What was worse was his position in society. He was not just any person. He was the city's tax collector. Anyone who had to pay taxes knew him (and hated him, of course).

Zacchaeus could not bother with all these considerations. To be able to see the Lord Jesus was more important to him. And he was not disappointed. For the Lord Jesus noticed him and even wanted to go to his house to be his guest!

This baffled the multitude. Did the Lord Jesus not know that Zacchaeus was a publicly hated sinner who extorted money from the people in the name of tax payment? How could the Lord Jesus want to associate with such a man?

But, that is exactly what our Lord Jesus came to this world for – to save sinners. By His gesture, Zacchaeus was so moved that he resolved to turn away from his sin of exacting more than what was due from each person. He was even willing to repay four times the amount to those from whom he had taken money. It was a real change in this sinner, evidenced by a clear outward manifestation. Indeed, as our Lord Jesus said, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (Lk 19:9, 10).

Suggested questions to guide the discussion:

1. Was it surprising to you that Jesus Christ noticed Zacchaeus in the crowd? Why or why not?
2. What do you think brought about the repentance of Zacchaeus?
3. Why do you think the multitude was upset that Jesus Christ wanted to go to a sinner's house and eat with him?
4. What was Jesus Christ's reply to them?
5. Can you think of other examples from the Bible where God looked upon the most unworthy ones of society?

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1 Hagar and her son's cries in the desert were heard by God. What does this teach you about God's mercy?

2 What did the Lord Jesus tell us not to worry about in Matthew 6:31?

3 Zacchaeus was so touched by the love of the Lord Jesus for him that he decided to repent of his wrongdoing. What did he decide to do to show his repentance?

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



A. Does God Really Know I Exist? (Author Unknown)

I mean, the universe is such a big place that our earth is a mere flyspeck in space.

I have created you.

And with all the billions of people crowding our planet, I'm no more significant than a grain of sand on one of the ocean's beaches.

You are my child.

And with all the people who've lived in the centuries before me...

I have known you since before you were born.

And all the people who'll live in the years after I'm gone,

You are precious to me.

How could God possibly have time to give me any attention—or even notice me?

He probably doesn't even know I exist!

I have created you and you're My child. You are as important to Me as anyone who has ever lived.

Me? Are you sure you really know I exist?

Questions to think about:

1. How does the author feel about God in this poem?

(The author believes that God is too busy to worry about him.)

2. How does this writer feel about himself?

6 (He believes he is insignificant.)

3. Perhaps you have some of the same doubts as this poet. Do you believe that God really cares for you? If so, how? How does He care for even the smallest details of your life?

B. God's Love Will Not Let Us Go

It is sometimes easy for us to doubt God's love and care for us. Sometimes, we may think God simply doesn't think we're important enough to warrant His attention. Sometimes, when things are not going the way we want them to, we think that God's blessing is not with us. But, the Bible tells us that "all things work for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Rom 8:28). The following is a story that carries a powerful message about God's love for us. When we suffer, when we are scarred, God's love could actually be at work, albeit different from what we imagine or expect!

SCARS

Some years ago on a hot summer day in south Florida a little boy decided to go for a swim in the old swimming hole behind his house. In a hurry to dive into the cool water, he ran out the back door, leaving behind shoes, socks and shirt as he went. He flew into the water, not realizing that as he swam toward the middle of the lake, an alligator was swimming toward the shore.

His mother, looking out the window of the house, saw the two as they got closer and closer together. In utter fear, she ran toward the water, yelling to her son as loudly as she could. Hearing her voice, the little boy became alarmed and made a U-turn to swim to his mother. It was too late. Just as he reached her, the alligator reached him.

From the dock, the mother grabbed her little boy by the arms just as the alligator snatched his legs. That began an incredible tug-of-war between the two. The alligator was much stronger than the mother, but the mother was much too passionate to let go. A farmer happened to drive by, heard her screams, raced from his truck, took aim and shot the alligator.

Remarkably, after weeks and weeks in the hospital, the little boy survived. His legs were extremely scarred by the vicious attack of the animal, and on his arms were deep scratches where his mother's fingernails dug into his flesh in her effort to hang on to the son she loved. The newspaper reporter who interviewed the boy after the trauma asked if he would show him his scars. The boy lifted his pant legs. And then,

with obvious pride, he said to the reporter, "But look at my arms. I have great scars on my arms, too. I have them because my Mom wouldn't let go."

You and I can identify with that little boy. We have scars, too. Maybe not from an alligator, or anything quite so dramatic, but the scars of a painful past. Some of those scars are unsightly and have caused us deep regret. But, some wounds, my friend, are because God has refused to let go. In the midst of your struggle, He's been there holding on to you. The Scripture teaches that God loves you. You are a child of God. He wants to protect you and provide for you in every way. But sometimes we foolishly wade into dangerous situations. The swimming hole of life is filled with peril—and we forget that the enemy is waiting to attack. That's when the tug-of-war begins—and if you have the scars of His love on your arms, be very, very grateful. He did not, and will not, let you go.

Questions to think about:

1. *What are some things in the world that threaten to drag us away from God and swallow us up, metaphorically speaking?*
2. *Do you have personal experiences of times when you felt that you were being swept away by things in this world, to the dangerous point of almost losing your spiritual life?*
3. *Did you feel God's "desperate hands" clinging on to you, to save you? Share this experience with your classmates.*

Activity:

Hand out 5 X 7 cards. Have students divide their cards into days of the week. You might want to do this before class to save time. They should write down a specific problem that they want to tackle for each day (see the following examples). After they have created their lists, they should be determined to begin each day by asking God to take part in all areas of their lives. They should especially ask Him to help them with the problems they have listed. At the bottom of the card they should leave some space to describe how God helped them resolve their problems. Or if they did not let God have control, they should write what they think God wants them to learn from their mistakes. Suggest that students pray for each other and call one another during the week.

Sample problem calendar:

Monday: Try not to argue with Mom about clothes.

Tuesday: Do not cheat on exams.
Wednesday: Get homework done instead of watching too much TV.
Thursday: Little sister always wants to tag along; she is a nuisance.
Friday: All my friends want me to cut class to see a movie.
Saturday: My friend called and wanted me to go out instead of going to church.
Sunday: My dad wanted me to help him and I yelled back.

How God helped me:

Monday: We argued, but God wanted me to have patience to listen to my mom and we talked things over at the end.
Tuesday: I goofed off, flunked the exam, God taught me I must study hard.
Wednesday: I prayed to God to give me strength to say "no" to temptation.
Thursday: God helped me to have patience with my little sister.
Friday: God helped me explain to them why I have to go to class.
Saturday: God reminded me to have conviction in my faith.
Sunday: God helped me to understand my dad's need and not yell back.

R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



Let us read Psalm 130:14 – 18: "I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are Your works and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You ... You saw my substance, being yet unformed. How precious are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand ..."

This section of the Bible, and many other parts of the Bible, tell us that God cares for us, even when we were yet unborn. Yes, even when we were but tiny fetuses, God cared for us. In our everyday lives, we often take our safety, our health and our very existence for granted. Actually, God watches over us all the time. So many possible dangers lurk in today's world. So many diseases can harm us. Let us not forget to always give thanks to God for all His care!

How to Live a Life of Faith

Listed Scriptures

Acts 1-3, 16

Lesson Aim

- 1) That the students will know what activities a Christian should engage in as a fundamental aspect of their lives
- 2) That the students will examine their hearts and life-styles to see if they have been leading lives true to Christian values

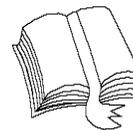
Memory Verse

“That you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” (Col 1:10)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Acts 1-6, 16

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



The book of the Acts of the Apostles is probably the best account of what life was like for early Christians. Many of the believers then, such as the apostles, had personally been with the Lord Jesus Christ. For those who came to believe after the day of Pentecost, their faith and beliefs were in sync with their life-style.

For instance, in Acts 2:42 – 47, we read how they kept to the doctrines taught by the apostles and lived together as one community. In fact, the early believers’ life-style was so unique and they were such a closely-knit community that the label “Christians” was created for them (Acts 11:26). It is therefore important that students be instilled with a sense of “separateness” as children of God. They need to understand that in many ways, they cannot conform to the ways of their non-believing peers and the rest of the world.



Do you have any heroes of faith from the Bible? Who are your heroes of faith? Think of at least two great people of faith in the Bible. What do you think characterized their daily lives? How did they maintain their faith and walk with God?

Many great people of God are not always full time workers of God. In the Old Testament, God called Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We know that these men had herds and servants to attend to. There are also men like Joseph, Daniel and Nehemiah who had positions in the palace, which probably meant their jobs were pretty challenging. Yet, these men managed to sustain lives of faith and walk closely with God. Today, we shall look into what a "life of faith" should entail.



Part 1

Great Men of Faith in the Old Testament

True faith is about walking with God all throughout one's lifetime. It is not just a moment of conversion or an occasion such as baptism or receipt of the Holy Spirit. A Christian is characterized by the way he leads his life and the things he does in his daily life. Let us now look at some biblical examples of Christian living. Read the following biblical sections concerning some great men of faith and then summarize what these saints of old did in their lives of faith. What would be the modern-day equivalent for you to emulate?

A . Jacob (Gen 28:17-22)

This event happened when Jacob was running away from the rage of his brother Esau, after having snatched the blessings for the firstborn from him. Empty-handed,

Jacob could not find any resting place when night fell. So, he simply slept in the open wilderness, with a rock as his pillow. That night, he dreamed of a ladder leading up to heaven and angels going up and down on that ladder. God was standing at the top of the ladder, and gave him a great promise: "I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you."

When Jacob awoke, he was full of awe, realizing that God was with him at this lonely place, throughout the night. In his gratitude, he set up an altar with the stone he had slept on during the night and poured oil over it as a form of offering. He also made a vow to offer a tenth of all that he would have if God allowed him to come back safely to this place, which he named Bethel, meaning "House of God."

This event is a very important lesson for us believers today. We should rely on God anytime and anywhere, like Jacob did. Walking with God means to always be sensitive to His presence and to always be ready to offer thanks to Him.

B . David (1 Sam 30:7-8)

This is one of the tumultuous events David had to go through before he became king. This time, the Amalekites came to one of his cities, burnt it down and abducted all the children and women. Even David's two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail, were among those captured. The people were in great sorrow and in their distress, wanted to stone David to death. It was definitely a very gloomy situation for David. He must have felt afraid, lost and anxious.

Instead of despairing, David "strengthened himself in the Lord" (1 Sam 30:6). He then asked the priest to bring the ephod to him and he consulted the Lord, whether he should fight back. God's assurance came to him when he sought Him, and finally, David and his men had victory over the Amalekites.

The lesson to be learned here is to never despair even when things look really dark and pessimistic. We should always turn to the Lord for guidance as to how to move on and always seek His help. As God had helped David when he called out to Him, surely God will do the same for His children today.

C. Daniel (Dan 6:4, 5, 10)

This is one of the famous stories about Daniel. Being excellent in his work, and with God's blessings, Daniel had risen to become the most trusted man of the king of Persia, King Darius. This drew the jealousy of the other officials at court. They conspired to find some fault in Daniel so they could oust him from the king's presence, thereby giving them a chance to rise in power. They could find no fault in Daniel. But they found out that Daniel, unlike them, worshiped the God of Israel. They devised a scheme to get rid of Daniel, even causing him to lose his life! They went to the king to ask him to approve of a decree "that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions."

As a subject of the king, Daniel was bound by this decree. That meant that he could not bow down to his God, the true and living God. As the second most powerful man in the kingdom, second only to the king, Daniel's life was inevitably under much scrutiny. What was he to do? Should he continue to worship God and defy the king's decree, and risk losing his life? Or, should he obey the decree and hope that God would understand his predicament? Of course, we all know what Daniel did. He went home immediately to pray to God, as was his custom. He was found out and then thrown into the lions' den. We also know that God delivered him from the lions and the king was thereby convinced of the greatness of God.

Daniel's situation may be similar to some of the situations we face today: dilemmas that sometimes force us to choose between God and other things on earth. What do we do? Daniel has set us a good example.

Another lesson to learn from Daniel is how he relied on God. No matter how pressing and urgent the situation was, the first thing he did was still to kneel down and pray. This gives us a good example of how we can deal with the emergencies or troubles in our lives – put God first.

D. Ezra (7:10)

Ezra was one of the leaders of the Israelites when they returned to Jerusalem, during the Persian rule, to rebuild the city. After years of exile, many of the Israelites had been assimilated into foreign culture. They had not held fast to the words of God. Many of them had forgotten the laws of God. Ezra was a scribe, and can be seen as a religious leader. He knew that he had to be equipped with the word of

God himself before he could lead the people back to worshipping and keeping God's commandments. Hence, he "prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel."

This attitude is surely worthy of our emulation. In order to effectively serve God, we must be well versed with the words of God. We should also be practicing God's words in our lives, before we can go on to help others.



Part 2

Great Men of Faith in the New Testament

A. The Early Believers (Acts 2:44-47, 9:4, 17:11)

These verses describe to us what some of the believers and truth-seekers during the time of the apostles were like:

Earliest believers right after the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended (Acts 2:44-47): They continued in the words of God and the teachings of the apostles. They had a lot of fellowship with one another, eating together and sharing their possessions. This is the true spirit of being one family in the Lord Jesus.

When persecution against the Christians began, the believers at Jerusalem had no choice but to flee to other cities. However, they were not abandoning the words of God nor their faith. In fact, wherever they were scattered, they went about preaching the gospel to people in those new areas (Acts 8:4). Do we preach the gospel today, even when times are peaceful and we do not face any persecution?

Truth-seekers in Berea (Acts 17:11): "These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so."

Teaching Tips

Read these biblical references carefully and familiarize yourself with the contexts of these verses. Then, elaborate on these characters' motivations and actions to your students after they have written down their own summaries.

B. Peter and John (Acts 3:1-9)

Peter and John (Acts 3:1-9)

This is the miracle that Peter performed at the gate named Beautiful. He cured a crippled man and made him walk, although this man had been lame from birth. This event serves as a reminder to us of the power of God. This power should be the same today as it was back then. We often lose sight of this fact. We are so afraid to tell people around us about God and His power. We should learn to be like Peter and John, spreading the blessings of God to people anywhere and everywhere we go.

D. Paul and Silas (Acts 16:25)

Paul and Silas were in Philippi when they met a girl who was possessed, controlled by sorcerers. They cast the demon out of that girl. Since the girl had been healed, the masters of this girl lost their source of income. These men then turned Paul and Silas in to the authorities who then put them into prison.

Instead of being worried about whether they were to be released from prison, Paul and Silas sang hymns, while other prisoners listened. This is a very good testimony of complete trust in God. Do we do the same in our daily lives, whatever our circumstances are?

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1 What does it mean to build altars to God?

2 What do you think Daniel's prayer was about in Daniel 6:10? The Bible records that he gave thanks in his prayer. How could he give thanks when his life was in danger?

3 What were some of the admirable deeds of the early believers during the time of the apostles?

4 What do you think were the main reasons why the early apostolic church grew as quickly as it did?

- 5** When Paul and Silas were imprisoned, they were able to sing hymns. What do you think was in their minds when they were singing hymns in their prison cells?

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



When and How to Pray

Part A- The following excerpt is adapted from page 44 of "A New Life in Christ" (part of the Discipleship Series © 2000 True Jesus Church).

A Piece of Advice Concerning Prayer

One brother, John, thus advises: "You should try to pray every day. Prayer is essential for every Christian. When you wake up in the morning, make sure you have a quick prayer before you leave the house. Before bedtime, you should kneel down and pray for at least one minute. I try to squeeze in at least 1 minute of prayer when I wake up and about 5 minutes before I go to bed. Sometimes, I'm really tired out and don't know what I'm praying about, but I feel prayer is a part of my Christian duty. Anyway, I think having a consistent prayer life makes God happy. So, regardless of how busy you are, you should always remember to pray."

Questions to think about:

- 1.** Analyze this piece of advice. Is it good advice? What are the good points about this piece of advice?
- 2.** What do you think John's prayer life is like? What do you think his prayer content is about?
- 3.** What is your prayer life like? What is your ideal life of prayer? How well-matched are the two?
- 4.** What changes would you make to improve on this piece of advice given by John?

Part B- Most, if not all, of us are familiar with "The Lord's Prayer." We have learnt it by heart and can rattle it off without any problem. Yet, how many of us truly look into the content of the prayer? Have we ever cared to examine what the prayer is all about?

The Lord's Prayer is the prayer that the Lord Jesus used to teach His disciples when they asked Him to teach them how to pray (Lk 11:1). Hence, it is surely more than something for us to simply memorize and recite. It is an outline teaching us what we should pray about. More importantly, it is a guideline for us in the way we lead our lives.

Let us now look more closely at this prayer. Here is a poem written as a reflection on the Lord's Prayer.

*I cannot say "Our Father,"
if I do not demonstrate the relationship in my daily life.
I cannot say, "in Heaven,"
if I am so occupied with the earth that I am laying up no treasure there.
I cannot say, "Hallowed be Your Name,"
if I, who am called by His name, am not holy.
I cannot say, "Your will be done,"
if I am questioning, resentful of or disobedient to His will for me.
I cannot say, "On earth as it is in Heaven,"
if I am not prepared to devote my life here to His service.
I cannot say, "Give us this day our daily bread,"
if I am worrying about my livelihood.
I cannot say, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors,"
if I harbor a grudge against anyone.
I cannot say, "Do not lead us into temptation,"
if I deliberately place myself, or remain in a position where I am likely to be tempted.
I cannot say, "But deliver us from the evil one,"
if I am not prepared to fight the spiritual battle with the weapon of prayer.
I cannot say, "Yours is the Kingdom,"
if I do not accord the King the disciplined obedience of a loyal subject.
I cannot say, "and the power,"
if I fear what men may do, or what my neighbor may think.
I cannot say, "and the glory,"
if I am seeking glory for myself.
I cannot say, "Forever,"
if my horizon is bounded by the things of time.
(Author unknown)*

This poem has given us merely one perspective to what the Lord's Prayer is about. The author applies the Lord's Prayer to what one ought to think and do in one's life.

The Lord's Prayer also teaches us the content of our prayers. For instance, in our prayers, we can pray and meditate upon how to have God's will done on earth as it is in Heaven. We could pray about church progress. We could pray about our own decision-making. We can also pray about our own weaknesses in our character and life-style.

Now, let's attempt a similar reflection on the Lord's Prayer as the author of the poem did. Complete the sentence for each line of the prayer below. As we write, think about what we should be praying about in our prayers, and what our lives should be like.

*I cannot say "Our Father,"
if I _____.
I cannot say, "in Heaven,"
if I _____.
I cannot say, "Hallowed be Your Name,"
if I _____.
I cannot say, "Your will be done,"
if I _____.
I cannot say, "On earth as it is in Heaven,"
if I _____.
I cannot say, "Give us this day our daily bread,"
if I _____.
I cannot say, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors,"
if I _____.
I cannot say, "Do not lead us into temptation,"
if I _____.
I cannot say, "But deliver us from the evil one,"
if I _____.
I cannot say, "Yours is the Kingdom,"
if I _____.
I cannot say, "and the power,"
if I _____.
I cannot say, "and the glory,"
if I _____.
I cannot say, "Forever,"
if I _____.*

Author: _____ (student's name)



Let us sing Hymn 399 as a conclusion. As we sing, let us meditate upon the words. Think about how we can truly be what the words depict in these four verses:

- 1. Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart.*
- 2. Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart.*
- 3. Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart.*
- 4. Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart..*

The words mention only "in my heart," But, we know that a true Christian must have acts to accompany his inner faith. Actually, the heart is the starting point of all our actions. Proverbs 4:23 is a good reminder to us, as to why the heart is so important: "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it springs the issues of life." Let us start with our hearts, and then show our faith through our actions, that we may live victorious lives as Christians living out the teachings of God, thus glorifying His name.

Setting Goals

Listed Scriptures

Lk 4:16-22

Lesson Aim

- 1) That your students will practice writing and evaluating short-term and long-term goals

Memory Verse

“Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come and the years draw near when you say, ‘I have no pleasure in them.’” (Eccl 12:1)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Lk 1-7

W A R M U P



Imagine yourself dead for a minute. Ask yourself this question, “What will they say about me when I’m dead?” How will others remember you? What will they write on your tombstone? Here are some epitaphs:

HE DIED AS HE LIVED---Billy the Kid

THAT’S ALL FOLKS—Mel Blanc

HE LIVED VICTORIOUS FOR GOD ALL HIS LIFE AND NOW HIS SOUL WENT TO GOD—Jim Johnson

Thinking about the end of your life is good for you, because it forces you to think about your life now. It’s too late to plan for greatness when you’ve got one foot in the grave. Rather than waiting until tomorrow, you’ve got to do something about it today.

Can you imagine an architect designing a building without first

having a vision of the finished product? Is there a professional football player out there who doesn't play the game with the end view of winning in mind? Would a teacher work hard to create a lesson plan unless she knew in advance what the class should be like? Why should your life be any different? Unless you are making some goals for your life and making the right choices now, you won't have the best possible outcome. That's why today's focus is on setting some goals for ourselves.

B I B L E S T U D Y



Part 1

The Lord Jesus- Living Out a Life-long Goal

A goal gives us something to try for, a direction to go towards, and a place to end up. Too often, we don't take time to think about our goals, and we usually end up going nowhere! In today's lesson, we can see that as soon as Jesus Christ started His work, He announced the goals that He wanted to achieve. Let's read Luke 4:16-22.

Have students take turns reading it out loud. Have them underline all the actions that were a part of Jesus Christ's goals. Circle all the people the Lord Jesus wanted to reach. Ask them to put a check mark by the goals they think were the most difficult for Jesus Christ to reach. They should be ready to explain why they chose those goals.

Healing the blind and ministering to the poor were certainly difficult. But how about accepting the cross? Jesus Christ wanted to set us free from the bondage of sin. That means He had to be willing to take our sin and die on the cross. It is clear that these goals were not easy. Think about the following questions:

1. Where did Jesus Christ announce His goals? (Nazareth, His hometown.)
2. The people of Jesus Christ's day were not aware of what would happen to Him. What do you think they thought He was claiming that He would do? (Perhaps liberate Palestine from the Romans, do miracles, make sure prisoners were let out of jail.)
3. Jesus Christ set biblical goals. Christians can set some of the very same goals He set. What goals might a growing Christian pick from the Isaiah passage

the Lord Jesus read? (We can tell others about Christ and His good news. We can help the poor. We can tell people the message of salvation.)

4. Based on what you remember about the life of the Lord Jesus, what were some of the difficulties He had in reaching His goals? (Satan did his best to tempt the Lord Jesus to change His goals. People tried to kill Him before He reached His goals. Yet Jesus Christ was always aware of what He had to do, and He worked toward His goals.)
5. Have students put a star by the goal they feel was most needed for Jesus Christ's day. Why? Double underline the goal they feel is most needed for the church today. Why?
6. What does all this tell you about the type of person Jesus Christ was and the goals He had? (Jesus Christ was a man of action—preaching and healing. Jesus Christ was interested in people who needed help. He was guided by the Spirit of the Lord.)



Part 2

Preparing to Serve God

When we talk about goals, we think of planning. But, to actually achieve our goals, we have to carry out our plans and work towards the goals. In the Bible, there are many who prepared themselves when they were young for a very noble cause – to serve God. Let us now take a look at how these people equipped themselves for God's service.



A. Samuel

Samuel served the Lord from his childhood. Read 1 Samuel 2:18–21 and discuss the following questions with the students.

1. How was Samuel's childhood different from that of the rest of his peers? (Samuel was meant to serve God in the temple from the day he was born. His mother, Hannah, had asked God to grant her a child, and in return, she would dedicate this child to Him to serve Him all the days of his life. As a result, we can imagine how different a childhood Samuel would have from his

peers. When he was weaned, he was sent to the temple to train under Eli, to be a priest.)

2. What kind of hardships do you think Samuel had to endure, being consecrated to the Lord for full-time service at such a young age?
(Little Samuel did not get to enjoy the many things that other kids enjoyed when they were young. He probably did not have many friends to play with. He did not get to see his parents as often as other children did. When other children could throw tantrums and demand things from their parents, Samuel had to learn how to be a good servant to God. Living in the temple was probably not as luxurious as living at home with his parents. He probably had to do a lot of manual work too, helping out with the chores of the temple.)
3. What qualities did Samuel have to cultivate in order to be able to serve God at such a young age and sustain it through his adulthood?
(All the hardships suffered as a young child probably trained Samuel to be physically able to take hardships. In addition, he probably had a lot of patience and endurance. Having lived in the temple, and growing up with a lot of training in God's words as a result, Samuel must have been equipped with an in-depth knowledge of God's words. He must have established a close relationship with God too since he was not with his parents from a young age. Over the years, God must have become his best friend.)

B. Daniel

Daniel and his friends withstood foreign influences and excelled in a foreign land. Read Daniel 1:1, 1:6-19 and discuss the following questions.

1. When Daniel and his three friends refused the food of the king, what spiritual qualities were demonstrated?
(As exiles, as young boys, the allure of good food offered by the king seemed hard to resist. Yet, Daniel and his three friends knew that this food was probably offered to idols. They refused to eat of such food. They would rather have gone hungry and settled for plain vegetables and grains than go against God's commandment and eat food offered to foreign gods. This shows great integrity, fear of God and self-control. It is not easy resisting good food if you are a captured prisoner.)

2. Why do you think they could maintain their stance and glorify God in the midst of foreigners?
(Daniel and his friends must have had very strong foundations in the word of God, as well as training in self-control, to be able to maintain their stand. By telling the guard to feed them plain vegetables and grains, they also exhibited great faith in God. This does not come without prior experiences in God. Whenever we turn to God, we build up experiences that will strengthen our faith and help us out in later times of trouble.)

C. Timothy

Timothy was trained from a young age to be a good worker of God. Read Acts 19:22, Acts 20:4 and 2 Timothy 1:5. Discuss the following questions.

1. What are some of the good works of Timothy? (Timothy was well trusted by Paul. Paul sent him to minister in Macedonia when he could not go himself. Timothy was a constant companion in the ministries of Paul. We can infer that he must have been an easy-going person who could work well and interact well with other workers and believers. He must have also been able to take physical hardship as missionary trips, especially during Paul's time, were not easy journeys.)
2. Timothy's faith was established at a young age. How can a youth equip himself to be a good worker of God, like Timothy did?
(We know that Timothy was well trained in the scriptures from a young age, by his mother and grandmother, Eunice and Lois. This is definitely one indispensable quality a youth who wants to work for God must possess.)

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



- 1 What was the Lord Jesus' goal in life, according to Luke 4:18?
- 2 What was the goal in life set for Samuel even before he was born?
- 3 What are some of the important qualities a good worker of God must

possess? How can one be trained for these qualities? (Refer to examples from the lives of the Lord Jesus, Samuel, Daniel and Timothy.)

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



Goals

What are your goals in life? What are your goals like? Do you have goals both for yourself and for those whom you love? Do you include God in your goals? When Paul, the apostle, met the Lord Jesus for the first time, he asked, "What do you want me to do?" (Acts 9:6). In your goals and plans, do you ever ask this question? Here are two real-life testimonies of church members who have resolved to live their lives for God's use:

Testimony 1

During one NYTS, one brother was fasting and praying to God about his future. He was about to graduate from college in a year, and had many questions on his mind. Will he even get a job? What positions should he apply for? Which city should he move to? Will he do well in his career? For many days during the NYTS, even though he fasted and prayed very hard, he didn't feel that God was really with him, until one afternoon when he felt God finally talk to him in his prayer.

In that prayer, this brother suddenly felt like God's voice was directed at him (though he didn't physically hear anything). In this prayer, he felt so strong that God was posing a question to him, "What about ME?" He then realized that his prayers had all been about HIMSELF and what he wanted to do in his life on earth. He had not thought about what he wanted to do for God or what God wanted him to do.

That prayer was a great awakening for that brother. He started to know what he ought to do. After talking with pastors and fellow brothers and sisters, he found answers to all his questions and had a part for God in all his plans. Now, he's got a good job in a city away from home and he's actively helping out with the church there, for the members there really needed more help in building up the church.

Testimony 2

Some twenty, thirty years ago, the True Jesus Church was not established in as many continents as it is today. There were two teenage brothers in Taiwan who made an agreement between themselves that when they got older, they would go

together to Europe, where the church had not been established, and bring the gospel there. They began on their ambition for God by putting it in their prayers. They also worked really hard on learning the languages spoken in Europe. After college, they applied to graduate schools there. They were accepted and they studied very hard in graduate school. After that, they got jobs there and settled down in their newfound homes. Together with some other members who went to Europe to study or to work, they met together for services and preached to whomever they met. Thank God, the churches in Europe have been established and more members have been added over the years.

Questions to think about:

1. From these two testimonies, what were the important steps involved in the plans the believers had for God?
2. No one can be the solitary hero in any work for God. The support of brothers and sisters is really important in our plans for God. Describe the roles of the brethren in the plans of these believers.
3. What were the sacrifices these brothers made in their plans for God? What do you think were the difficulties they had to overcome?
4. Have you ever thought about your goals? Have you ever taken the time to actually write the goals you long to reach, and then evaluate them? If not, here is a pattern you can follow.
 - a. Begin by writing one spiritual goal you would like to accomplish this month. Write it down. You might write, "My goal is to learn more about the Bible," or "My goal is to have a better prayer life."
 - b. Second, you need to be able to measure it in some tangible way. You will need to rewrite your goal if it is not measurable. For example, a better prayer life could be measured by getting up 10 minutes earlier each day and praying or praying for all family members each night before going to sleep. These are clear goals because they can be easily measured. You can tell when you've reached your goal. Remember to write your goals in terms of specific actions.
 - c. Now, go ahead and write several spiritual goals for the future—for this year and next year, or for the next 2-3 years.
 - d. Fourth, evaluate your goals. Because these are spiritual goals, ask

yourself the following questions for each goal.

- *If I accomplish this goal, will Jesus Christ be glorified?
- *Does this goal help me and/or others become more like Jesus Christ?
- *Is my goal a specific action I can see or measure?
- *Will I know when I have accomplished my goal?
- *Is it possible to reach my goal?
- *Does meeting this goal require the work of the Holy Spirit?
- *You can add other questions you might think are helpful in determining whether a goal is spiritually valuable.

- e. Now, prepare to share your goals with your class. Tell them about the process you went through to get your goal written and evaluated. You may want to share with the class during the next month how you're meeting your spiritual goals.

R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



What we have done today is to organize a few steps in your journey of life. It may seem unimportant to set a goal this month. But it is a step. Then having met this month's goal, you may want to take some more steps next month and the months after. It's great to begin setting goals. It's a good habit that will help your journey down the road. Close the class with a prayer, remembering as you pray that only with His help do you meet your spiritual goals.

Goals

Being Christian is not simply a status in name. A true Christian is one who puts biblical principles into practice in his or her life. He or she will know that it is more important to hold on to the teachings and principles of the Bible than to conform to the world. He or she will not compromise the teachings of God for convenience or gains in this world. J2 students are at a crucial age where a lot of life-long principles are being forged. It is important that they recognize their special status as God's people.

The Bible also gives very practical teachings about wealth management. For example, in Matthew 19: 16-22, Jesus Christ taught the rich young ruler about the need to prioritize God before his own wealth. Our students should also realize that all that they have on earth are gifts from God, and they should freely share those gifts.

unit 2

Teacher Devotional

Many of us are familiar with the parable of the talents (Mt 25:14 - 28). In sermons, we often hear how this parable is applied to our service to God in church. Do we also realize that the talents that the master in the parable gives to his servants can also be seen as symbolizing the many things we take for granted in life? Things like our very life, the houses we live in or other material possessions. How we live our lives and interact with others are actually reflections of how we make use of the talents God has granted us. So, while we are actively involved in church work, let us not forget that God has also entrusted us with His talents outside of the chapel.

Be Ready to Share Our Blessings with Others

"Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels." (Hebrews 13:2)

Lesson 4

Godly Values and Worldly Values

Listed Scriptures

Gen 6, 18, 39; Dan 1, 3

Lesson Aim

- 1) That the students will understand that there is an absolute standard of what is right and wrong, even though this world tells them that values are relative
- 2) That the students will see the need to choose and stand on God's side and practice God's teachings and biblical values

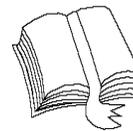
Memory Verse

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Rom 12:2)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Gen 6, 18, 39; Dan 1-4

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



One way to look at the teachings of the Bible is to view them as exhortations to the believers of Christ to not conform to the world. From the time of Genesis to Revelation, we are given many contrasting examples of people who obeyed God and people who turned away from God to do evil. This theme is in fact the most important lesson any Christian must learn – obedience to God by not following the ways of the world. The New Testament dwells a lot on obedience to God through the help of the Holy Spirit (see Galatians 5, for example). It is important to understand that obedience to God is not something automatic or pre-wired in us. When God created Adam, He did not make Adam to be a robot programmed to have total, unquestioning obedience. In fact, it is when we are not "pre-wired" and when we choose to obey God that we bring glory to God's name. This should be an important underlying message for our students in this lesson.



Today, we live in a world where moral standards are relative. It is politically incorrect to try to maintain that one set of morals is superior to another, or that there even exists a moral standard. As Christians, however, we know that there will come a judgment day where God will judge everyone according to His standard. Hence, we should be careful not to imagine that everything is relative. Instead, we should seek to study more of the word of God so that we can live a life according to His standards and be found pleasing in His sight when He appears again to judge all creation. In today's lesson, we shall primarily look at the contrasts between what the world says and what we ought to do.



Part 1

Romans 12:2

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom 12:2). This was the exhortation of apostle Paul to the believers in Rome in the first century. This same message still applies to believers today. Let's take a closer look at what this verse says.

A. "Do not be conformed to this world"

1. What does it mean to you when Paul says we should not conform to this world?
(The world that we live in today is full of ideas and practices that are contrary to the teachings of the Bible. There is much sexual immorality. There are people who would do anything to gain power or money for themselves, even at the expense of others. Relationships are turning cold and superficial. True love between people is often lacking. Paul's words, "do not be conformed to this

world," spoken about two millennia ago, still carry its relevance to us today.)

2. What are some of the things of the world today that are contrary to God's teachings?
(Some other things contrary to God's teaching include killing of lives, abortion, hatred, sexual promiscuity, lack of a heart to worship God, pride and over-confidence in oneself.)
3. Do you see any of the people around you practicing those deeds that are not in accordance with God's teachings?
(For teenagers like our students, it is hard not to conform to the many things that their friends do. They will likely feel left out if they choose to abide by God's word strictly.)
4. Read John 15:19. The Lord Jesus says that if we distinguish ourselves from the rest of the world, we are likely to be hated by the world. What kinds of pressure do you feel from your peers with regard to your not conforming to their behavior? How do you keep yourselves from not conforming to those practices despite the peer pressure?
(It is important therefore to find good friends in church, both friends of their own age group as well as friends in their teachers or other older youths. Such friendships in the Lord will provide a support base, both emotionally and spiritually. It will make it easier for youths to hold fast to God's words. Of course, personally, we need to be grounded in God's words and have close experiences with God. If we are close to God, we will find it easier to not conform to the practices of the world. Closeness with God comes from regular worship services, listening and reading the words of God, meditating on how God's words apply in our life and frequent prayers.)

B. "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind"

1. Read Titus 3:5. The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit can renew us. Does that mean that anyone and everyone who has the Holy Spirit will automatically not conform to the world? Is there anything more that one has to do after one has received the Holy Spirit?
(Receiving the Holy Spirit is not the end of our faith. God grants us His Holy Spirit to help us maintain our faith and keep His word. It is not a magic formula, that we become robot-like, perfect Christians.)

2. Read Galatians 5:16 – 18. What does this part of the Bible teach us about how to be led and renewed by the Holy Spirit? What does it mean to “walk in the Spirit”?

(To allow the Holy Spirit to work in us, we have to obey the guidance and movement of the Holy Spirit. As human beings, our environment can easily influence us. To ensure that we do not conform to the world, but rather “walk in the Spirit,” we have to work at it – by attending services, keeping company with people who hold fast to God’s words, praying constantly, relying on God always, etc. By so doing, we can carry out God’s teachings, manifest His power, and even change the lives of others around us!)

3. Give some examples of how one can be transformed to God’s will.

(Examples of being transformed to God’s will:

* One brother who was a drug addict was able to get over his addiction after he converted and received the Holy Spirit.

* Instead of spending Friday evenings partying or having sleep-overs with friends, a church brother decided to do what is better by attending Friday night services.)

C. “Prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God”

1. Can you think of Bible verses that directly refer to the will of God? With the help of a concordance, look up all the verses that mention “the will of God.” Summarize your findings and share them with the class.

(Some verses with the phrase “will of God”:

*“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Rom 12:2)

*“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality.” (1 Thess 4:3)

*“In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (1 Thess 5:18)

*Refer also to Micah 6:8 – “He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God?”)

2. Other than those verses you have found which directly mention “the will of God,” what else do you know about the will of God?

(The will of God ultimately is to save mankind from sin and eternal death. That was His intention from the beginning of creation. That is why He came to this world as the Lord Jesus to die for mankind. So, in whatever we do, we must make sure we do not jeopardize this will of God – whether it is concerning our own salvation or another person’s faith.)

3. What are some of the things that you can do that will conform to the good, acceptable and perfect will of God?



Part 2

Be the Light of the World

In Matthew 5:14, the Lord Jesus says that we are “the light of the world.” In this world of spiritual darkness, we have to shine forth the light of God. To do that, we must not partake of what the unbelievers do. “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?” (2 Cor 6:14) Since days of old, believers of God have shown themselves to be different from the people of their time. Today, we shall take a look at some of these examples. For each of the Bible sections below, list the activities of the people who did not acknowledge God. Then, as a study in contrast, list what the people of God did.

A. Genesis 6:1-12

What the people of the time were doing:

(The people who did not know God were not reverent. They indulged in the lust of their flesh, making merry and having fun, in all senses of the word. That is why their sins were described as having corrupted the whole earth.)

What Noah did:

(Noah obeyed God, and was found to be righteous in His eyes. Noah also obeyed God’s command to build the ark even though at that time, rain from the sky was completely unheard of. By faith he simply obeyed and did according to what God told him.)

B. Genesis 18:20, 19:4-7

What the people of the time were doing:

(Sodom and Gomorrah were very sinful cities. There was homosexuality and a lot of sexual immorality. When the two angels visited the house of Lot, the people even wanted to have physical relationships with them!)

What Lot did:

(Lot realized the evil of the city he was dwelling in, and heeded the voice of the angels to leave the city as soon as possible. He packed up and led his wife and two daughters to flee the city.)

C. Genesis 39:6-12

What the wife of Potiphar was doing:

(As a married woman, she should have stayed faithful to her husband. Instead, while her husband was away, she found herself attracted to the young Joseph and even acted upon it to try to entice him. When Joseph rejected her advances, she wrongly accused him. She had no respect for purity or justice.)

What Joseph did:

(Joseph was clear about his stance. He said, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin before God?" (Gen 39:9) He was a lonely servant in a foreign land. But he did not allow anything to sway him from keeping God's words. He was even willing to go to jail.)

D. Daniel 1:3-10

What the other youths in the court were doing:

(They were all eating the food of the king, which was likely to have been offered to idols.)

What Daniel did:

(Daniel would rather have risked his health than eat the food and drink the wine from the king. He trusted that God would grant him good health and asked to only have vegetables.)

E. Daniel 3:1-6, 16-18

What the others in the country were doing:

(They were all bowing down to the great statue that the king had ordered to be constructed.)

What Shadrach, Meshach & Abed-Nego did:

(The three men of faith said that even if God did not deliver them, they still would never bow down to the statue, v. 18.)

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1

What does it mean to be "transformed by the renewing of the mind"?

2

Summarize some of the sinful deeds of the people who did not know God.

3

Summarize the contrast in behavior shown by the people who knew God.

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



Part A-

What the World Says Versus What the Bible Says

Although the scriptures were physically penned more than 2000 years ago, they are still relevant to our lives today. This is because "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim 3:16). Let us take a look at some real-life situations that youths in our church have encountered. Then, making use of the Bible verses given, and also adding more biblical references of your own, give these youths advice as to what they ought to do. (The names of the youths have been changed and their stories slightly modified.)

1. Alice had always been in a private school. But after her parents moved to the city, she was enrolled in a public high school. In the city, the student population is more diverse, and she made friends who were from different

backgrounds. One day, she got a shock when the group of buddies that she hung out with offered her a chance to try something really fun. They suggested that she try out some of the drugs that they had been enjoying. Alice knew that her friends smoked cigarettes, but never thought they were actually into something more! She knew instinctively that she should never join them. But, they were her closest friends in the school and being new, she sort of needed their companionship. If she did not join them, they may not want to hang out with her in the future.

Your advice to Alice:

Biblical references: 1 Cor 6:19, 20; 2 Tim 2:22; 1 Cor 6:12, 1 Cor 10:23

2. Like any other teenager, Sammy spent quite a great deal of his time after school chatting on-line with friends. He found this to be a good way to keep in touch with people, especially friends in church whom he did not get to see every day. He also made some new friends through various chat rooms on the Internet. One day, one of his on-line friends suggested to him that he might want to check out some “sizzling” websites: pornographic sites. This friend told him that there was nothing wrong to simply view some images and not actually do anything. Just checking them out once or twice was no big deal. Besides, no one would ever know.

Your advice to Sammy:

Biblical references: Jas 1:15; 2 Tim 2:22; Eccl 12:14; Eph 5:15, 16

3. Diane has heard much about loving our brothers and sisters in Christ. She never seriously thought about it until the RE teacher initiated a “buddy system,” and she was paired as a buddy to someone she felt was not at all her type. She never really talked to that sister in church. The way she dressed, and even the way she talked simply was not her cup of tea. She could not imagine how she could become prayer-buddies with someone whom she did not like. At school she could choose whom she wanted to hang out with. No one could force anyone to be someone’s friend. But, she couldn’t possibly say no to her RE teacher. She started feeling resentment growing inside of her, both towards the RE teacher and towards her assigned buddy.

Your advice to Diane:

Biblical references: Gal 6:2; Jn 13:34, 35; Gal 5:22, 23

4. David has had a lot of problems with his parents since he started high school. His parents seemed to want to meddle too much in his affairs. That was okay when he was younger. But, he was already in high school and he considered himself a grown-up. He didn’t like it when his mother wanted to make sure he

with his parents. He even felt that their “Chinglish” was an embarrassment to him. His friends at school told him to simply bear with them for a bit more. Once he went on to college, he could plan on moving out on his own and be free of his parents forever.

Your advice to David:

Biblical references: Ex 20:12; Eph 6:1-3

Part B—A Man/Woman of Strength

In this competitive world, it is important to be strong in order to survive. So often, the values that we absorb from the world are brought into the church and into our lives. We become no different than people of the world. We no longer can shine as lights in this dark world because we have become acculturated with the rest of the world, with the people who do not know God. It is important that we realize our special status as God’s people and have the wisdom to tell the difference between what the world esteems and what God favors. Here is a verse that highlights the difference between what strength means to the world and what it means from a Christian perspective.

*A strong man/woman works out every day to keep his/her body in shape,
But a man/woman of strength kneels in prayer to keep his/her soul in shape.*

*A strong man/woman isn’t afraid of anything,
But a man/woman of strength shows courage in the midst of his/her fear.*

*A strong man/woman won’t let anyone get the best of him/her,
But a man/woman of strength gives the best of himself/herself to everyone.*

*A strong man/woman makes mistakes and avoids the same in the future,
But a man/woman of strength realizes life’s mistakes can also be God’s blessings
and capitalizes on them.*

*A strong man/woman walks sure-footedly,
But a man/woman of strength knows God will catch him/her when he/she falls.*

*A strong man/woman wears the look of confidence on his/her face,
But a man/woman of strength wears grace.*

*A strong man/woman has faith that he/she is strong enough for the journey,
But a man/woman of strength has faith that it is in the journey that he/she will
become strong.*

Now, write at least one paragraph that illustrates the contrast between what the world says and what the Bible teaches, as is shown in the verses above. You may want to think about what the world around you believes is "strength." Contrast that with what you know from the Bible to be strength. As best as possible, give a Bible verse to support what you write. For example, you can write something like this: "A strong man sees power in getting people to obey him, but a man of strength sees power in being gentle and getting along with others." For, the Lord Jesus Himself says, "I am gentle and lowly of heart" (Mt 11:29). Then, share it with the rest of your class.

R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15). Whether or not we want to be God's children is a conscious choice. God's children are not marked merely by the event of baptism or receipt of the Holy Spirit. To be truly considered a child of God, each of us has to prove that we are each a child of God through the mindsets we have and the ways we conduct our lives. So, if we choose to conform to this world and love this world and its ways, we cannot at the same time be a true child of God. May God give us wisdom and courage to be separate from the world!

Priorities, Possessions and Time Management

Listed Scriptures

Gen 13:8-13, 14:14-15:1

Lesson Aim

- 1) That the students will view their material possessions as second place compared to their relationships with God
- 2) That the students will be able to talk about how they determine value

Memory Verse

"For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mt 16:26)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Gen 10-17

W A R M U P



Imagine you have a younger brother and both of you are in your late 30's. Both of you are well established and making reasonable salaries. You have a nice car, a good size house, a great job and you also maintain a good savings plan that enables you to give tithe to the church. One day, your younger brother suddenly comes and tells you that he is going through bankruptcy and he demands that you give him a large sum of money in order to pay off some of his debts. What would you do for the sake of your relationship with your younger brother?



Part 1

Possessions

Choosing between possessions and people (or between riches and relationships) is a hard decision to make. But many of us have to face this kind of choice in life. We can choose to love our possessions or to love people. How do we make this decision? Does God care about how we value relationships and the way we value our possessions?

- Let's take a look at Genesis 13:8-13.
Abram was a very wise man when it came to putting people before possessions. When did Abram allow Lot to take whatever he wanted? What do you think this did for their relationship?
(Abram was indeed wise. By allowing Lot to choose the best land, Abram showed Lot that peace in a family and his relationship with Lot was more important than his wealth. If Abram had held on tightly to what was rightfully his, he would have had family problems that might have lasted for years.)
- Let's read Genesis 14:1-15:1.
After Abram and Lot parted, Lot went on to enjoy a good life in the best of the land. However, later on in his life, several kings surrounding Sodom rose up and looted the city, taking Lot and his family with them. After Lot was captured, what did Abram do?
(Abram took 318 trained fighters and set out in pursuit of the looters. Abram's men attacked and recaptured all the goods, and saved Lot and his family as well.)
- What reward did the king of Sodom offer Abram for his deed?
- Why did Abram turn it down?
- What did this do for his relationship with the king of Sodom?
(The king told Abram that he could keep all the goods for himself. But Abram refused them because he had earlier made an oath to God. Abram turned this offer down because accepting a gift from the king would bind Abram politically to the leader. Abram had already determined to not let the attraction of

these riches lead him into an unhealthy relationship.)

- What did Abram give to the priest Melchizedek?
- What did this do for his relationship with God?
(Abram gave Melchizedek one-tenth of everything that he had as an offering to God. Abram's offering showed God that He was more important to him than his wealth.)



Part 2

Priorities

"Does God really care about what I do with my money and my possessions? What difference do these decisions make to Him?" Since God made you in His image, what you do with your money and possessions do matter a lot to Him. Let's take a look at monetary priorities. We have many things in our lives that demand money, including our tithe, bills, food, education, and clothes. Sometimes, we may even feel that there just isn't enough money for everything. People get caught in a life-long trap when they put aside their Christian values for the love of money. The worst thing is that we might even do something that we know isn't God's way because it makes more money for us. Therefore, a good list of priorities helps keep us focused on godly use of money and attitudes. When we use money the way God wants us to, we won't want things that are unhealthy. So, what is your priority? Let students work on their list of priorities for about 5 minutes.

Priorities help us make decisions on whether we can or should do certain things. Before we do anything, buy anything or go anywhere, we should take a look at our list of priorities. For example, work is important, but imagine working seven days a week. We may make a lot of money, but what does it support? Does it support our desire for money? Yes. Does it make our family happy? No, they never get to see us. Does it make God happy? No, He doesn't get to spend time with us either. Does it support the values that we want to live by? No, there's no room in our lives for anything but money.

Do our priorities follow God's plan for our lives? God has designed our lives to have balance in all things. Our prayer time, our devotional time, our families, school, work, rest, relationships, personal time and recreational time should be balanced if we are following God's will.

So, where do we put God in our lives? The Bible makes it very clear where God should be on our list—the top! When it comes to investing our time and money, our list should be God, family, school or work, then recreation. There are a few standards that God wants us to focus on when it comes to money and possessions. Read the following verses and discuss why they are important values and standards for us to go by.

1. Concerning Contentment

We should be very thankful for the things we have. “Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you’” (Heb 13:5). Read 1 Timothy 6:6-8. “Godliness with contentment is great gain for we brought nothing into this world...”

2. The Importance of Working Hard

A lot of people don't like to work and want everything. Their philosophy is, “Why worry about tomorrow, go for the now!” Therefore, a lot of people go around buying all kinds of stuff on credit. But remember, as God's people, He wants us to save for the things we need. “He who works his land will have abundant food, but he who chases fantasies lacks judgment” (Prov 12:11).

3. Managing Money

We should be using our money wisely and with an ear to God's heart. “And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased” (Heb 13:16).

4. Planning Ahead

God wants us to be planners. What we do today is our foundation for tomorrow. “Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed” (Prov 16:3).

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1

Why did Abram let Lot choose whatever land he wanted first? What does this tell us about Abram's priority and also his faith in God?

- 2 How did Abram make sure he did not “owe” the King of Sodom anything? Why did he want to do that?
- 3 What does Hebrews 13:5 tell us about the right attitudes we should have towards riches?
- 4 What advice does Hebrews 13:16 have for us with regard to our relationships with the people around us?

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



Part A- The Danger of Materialism

Tolstoy once told a story of an outlandish real estate sale. Some Russian tradesmen made an offer to sell all the land a person could walk around on in one day—for one thousand rubles. The person had to be back by sunset, however, or lose his money. A peasant heard of the offer and sold everything he had to take advantage of it. He gave his one thousand rubles to the men and set off. He walked for a while and saw all the beautiful hills that he wanted for his own. After walking past those, he saw even more land that he wanted. He quickened his pace to include that property. Dusk was approaching, and he had to make his way back—but there was just a little more he wished to have. He began to race back to meet the deadline of darkness, encircling as much property as humanly possible. He ran as hard as he could to the starting point. He made it on time, but collapsed dead upon the mark. Now all the land that he needed was a six-foot hole in which to be buried.

Question: What would you do if given a similar opportunity?

Teaching Tips

As Tolstoy's story illustrates, “more” only leads to death. Your students will tell you that more of everything is better, because it provides popularity, prestige, and even power. The bottom line is that “more” claims to provide security, the number one emotional need of teens. However, the only thing that can really provide this kind of security is a relationship with God. After all, He is the provider of all that we have.

Questions to think about:

1. Read 1 Timothy 6:6-8. According to this verse, what is the key to contentment?
2. What is your own definition of godliness?
3. Since God will provide for our needs, both physical and emotional, how should we value our priorities?
4. Why is it that our attitude toward our possessions has a big effect on our relationships, especially our relationship with God?
5. Each one of us will die one day. What will be your possession if God tells you that tomorrow is your last day?

God gave us our resources for several reasons. Surprisingly, one of those reasons is the pleasure they bring. But once you desire the pleasure of the gifts more than the giver, your desires become idolatry. What does God say about that? Let's read James 4:4-5. This verse tells us that God will not tolerate second place.

The ultimate reason people accumulate wealth is to increase their sense of security. God, the creator and provider of all wealth, knows that only a relationship with Him will provide the true security that people seek. Just like what we studied earlier, Abram's choices were grounded in his confidence that trusting God was the most profitable choice he could make, even when the benefit wasn't immediate.



We need to ask ourselves, "What is our treasure?" Read Luke 12:34. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." The message is very clear to us. What we value reflects our hearts. Imagine if we had to sit forever in a room with the things we valued. Many of us would be sitting alone with bags of money. How about sitting in a room full of our loved ones, and strangers to whom we gave time, love, support and care? That's a treasure room God would be proud of. In Matthew 6:33, Jesus Christ told us that we need to "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." That's what God treasures and values. Let's pray to ask God to give us the wisdom.

Personal Finances, Giving and Tithing

Listed Scriptures

Gen 14; Mal 3; Mk 10:17 – 30; Lk 16:19 – 25; Mt 26: 1 – 13

Lesson Aim

- 1) That the students will understand the importance of managing money wisely
- 2) That the students will know that it is more important to be rich towards God than simply being rich on earth

Memory Verse

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth . . . for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Mt 6:19, 21)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Gen 14; Mal 3; Mk 9-10; Lk 16-17; Mt 26

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



The “ointment” mentioned in the gospel books (Mt 26:7, 9, 12; Mk 14:3-4; Lk 7:37-38) that was used to anoint the Lord Jesus was the best of its kind. The spikenard was one of the costliest of perfumes. It is often cited that the alabaster flask of spikenard oil that the woman used to anoint the Lord Jesus cost the equivalent of a year’s wages. The woman who anointed Jesus Christ was obviously not a woman of high status or great wealth. Her great generosity and willingness to offer the Lord Jesus her best can be clearly seen.



How many of you think that the Bible deals only with topics related to matters of faith and does not deal with “earthly” topics like money or wealth? (Let students respond.) Actually, monetary matters are important topics in the Bible. God has certain requirements of His children in matters of money. The Bible is also a good guide that instructs us to be wise in dealing with money. Money can sometimes be a part of showing our faith in God and our love towards fellow men. Today, we will take a look at some biblical teachings concerning money and wealth.



Part 1

Giving Tithes

Do we know what tithes are? How many of us actually offer tithes? In the Old Testament, under the Mosaic law, there were many different types of offerings that the Israelites made to God. Some of them were for atonement of sins, and some were for thanksgiving. However, tithes were not a part of those types of offerings. The history of tithing dates back to the time of Abraham. Let’s read the following Bible verses to find out more about tithes.

1. First biblical recording of offering tithes
 - a. Abraham offered a tithe to King Melchizedek (“tithe” means “a tenth”) (Gen 14:17 – 20).
 - b. King Melchizedek is actually God’s manifestation in the Old Testament (Heb 7:1-4).
 - c. Jacob’s vow to God while he was in the wilderness confirmed tithing as an obligation of the people of God then (Gen 28:22).
2. Purpose of tithes during the times of the priests
 - a. During the conquest of Canaan, the Levites were not allocated any land. They relied on the tithes of the other 12 tribes for their livelihood (Josh 14:3-4).

- b. The Levites who were chosen to take care of the affairs in the temple of God depended on tithes as a means of sustenance (Num 18:21-24).
 - c. Tithes were offered in the form of animals and produce of the land (Lev 27:30).
3. The importance of offering tithes in the eyes of God
 - a. A deliberate failure to offer tithes is considered robbing God (Mal 3:8, 9).
 - b. God promises blessings if we offer tithes to Him (Mal 3:10).

In the New Testament, tithing was continued as well (e.g. Luke 11:42).



Part 2

The Spirit of Giving

As children of God, we are to be the light of the world. This refers not only to our good behavior, but also entails a generous spirit of sharing what God has blessed us with. Those who are willing to offer and share are always found pleasing in the eyes of God. Let’s study a few examples from the Bible, some of whom refused to share while others were generous and were praised.

A. The Rich Young Man (Mk 10:17-30)

1. What was the Lord Jesus’ reply to the young man regarding the method to attaining eternal life?

The rich young man who came to the Lord Jesus was first asked if he kept the commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not bear false witness," "Do not defraud," and "Honor your father and your mother." He replied that he had kept all the commandments. Then the Lord Jesus proceeded to tell him that he still lacked one thing, which was to sell whatever he had and give it to the poor. Then “you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.” At this, the young man went away sadly.

2. Do you think the Lord Jesus really meant that we have to be poor and penniless to become His disciples? If not, what do you think the Lord Jesus was saying to the rich young man?

Surely the Lord Jesus did not mean that the young man had to become penniless in order to follow Him. What the Lord was referring to was our priorities. To the young man, he could not give up his wealth. That became a stumbling block to him. Everyone has a different stumbling block. For a lot of people, money is what prevents them from searching for God. These people want to spend most of their time and energy on earning more and more money. To others, it could be their pride that is preventing them from coming before God. It is important for everyone to examine what stands between him and God.

3. What does “treasure in heaven” mean to you?

We often hear about our “reward in heaven” as if that’s the reason why we want to obey God, or to do good to our fellow human beings. But, what is really treasure in heaven? This is something worthy of our pondering. We know that when we get to heaven, we’ll see God and be with Him for eternity. That kind of joy is probably beyond our imagination now. But if we could just imagine for a second the true goodness and beauty of heaven. That is the real reward. We should not be craving for “riches” in heaven and think that by forgoing the chance to be rich on earth, we’re going to be rich in heaven. That would defeat the purpose of God’s salvation.

B. The Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-25)

1. Is it a sin to be rich? If not, what was wrong with the way the rich man led his life?

It is definitely not a sin to be rich. In fact, riches are often a result of God blessing us with a good career coupled with wisdom to handle money wisely. The rich man lived a life of complete excess – too much food, too much enjoyment. Christians should aspire to lead a simple life. If God has blessed us with “extras” after we have built comfortable lives for ourselves, we should learn to share God’s blessings with others: the poor, the sick or even just people in church who may need that extra care and concern from us. Sharing God’s blessings is not just about sharing physical wealth. It is also about sharing emotional and spiritual blessings.

2. Who are the “Lazaruses” today that we can show our generosity to? (Read also Mt 10:40 - 42, 25:31- 45)

C. The Woman Who Offered the Alabaster Flask of Ointment (Mt 26:1-13)

1. How much do you think the flask of oil would cost, in modern terms?

2. What did the people present say about her offering?

3. What do you say about her offering?

4. What did Jesus Christ say about her offering?

In the days when the Lord Jesus was on earth, the flask of spikenard oil cost about a year’s wages for an ordinary worker, probably the middle class man. That is a lot of money. It is no wonder that when the woman broke her flask to anoint the Lord Jesus with the oil, people were astonished and even thought the money could have been put to greater use, like doing charitable deeds. But, of course, they did not realize that the Lord Jesus appreciated the gesture. Everywhere the gospel is to be preached, the Lord Jesus wanted this woman to be mentioned. This is a lesson to us that when we offer things to God, we should offer our best. Although God is not concerned with the physical value of what we offer, we should not be offering to God whatever is left over and whatever is not useful to us. This applies to both our physical offerings to the church as well as our intangible offerings of time and energy.



Part 3
Wealth

When we talk about wealth, we do not necessarily mean millions of dollars. Wealth is what we have, financially speaking. Read the following pieces of biblical advice. Then, in your own words, write down the three most important pointers you would give to yourself or your peers in church regarding good wealth management.

1. Proverbs 6:6 – 8: “Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, . . . she provides her supplies in the summer and gathers her food in the harvest.”

2. Proverbs 6:10, 11: "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep – so shall your poverty come on you like a prowler, and your need like an armed man."
3. Proverbs 26: 15: "The lazy man buries his hand in the bowl; it wearies him to bring it back to his mouth."
4. Proverbs 31:15: "She also rises while it is yet night, and provides food for her household, and a portion for her maidservants."
5. Proverbs 31:16: "She considers a field and buys it, from her profits she plants a vineyard."
6. Ecclesiastes 4:6: "Better is a handful with quietness, than both hands full together with toil and grasping for the wind."
7. Ecclesiastes 10:18: "Because of laziness the building decays, and through the idleness of hands the house leaks."

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1 What does tithe mean?

- 2** Why did God expect tithes from the people of Israel?
- 3** How can we tell that God views tithing as something very important?
- 4** What did Jesus Christ ask the rich young man to do to obtain eternal life?
- 5** What was wrong with the life-style of the rich man in the parable of "The Rich Man and Lazarus"?

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



Part A-

What does your financial plan look like?

Today, when you turn the pages of newspapers and many magazines, you see advertisements by investment companies telling readers about financial plans. Let's read a story of how a successful businessman came up with a good financial plan for a poor fisherman he met on vacation.

An American businessman was at the pier of a small South American coastal village when a small boat with just one fisherman docked. Inside the small boat were several large yellowfin tuna. The American complimented the fisherman on the quantity of his fish and asked how long it took to catch them.

The fisherman replied, "Only a little while."

The American then asked why he did not stay out longer and catch more fish. The fisherman said that he had enough to support his family's immediate needs. The American then asked, "So, what do you do with the rest of your time?"

The fisherman replied, "I sleep late, fish a little, play with my children, take a siesta with my wife and stroll into the village each evening where I sip wine and play the guitar with my amigos. I have a full and busy life."

Then the American said, "I am a Harvard MBA. I can help you. You should spend more time fishing and with the proceeds, buy a bigger boat. With the proceeds from the bigger boat, you could buy more boats, and eventually, you would have a fleet of fishing boats. Instead of selling your catch to a middleman, you would sell directly to the processor, eventually opening your own cannery. You would control the product, processing and distribution . . . you would have to leave this small fishing village, move to LA and eventually NYC where you will run your expanding enterprise. You will then sell your company stock to the public where shares are traded at the New York Stock Exchange. Then you would make millions and millions of dollars."

"How long will all this take, senor?" the fisherman stopped the American.

"Some 20 or more years," the American replied thoughtfully.

“Millions, hmm, then what, señor?” so asked the fisherman.

“Then, you would retire, move to a small coastal village where you would sleep late, fish a little, play with your children, take a siesta with your wife, stroll to the village in the evenings where you would sip wine and play the guitar with your amigos.”

Questions to think about:

1. *What does this story tell you? (Share your impressions with the class)*
2. *Who do you think is the wiser of the two? Why?*
3. *Having read about one possible financial plan as offered by the American businessman in the story, now you will write your own financial plan. Perhaps many of you, being students, do not have so-called financial plans yet. But, in this exercise, let us plan ahead a little and imagine what we want our lives to look like in 20 years' time. Draft out a financial plan for your own use between now and then. After that, share with your class what your plan looks like. Here are a few questions that you may want to consider:*
 - a. *Who are the people included in your plan – just yourself, or others, like your family members, God, church . . . who else?*
 - b. *What types of activities will help you achieve your goals/plan?*
 - c. *Are the activities you plan to be involved in to achieve your goals acceptable in the sight of God?*
 - d. *What are the sacrifices you have to make to achieve those goals? Are those sacrifices worthwhile?*
 - e. *What do you think God would say about this plan of yours now, and on the Day of Judgement?*

Part B-

“It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts 20:35)

Do you know who said these words? It was the Lord Jesus Himself. This is hard to

believe or accept if one is very poor. Nevertheless, there are many good testimonies of people who gave even though they had limited resources. Let's first read a biblical example, Mark 12:41-44.

1. How much did the woman give as an offering?
2. Why did the Lord Jesus praise her act of offering?
3. What do you think is more important, the amount offered or the attitude in offering? Can we have one and not the other? Why?

Next, let's read two modern-day cases of people who offered when they themselves were facing financial difficulties.

Story A

Hudson Taylor was a very famous missionary who pioneered the missionary work in China, before the gospel was ever really preached in China. One day, he was called to a home to pray for a sick woman. He was called because, unlike other religious leaders of the day, he did not charge the family for his visit.

The woman was from a very poor family. When Taylor saw her poverty, he clutched the only coin in his pocket. It was all the money he had then. He wished he had two, so he could give one to her. After all, he could not give her his only coin! What would he do to survive? He had only two meals left at home for himself.

He knelt down to pray for the woman but found that he could not pray. He felt his conscience telling him that he should give up his coin. But, how could he walk away with nothing to live on? With that thought, he tried to pray but failed again. Finally, he gave her the coin. After that, he felt great freedom.

Hudson Taylor's experience provides one example of what it means to reach out to the poor and needy – this is something God asks of us, even when we are poor and needy ourselves.

Story B

One church sister contracted an infection and had to undergo a minor surgery. She thought she could try to hold it off for as long as she could, because she did not have insurance that would cover her medical expenses and she could not afford to pay the medical bills quoted to her by the hospital. Being in great pain, she knew she had to try to do something about it. A concerned friend recommended her to a hospital where medical students and residents gave free medical treatment as part of their training. That hospital, however, accepted only a limited

number of walk-in patients on certain days of the week. She was told that the line for this free-treatment program began each day at 6 a.m.

Without any delay, she took the subway to the hospital the next morning. It was a cold morning in the early part of spring, where winds still chilled one right down to the bones and the slush on the roads had not quite melted yet. Upon reaching the hospital, the door to that clinic was not even open yet. She saw that there were already quite a number of people standing in line. She joined in the line, praying that God would let her be one of those accepted for free treatment.

After two hours of waiting, her number was called. She went up to the reception counter with great anticipation and thanksgiving. Then the bad news: the receptionist told her that due to a decreased number of doctors that day, she and those who came after her had to go home and try again another day. She felt completely crushed. She felt tears flowing out of her eyes uncontrollably. Why did God allow that to happen? Why did she have to suffer like this? Thoughts of her pitiful plight and doubts about God's love filled her whole head as she walked to the train station in tears. She prayed to God that she would not become bitter towards Him, for that was how she was feeling then.

Upon getting off the train, as she was walking through a passageway to get to another connecting train, she heard a thin voice singing. She saw that it was a blind, fragile-looking street performer who was playing on an electronic keyboard and singing with as much energy as he could. Her heart melted. She thought of how much more blessed she was, for she had an easier job of sustaining her livelihood than this old, feeble man. Who knew, maybe he had family members to feed, or even a sick mother to take care of, or maybe even medical conditions or bills to deal with. Immediately, she emptied all the coins in her wallet that she had, and put them into the dirty cardboard money box in front of the old man.

At that moment, the sister's physical pain did not leave her. But, in her heart, she realized that life is beautiful after all, for there is love. She thanked God that she did not become bitter. She thanked God that she still had a little bit of compassion in her to think about someone else, and not be consumed by herself. With that thought, somehow, her physical pain seemed more bearable.

Questions to think about:

1. *Have you ever been as poor as Hudson was at that time, left with only two meals at home and a coin? Have you ever been so poor that medical treat-*

ment was beyond you?

2. *Most of the people living in the USA today are not so poor that they are left with only enough for two meals. But, it is not hard to imagine what it is like to be that poor. Put yourself in the shoes of Hudson and that sister. What would your feelings be like?*
3. *Neither Hudson nor the sister's financial problem was solved when they helped someone out. Nevertheless, each of them received some kind of reward. What reward was that?*
4. *Do you meet people who are poor and in need of your help? Who are they? What do you think you can do to help them?*
5. *What is one lesson about the spirit of giving that you have gained from either or both of these stories?*

R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



"Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher, "vanity of vanities, all is vanity. What profit has a man from all his labor, in which he toils under the sun?" (Eccl 1:1, 2) These are the words of one of the richest kings in the history of mankind. The extent of his riches is probably unmatched by any of the richest men on earth today. However, this is his conclusion about a life under the sun, a life without God. Hence, in his conclusion in the book of Ecclesiastes, he reminds us how to ensure that our lives would not be a vanity of vanities.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil" (Eccl 12:13, 14). May God grant us the wisdom to know what to pursue in our lives, so that we would not lose our heads in the pursuit of wealth and forget to honor God and care about our fellow human beings.

Goals

God had not meant for His chosen ones to live like hermits, out of touch with the world. In fact, when He first called Abraham, He told him that through him, all the families of the earth shall be blessed (Gen 12:3). Yet, the hardest part about living on earth is actually dealing with interpersonal relationships successfully, and in accordance to God's teachings. In this section, the students will learn some biblical wisdom regarding how to dwell amicably with others.

unit
3**Teacher Devotional**

As God's children, we still live in this world. It is inevitable then that we would face problems and difficulties. When one is really close to God, life's problems can become insignificant. But, this is not always evident to us right away, especially when we are undergoing difficult times. It is at times like these that we have to hold on to God's teachings and not give in to our weaknesses and temptations. Sometimes, this is easier said than done. That's why God has given us brothers and sisters in the faith to help us along, to encourage us, to pray with us, and to remind us of the right things to do. So, when things seem hard for us to deal with, let us turn to God and also seek strength in our brethren.

Always Shine for God

"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden." (Mt 5:14)

Lesson 7

Loneliness and
Depression**Listed Scriptures**

Ps 23; Mt 28:20; 2 Tim 2:22

Lesson Aim

- 1) That the students will understand that loneliness is not particular to them but that it is a rather universal experience
- 2) That the students will know that God is always with them and they never should be afraid of loneliness
- 3) That the students will know that loneliness can be a step towards drawing closer to God

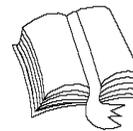
Memory Verse

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me." (Ps 23:4)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Ps 23; Mt 28-29; 2 Tim 1-4

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



The Bible does not directly address the issue of loneliness or depression as we know these terms today. But, from the lives of many biblical characters, we know that they faced periods of deep loneliness. Joseph was sold to Egypt at the age of 17, went through slavery, lived life as a prisoner and finally, even after becoming the premier of the kingdom, was nevertheless an alien in a foreign land. Moses spent forty years alone in the wilderness of Midian. After that, as the chosen one to lead the people of God out of the land of bondage, he suffered misunderstandings and accusations, even from his own sister and brother (Num 12). Much of his life was spent alone. At the end of his life, he was alone on Mount Nebo, and God buried him (Deut 34).

The Bible paints for us many vivid pictures of the lives of the saints of old like Joseph

and Moses. As we study the Bible, we can benefit more if we slowly try to understand the circumstances of these characters. We will see that in their loneliness, they drew closer to God. In their loneliness, they relied on God to accomplish great works. Loneliness is therefore not something to be afraid of. Loneliness without God is. This is a message relevant to both teachers and students alike.

W A R M U P



Do you know that in the USA, depression is the sickness for which most patients seeking mental health treatment are being diagnosed with? This problem has almost become a social problem. Each year, millions of dollars are being channeled into treatment and research in this area.

Why do you think depression is getting more and more prevalent today? (Let students respond.) There are many reasons. One of the causes of depression is loneliness. More and more, we see that it is hard for people to forge deep relationships. At work, most ties between people are purely at the professional level. Due to an increase in physical mobility, people move to different cities as they change jobs, and ties that have been built up can be easily loosened. With the emphasis on materialism, the human heart becomes more and more empty. All these can make a person feel very lonely and ultimately, depression can set in.

As Christians, we should never feel lonely. For our God has promised us that He will always be with us. All we need to do is to turn to Him. Of course, as Christians, we are to lead our lives in a way that benefits our fellow men, thus bringing glory to God's name. That means, among many things, we should make an effort to be friendly to people around us. A person who is friendly and practices the teachings of the Bible will have no problem finding friends.

B I B L E S T U D Y



Part 1

Lonely but Not Alone

Many characters in the Bible went through periods of loneliness. Yet, they never bowed down to loneliness. Instead, they drew closer to God because they were lonely, and by relying on God, they went on to accomplish great works for God. We will look at a few of these characters today, and study their relationships with God. Read the Bible references indicated below and answer the questions which follow.

A. Jacob (Gen 27:41-45, 28:10-22)

1. What do you think went through the mind of Jacob as he fled his own home in haste?

(Fleeing from the home that he had lived in all his life, Jacob found himself alone in a strange place, out in the wild. His thoughts probably included, "Will I be able to find Uncle Laban's house? Will I have enough water to drink and food to eat until I get there? What if I lose my way? I've never been out this way on my own before. What if Esau catches up with me?")

2. What were the possible dangers that Jacob faced as night fell and he was out in the wilderness all by himself (28:11)?

(As night fell, Jacob was probably afraid. There could be attacks from wild beasts. There could be weather changes and he had no shelter. And surely, there was the possibility of attacks from robbers.)

3. How did God show Jacob that he was not alone? How did Jacob react?

(In spite of all his fears, Jacob managed to fall asleep using a stone as a pillow. It was then that God's assurance came to him, showing him that he was not alone. Jacob dreamed of a ladder leading up to heaven and angels going up and down on that ladder. God was standing at the top of the ladder, and gave him a great promise: "I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descen-

dants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you." When Jacob awoke, he was full of awe, realizing that God was with him at this lonely place, throughout the night. In his gratitude, he set up an altar with the stone he had slept on and poured oil over it as a form of offering. He also made a vow to offer a tenth of all that he would have if God allowed him to come back safely to this place, which he named Bethel, meaning "House of God.")

B. Moses (Ex 2:15–22, 33:18–23; Num 12:3; Deut 34)

1. What was the reason Moses had to flee to the wilderness of Midian?

(Moses held the status of the prince of Egypt. But he was brought up to know that he was a Hebrew. When he saw one of his fellow Hebrews being beaten up by an Egyptian, he felt he had to defend his own brother. So, he killed the Egyptian and buried him secretly. Of course, nothing is really done in secret. Moses' act of murder was somehow known. One day, when he tried to intervene in a fight between two Hebrews, one of them asked if he was going to kill him like he killed the Egyptian. That was how Moses realized that people knew about his murderous act. The Pharaoh got news about this too and sought to kill Moses. He had no choice but to flee to the wilderness.)

2. Was there a change in the personality of Moses before and after he spent the forty years in Midian as a shepherd?

(In the wilderness, Moses spent time shepherding and enjoying nature. Living in such a tranquil environment changed him a great deal. Before, he was a impetuous young prince, full of aspirations and ideals about how the world should work. After forty long years of isolated life in the wilderness, Moses mellowed down completely.)

3. Discuss what you know about the life of a shepherd. Moses was an aggressive man who killed a man. After the forty years in the wilderness, he became a very meek person. How much do you think being a shepherd contributed to the change in Moses? Why?

(It has been said that God is present only in a quiet environment. In a way, this is true of Moses' life. He had to rely on God in the wilderness, for there

was no one else readily at hand to help him deal with whatever might have come up.)

4. Many times, Moses was lonely. But it was also during those times that he got close to God. What do you think would be the modern day equivalent of Moses' experiences in Exodus 33 and Deuteronomy 34?

(Exodus 33 and Deuteronomy 34 are depictions of closeness with God that is almost the highest level any person could ever hope to achieve. In Exodus 33, God allowed Moses to see Him. But, in order that His glorious light would not cause Moses' death, God covered Moses with His own hand. A modern day parallel would be a deep prayer with God, or some deep experience of God. In Deuteronomy 34, God spoke with Moses and accompanied him to his death. This is the ultimate bliss, for death is a painful and lonely experience for any man. To have God by his side when he was about to depart from this world is one of the greatest blessings to have. If a believer can hold fast to God and His commandments until the end of his life, it is worth much more than any treasure on earth!)

C. Joseph (Gen 37:2, 41:46)

1. Joseph was about seventeen years old when he was sold as a slave to Egypt. He was thirty years old when he became the premier of Egypt. Recount what happened in his life in those thirteen years.

(We are all familiar with the life of Joseph after his brothers sold him to the Midianites. The Midianites sold him off to Potiphar as a slave. Being a faithful and hardworking servant, Joseph soon gained the trust of his master, who put everything in his household under his charge. Unfortunately, good times did not last for Joseph. The wife of his master saw that he was a handsome young man and wanted to seduce him. Joseph held fast to his integrity. Being spurned by Joseph, his mistress then framed him and accused him of trying to seduce her. The evidence she used was his cloak which fell when he was running away from her! So, poor Joseph was sent to jail, a captive once again. In jail, he interpreted the dreams of the baker and the butler of the Pharaoh. The baker was beheaded as Joseph had said he would be. The butler was reinstated to his position. However, he did not remember his promise to Joseph to mention him to the Pharaoh to have him released. Hence, Joseph remained in prison for another two years until he was called to interpret the dreams of the Pharaoh. It was through this that he was released from prison, and made the premier of the land of Egypt.)

2. In those thirteen years as a slave and prisoner, what questions do you think Joseph had in his mind? How would you characterize his feelings during those years?

(During these thirteen years, Joseph must have had doubts about himself, and about God's love for him. There must have been times when he thought he would remain a servant or a prisoner for the rest of his life. When he thought of his family, especially his father who loved him most, he must have felt very sad for he might never see them again. He probably thought too, that the best years of his life were wasted in slavery and imprisonment.)

3. Read Acts 7:9 & Genesis 39:1. Do you think that having God with us necessarily means that we are successful by worldly standards? Explain your reasons.

(From the human perspective, Joseph must have been a horrible person for God's blessings were not with him. But, Acts 7:9 says something different: "And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him." This tells us that we should not judge if God is with a person by worldly success. Often, the end of a person's life is more indicative of whether he abided with God and God abided with him, as in the case of Joseph.)

 **D. Lord Jesus (Mt 8:20; Lk 9:58; Mt 13:53-58, 26:36-43)**

1. Mt 8:20, Lk 9:58 - What comes to your mind when you read the verse where the Lord Jesus says He has nowhere to lay His head? What does it mean to not have a place to lay one's head? Why did Jesus Christ not have a place to lay His head? Do you think He was an outcast?

(When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He came as a poor man. He had to go to different places to preach the gospel, so as a result, He had no fixed resting place. Often we read about Him retreating to the mountains to pray, probably not having His meals or even proper sleep. We read about believers who received Him in their houses, such as Martha and Mary of Bethany. But, these are actually rare occasions. Most of the time, our Lord Jesus had to simply settle for outdoor lodging.)

2. Mt 13:53 - 58 - Have you ever been left out by friends? Maybe they were hanging out and didn't include you? Even when you have a lot of people around you, do you feel very excluded or alone? Do you think Jesus Christ felt the same way when peo-

ple from His own hometown rejected Him?

(Our Lord Jesus knew that He did not come to this world to make friends and enjoy life. Loneliness was surely something He experienced. But, He spent His time preaching, healing, comforting people and praying rather than indulging in self-pity or depression.)

3. How did the Lord Jesus handle the problem of loneliness? (Cite examples from the gospel books.)

4. Mt 26:36 - 43 - Why was it so crucial for the disciples to pray with the Lord Jesus at the Garden of Gethsemane? What do you think were the feelings of the Lord Jesus when He came back twice and found the disciples sleeping?

(At the Garden of Gethsemane, right before He was arrested to be crucified, He badly needed His disciples to pray with Him. In human form, He felt fear, for crucifixion is, after all, a really painful process, a very frightening way to die. Our Lord Jesus must have felt very hurt upon seeing His three most beloved disciples falling asleep, not once but three times, when they were supposed to be praying with Him. However, our Lord Jesus was not overcome by loneliness. The Bible records that angels came to strengthen Him. This was because He prayed.)

5. Do you think the Lord Jesus was overcome by loneliness? Explain your answer.



Part 2

Unity is Strength

"A man who has friends must himself be friendly" (Prov 18:24). One of the best solutions to the problem of loneliness is to be proactive in making friends. However, we must exercise caution when we make friends. The Bible has a very good guideline - "Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim 2:22). In the Bible, we can see examples of how believers in God stuck together and helped each other out and hence, accomplished great works for God's glory.

A. Esther

Esther was alone in the palace, but united with the other Jews (Esther 3:8 – 4:16).

1. What was the crisis facing the Jews at the time when Esther was queen to King Ahasuerus (Xerxes)?

(Haman tricked the king into giving him the authority to kill the Jews: "There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from all other people's, and they do not keep the king's laws. Therefore it is not fitting for the king to let them remain. If it pleases the king, let a decree be written that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who do the work, to bring it into the king's treasuries" (3:8,9).)

2. Why was Esther not able to save her own people even though she was the queen? What did she ask Mordecai and all the other Jews to do?

(Although Esther was queen, wife of the king, she could not approach the king whenever she liked. Hence, she could not simply go up to the king and tell him about Haman's ploy. So, she asked Mordecai and all the rest of the Jews to fast and pray with her. She would approach the king without his permission and ask him to revoke the order to have the Jews killed.)

3. Are there similar situations in our life today that resemble the situation of Esther?

(Today, we are not likely to face situations as dire as this. But we may have trouble with other things, such as our work or studies. Any situation in which we feel helpless can be likened to what Esther was going through. There simply did not seem to be any way out. But, if we were to do as Esther did, which is to turn to God and pray for help, we will have victory just like she did!)

B. Daniel

Daniel and his three friends held on to their faith in a foreign land (Daniel 1 & 3).

1. In Daniel 1, what was the dilemma Daniel and his three friends faced when they were selected to be among the special group of youths to serve in the king's palace?

2. In Daniel 3, what was the tough choice that befell the three youths?

3. Do you think it would have been easier for just one person to succumb to the king's command if Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah (Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego) had not had each other's company?

(As exiles, the allure of good food offered by the king seemed too hard to resist. Yet, Daniel and his three friends knew that the food offered by the king was probably offered to idols. They refused to eat of such food. They would rather go hungry and settle for plain vegetables and grains than go against God's commandment and eat food offered to foreign gods. This shows great integrity, fear of God and self-control. It is not easy resisting good food if you're a captured prisoner. In chapter 3, when everyone else in the nation succumbed to fear and bowed down to the huge statue erected by the king, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego refused. They chose to die rather than to bow down to any other but the true and living God. It is always easier if one has companions in faith. In the case of Daniel, the resolution that is shared by three other friends in a similar situation is easier to carry out than if he were alone in the court of the king. In addition, Daniel and his friends must have had very strong foundations in the word of God, as well as training in self-control, to be able to maintain their stand.)

C. The Apostles

The apostles were always working together (Acts 3:1–8, 12, 13:1–2).

1. In the examples you read above, which apostles were paired together in their ministry?

(When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He sent out His disciples two by two. After He ascended to Heaven, the apostles also worked in pairs most of the time. We see Peter and John preaching together in Acts 2, and Paul and Barnabas in Acts 12 and 13.)

2. Read Mark 6:7 – why do you think workers should work in pairs (or in groups)? What are the disadvantages of working alone? What are the advantages of working with someone else?

(Working alone has many disadvantages:

* Loneliness

* Decision-making that is not always well thought-out

- * Less strength as two are always better than one
- * More easily prone to disillusionment due to lack of support/encouragement

Working in pairs/groups has a lot of advantages:

- * Looking out for each other
- * Complementing one another's strengths and weaknesses
- * Overcoming loneliness and fear
- * Make better decisions, as two heads are often better than one
- * Encouragement to one another

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1 How did God show Jacob that he was not alone when he was fleeing from his brother?

2 What were some of the benefits that Moses reaped by being alone?

3 What were the difficulties Daniel and his three friends overcame by standing united as exiles in the foreign land of Babylon?

4 Give two examples of apostles who paired up and worked together.

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



Part A – Loneliness

It is often said that the best cure for any problem is to understand the cause of the phenomenon and thereby preventing it. Loneliness, to varying degrees, is something young adults like you have to deal with at times. Let's now look at some possible causes of loneliness and as a class, suggest ways to help someone who may be in that predicament. The first one has been done for you as an illustration.

Example

Cause of loneliness

- Not joining in the worldly activities of friends at school

Result

- Being "left out" of the cliques formed among classmates
- Not having close friends at school to hang out with

Advice/suggestion to overcome loneliness

- Draw close to friends in church. Involve yourself with the activities of church friends and activities organized by the church

Case 1

Cause of loneliness

- Not having enough attention and care from parents

Result

- Often feeling bored being alone at home
- students' response

Advice/suggestion to overcome loneliness

- students' response

Case 2

Cause of loneliness

- A lot of one's peers already have close boyfriends or girlfriends

Result

- Feels as if one is "falling behind" and wishes to have the experience of intimacy with someone special too
- students' response

Advice/suggestion to overcome loneliness

- students' response

Case 3

What other causes of loneliness can you think of?

- students' response

Part B- Footprints in the Sand

Life is full of times when we feel lonely. Even when we have people by our sides, we sometimes feel very lonely too. It is as if there's a void in our souls that others can never fill. That is why we need to draw closer to God in times of loneliness. We should always believe that God is with us. The following is a poem that may

be familiar to some of us. Read the poem and then discuss the questions that follow with the rest of the class.

Footprints in the Sand

One night, a man had a dream.
He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord.
Across the sky flashed scenes from his life.
For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand:
One belonging to him and the other to the Lord.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him,
He looked back at the footprints in the sand.
He noticed that many times along the path of his life
There was only one set of footprints.
He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life.

This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it:
“Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you’d walk with me all the way.
But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don’t understand why when I needed you most You would leave me.”

The Lord replied, “My son, my precious child,
I love you and I would never leave you.
During your times of trial and suffering,
When you see only one set of footprints,
It was then that I carried you.”

(Attributed to Mary Stevenson)

Questions to think about:

1. At what times in your life do you really feel that God is walking with you side by side?
2. Have there been times in your life when you felt that you were walking alone and God was not with you? In retrospect, do you still think that God was not with you at those times? Why?
3. The person in the poem asks God directly why there was only one set of foot-

prints during his most lonely times.

- a. Do you think that asking God directly is the most efficient way to deal with loneliness? Why or why not?
- b. Have you had your problems solved by directly talking to God? Share these experiences with your classmates.

4. What encouragement would you give to someone who feels lonely in (a) church and (b) life?

REFLECTION & PRAYER



Sing Hymn 391. The Lord Jesus promises us that He will never leave us, “and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Mt 28:20). Let us be assured that God is always watching over us. In times when we think we’re all alone, forsaken and forgotten, God is with us. In times when we are misunderstood, or when no one even tries to understand us, God is with us. Let us never lose faith in this great assurance promised to us by God Himself.

Interpersonal Conflicts

Listed Scriptures

Ex 14 – 20; Num 11 – 14, 16, 20

Lesson Aim

- 1) That the students may acquire the skills of handling interpersonal conflicts, using the insights we learn from examples in the Bible

Memory Verse

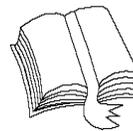
“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”

(Prov 15:1)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Ex 14 – 20; Num 11 – 14, 16, 20

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



The Bible teaches us to speak the truth with love (Eph 4:15). Indeed, lying lips are an abomination to God (Prov 12:22). While it is important to speak the truth always, it is important to know HOW to speak it. Many people are truthful and sincere but when a message is communicated in a wrong way, even sincere words can create conflicts.

In this lesson, it is important to stress to the students that as children of God, we must always speak the truth and not be hypocrites. However, we have to pray for wisdom to know how to communicate our sincerity effectively and diplomatically. It is a lesson that's not easy, and it's for both the teacher and the students.



Do you ever have difficulty getting along with people?

If so, you are not alone. Someone commented, "It's easy to love humanity; it's people I can't stand." Sometimes, getting along with people can be a pain. Getting along with others other pushes us to the limits of our endurance.

But you are not alone. People in the Bible who walked with God had their own struggles with certain individuals too. Their own patience was pushed to the limit. Today, we will talk about Moses, who was drafted by God to lead a nation. The nation of Israel repeatedly rebelled against God and against Moses. How did Moses handle these people? Let's find out!

B I B L E S T U D Y



Part 1

The Israelites' Conflicts with Moses

Have your students read their assigned Scriptures, then work together to file a report for our church magazine "Manna" summarizing what happened. Encourage them to use their imaginations to fill in some of the gaps as they write their stories. Have them detail the feelings and frustrations of the people as they reacted against Moses. Have them read their finished reports to the class. Supplement their stories with the following commentary.

The Israelites had every display of God's wondrous power and every provision any person could need and want, yet their faith failed virtually every time it was put to the test.

1. Exodus 14:11-12. The Israelites should have been rejoicing now that God had handpicked Moses to lead them into the land flowing with milk and honey. Instead, they groused and complained.

2. Exodus 15:24. The Israelites attacked Moses for not having any water. Once again, they lost their focus on God and grumbled against His provision.
3. Exodus 16:3. The Israelites complained that they didn't have any food. It is amazing that they were not rejoicing over their freedom in the new land but rather thinking about the old days in Egypt. If God had provided water earlier on, God could also provide food.
4. Exodus 17:2-3. The Israelites grumbled and complained to Moses when they faced a shortage of water. They really should have remembered how God had miraculously provided for their needs in recent situations. This time, Moses was really about to lose his patience.
5. Exodus 20, 32. God appeared to the nation, spoke to them in a voice, demonstrated His greatness through thunder and lightning (20:18) and gave them the Ten Commandments. In chapter 32, the people of Israel turned their backs on God and chose to worship a golden calf.
6. Numbers 11:4-6. Here the Israelites again groused about their food. Moses really lost his patience and asked God why he was stuck with these unthankful people.
7. Numbers 12:1-2, 9-10. Moses' sister Miriam decided to include her brother Aaron, the high priest, to help her overthrow Moses. God was very angry and Miriam became leprous.
8. Numbers 13-14. The Israelites didn't want to enter the land after Moses sent 12 spies to survey the land for 40 days. So God granted their wish. For 40 years, one day for each day the spies were in the land, the entire nation wandered aimlessly in the desert. Eventually, the older generation died and the next generation enjoyed the promised land. Remember, complaining and grumbling to God is not acceptable.
9. Numbers 16:3. Korah led a revolt. He and his entire company were destroyed.
10. Numbers 20:3-5. Moses had lost all patience. He blatantly disobeyed God, and took credit for a miracle that had just been performed. As a result, Moses was told he could not enter the land.



Part 2

Reacting to Confrontational Situations

Being able to react calmly and tactfully in a situation of conflict is very important. Let's take a look at two contrasting biblical examples to see how a difference in the way we respond in a conflict can lead to changed outcomes.

A. Gideon Spoke Respectfully to the Ephraimites

Gideon had a roaring victory over the Midianites. He had used only three hundred warriors, as instructed by God. The Ephraimites were unhappy that they were left out of the battle and came to Gideon in anger. Let's read what the two parties said to one another and how the conflict was resolved.

"Now the men of Ephraim said to him, 'Why have you done this to us by not calling us when you went to fight with the Midianites?' And they reprimanded him sharply. So he said to them, 'What have I done now in comparison with you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? God has delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. And what was I able to do in comparison with you?' Then their anger toward him subsided." (Judges 8:1-3)

B. Jephthah Intensified the Conflict with Harsh Words

This is a similar situation as in the previous example, where the Ephraimites demanded to know why they were excluded from battle. Read the following passage to see what a great contrast Jephthah's answer was and how the ending was tragic compared to what happened in the case of Gideon.

"Then the men of Ephraim gathered together, crossed over toward Zaphon, and said to Jephthah, 'Why did you cross over to fight against the people of Ammon, and did not call us to go with you? We will burn your house down on you with fire!' And Jephthah said to them, 'My people and I were in a great struggle with the people of Ammon; and when I called you, you did not deliver me out of their hands. So when I saw that you would not deliver me, I took my life in my hands and crossed over against the people of Ammon; and the LORD delivered them into my

hand. Why then have you come up to me this day to fight against me?' Now Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead and fought against Ephraim. And the men of Gilead defeated Ephraim, because they said, 'You Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites and among the Manassites.' The Gileadites seized the fords of the Jordan before the Ephraimites arrived. And when any Ephraimite who escaped said, 'Let me cross over,' the men of Gilead would say to him, 'Are you an Ephraimite?' If he said, 'No,' then they would say to him, 'Then say, "Shibboleth!"' And he would say, 'Sibboleth,' for he could not pronounce it right. Then they would take him and kill him at the fords of the Jordan. There fell at that time forty-two thousand Ephraimites." (Judges 12:1-6)

Questions:

1. Who do you think is the wiser of the two judges – Gideon or Jephthah? Why?
2. Why did the words of Gideon please the Ephraimites?
3. Why did the words of Jephthah anger the Ephraimites?
4. What are the lessons to learn from these two contrasting examples?

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1

When the Israelites complained about not having water to drink in Ex 15 & Ex 17 respectively, what happened?

2

How did Miriam revolt against Moses and why? What was the outcome?

3

What did Korah and his family do against Moses, and what happened to them in the end?

4

How did Gideon and Jephthah deal with confrontation from the Ephraimites? What lessons can we learn from the different ways they handled the situations and the outcomes that ensued?



Part A- Case Studies

Read the following scenarios. Then answer the questions.

Case 1

My best friend thinks I've been spreading rumors about her and her family. I never did that, but she won't let me explain. Every time I call her, she hangs up the phone on me. I sent her an email, but she didn't reply. What can I do? At school, she just ignores me.

Case 2

My parents just don't seem to understand. Every time I come home after being with my friends, they would ask me a bunch of questions. They question me about this friend and question me about that friend. I've never had a friend they liked. Why don't they get off my case? The other day I came home way past the curfew. I was having fun at a party and did something stupid. Then, my parents yelled at me. They just don't understand me. Worse than that, they will never trust me again.

Case 3

My school teacher thinks that I stole some money out of the fund-raising box. Someone, I'm not sure who, told my teacher that I was acting kind of funny, and that I was hanging around that fund-raising box the other day. But I had nothing to do with it. I didn't even know where they kept the money. Now, my teacher watches every move I make. In fact, I've caught other school friends watching me too. I can't stand it anymore.

Discussion

Interpersonal conflicts are really tough to deal with. When a relationship breaks down because we are misunderstood or misjudged, it really hurts. Discuss the above scenarios and have your students respond to these questions.

Questions to think about:

1. What would you say to someone who came to you with these problems?
2. What attitudes do we need to bring healing to these kinds of divisions between people?

3. Describe a situation where you patched up a severed relationship.
4. What could you do as a third party to help in any of these three situations?
5. How would you ask God to help you if you were having these problems?
6. How would you think God wants us to bring healing to broken relationships or help friends patch up theirs?

Part B- Conflict and Peace

The Bible is the best guide to good relationships with anyone. It's much better than any self-help guide available in bookstores. If only we were more diligent in discovering the many tips on communication that are found in the Bible! Below are some Bible verses that teach us about communication. For each of these verses, describe a situation that you have experienced or witnessed where the biblical advice was shown to be at work, or could have helped avert conflicts. These four questions may help you when you analyze the situations: What was the situation? What did the parties involved do or say? What were the consequences? What did you learn from that incident?

1. Think before we speak, for many a time, hasty words cause a breakdown in communication and generate defensive attitudes.

“Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.” (Jas 1:19)
 “Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.” (Prov 29:20)
2. Allow the other party to finish or explain his side of the story. Conflicts often occur because one party simply misunderstands the actions or words of the other party, and the misunderstanding is not clarified.

“He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him.” (Prov 18:13)
3. When facing a conflict, be careful not to say anything nasty that will cause us to regret our words later. As Christians, let our words always be gracious.

“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.” (Eph 4:29)

4. When caught in an argument, it is good to always stop ourselves right away and calm down before trying to resolve the conflict. It may help to wait until another day.

“It is honorable for a man to stop striving, since any fool can start a quarrel.”
(Prov 20:3)

5. It is important to always try to be calm and controlled, even if it means having to walk away from a situation and take a long walk!

“He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules the spirit than he who takes a city.” (Prov 16:32)

R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



Conflicts occur among Christians much more frequently than we would dare to admit. The Bible contains examples of how touchy situations can be smoothed over and resolved with a level head and appropriate words. God also promises a special blessing to those who bring peace between people. Read Matthew 5:9 together with the students.

Forgive and Forget

Listed Scriptures

Gen 37-50

Lesson Aim

- 1) That the students will know to forgive those who have inflicted them with pain

Memory Verse

"Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another, even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do." (Col 3:13)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Gen 37-50

W A R M U P



Have you ever felt hurt? Recall a few situations when you felt hurt. What happened then? Who was the person who hurt you? Did you reconcile with him? How did you do that? Guide the students in their responses.

If one has been badly hurt, it is not easy to forgive the person who caused the pain. Nevertheless, in the Lord Jesus Christ, all wounds can heal. If we view things in the right perspective, and turn to God for comfort and love, it is possible to forgive the one who hurt us and forget the injury and move on in life.



Love and Forgiveness

In the Bible, we see some wonderful stories of forgiveness and love. Are there any examples that come to your mind right away?

Today, we will look at some of these stories of forgiveness. Read the Bible passages cited here and then answer the questions that follow.

A. Isaac Gave in to His Neighbors (Gen 26:2-6, 15-33)

1. What did Isaac's neighbors do to his property? Why was what they did terrible and serious?
2. Who were these neighbors?
3. How many times did such similar incidents occur?
4. Why do you think Isaac was able to forgive them? How does readiness to forgive someone relate to one's level of faith in God?
5. If you were Isaac, could you forgive your neighbors? Why or why not? Explain what your feelings would be.
6. What are the difficulties in forgiving someone? Share your experiences of forgiveness.

(The Philistines envied the success of Isaac and stopped all the wells that were dug during the time of his father Abraham. Then Isaac moved to the valley of Gerar. The inhabitants of Gerar also stopped his wells. They did it twice. Each time, Isaac gave in and moved away to look for another well. Isaac was clearly a peace-loving and gentle person. Instead of fighting back, he gave in and moved away to look for another well. If we trust God, we would have confidence that God will take care of every detail of our lives. Hence, there is not much need to fight for our own gain. Also guide the students to come up with reasons in addition to his peace-loving personality. For instance, his faith in God's promise is one thing – see Genesis

B. Joseph Forgave His Brothers (Gen 37:23-28, 47:1-6, 12, 50:15-21)

1. Genesis 37:23-28 records how Joseph's brothers sold him to Midianite traders who took Joseph to Egypt. That was not the real damage to Joseph. From age 17 to 30, he was a slave and prisoner. Put yourself in the shoes of Joseph. What were some of the hardships (physical and emotional) and missed opportunities he suffered in Egypt?
2. If you had been one of Joseph's brothers who had sold him to Egypt, what do you think you deserve as punishment for treating your own brother so badly?
3. What did Joseph say to his brother in Genesis 50 that shows his deep reverence for God?

(Joseph was the most beloved son of Jacob, which was why his brothers were jealous of him and plotted against him. When he was sold to Egypt, he must have had to endure a lot of physical pain and hardship. He worked as a slave, and on top of that, he must have suffered a lot of mental and emotional agony. In Genesis 50, Joseph assured his brothers that he bore no grudge against them: "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them. This shows his fear and trust in God. It also shows his great love for his brothers.)

C. Moses Prayed for His Sister (Num 12:1-16)

1. What was the reason Miriam and Aaron accused Moses of wrongdoing?
2. Were they justified in their accusation? Why or why not?
3. What do you think were Moses' feelings at that time, to be openly accused by his own brother and sister?
4. What was the result of their accusing Moses?
5. What did Moses do that showed his forgiveness?

(Miriam and Aaron accused Moses of marrying a gentile woman, an Ethiopian. This accusation was not justifiable as Moses' wife must have been a supporter of his work and loved God. Otherwise, how could he have led the Israelites into the wilderness? The fact that God was with him was also very evident. Moses must have felt very hurt, to be betrayed by his very own blood brother and sister. But, he kept his peace. We know that God spoke up for Moses, saying that with other prophets, God appeared to them in dreams and visions but with Moses, God talked with him face to face. God also punished Miriam by inflicting her with leprosy. It was Moses who prayed to God to heal Miriam, thus showing his great love and forgiveness.)

D. The Lord Jesus Forgave Those Who Hurt Him (Lk 23:1-35)

1. Why did the people want the Lord Jesus crucified?
2. Outline some of the painful inflictions the Lord Jesus had to go through.
3. When the Lord Jesus was on the cross, He uttered seven sayings. These were all very important sayings because it was extremely difficult for Him to speak while suffering on the cross. Of these seven sayings, one of them was, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Lk 23:34). Do you think you would be able to do the same and forgive someone who caused you this much pain? Discuss your answers as a class.

(The religious leaders, and even political leaders at that time wanted the Lord Jesus dead because He had a lot of influence and they did not like that. On this occasion, the multitudes were in a great frenzy. They wanted to see Barabbas released and have the Lord Jesus crucified instead. Crucifixion on the cross is a very painful process. One can imagine the pain of having nails pierced through one's wrists and have one's whole weight hanging on those two nails. The crown of thorns was pressed onto the Lord Jesus' head, so much so that blood oozed out. As He was losing blood, He was also getting dehydrated and finding it harder and harder to breathe. To bring His body upwards to breathe meant more pain to the wrists. His feet were probably also nailed to the cross.)

Teaching Tips

Have a solemn session asking the students to slowly outline what they imagine to be the physical process/pain the Lord Jesus had to go through.

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1 What did Isaac's neighbors do to him? How did he react?

2 What did Joseph say and do when he met his brothers again after more than 20 years?

3 What did Moses do that proved his great magnanimity towards Miriam?

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



Joseph's Tears

"Forgive and forget." Is it really possible to do this? We can forgive, but it is not so easy to forget.

God's word tells us, "Forgive, and you will be forgiven" (Lk 6:37). The word "forgive" in Greek implies release or liberation. When we forgive and "liberate" people, we, too, will be liberated. Joseph went through great tribulations. We will use the story of Joseph to illustrate how he forgave his brothers and, in the process, liberated them and himself.

JOSEPH SOLD

Genesis 37 describes Joseph as a good child who disliked evil. His father loved him very much and made him a robe of many colors. Instead of bringing joy, unfortunately, his father's love created disharmony among the brothers.

God sent Joseph two dreams, revealing what would happen to him in the future. This was a promise from God, showing that he would have greater achievements than his brothers. Instead of bringing him respect from his brothers, the dreams caused his brothers to hate him. These dreams were from God; they were not his own dreams. But because God allowed him to have these dreams, his brothers condemned him.

One day, his brothers went far away to shepherd the flock. Joseph was sent by his father to see how his brothers were doing. To his consternation, there he discovered his own end. When his brothers saw him approaching, they said, "Look, this

dreamer is coming! ...Let us now kill him." Fortunately, two of his brothers had more compassion and did not want to kill him. Instead, they sold him.

If you were Joseph, would you have been able to understand all of this? Of course, in hindsight, we could say that he should thank God because he would become prime minister of Egypt through all of this. But at that time, Joseph had no idea what would happen tomorrow. When he was about to be sold, he pleaded with his brothers in anguish and with tears (Gen 42:21). He was sold like cattle.

JOSEPH AS SLAVE AND PRISONER

After Joseph was brought to Egypt, he was sold as a slave to Potiphar. Most people would ask God, "Why did this happen? Why me?" Joseph must have thought about Abraham, his great-grandfather, whom God promised a great blessing. God revealed to Isaac that there would be a famine. Jacob wrestled with God Himself. But what about Joseph? If you study the Bible carefully, you'll notice that God never appeared to Joseph nor spoke to him.

Here we see Joseph as a slave; however, he was not crushed by slavery. He could not understand why he was a slave, but he accepted it. He could not understand the situation he was in, but he accepted it. That was why he was able to become the best slave. He fell from the status of beloved son to slave, but he was not overcome by the tragedy. He became the steward of his master's house, and God's blessings followed wherever he went.

In Genesis 39:1, it states that God was with him. There seems to be a contradiction here, because if God was with Joseph, why was he a slave? But Joseph accepted it even though he could not understand why. He revered God, and God was with him.

Later on, Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph, but he refused to sin with her. Out of spite, she framed him, accusing him instead of trying to take advantage of her. Joseph was then thrown into prison.

Joseph was like a person getting struck down again and again as he tried to get up. The first time, his brothers struck him. The second time, he was struck down by his fear of God. It seemed like the harder he worked, the worse his situation became. He became a slave through no fault of his own. Now he was thrown into prison for a sin he did not commit.

However, the story states repeatedly that the Lord was with Joseph (Gen 39:20).

Joseph did not understand, yet he accepted his situation. He became the model prisoner and, once again, he transcended his miserable situation.

One morning, Joseph noticed two prisoners, the king's butler and baker, looking very sad. He must have transcended his difficult situation in order to show his concern for others' problems. For instance, if you've just lost ten million dollars, it is unlikely that you would notice other people's suffering. But Joseph noticed these two prisoners, showed his concern, and helped them by interpreting their dreams.

Joseph interpreted the butler's dream and told him that he would be restored to his original position. He asked the butler to "remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me; make mention of me to the Pharaoh, and get me out of this house" (Gen 40:14). Notice how many times Joseph mentions the word "me" in his request. He wanted so much to leave this prison and return home; he was not happy.

Afterward, Joseph must have thought that this was an opportunity from God to leave the prison. Since only God can give the wisdom to interpret dreams, he probably thought that God wanted to rescue him from prison. The butler brought wine to Pharaoh every day, and he would be able to bring his request before him. The butler was his only hope for freedom.

But after the butler left and was restored to his position, he "did not remember Joseph, but forgot him" (Gen 40:23). To say "did not remember" and "forgot" is repetitive. This was written purposely, to show that it was God's will. It was impossible that the butler could have forgotten! Every day, as he bore the cup, he must have remembered how he got out of prison and how Joseph explained the dream. How could he forget something like that? But he did. Joseph waited day after day in prison, hoping that, each time the jail door opened, it would be to release him.

JOSEPH AS PRIME MINISTER

One day, two days, one month, one year, two years passed. The butler forgot about Joseph for two whole years (Gen 41:1) until Pharaoh had a dream that greatly troubled him. Then, the chief butler said he remembered Joseph and that he had fault (Gen 41:9). His remark shows that he did not intentionally forget about Joseph. He quickly called for Joseph, and Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream. Pharaoh then made Joseph prime minister to oversee all the affairs of Egypt, second in command only to Pharaoh.

Joseph was thirty years old when he became prime minister (Gen 41:46). If we

assume that he was seventeen when he was sold into Egypt (Gen 37:2), he suffered for thirteen years. How many “thirteen years” do we have in our lives? Have we spent thirteen years as a slave or prisoner? What kind of person would we become after this experience? Very few people would want to go to prison for thirteen years, even if they could become prime minister afterward.

Trying to Forget

Later, Joseph married. Marriage is a turning point in life; to have children is an even greater turning point.

Now Joseph had two sons. The first son was called Manasseh, meaning “God has made me forget all my toil and all my father’s house” (Gen 41:51). But did he truly forget? When he said “forget,” he remembered all the more. The more we try to forget about an incident in our lives, the more we remember. Even if we don’t stay angry at something, we will not forget it. Even if we forgive, we cannot forget. We can forgive others, but we will not forget them.

If Joseph had really forgotten all those trials, he would not try to forget. He named his second son Ephraim, which means “fruitful.” He wanted to forget his past and start a new beginning, but that did not resolve anything. Even though he had that kind of resolution, could he forget the wickedness of his evil brothers and his sorrow the last thirteen years? No, he could not forget.

JOSEPH’S PATH TO FORGIVENESS

From Revenge

When Joseph was prime minister, a famine struck the whole land. His brothers came to buy food from him. Joseph sat up there as prime minister, and his brothers bowed down to him. Joseph remembered the two dreams he had before. After thirteen years, he was now wearing splendid garments, and his brothers were still shepherds.

“Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them” (Gen 42:7). As a prime minister, many people came to him each day to ask for food. If he did not look carefully, how could he recognize them? Yet, he recognized them, because he did not forget them.

Joseph spoke to them roughly, saying, “Where do you come from?” Of course, he knew where they were from. Once he remembered the past, did he forgive? No, things were not yet resolved. Joseph began to take revenge on his brothers. He said

to them, “You are spies!” (Gen 42:9). In those days, spies were beheaded. An eye for an eye—they wanted to kill him before.

Joseph put them all in prison for three days. Those three days were probably very terrible for his brothers, because they did not know what would happen to them. In those three days, Joseph probably also struggled greatly.

But on the third day, Joseph brought the brothers out of prison and said to them, “I fear God” (Gen 42:18). Joseph feared God. It doesn’t necessarily mean that a person who fears God will never get angry. But a person who fears God will control himself and will not harm people out of anger.

To Struggle

When this happened, the brothers’ consciences rebuked them. They immediately thought back to their sin of selling Joseph (Gen 42:21). After twenty-two years, the brothers were still haunted by guilt.

The brothers spoke in Hebrew, and they thought Joseph did not understand. But Joseph understood. When he heard that his brothers were conscience-stricken for what they had done to him, he was greatly moved, because Joseph feared God. If he were a person with a heart of stone, he would want to repay his brothers with more harm.

Joseph “turned himself away from them and wept.” People weep because they are not emotionally balanced—too happy, too sad, too frustrated, etc. Joseph released some of his heavy burdens by crying. However, he was not able to wash away everything. He was still unable to face his brothers. He went away from them to weep, and, afterward, he returned to them, gave them food, and sent them home.

To Release

The second time, his brothers brought Benjamin his younger brother. When Joseph saw Benjamin, he quickly went into his room to weep. This time, he wept even more and he had to make haste, in case he was discovered. And after weeping, he even had to wash his face. Every time he wept, he released a little bit of his brothers as well as himself. If you cannot forgive someone, you are actually in bondage yourself.

The third time, Joseph revealed himself to his brothers. This time, there was even more haste, but he could not escape. There was no time to run. Now Joseph could not restrain himself in front of all the people, so he made everyone go out from in

front of him. He could not run somewhere else to cry, so he asked someone else to run.

“And he wept aloud”—he wept for all the years of bondage and affliction. He did not want others to hear him, but everyone heard. The Egyptians and also the house of Pharaoh all heard it because he cried so loudly. Joseph had tried to forget, but he could not. But Joseph wanted to forgive, because he feared God.

He said, “I am Joseph, does my father still live?” His brothers were terrified, but Joseph said to them, “Do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life” (Gen 45:5). How can we forgive others? We need to gradually comprehend and understand the will of God for allowing the situation. At that moment Joseph understood there was a higher will of God for him. But Joseph’s realization did not come until after three or four times of weeping and about twenty years of affliction. It was not that easy for him to do.

Joseph wept when he reunited with his father and again when his father passed away.

Joseph wept much, and through his tears, he forgave and liberated his brothers. But his brothers did not understand that he had already forgiven them. After their father died, they became nervous. They thought that Joseph did not harm them because their father was still alive. So they sent messengers to Joseph saying, “I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you” (Gen 50:17). Joseph wept again. After he wept, he spoke words of kindness and comfort to his brothers. After this long, they still carried the burden with them.

You must liberate others in order to liberate yourself. You cannot forget the wrongs that others have done to you, but you must forgive and liberate them. If you don’t, they will also become a burden to yourself. When you forgive them, God will also forgive you. When you release others, you will also be released.

This is why Joseph wept. (By Preacher H.H. Ko – Manna Oct - Dec 2002)

Questions to think about:

1. Who has hurt you deeply?

2. Do you harbor feelings of hatred?

3. If you have been deeply hurt or offended by someone, you need to make a list of all the positive benefits that have come out of the pain you have carried. While focusing on these positive benefits, you need to ask God to change your heart with the power of the Holy Spirit. Ask God to change your heart from one of hatred to one of forgiveness toward the person who hurt you. Only then, will you be free to experience and enjoy a life of happiness and abundance.

R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



Sing Hymn 405. Often, we find that things that seem like such a big deal no longer mean anything after a while, or after a considerable period of time. Yet, when we are angry, we act in an unforgiving manner and find it hard to let go. May God give us a magnanimous heart of love, so that we can be more forgiving and not allow bad feelings to linger in our hearts.

Goals

"For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body." (James 2:2)

This verse tells it all: Bridling our tongues might well be the hardest lesson to master in our spiritual cultivation. Our world today is full of lies and ungracious words. We have to shine as light by manifesting good speech in our dealings with people. It is not always easy, but at least, as Christians, we should be consciously trying all the time. The lessons in this section will highlight to the students important pointers about exercising control over the tongue. At the very least, they will be made aware of the importance of bridling this tiny faculty of the body.

unit
4**Teacher Devotional**

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver." (Prov. 25:11)

The gift of the tongue is often hard to come by. Not everyone is good with words. Even more rare are people who can always cheer another person by his or her words. As Christians, we are often careful with our words only because we do not want to face judgment from God. But, more importantly, the reason to watch our tongues is so we can edify people and bring blessings to our hearers. Hence, we should aspire to not utter words that will hurt others. We should strive to learn to say nice things so that people who interact with us can receive comfort and joy.

Let Our Speech Be a Source of Edification

"Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers." (Eph 4:29)

Lesson 10

Handling Temptations

Listed Scriptures

Mt 4:1-11

Lesson Aim

- 1) That the students will pinpoint three of their temptations and plan how to handle them with the word of God

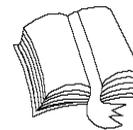
Memory Verse

"But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death." (Jas 1:14, 15)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Mt 4-10

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



Temptations can be seen as tests. This testing is of good intent, meant for us to improve our character as Christians. However, the testing can be evil too, with the intent to harm the person. It is only in the last 300 years that the English word temptation has been used with the more restricted meaning of inducing a person to evil.

Jesus Christ was "led by the Spirit" (Lk 4:1) into temptation, but He was tempted by Satan. Both divine and Satanic powers were at work—with motives for the test. Satan is permitted to tempt Christians (Job 1:6-12), but only within certain limits. Satan may use pain, lies, success, lust, desires to tempt Christians.

Jesus Christ taught us to pray to God to "lead us not into temptation" (Mt 6:13), but "deliver us from the evil one" (2 Tim 2:22). 1 John 2:15 it tells us that sin originates when our sinful, inner desire latches on to things in our outer world.

Temptations can also be seen as arising out of our own desires (Jas 1: 13-15). "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."

When Jesus Christ was tempted, He quoted from the Book of Deuteronomy. This shows us that the word of God is an excellent sword and shield against temptation. It is vital to be able to cite verses and biblical principles when emergencies arise.

W A R M U P



1. Do you know that temptations are a normal part of life?
2. Why do you think our lives are so filled with temptations? (Students will probably suggest that Satan tries to keep us from growing as Christians. Some will say that God allows testing to cause growth in our character.)
3. No one likes temptations. What possible value might temptation have in our lives? (When we overcome temptations, we become stronger Christians. Sometimes our failures make us realize that we must depend more on God.)

We face temptation every day and dealing with them can be tough. Today's passage talks about three tough temptations that Jesus Christ faced—and how He overcame them.

B I B L E S T U D Y



The Temptation of Jesus Christ

Have your students read Matthew 4:1-11 one verse at a time. Go around the class so every student has the opportunity to read. Ask the students to do the following things as they are reading. They will need a few minutes to mark the passage as indicated.

1. Put squiggly lines under the three temptations Satan used on Jesus Christ.
2. Put a triangle by the place where each temptation happened.
3. Circle the responses Jesus Christ made to Satan's temptations.
4. Underline anything that tells us that Jesus Christ knew the Bible well.

Have your students read the following material on the experience of hunger during Jesus Christ's temptation. Ask them to think about what it might be like to go 40 days without food.

According to accounts of those who know, intense craving for food dominates the ravenous person's mind. He thinks constantly of food. After two weeks, the starving person struggles to hold down water without retching. (Note: Did Jesus Christ have water during His fast? We don't know.) Slowly, the lack of nourishment takes its toll. The person's body turns colder. His skin becomes parched and dry. His weight drops dramatically. But the worst experience of all occurs right around 40 days—the length of time the Lord Jesus fasted. —Time Magazine, August 17, 1981

From this material, we can see that Jesus Christ was extremely weakened. He knows what it's like to be tempted when it hurts most.

Questions to discuss:

1. **Why do you think Satan waited until Jesus Christ had fasted 40 days to attack? What can you learn from this?**
(Satan waited until Jesus Christ was hungry and more open to temptation.)
2. **Satan didn't really want bread from stones. What did he want in his first temptation of the Lord Jesus?**
(Satan wanted Him to obey him rather than God.)
3. **It is easy to see why Satan's first temptation might have been tempting. What kinds of physical temptations do you face today?**
4. **Satan didn't want to see a miraculous rescue in the second temptation. What did he really want?**
(He wanted Jesus Christ to put God to the test—to violate the Bible—in an effort to prove His divine Sonship.)

5. Write the second temptation in a way that it might come to you today.

(“If you are such a good Christian, then why don’t you prove it?”) or (“You don’t need to study for your midterms. If God loves you, He’ll give you an A+ on the midterm.”)

6. At first glance, Satan’s third temptation doesn’t seem to apply to us. But if Christian teens were completely honest, what things do you think they love more than God, and place before Him?

(Some may say that they put money, clothing or prestige ahead of God.)

7. Which temptation do you think was hardest for Jesus Christ? Explain.

(The first temptation dealt with physical needs. This was difficult, but probably not the hardest. In the second, Satan used God’s word to try to test Jesus Christ to put God to the test. This was deceiving, but was probably not as hard as the final temptation. In the third temptation, Satan tried to get Jesus Christ to escape the cross and still rule the world. Jesus Christ knew how horrible the cross would be, but He did not sin. He simply trusted God to deliver Him out of the temptations.)

8. What would have happened if Jesus Christ had given in to Satan’s temptations?

(He would have sinned, and then could not have been the perfect sacrifice for our sins.)

9. How are the three responses Jesus Christ gave alike?

(All three of the answers were quotations from the Bible.)

10. Satan stopped each temptation when Jesus Christ used the Bible. Why do you think this happened? What can we learn from this?

(Satan knew that when Jesus Christ quoted the Scriptures, He knew what was right and was going to obey God’s word rather than succumb to the temptations.)

11. How was the way that Jesus Christ used Scripture different from the way Satan used it?

(Jesus Christ believed in Scripture, interpreted it correctly and used it for good purposes. Satan used Scripture for an evil reason—to tempt the Son of God. He probably didn’t believe the Scripture anyway and wanted Jesus Christ to

destroy Himself by throwing Himself down.)

12. Jesus Christ used Scripture to help Him through Satan’s difficult temptations. What does this tell you about Bible study and memorization?

(Jesus Christ didn’t have written Scripture with Him during Satan’s temptations, but He knew the Scripture very well. When we study and memorize the Scripture, God’s words are always with us.)

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1

What were the three temptations Satan posed to the Lord Jesus?

2

Satan also used the Scriptures when he tempted the Lord Jesus – how did he manage to turn God’s words into temptations?

3

Our Lord Jesus overcame the temptations by using the Scriptures too. What does this teach us about how to fight temptations?

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



Handling Temptation

There are four reasons why Scripture is a valuable tool for countering temptation.

1. Scripture gives us examples of people who resisted temptation as we can follow their examples.
2. Scripture tells us the boundaries for our actions. It lets us know what is right, and what is wrong.
3. Scripture gives us guidelines on how to fight temptation, such as fleeing from evil and praying so that we don’t fall into temptation.
4. Scripture gives us godly values and attitudes so that by relying on the power of the Holy Spirit, we don’t desire many of the things that used to tempt us.

Why do you think Scripture is a valuable tool for overcoming temptation? (Because the person is changed on the inside, and temptation gradually loses its power; it makes us want to do what's right and tells us right from wrong.)

Allow your students to role-play and discuss how to handle temptation.

Scenario 1:

Jenny is on her way to a friend's party from school. Jenny didn't suspect anything before, but the first thing she notices when she enters the room at the party is the smell of beer and alcohol. "You have drinks here?" "Sure," her friends reply.

Scenario 2:

Renee stayed out past her curfew and is worried about what her parents will say. Her friend at school has told her to tell them that they had an accident on the highway and they were held up. What should Renee say?

Scenario 3:

Nathan is walking to a football game with two friends. One of them spots a car with its key in the ignition. "Hey," he says, "Let's take this thing for a ride." The other friend quickly agrees, and the two pile in. "Well, come on, Nathan," his friends say.

After they have read each scenario, have the class role play the inner struggle of the teens at the moment of decision. Half the class should play the inner voice urging the teens to resist the temptation. The students playing this voice should use any Scripture that might help the teens. For example, in the first situation, the class would play the inner struggle Jenny is experiencing at the party. The students playing the voice of temptation might say, "Come on. You don't want to look weird in front of your friends. Have a drink." The other students might respond, "Don't worry about what they think. Stand firm." To make the role plays more effective, you may want to place the two voices on opposite sides of the classroom. Cut the action when the arguments for giving in or resisting begin to repeat themselves. After each role play, tie the action together by asking the class the following questions:



Questions to think about:

- 1.** *How do you think the teen feels at this moment?*
(Pressured, scared or confused. The teen probably feels he has no time to make a decision.)
- 2.** *What makes this situation such a difficult one?*
(To go against his conscience and what he knows to be right, to risk losing friends or to be punished.)
- 3.** *How do you think the teen could handle this situation?*
(Don't give in.)
- 4.** *Not giving in to temptation takes real strength. What are some ways we could prepare ourselves to not give in to difficult temptations we will encounter in the future?*
(Pray for the fullness of the Holy Spirit, the more we are filled with God's Spirit, the less we want to do something that would disappoint Him; share our problems and difficulties with Christian friends who can help pray for us and encourage us; read the Bible more often since it gives us principles for fighting against temptation and new thoughts to change our lives.)

Next time you are faced with the most difficult temptation, ask yourself the following questions:

1. What time of day is it?
2. Where are you?
3. Who is around?
4. How have you reacted in the past in this situation?
5. Is it possible to leave the situation and avoid the temptation?
6. If you can't leave the situation, how would you like to react to the situation?

Most of the time, your students may have chosen to avoid the situation completely and that is great! Or they may have decided they can't avoid getting into the situation, but they can leave the place of temptation once it starts. Finally, your students may have decided they can't avoid or leave the situation, but they can face it with the word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.



When unavoidable temptations arise, there are three ways to respond: give in, run from the situation or face it. Giving in to evil thoughts or actions is sin—what none of us want to do. In order not to give in to temptation, we need to pray to God and receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Swearing, Oaths and Profanity

Listed Scriptures

Jas 3:1–12; Prov 10:19, 15:11, 25:11, 29:1; Mt 12:36, 37; Eph 5:4; Col 4:6

Lesson Aim

- 1) That the students will know to be careful in their speech
- 2) That the students will attempt to practice being gracious in their speech in their daily lives

Memory Verse

“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.” (Eph 4:29)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Jas 3; Prov 10, 15, 25, 29; Mt 12; Eph 5; Col 4

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



The Bible is a rich resource for guidance in our daily lives, even with regard to our speech. In the Old Testament, we have exemplary people of God who were gracious in both their conduct and by inference, their speech. For instance, we know the story of how Isaac refused to contend with his neighbors who had taken over or covered up his wells (Gen 26). Although the Bible did not explicitly tell us what Isaac said to his neighbors, we can be sure that he did not speak harshly to them or pick a fight. In the same way, Daniel, Nehemiah and Esther also had success among gentiles. Surely they must have practiced prudence and wisdom in their speech in addition to good conduct. As we study this lesson, we can remind ourselves and our students of how many saints of old were successful in their lives on earth. God’s blessings are definitely a reason for that. But their own effort in exercising control over their speech is not a factor to be discounted. For as the proverb goes, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit” (Proverbs 18:21).

The Book of Proverbs provides much direct advice about bridling our tongues. We will take a look at a few of the verses in this lesson. However, there are many more proverbs not covered here that the teacher (and students) can refer to as guides to daily living. We may want to encourage our students to read the book of Proverbs every day, in addition to their Bible reading schedule. This great book of wisdom can never be exhausted as far as teachings about our life's journey are concerned. It should be a daily supplement, all through a Christian's life.

W A R M U P



In the world that we live in today, there is a lot of swearing going around. It may not be swear words hurled intentionally at a particular person during a fight. In fact, if we were to stand back and observe, we'd notice that people use swear words so frequently that no one even takes offense at times. As Christians, we are probably aware that we should avoid getting into verbal disputes with anyone. But, do we check ourselves against using any swear words in our daily conversations?

One day, a seven-year-old brother came back home and asked his mom, "Mommy, tell me what the 'B-word' and the 'F-word' are! All my friends laugh at me because I do not know what those words are." His mother did not know how to answer him, except to tell him that those words are "bad words" and he should never ever use them. This incident goes to tell us that using swear words (even when not swearing in real disputes) is common. As Christians, we must guard ourselves against this trend.

B I B L E S T U D Y



Our Speech (James 3:2-12)

How important is speech in our relationships with both God and people? The Bible tells us that anyone who does not falter in his speech is a perfect man. With our tongues, we can praise God and bring comfort to others. With our tongues we can also commit sin against God and bring distress and detriment to ourselves and

others around us. The tongue is such an important part of our lives that we cannot but be vigilant about how we use it. Today, we'll study the importance of the tongue in our lives as Christians. Read James 3:2-12 and discuss the following questions:

1. The Perfect Man (v. 2)

- What does this passage say about "the perfect man"?
- How is the tongue related to all other aspects of our spiritual cultivation? For example, how can one who can control his tongue also control his whole body?
- Do you think it is possible to be perfect by this definition? If not, do you think it's possible to come close to that standard?

If we do not falter in our speech at all, we can be considered a perfect person. But the fact is, we all falter with our words because we speak a lot. From morning until night, when we are with people, we inevitably engage in conversation. And when we converse we do not have time to "proof-read" or "edit" our words before they are out of our mouths. That's why we often find ourselves saying things we don't mean, or not expressing things in the way we want the message conveyed. If we can be very alert and careful about our words, we are probably also very alert about other parts of our spiritual cultivation.

2. Metaphors used to describe the tongue (v. 3, 4, 5)

- James uses different metaphors to describe the tongue. Identify these metaphors. (bits in horses' mouths, small rudder in a ship, little fire that burns a whole forest)
- Are these metaphors aptly used?
- How is the tongue like each of these things he compared it to?

3. The tongue is "full of deadly poison" (v. 8)

- What are the ways a tongue can do damage and "poison" people?
- Have you done damage with your tongue before?
- What were the consequences?
- How did you feel after that event?
- In hindsight, do you think you could have done better in the same situation?

4. We use our tongues both to bless and to curse (v. 9-12)

- Is your tongue a spring that sends forth fresh water or one that sends forth bitter water?
- Other than praising God, how else can we put our tongues to good use?

(Our tongues can be used to say good things to people, speak words of comfort, speak words of encouragement, preach the gospel, sing praises/hymns.)

- c. Give examples of blessings or gracious words that we can use our tongues for.

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1 Give three metaphors used by James to describe the tongue.

2 In what ways can the tongue be “deadly”?

3 In what ways can the tongue be used for blessing?

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



Part A- Controlling Our Tongues

The Bible gives us good advice about controlling our tongues. If we can fully abide by the biblical teachings, we will definitely be close to being a “perfect man” as mentioned in James 3:2. For the following verses, write down an example in your life whereby you can apply the teaching. Then, share your examples with the rest of the class. The first one has been done for you as an illustration of the task.

1. Proverbs 10:19

It is logical to think that the more we speak the more chances there are for saying the wrong things. One scenario I can think of is when I hang out with my friends. Often, the conversations go into topics related to people rather than just events/things. And, in a group, with one person saying one thing, and another adding on details, it can easily get out of hand and we lapse into gossiping.

Once, I was with a friend who was really mad at someone about something. She started to talk about all the things that the person had done in the past (which was not related to the current incident). First, I agreed with the things she said. Then I

found myself joining in the “verbal bashing” of that person, behind her back. It just came naturally. It’s hard to check ourselves when we’re in a group. So, it’s best to have self-control about how much we talk. The less we talk, the less opportunity there is for saying the wrong things.

2. Proverbs 15:1

3. Proverbs 25:11

4. Ecclesiastes 5:1, 2

5. Matthew 5:33-37

6. Matthew 12:36, 37

7. Ephesians 5:4

8. Colossians 4:6

Part B- Stories Concerning Speech

We must have heard of the saying, “Little droplets of water make a great ocean.” We may not realize how far-reaching the effects of good behavior and gracious speech are. In fact, if we always demonstrate graciousness in our speech, we can have a great impact on the people around us. For one, at the very least, we can glorify God’s name among non-believers. We may even touch them through our gracious speech and bring them to Christ.

In this section, we’ll first read a short testimony of a sister who shone for God at her work place. Then we will construct our own stories or scenarios of people who have (or have not) glorified God’s name in their lives. We will share these stories with the rest of the class. We will try to learn some lessons from each story.

A Testimony

Jean works as an administrative assistant in a relatively large department in her firm. Her job requires her to deal with many different levels of the staff. As such, she has to handle all kinds of people in a typical day at work. There are some who are usually nice and gracious. But, there are also others who are often impatient and make unreasonable demands. Sometimes, when the work pressure builds up in the office, people can get rather quick-tempered and even unpleasant in their speech.

Jean understands that as a Christian, she must put God before herself. That means she should shine for God and glorify God's name before her own pride and feelings. To be gracious in her speech and mild-tempered amid all kinds of stress is her constant prayer. In her office, no matter whom she deals with, she tries her best to always be courteous and gentle in her speech. To her, this is but her basic Christian duty.

Little did she realize that her gracious ways have touched the heart of one of her co-workers. One day, this co-worker came up to her and asked her, "Which church do you go to? May I go with you to your church for service?" Jean was really surprised. She had never preached to this co-worker before. Why would this co-worker ask to go with her to our church? When she asked why, the co-worker told her that she had observed that her conduct has been extraordinary and believed that she must have come from a very good church.

Constructing your own stories/scenarios

This short testimony shows us the importance of our speech and conduct in our everyday lives. Having read the testimony, it is now your turn to share a testimony. If it is a good testimony, we can emulate the good example. If it is a "reverse-example," i.e. a testimony about some mistake or an incident that did not glorify God's name, we can also learn from it and not follow in the same footsteps. As you write your testimony or a testimony of someone you know, pay attention to the following questions. You should not mention the names of the people involved in your narration. After writing, discuss with the class what can be learned.

Questions to think about:

1. *What types of people did the person have to deal with?*
2. *What was the incident about or what type of situation was involved?*
3. *What did you think was going through the mind of the person when the incident happened?*
4. *What did the person do?*
5. *What were the reactions of the other people who were present?*
6. *If it is a reverse-example, what do you think the person could have done differently?*



Sing Hymn 212. The Lord Jesus teaches us to "let your light so shine before men" (Mt 5:16). In our daily lives, we cannot avoid speaking to people. Since speech is such an integral part of our lives, we cannot but be very wary of ourselves; of how we use these little tongues of ours. Do we use them to bring grace to others and glorify God or do we use them to cause harm? May God help us to bridle our tongues, so that we can shine for Him through our speech.

Lies, Gossip and Truthfulness

Listed Scriptures

Mt 12:36, 37; 1 Kgs 21; 2 Kgs 5; Acts 5

Lesson Aim

- 1) That the students will know that they should not lie and gossip
- 2) That the students will always try to be sincere and truthful

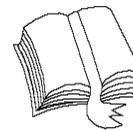
Memory Verse

“But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned.” (Mt 12:36, 37)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Mt 12-15; 1 Kgs 21; 2 Kgs 5; Acts 5

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



Please refer to the Bible Background section in Lesson 11 for additional information.

W A R M U P



How many of us here in this room have never told a lie or talked about someone behind his back before? (Students respond. It is unlikely that anyone would reply in the positive.) If we deliberately tell a lie and cause harm to anyone, it is considered a sin before God. Sometimes, things we talk about or information we pass on

without any bad intentions can also hurt another person. While we may not think we are gossiping, we have nevertheless transgressed before God and done harm to another person.

What about times when you are asked certain things about other people? Can you think of situations where you cannot reveal something? For instance, it could be a secret that someone has shared with you. In such a situation, it is better to change the subject or simply tell someone that one's privacy needs to be respected rather than to lie. Today, we'll take a closer look at this topic.

B I B L E S T U D Y



Part 1

Biblical Warnings Against Lying

We have always heard that Christians should not lie. Do you know any specific verses from the Bible that tell us directly that we should not lie, or that lying is abominable in the eyes of God? Let us first take a look at a few Bible verses that warn against lying. Then we will take a look at a few biblical events where lying was involved and study the consequences.

A. Biblical Warnings Against Lying

1. **"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." (Ex 20:16)**

- a. What does it mean to "bear false witness" against someone? (To tell lies about someone or even to speak half-truths about someone. Even saying something about someone when we are not sure if the information is correct is also a form of false testimony.)
- b. Why do you think God includes this as one of the Ten Commandments? (Words can bring a lot of harm. One can feel hurt. Or, one can feel pressured by all the misunderstandings going on about him or her. In church, this can cause someone to not feel like coming to church or to not have fellowship with the church members. This can adversely affect one's faith.)

- c. It is often said that the last six of the Ten Commandments have to do with God's requirement of us in our relationships with our fellow humans. How do you think this commandment is related to a Christian's interaction with others on earth?

(Our words towards others or about others are indicative of how much we truly love and care about them. For instance, if we truly love someone, we would never say something about that person unless we are sure of that piece of information. Or, if something is not going to be edifying, we won't even say it at all. Our words determine how we interact with others. Hence, commandments concerning our words are definitely a very important part of Christian living.)

2. **"These six things the Lord hates...a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren." (Prov 6:16-19)**

- a. In this passage, six other vices are mentioned. In fact, these seven abominations to God are not completely separate. Discuss how they are related to one another.

(These six things the LORD hates, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren. The whole requirement God has for us regarding our relationships with other people can be summarized in the verse from Micah 6:8: "He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy." To be fair in our dealings with all men, we have to watch our hearts and our words. We should never twist facts to suit our own agenda or to please certain parties we want to gain favor with. To love mercy, we have to watch our words and not cause discord. This also has to do with a pure and good heart that bears no harm against anyone.)

3. **"Bread gained by deceit is sweet to a man, but afterward his mouth will be filled with gravel." (Prov 20:17)**

- a. Other than the literal meaning of "bread," what else do you think could be a sweet gain that can be attained through deceit? (Wealth, promotions, better grades, attention from people; we see many people resort to deceit and unscrupulous means for such things.)
- b. If we look around our world today, do we see people who have profited from deceitful means? Can you give a few examples?

(This is probably most apparent in the corporate world. But, sometimes, by giving false testimonies or simply spreading stories about people whom we do not personally have first-hand information of, we are gossiping. This, in the eyes of God, is unacceptable too. Far too often, we tell petty lies to get something which is really insignificant in the long run – such as lying to our parents about our activities.)

- c. Have you seen these people's mouths "filled with gravel" (as in they suffered bad consequences for their deceit)?
- d. Read Ecclesiastes 12:14. What does this verse tell us about gains from deceit?
(We may gain from our lies/deceit. But, remember that God watches over all things. What really counts is the final judgment. Hence, it is better to suffer loss or disadvantages now than to lie or do things not in accordance with God's teachings. For whatever gains we have now, if we achieve them through deceitful ways, we are going to have to pay for them.)

4. "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Tim 4:1, 2).

- a. What does it mean to "speak lies in hypocrisy" and to have one's conscience "seared with a hot iron"?
(A lie is a lie is a lie. We often hear people say this. Why do people have to lie? More often than not, it is because they don't want to speak what is truly in their hearts. This is not the same as avoiding a subject in conversation. When we actively lie, we do not have sincerity. And, the more we sin, the easier it becomes with each occurrence. Our conscience becomes hardened. It is the same with telling lies. Also, we often have to lie further to cover up our earlier lies.)
- b. Can you think of examples that illustrate this?
(Let the students come up with their own examples from their own experiences.)

B. Biblical Incidents of Lying

1. The serpent lied – the beginning of sin

- a. Read Revelation 12:9, Genesis 3:1–7 and John 8:44. What do you think can be said about the relationship between liars and the "serpent of old . . . the Devil"?
(Liars do the same thing as the devil – in one sense, they belong together!)
- b. What does this say about the severity of lying?
(We don't want to be in the camp of the devil. Hence, lying is not a small transgression to be ignored!)

2. Jezebel framed Naboth

- a. Read 1 Kings 21:1–24. What were the motivations behind the lies of Jezebel?
(She wanted to please her husband and impress him with her abilities. Hence, she framed Naboth so as to secure his vineyard for her husband.)
- b. What was God's reaction towards the lies set up by Jezebel?
(In addition to her lies, Jezebel was a very evil woman who practiced idol-worshipping and all the activities associated with her pagan gods. She was severely punished when she was pushed from a tower and died without a burial – dogs ate up her corpse.)

3. Gehazi lied to Elisha

- a. Read 2 Kings 5:14–27. Why do you think Elisha rejected the gifts of Naaman?
(Elisha performed the miracle for Naaman to be cured not by his own power. He understood that he was but a worker of God and he should not be using the work or power of God to further his own gains.)
- b. What was the punishment upon Gehazi?
(Leprosy)
- c. Were the consequences suffered by Gehazi worth the amount of gifts he coveted?
(A lot of times, when we lie, it is merely to get us out of some current situation. But, our lies often catch up with us and the long-term conse-

quences are not worth those short-term gains. This is the same in the case of Gehazi.)

4. Ananias and Sapphira lied to the apostles and to the Holy Spirit

- a. Read Acts 5:1–10. Since it was not a requirement that believers had to offer all they had (v. 4), why do you think Ananias and Sapphira lied? (It could be that they felt the pressure from other believers who contributed all they had. Or, they could have wanted a good name for themselves.)
- b. In verses 3 and 9, what did Peter equate lying to the apostles with? (By lying to the apostles, Ananias and Sapphira were allowing Satan to enter their hearts. It is equivalent to lying and testing the Holy Spirit.)
- c. What would be a modern day equivalent of the kind of lie that Ananias and Sapphira told? (Our God is a God that looks at the heart. Lying can be said to be putting on a front that is incongruent with what is truly in our hearts. In a broad sense, anything that is not true can be considered lying.)



Part 2

Be Forewarned Against Gossiping

Read the following Bible verses and discuss how we can apply these teachings in our daily lives.

1. Ephesians 4:15

This verse teaches us a fundamental principle in our dealings with people, especially brethren in the church. We have to speak the truth in love. Unfortunately, we sometimes hear of incidents where half-truths are told, instead of the truth. In worse cases, we hear of how gossip is created and the things that are being spread are not even close to the truth.

2. Matthew 12:36, 37

Gossip can be very damaging. Gossip is often unpremeditated talk about people. It is not that we set out to malign someone. But, gossip takes form when seemingly harmless talk spreads like wild fire. That's when damage is done. This is why the Bible tells us that we will be judged for every idle word we speak. Hence, we must be very careful about the things we say.

3. 2 Corinthians 1:18, 19

Paul's principle is to always speak the truth and not dwell on ambiguity. This is an important principle for us today too. As children of God, we have to mean what we say, or we should not say it. That is one way we can avoid being rumor-mongers.

4. Proverbs 29:11

There is a fundamental difference between speaking the truth and pouring out all that is on our minds. Part of our spiritual cultivation is to be able to have self-control. That means we have to know how to hold back certain thoughts and feelings we may have if saying them out loud may harm another person.

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1

How is the 9th Commandment related to the other Ten Commandments? What do you think is the root or cause of lies/false testimonies?

2

What did Jezebel do to obtain the vineyard of Naboth? Besides the actual deed of fabricating a lie, what else was wrong with Jezebel's heart?

3

Why did Gehazi lie? Are there parallels in the Bible or in people around you who lie to receive gain, like Gehazi?

4

Who lied to the Holy Spirit? In the modern day context, what would be considered lying to the Holy Spirit?

5

What does it mean to "speak the truth in love" (Eph 4:15)?

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N

Case Studies



We are going to look at three cases of real-life situations that brothers and sisters in church have encountered.

1. Read about their situations.
2. Then, answer the questions that follow.
3. Next, your teacher will tell you what the brother/sister actually did and what happened in the end.
4. Discuss your answers in (2) with the rest of the class, in light of the ending.

Case A

Ann works for a research institute. She has to run tests and she handles a lot of data in her work. One day, her boss gives her a very important project. If she does well, she will definitely gain favor in the eyes of her boss. She would also have more opportunities in the future to take on more important projects, and get a raise in her salary. One afternoon, she discovers a mistake that has gone unnoticed in the earlier stages of that project. It is a mistake made by her assistant. If both of them keep quiet, no one would ever know. Ann finds herself in a big dilemma. If she reports it to her boss, she will have to take the blame and that would not be a favorable position to be in. But she knows that keeping things under cover is not the right thing to do.

Questions to think about:

1. *What are the possible reactions of her boss if Ann were to report her mistake?*
2. *What would you do if you were in Ann's shoes?*

Case B

When John was in middle school, he hung out a lot with a group of friends from school. Together, they frequented arcades and would spend hours and hours there. A number of times, he even skipped classes with them and simply went around malls, wasting their hours away. On days when he came home really late, he would tell his parents that he had some discussion with friends about school projects. When his grades suffered, his parents were really worried. At first, John lied to them that the exams were really hard and that the others in his class did poorly too. But, when his poor grades persisted, his parents suspected something was going on. When they found out that he had skipped classes, they were furious. This led to more arguments and a few times, John even threatened to leave home. Sometimes, when arguments got really bad, he would simply go over to a friend's house and spend the night. His parents were so worried for him, but other than praying for him, they did not know how else to help him.

Questions to think about:

1. *What do you think would be the best methods to counsel John?*
2. *If you were a classmate of John's, and you happened to know about his situation, what advice would you give to him?*
3. *If John were in your RE class, what do you think you would do to help him?*

Case C

During a meeting among co-workers in church, a conflict arose. After that meeting, one of the two members who had that conflict started telling many people in church that the sister said something really unkind to him, even using some bad language. People who heard his side of the story were horrified that the sister would say such things. They started to tell it to others, without first ascertaining if what they heard was true. So, it ended up that more and more people got to know about the incident. When news spreads, it always gets to the involved party. The sister heard about the things that were being said about her. She knew it was not the truth. But how was she going to explain herself? News had spread to so many different people, even people not from her local church. She felt very hurt. For a long time, she didn't know how to face the people in church. She felt that they were too gossipy and gullible to believe only one side of the story. She started to skip church services, simply because she wanted to avoid them.

Questions to think about:

1. *If you were one of those at the meeting, and you heard the rumors that were going around, what would you do?*
2. *If you were one of those who heard one side of the story, what do you think you would do?*
3. *How would you encourage the brother who went around telling his side of the story?*
4. *How would you encourage the sister, who felt she was completely misunderstood and victimized?*

Story Endings

Case A

Ann finally decided to tell her boss. However, she prayed really hard and asked a few close friends from church to pray with her before breaking the news to her boss. It turned out that her boss merely asked her to re-do the whole project from scratch, and did not even reprimand her a bit. Consequently, the boss was still a good boss to her, as if that incident had never happened. Ann knew that it was only by God's grace that she could have a smooth time at her job.

Case B

John's parents and some other church members prayed continuously for him. John slowly realized that he could not continue to lead his life in such an irresponsible and laissez-faire manner. In fact, one day as he was praying, he saw a vision in which all his deeds were shown to him. In that prayer, John realized that God knew and was watching him all this while. He was filled with awe and gratitude for God's mercy upon him, that he was never really punished for being so rebellious.

Case C

This sister did not try to explain herself, except to very close friends. She prayed a lot and entrusted everything into the hands of God. Her good friends in church encouraged her not to give up going to church and prayed with her. They showed a lot of care for her and stood by her in church. She also learned the lesson of the destructive power of the tongue. For herself, she learned that she should never be involved in any rumor-spreading or plain "sharing of stories," for fear that it can unintentionally hurt someone. She also learned that one should always be wise to hear both sides of a story before making any judgments, if any judgment is at all called for.

R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



"Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles" (Jas 3:5). The tongue is a very powerful member of the body. Used correctly, it can lead to blessings for people around us. Unfortunately, we often use our tongues for idle talk, half-truths and even lies. We have to understand that God wants us to be sincere and truthful always. Let us make it a point in our daily lives to use our tongues in a good way, and not allow it to hurt anyone.

Review

Lesson Aim

- 1) That the students may have a review of some of the key points learned in the past 12 lessons
- 2) That students may be able to apply the memory verses to their lives

R E V I E W

Part A- Memory Verse Test

For the following Bible verses, write out the memory verses, and explain how each verse relates to your life today. Some parts of the verses have been given to you as hints to help you. (NKJV)

1. Colossians 1:10 (Lesson 2)
 "That you may walk worthy of the Lord, _____ Him, being fruitful in every _____ and increasing in the _____ of God."
Relation to my life today:

2. Ecclesiastes 12:1 (Lesson 3)
 "Remember now _____ in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you say, " I have _____ in them."
Relation to my life today:

3. Romans 12:2 (Lesson 4)
 "And do not be conformed to _____, but be transformed by the _____, that you may prove what is that _____ and _____ and _____ of God."
Relation to my life today:

4. Matthew 6:19, 21 (Lesson 6)
 "Do not lay up for yourselves _____ on _____, where _____ and _____ destroy and where _____ break in and steal."

Relation to my life today:

5. Colossians 3:13 (Lesson 9)
 "Bearing with one another, and _____ one another, if anyone has a _____ against another; even as Christ _____ you, so you also must do."

Relation to my life today:

6. Ephesians 4:29 (Lesson 11)
 "Let no _____ proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary _____, that it may impart _____ to the _____."

Relation to my life today:

Part B- Jeopardy

1. Prepare a chart similar to the one shown here. The point-chart corresponds to the questions given below.
2. As the students select the numbered boxes (according to the points), use a large Post-It note to cover the squares that have already been taken. On top of each Post-It note, indicate which team has earned the space (points).
3. At the end of the game, add up the points and present the winning team with a prize (and consolation prizes to the team(s) which did not win).

Quotes/ Bible Verses	Christians & Personal Life	Stewardship	Life's Challenges	Speech
200	200	200	200	200
400	400	400	400	400
600	600	600	600	600
800	800	800	800	800
1000	1000	1000	1000	1000

Quotes/Bible verses

200
 "A soft answer turns away" Continue the Bible verse.
 (Bonus of 100 points for correct reference: "... turns away wrath but a harsh word stirs up anger" – Prov 15:1)

400
 Matthew 6:33 says, "Seek first His" Continue the verse.
 ("Seek first first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.")

600
 "What profit is it to a man . . ." Complete the verse and give the Bible reference.
 (" . . . if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? What will a man give in exchange for his soul?" – Mt 16:26)

800
 What does 2 Timothy 2:22 say? Hint: "Flee also youthful lusts, . . ." ("Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.")

1000
 Cite Galatians 5:22, 23.
 ("But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.")

Christians and Personal Life

200
 Name three daily activities in the apostles' life of worship during the early days of the apostolic church.
 (Prayer, fasting, encouraging one another in God's word, preaching, hymn-singing etc.)

400
 Name two people in the Bible, as mentioned in Lesson 1, whom God took notice of and helped.
 (Hagar, Zacchaeus, woman who offered the two copper coins)

600
 What happened to Jacob when he rested at Bethel while he was fleeing from his brother? What did he do or say as a thanksgiving to God? (Gen 28:17–22)
 (He had a dream about angels going up and down the ladder that leads to heaven. He realized that God was with him. He set up an altar and poured oil on the rock that he had slept on. He vowed to worship God and give a tenth of all that he had.)

800

In Ezra 7:10, Ezra made a resolution for God. What was that resolution? (He devoted himself to the study and observance of God's laws and to also teach the laws to all Israel.)

1000

How were Samuel, Daniel and Timothy prepared at a young age to do the work of God? Give specific instances in their lives or specific areas that they excelled in or had training in.

(Lesson 3 material – Samuel served in God's temple and was sensitive to God's voice. Timothy was trained in the words of God by his mother/grandmother)

Stewardship

200

Talk about three types of attitudes we should have towards wealth on earth (Contentment, willingness to share, help others, not to see wealth as more important than God, etc.)

400

What did Abram give to King Melchizedek?

(A tenth of what he possessed.)

(Bonus of 100 points – what is the relevance of this gift to our lives today? – offering of tithes)

600

What were the purposes of tithes during the OT? (What were the tithes used for?) (1. Land to the Levites who were not allocated any land after the conquest of Canaan; 2. To support the livelihood of the Levites, priests and other temple workers because service to the Lord is their full-time job.)

800

In Malachi 3, two important points are raised concerning the giving of tithes. What are the two points?

(1. Failure to offer tithes is equivalent to robbing God, v. 8, 9;

2. Blessings will follow if we give tithes)

1000

In Lesson 6, you read many proverbs. In the Book of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes there are many that encourage us not to be lazy. Paraphrase one of these proverbs. Bonus of 100 points if student can recite the whole verse.

(Prov 6:6-8, 6:10-11, 26:15, 31:15, Eccl 10:18)

Life's Challenges

200

In Lesson 7, we studied how Jacob, Joseph and Moses had their times of loneliness. Pick one of these characters and describe a period in his life when he was lonely and how God showed Himself to him.

(Lesson 7 material – general, basic Bible knowledge)

400

"And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish." Who said these words? What happened to the whole nation of Jews after this person said these words?

(Esther – they fasted and prayed and God delivered them from Haman)

600

"Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive." Who said these words? To whom? On what occasion? (Gen 50:19, 20 – Joseph to his brothers, after the death of Jacob, assuring them that he bore no grudge against them and would take care of them.)

800

On two separate occasions, the Ephraimites were not involved in the war against the Canaanites. Describe how two judges – Gideon and Jephthah – handled the situations differently, and to what results.

(Lesson 8 material – Jephthah started a war against them while Gideon flattered them and pacified them.)

1000

What were the three temptations that Satan tried on the Lord Jesus after He fasted for 40 days in the wilderness? How did Jesus Christ reply in each case?

(Mt 4:1-11)

Speech

200

In James 3, the Bible compares the tongue to many things. Explain two of these metaphors and why the tongue is indeed like what is described.

(Little spark, rudder of the ship, bits in horses' mouths, etc.)

400

What does it mean to give false testimony against your neighbor? Give two illustrations – one example from the Bible and one in real life (could be hypothetical). (Jezebel framed Naboth)

600

What advice does Proverbs 10:19 give? Bonus of 100 points – explain how that advice will help us in our speech.

("In a multitude of words, sin is not lacking. But he who restrains his lips is wise.")

800

Who were Ananias and Sapphira? What did they do? What were the consequences of what they did? Where is their story recorded in the Bible?

(This last question carries 200 points, so deduct 200 points if students cannot come up with the answer.

Acts 5 – lied to the Holy Spirit by saying they offered everything their land was worth when they in fact kept some money for themselves. They died on the spot, one after the other)

1000

Matthew 12:36, 37 tell us that we will be held accountable for our words on Judgment Day. Recite these verses.

R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



During this quarter, we have studied how to live a Christian life-style. As Christians we are not freed from the worries of life that non-believers have, such as financial issues, interpersonal conflicts and loneliness. But the great comfort is that we always have God to turn to for help. Hence, God has certain expectations of us. He wants us to rely on Him to shine as lights in this world and by our deeds, we show ourselves to be separate from those who do not know Him. Let us always turn to Him and rely on Him so that we may bring glory to His name and benefit those whom we meet in our lives. End with a hymn.



**TRUST IN THE
LORD WITH ALL
YOUR HEART, AND
LEAN NOT ON
YOUR OWN
UNDERSTANDING,
IN ALL YOUR
WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM, AND
HE SHALL DIRECT
YOUR PATH.”**

Proverbs 3:5-6

*“Whatever your task,
work heartily as serving
the Lord and not men.”*

(Col 3:23)

*“Be an example...of good deeds of
every kind. Let everything you do
reflect your love of the truth.”*

(Titus 2:7)