

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.

unit
1**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

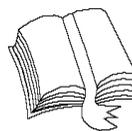
Memory Verse

"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!