

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

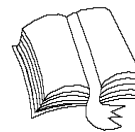
Memory Verse

"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 ate properly and not whatever he liked. He no longer liked to go to the mall

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!