

# LESSON 11

## THE TWO SONS

### BEFORE YOU TEACH

#### The Temple School

The temple school was a kind of seminary. It was very famous throughout Judea. During the time period that Jesus lived, the great rabbis in Judea would assemble at the temple to discuss matters of faith and to teach.

When Jesus was a child, His parents brought him to the temple every year for Passover. There, Jesus was a student asking important questions about the Jewish faith.

As an adult, Jesus taught the mysteries of the heavenly kingdom at the temple.

### UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

In this parable, the Israelites were represented by the son who said he would obey his father, but did not follow through on his promise. Many times the Israelites agreed to follow God's will, but they always ended up disobeying Him.

Your students may behave similarly at their age, but their disobedience is usually not intentional. Your students may not appreciate the promises they make to God, or they may forget to keep their promises. However, they should be reminded to obey God's commandments.

Use concrete examples from home or the class showing how someone benefited from obeying God. This will help the students understand what it means to obey God. For example, you can have the students write down what they have promised to God and their parents. In addition, you can discuss the difficulties they might encounter while trying to obey God. Talk with the students and let them know what God will do for them. Remind your students that God is pleased when they obey Him.

### BIBLE TEXT

Matthew 21:28-31a

### BIBLE TRUTH

God is pleased with those who do His will.

### LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To strive to be "doers," not "hearers," of God's words.
2. To understand that keeping the commandments of God with obedience is essential to salvation.

### MEMORY VERSE

"Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

(Luke 11:28b)

### PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. Thank You, Lord, for bringing us to church on this blessed Sabbath day. Lord Jesus, You want us to obey Your words, but we often do not. In the same way, we disobey our parents even though we say that we will do what they ask. You said in the Bible that You will bless those who hear Your words and do them. Help us to be obedient children. Hallelujah! Amen.

## VOCABULARY

**vineyard:** a plantation of grapevines

## REVIEW

Last week, we learned about a parable that Jesus told during a dinner at a Pharisee's house. The parable was about two different types of guests.

These two guests were invited to the same feast. The first guest was very proud and wanted everyone to see him with the host. So, he sat himself at the middle of the table in the seat of honor. The second guest was humble and wanted to avoid being the center of attention. So, he chose the lowliest seat at the end of the table.

When the host appeared, what did he do? That's right. He asked the proud guest sitting at the seat of honor to move to the lowliest seat at the end of the table. The host then asked the humble guest to join him in the middle at the seat of honor.

What important lesson did Jesus want us to learn from this parable? Jesus told this parable to emphasize the importance of being humble. If we are humble, God will bless and reward us in ways we do not expect.

## BIBLE STORY

### Jesus Teaches in the Temple

In Jerusalem, Jesus taught at the temple many times. He taught the people about God and His word. Many people came to listen because they wanted to understand God.

Among the crowd were others who did not believe in His words. They liked to ask Jesus difficult and tricky questions, hoping that Jesus would fall into the trap and say something they could use to arrest Him. They wanted Him to stop teaching because they did not believe He was the Messiah.

Jesus knew of their intentions, so He did not answer their questions. He focused on teaching the people about God. One of the parables Jesus taught the people was about a father and his two sons.

### Two Sons, Two Responses

There was a father who had two sons. This father owned a very large vineyard. It was so large that he had to hire workers to take care of the vineyard. When there was too much work for the workers, he would have his sons help.

One day, he realized that the workers needed help. So he went up to his first son and said to him, "Son, I need you to go out to the vineyard today and pick some grapes." But the son replied, "No, I don't want to go and help. It's too hot."

The father was disappointed that his son did not want to help. However, he still had another son, so he went up to that son and said, "Son, I need you to go out to the vineyard today and pick some grapes."

The second son promised, "Okay, I'll go."

The father felt happy when he heard his second son's reply. At least one of his sons was willing to help him.

### The Sons Change Their Minds

Later on, the father went out to the vineyard. He noticed

that everyone was hard at work. He looked around for his second son. After searching for a long time, he could not find him.

Instead, who do you think he saw working in the vineyard? Yes, he saw the first son who had originally said no to working in the vineyard. The father was surprised and wasn't sure what had happened.

He went up to his son and asked him, "I thought you did not want to come out. Why are you here now?"

The son replied, "I felt bad after I refused. You needed help and I am your son, so I should help. I can put what I want to do aside for now. You are my father, so I decided to come out after all."

The father smiled. He was really pleased to hear that his first son had changed his mind and decided to listen. But he also felt sad and disappointed at his younger son.

Even though the second son had told his father that he would come out to help, he ended up deciding not to come out and pick the grapes.

### Who Was Obedient?

After Jesus finished telling the story, he turned to the people in the temple and asked them, "Which son obeyed his father?"

They answered, "The first son."

The crowd understood the parable. Neither son did what they said they would do, but the first son obeyed his father because he eventually did what his father had asked him to do.

In this parable, the father represents God and we are His sons. God asked us to listen to His word and keep His commandments. We obey God not by making promises but by doing His commandments and following His teachings.

## CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

### True or False/Questions to Think About

1. **Only one of the man's sons changed his mind at the end.** False; both sons changed their minds.
2. **The second son did not keep his promise to help his father.** True.
3. **The father understood that his second son was busy, so he did not mind that his son did not come to help in the vineyard.** False; he was disappointed that his son did not obey him.
4. **Jesus told this story because He wanted everyone to obey God.** True.
5. **It is good enough to just promise to obey God without doing what God commanded us to do.** False; we must obey God through our actions.
6. **What should we do when we find out that we have disobeyed God?** Answers may vary.
7. **How does God feel when we say that we will obey Him but we don't follow through?** Answers may vary.
8. **How did the father feel about the son who obeyed him?** He felt pleased.

## MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

Please reinforce the memory verse every week.  
You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

**"Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" (Luke 11:28b)**

## SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

### 1. We must strive to be "doers," not "hearers," of God's words.

Have your parents ever asked you to do something that you did not want to do, such as share your favorite toy, tidy your room, or turn off the TV? [Have students share what they were asked to do.] Did you first tell your parents, "No," but then later found yourself doing what your parents asked? Or did you tell your parents, "Yes," without following through? [Let them continue to share.]

We can probably relate to how the first son in the parable must have felt. His father asked him to do something and he did not want to do it. He said to his father, "I will not." But he regretted what he said and ended up going to the vineyard to work (Mt 21:29). There are many things that are difficult to do or that we do not want to do. We can always talk to God or our parents and ask them for help or ask them to explain the difficult parts. But sometimes, we just do not want to obey our parents. This does not make God happy. Like the first son, we must do our best to obey our parents and our Lord Jesus.

People always say, "Actions speak louder than words." Let's also look at what the Bible says. Can someone read James 1:23-25 for me? [Pick a student to read.] "For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does." Every time we learn something from the Bible, we need to examine ourselves and see where in our lives we can use this knowledge that we have just learned. However, some people may walk away from a lesson and immediately forget what they have just learned. These are the "hearers" of the God's word, because they have heard what they should do but do not do it. Here, the Bible tells us that only those who are "not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work" will be blessed. So, yes, while we need to be a "hearer" of God's word, the most important role for us is to be a "doer" of God's word. Jesus spoke parables not just for people to listen to or for us to read. He wanted us to understand the meaning of His word and do as He instructed. Let me share two scenarios with you.

Last Sabbath, Grace learned from her RE class that the church is a place for worship and therefore everyone must keep it holy and clean at all times. That day, Grace cleaned up the classroom with her friends after RE class, putting into actions what they had learned. However, after only one week, Grace seemed to have forgotten what she had learned. Today, when she was in the chapel during morning service, Grace sat with her friends and they made noises throughout the service. A few times, some members turned around and told them to be quiet. After lunch, Grace left her paper plate on the table and went to play with her friends, shouting and laughing very loud. This disturbed many members. Moreover, she forgot to clean up after class this time. As soon as RE class was over, she left the classroom for refreshments served at the fellowship hall.

### Reflection Questions

- 1. Was Grace a “doer” of God’s word?** She was not. She was only a “hearer,” who heard the message and remembered it for a short period, but then forgot it later. Even though she had learned about keeping the church holy and clean at all times, she didn’t put what she learned into practice.
- 2. If Grace were a “doer” of God’s word, what would she have done differently?** Firstly, she would have listened attentively to the sermon speaker instead of making noises during service in the chapel. Secondly, she would have thrown away the plate that belonged to her after lunch. Thirdly, she would have kept her voice at an acceptable level, even when playing with her friends. Lastly, she would have helped clean up after class.

Ricky used to be a very rebellious child. Every time his parents asked him to do something, he would purposely not do it or pretend that he didn’t hear them. It became a habit for him to ignore his parents. However, Ricky had changed ever since he read Ephesians 6:1, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” He realized that God was not pleased with his attitude towards his parents. He felt remorseful and guilty that he had not been obeying his parents. In his prayers, Ricky repented and was determined to make a change for Christ. He strived to become an obedient child. At the beginning, Ricky was not used to listening to his parents. However, Ricky constantly reminded himself of God’s word and stood by his promise to God. Now, Ricky obeys his parents in everything that they tell him and want him to do.

### Reflection Questions

- 1. Was Ricky a “doer” of God’s words?** He was. After reading the Bible verse in Ephesians 6:1, he repented and made a promise to God that he would obey his parents. Ricky used to be a very rebellious child, but now he is the complete opposite. He made a change for Christ and became an obedient child.
- 2. If Ricky were not a “doer” of God’s word, what would he have done differently?** Even after reading the verse in Ephesians 6:1, Ricky still would not have changed his attitude towards his parents. He would have remained a very rebellious child because he refused to do what the Lord asked of him.

## 2. Keeping the commandments of God with obedience is essential to salvation.

To say, “Yes, I will tidy up my room,” or “Yes, I will do my homework,” is not enough. You must also put your words into action. If you do not, you will be like the second son. He said, “Yes,” to his father, but he did not go and help. God wants us to obey through our actions. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He obeyed the heavenly Father completely. Jesus was “obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (Phil 2:8). When God sees us doing what He asks, He is very pleased with us. If we are obedient to Him and keep His commandments, God will be very willing and eager to listen to our prayers. He will help and bless His obedient children.

John 14:15 says, “If you love Me, keep my commandments.” Consider the word “love.” God wants us to love Him the way He loves us. And how does He love us? Firstly, He loves us unconditionally. There is nothing He cannot do for us. Because of our sins, He died for us on the cross so that the fountain of salvation could be opened for us. Moreover, He loves us faithfully. His love is steadfast and everlasting. This is the kind of love we need to strive to have for God, and it all begins with keeping His commandments with obedience. And what does it mean to be obedient? It means to willingly submit to what the Lord asks of us. Only when we do so can we enter the kingdom of heaven.

Let’s read a short passage from the Bible. Luke 10:25-28 reads, “And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, ‘Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ He said to him, ‘What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?’ So he answered and said, ‘“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,” and “your neighbor as yourself.”’ And He said to him, ‘You have answered rightly;

do this and you will live.'" From this passage, we can see that keeping the commandments of God is essential to salvation. If you read the Ten Commandments carefully, they consist of two parts: the first to fourth commandments teach us to love the Lord our God, and the fifth through tenth teach us to love our neighbors. Now, let me ask you a question: Do you love God? [Give students some time to think.] If your answer is "Yes," then you will obey Him. And if you obey Him, you will love your neighbors. Jesus said, "Do this and you will live." Keeping His commandments with obedience is what we must do to enter the kingdom of heaven.

### 3. Which son are we? Are we going to work in the vineyard for God?

Students, in today's parable, we learned about two sons whose words and actions differed greatly. Which son represents you in this life? Are you the second son who heard his father's words, but ended up not helping him? Or are you the "doer," the first son who went to help and pleased his father through his actions?

Are you going to work in the vineyard for God?

### HOMWORK ANSWER KEY

1. B
2. C
3. False; both sons changed their minds.
4. True
5. False; he was disappointed that his son did not obey him.
6. True
7. False; we need to obey God through our actions.
8. God feels very sad.
9. Answers may vary.
10. "Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

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## ACTIVITY

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### Blessed Are Those Who Obey

**Objective:** To give the students a chance to practice obeying.

#### Materials

- Slips of paper
- Container
- Sticker badges

#### Preparation

1. Write the following simple instructions (or your own ideas) on separate slips of paper:

- Erase the whiteboard.
- Shake hands with each of your classmates.
- Sing your favorite song alone.
- Say something kind about each classmate.
- Share four things for which you are thankful.
- Act out something that you will do for a family member during the week.

2. Write "I can obey" on the stickers.

#### Instructions

1. Put the slips of paper in a container. Have the students take turns choosing one from the container and obeying the instructions written on it.
2. Afterwards, invite the students, one at a time, to tell whether they found the instructions easy or difficult to obey.
3. At the end, give each student an "I Can Obey" badge. Encourage the students to keep their badges so they will be reminded to obey their parents and God.

### SUGGESTED HYMN

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#### Quickly I Obey (G major)

When my mother calls me,  
Quickly I'll obey.  
I want to do just what is best  
Each and ev'ry day.

When my father calls me,  
Quickly I'll obey.  
I want to do just what is best  
Each and ev'ry day.

Heav'nly Father loves me,  
Blesses me each day.  
I want to do just what is best  
Each and ev'ry day.

Words: Thelma J. Harrison, 1906–1991  
Music: Russian folk tune

## E1 Year 2 Book 4 Lesson 11—The Two Sons

**Homework Assignment**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bible Truth:** God is pleased with those who do His will.**Lesson Objective:** To help students recognize the importance of following and obeying the commandments of God.**Bible Reading:** Please put a check mark in the space when you complete the reading each day.**Prayer:** Please put a check mark in the space provided on the days you prayed to God.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bible Reading							
Prayer							

**Memory Verse**

Please write down this week's memory verse.

(Luke 11:28b)

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**What I Learned from the Bible This Week**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

# Homework Assignment

*Understanding What You Have Learned*

## Multiple Choice

1. \_\_\_\_ : The story of the two sons teaches us that \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. We can disobey our parents if we are asked to do something we do not want to do.
  - b. We should obey our parents and God even when it is difficult or when we may not feel like it.
  - c. God does not mind when we disobey Him.
  
2. \_\_\_\_ : When the father asked the first son to help in the vineyard, the son said, \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. "Yes," but didn't help.
  - b. "No," and didn't help.
  - c. "No," but he changed his mind and helped his father.

## True or False

3. Only one of the man's sons changed his mind at the end. \_\_\_\_\_
4. The second son did not keep his promise to help his father. \_\_\_\_\_
5. The father understood his second son was busy, so he did not mind that he did not help in the vineyard. \_\_\_\_\_
6. If we find that we have disobeyed, we can change our minds and obey. \_\_\_\_\_
7. It is enough just to promise that we will obey God; we do not need to actually do it. \_\_\_\_\_

## Short Answer

8. How does God feel when we tell Him that we will obey Him but do not follow through?

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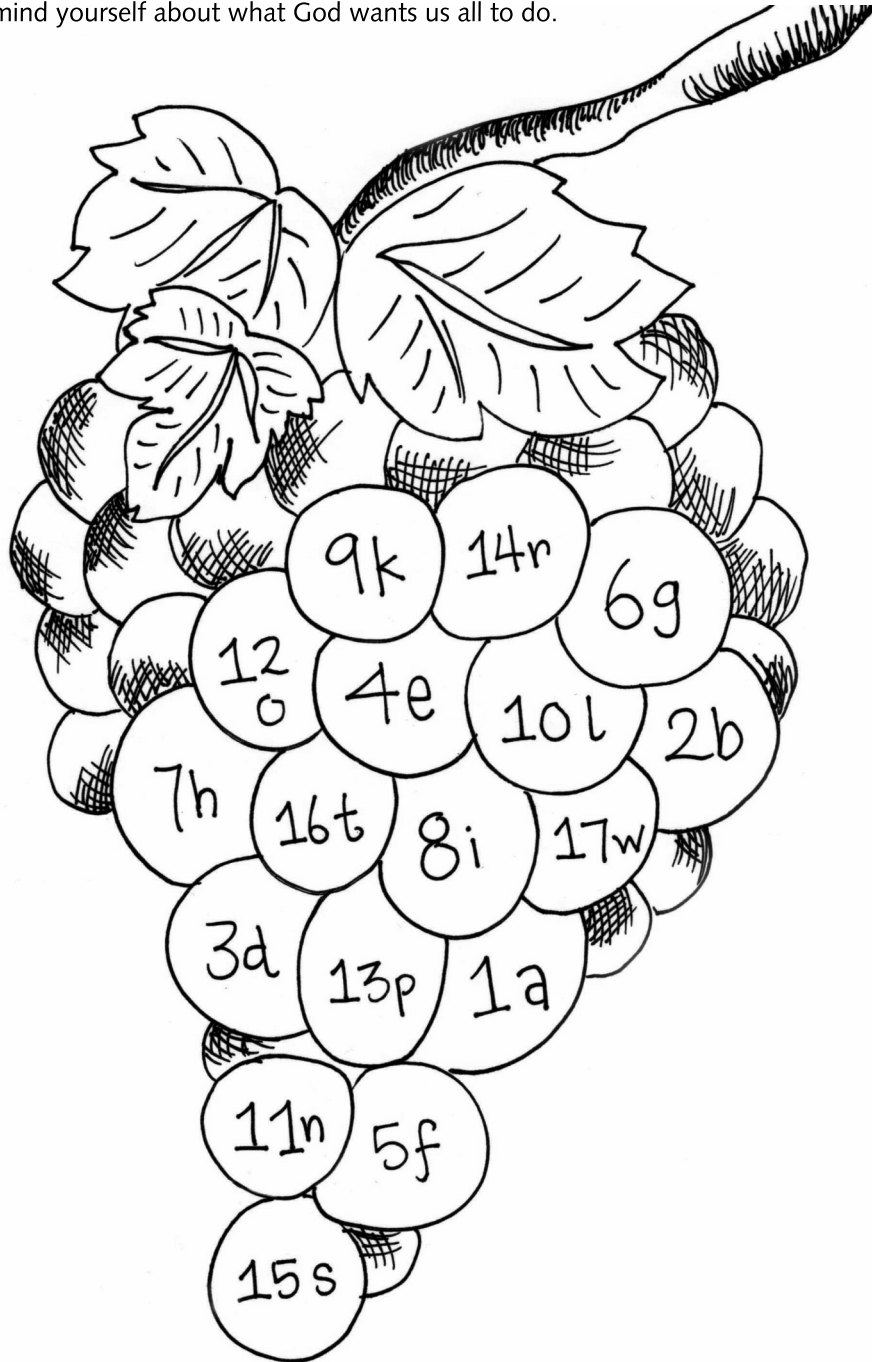
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9. Name one thing that you find difficult to obey. In your prayers, ask God to help you be obedient.

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10. Use the grapes to match the numbers with the letters and then fill in the blanks. Then, after you are done, read the verse aloud to remind yourself about what God wants us all to do.



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2 10 4 15 15 4 3 1 14 4 16 7 12 15 4 17 7 12

7 4 1 14 16 7 4 17 12 14 3 12 5 6 12 3

1 11 3 9 4 4 13 8 16 !"