

LESSON 3

SEEK TO DO GOD'S WILL, AND BE THANKFUL AT ALL TIMES

OBJECTIVES

1. To understand that we should seek after God's will and submit to His will.
2. To know that giving thanks at all times is God's will.
3. To remember that God answers prayers according to His will.

MEMORY VERSE

"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

PRAYER

1. Thank You, God, for allowing us to be here on this wonderful Sabbath day to worship You.
2. Today, we are going to learn about the purposes behind Your will and the attitude we should have when praying for Your will.
3. Lord, please place in our hearts a desire to follow Your will for us and to be thankful for what You have given us at all times.
4. May Your presence fill our classroom today so that we may experience the power of Your knowledge and wisdom.



Overview

1. **A Healed Leper Gives Thanks to God (Lk 17:11-19)**
2. **Apostle Paul Accepts the Will of God (2 Cor 12:7-10)**
3. **Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs—The Holy Bible**
4. **Life Application**
 - Scenario: Putting God's Will First
 - Submit to God's Will
5. **Activity—Thank You, Lord!**



Background Knowledge for Teachers

A Healed Leper Gives Thanks to God (Lk 17:11-19)

When Jesus and His disciples were on their way to Jerusalem, shortly before the Crucifixion, they passed along the border of Galilee and Samaria where they met ten lepers who called on Jesus for mercy. Since the time of Moses, the Hebrews observed special laws concerning leprosy (Lev 13). When a man was declared to have leprosy, he was required to wear torn clothing, leave his head uncovered, and live outside the town. When anyone approached, he had to cover his upper lip and call out, "Unclean! Unclean!" Leprosy was believed to be a contagious disease and there was no cure at that time.

Priests were responsible for recognizing the symptoms of leprosy, which begins with whitish sores. Fingers with the sores often wasted away, becoming shorter and shorter, and then shriveling away into the deteriorating hand. The nose sometimes receded into the face. Toes might fall off. As the disease advanced and the flesh began to decay, a terrible smell would be added to the misery. Sometimes, the disease could burn itself out and stop. If a person believed that this had happened to him, he could go to the priest and the priest would decide whether the person could return to a normal life. This is the reason Jesus told the ten lepers to go and show themselves to the priest after healing them.

Apostle Paul Accepts the Will of God (2 Cor 12:7-10)

On more than one occasion, Apostle Paul mentioned his physical affliction in his letters to different churches. This affliction, which he referred to as a "physical infirmity" (Gal 4:13), may have been a problem with his eyes because he wrote to a Galatian Christian that "if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me" (Gal 4:15). Whatever this affliction was, it was evidently painful and chronic. Paul prayed for release and asked God to remove his sickness. However, God's will was not to heal Paul but to give him strength to endure his pain.

Paul said that a thorn was put into his flesh and the devil's messenger was sent to plague him in order to keep him from being proud because of his wonderful experience of getting a glimpse of Paradise (2 Cor 12:1-6). He also understood that God's will was for him to realize that His love is enough for him and that His power was doing its best work. Therefore, in response to God's answer, Paul delighted himself in following God's will and gloried in his affliction. He said, "If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity. [...] Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor 11:30; 12:10). These words of Paul's do not reflect the natural reaction to pain. The capacity to think this way can only come from God. Paul was willing to accept God's will, whatever it might be, without any reservation. This is a great example of how Christians should fully yield to the will of God.



Reaching Out to Your Students

Your students, being raised in Christian homes, probably have already learned to say "thank you" to God. However, to many of them thanking God is merely a duty or words that do not have real and personal meanings. Explain to your students that we need to thank God because everything we have has been given by Him—the air that we breathe, the food that we eat, the people who love us, etc. Help them realize that we should not take these things for granted, as God has the prerogative to take anything away from us. So, we should appreciate what He has given us. Encourage your students to thank God on a regular basis, maybe every night before they go to bed, not just for the same thing every time, but for God's every blessing we continue to receive. This will help them become closer to God as they learn to appreciate His wonderful grace and mercy.

Upon having a good understanding of how much God loves and blesses us, students can begin to remember what it means to trust in God's goodness when they experience frustrations. Today's lesson not only teaches students to be thankful for blessings but also for God's purposes for us, which may at times be different than what we want. Teach students to pray for God's will and to never be discouraged when God is slow to answer their prayers. God makes everything beautiful in His time, and we need to hold on to our faith in His will for us. Share testimonies with your students, and help them understand how God's will is always the best.

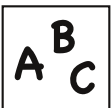


Opener

5 Minutes

[Share some of the information on leprosy provided in the Background Knowledge for Teachers section. To make the information on leprosy even more vivid for your students, bring a piece of cotton soaked in chlorine bleach or ammonia. Seal the cotton tightly in a plastic bag until after you have presented the information on leprosy. Then, release a little of the smell of ammonia or bleach from the plastic bag, and let the children comment on the strong odor.]

Imagine, if someone who smells like this walks into this classroom right now, would you want him to stay around? People with leprosy often smelled bad, and other people were afraid they might catch the disease. In biblical times, nobody even wanted to have anything to do with lepers. Today, we are going to find out what happened when Jesus met some lepers.



Vocabulary

Leprosy is a terrible disease caused by bacteria. It usually begins with sores that eventually spread all over a leper's body. Doctors in the past could not cure leprosy. People with leprosy were not allowed to live in town; they had to stay outside the city. They could not work at a job or live with their families. When people came near, a leper had to call out, "Unclean! Unclean!" to warn them.



Bible Discovery & Spiritual Teaching

30-35 Minutes

Imagine this scenario: Ten unhappy men huddled by the side of a road near a village. They were not allowed into the village with others, not even their families. How did they end up being isolated? Did they do something wrong? No, these men didn't do anything wrong. They were isolated because they caught a disease thought to be extremely contagious, called leprosy, which no medicine could cure at that time. On Bible Discovery Worksheet #1, you will find the diary of one of these lepers who wrote about how he ended up being outside of the village.

FOR TEACHERS

Hand out Bible Discovery Worksheet #1. Keep a copy of the worksheet to reference. Guide students to complete Entry A, B, C, and D. Answers have been provided below.

Answers

Entry A: leprous, white, deeper, seven

Entry B: seven

Entry C: white, deeper, unclean

Entry D: Jewish, Samaritan

Ask the following questions and allow time for student responses after going through the diary entries: What are your thoughts now that you've read about the feelings of this leper? Do you sympathize with lepers? Are there situations in your life when you feel you are somehow a little like them, though not so in the physical sense?

Poor man! He didn't do anything wrong to deserve such a hopeless and distressing life. Sometimes, but not very often, a person with leprosy would get well and the priest would give permission to the leper to live at home in his own village again. This Samaritan leper's family and friends were probably desperately hoping that he would be one of the few lucky ones to get well. But other than hoping, no one was able to actually do anything to help him. We as human beings are limited.

One day, the sound of a crowd made these ten lepers look up. They saw Jesus walking with some of His followers. The lepers, who had probably previously heard about Jesus and His healing power, lifted up their voices immediately to stop Jesus. What do you think they wanted from Jesus? [Let students answer.] They wanted Jesus to heal their leprosy! We don't know how long these lepers had been isolated nor do we know how bad their leprosy was, but we do know that they were in a hopeless situation and that Jesus brought them hope! Now you might think, would Jesus help these abandoned people that no one was even willing to approach? What do you think? [Let students answer.] Jesus did not care that these ten men smelled foul, wore torn clothing, or were penniless and horribly infected from head to toe. Instead, He had mercy

on them. Jesus said to the ten lepers, "Go, show yourselves to the priests."

Did Jesus mean they were well? The lepers probably wondered. They looked at their hands and feet; there was no change. Sores and scabs still covered their skin. They could go to the priests only if they believed that they were healed from leprosy. Jesus, as in other times, required faith from the sick persons before performing miracles of healing. So, these lepers started down the road toward the village to see the priests. Then it happened—they felt different! They saw that their skin was smooth and clean. They felt strong! They began to run and jump and laugh. They were healed. Jesus had healed them!

These lepers started running down the road to find the priest. They could hardly wait. Suddenly, one of the men in the group stopped and returned to Jesus. He was the Samaritan leper! He arrived in front of Jesus and praised God in a loud voice, "Glory to God! Glory to God for His goodness to me!" Then, he threw himself at Jesus' feet and said, "Thank You, Lord, for healing me." This leper came back to thank Jesus for His healing.

Then Jesus spoke, "There were ten men healed. Where are the other nine? Why did only one come back to say thank you?" To the thankful Samaritan, Jesus answered kindly, "Get up and go. Your faith has made you well." This Samaritan was the only person who turned back to thank Jesus. His faith was confirmed, and he likely continued to pursue after Jesus. On the contrary, the other nine only focused on going to the priests. They quickly forgot about Jesus who made them well—faith meant nothing to them. They lost their only chance to thank Jesus personally and left Jesus disappointed.

How would you feel if a person you generously helped never said thank you to you? [Let students share.] This is probably how Jesus felt at that time. Today, God gives us many blessings—guidance, protection, providence, etc. Today, do we walk away without thanking Him, as the nine lepers did? Do we take God's blessings for granted and leave Him disappointed from time to time?

Before we move on to our next story, let's finish the last diary entry (Entry E) of the Samaritan leper. We should follow his example and give thanks to God for His every blessing.

FOR TEACHERS

Entry E: leprosy, Jesus, nine, priests, thank, thank you, Jesus

It is so true that when other people see God's work through us, they may come to believe in Him, as we have become evidence to them that God is all-powerful and real. However, this is not the only way we can bear witness to God. The Bible tells us that God is always at work fulfilling His plans for us. He knows what is best for us, and He will at times allow us to suffer, never for more than we can handle, in order to give us the best and keep us humble. In times of suffering, God wants us to believe in His will and remain thankful at all times. He gives us trials and tribulations so that we can exercise our faith in Him and glorify His name when others witness our joy and peace, even in times of troubles.

A good example of joy in tribulation can be found in the story of Apostle Paul. Apostle Paul suffered from a chronic affliction. We don't know what his ailment was, but we do know that it made Paul uncomfortable day after day. He wanted his problem to go away. He thought it kept him from doing his best work for Jesus.

One day, Paul prayed about it. He said, "Lord, this thing really bothers me. I think I could do a much better job for You if You would take it away." Paul waited, but his problem did not go away. He decided he should go on praying about it, so he prayed again, "God please take this hurt away. It bothers me." It still did not go away, so Paul prayed a third time. God still did not do what Paul asked. Instead, God answered, "Paul, the strength that I give you is enough for anything you will need to do. Trust Me. People will see that your problem doesn't stop you from doing My work."

Now Paul understood, "I can see how God's plan is better. If people see God's strength working in me, they will believe God can work in them, too. They will see how powerful God really is!" So Paul went on serving God. He still had this trouble, but it didn't seem like an impossible problem anymore. In fact, Paul started thanking God for it. People who heard him preach or who read his letters saw God's strength in Paul.

FOR TEACHERS

After telling the story of Paul, read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 with your students. Explain to your students that Paul realized that God's will was for him to glorify His name through his suffering. When we are weak, God is strong and will give us the strength to endure all our sufferings. His strength manifests when we are weak.

God always answers our prayers. When it seems that God doesn't hear our prayers, just as when Paul was waiting for God's answer to his prayer, it is because He is answering in a different way! We know that God wants us to learn to submit to His will. Therefore, sometimes God says "no" to our prayers when we fail to trust His plan for us. Most

often, when we offer prayers that God delights to hear, His answer to our prayers is "yes." However, submitting to God does not only require us to seek after His will, but also to wait patiently for His will to be done. So, many times God's answer will be "wait" instead of an immediate "yes." Does that make sense? Let's analyze a few examples on Bible Discovery Worksheet #2.

Pretend that you are saying the prayers below. Which answer would you expect God to give each of your prayers—"Yes," "No," or "Wait"?

FOR TEACHERS

Discuss each prayer with your students and ask them to give their answers before explaining the correct answers to them. Answers have been provided below.

- **Help me obey my parents.**
Yes. This is what every child should do; God delights in seeing obedient children.
- **Make that mean Patrick fall off his bike and get hurt.**
No. God wants us to love everyone, including our enemies. Only God can judge and we should not ask God to punish others.)
- **Let me be a teacher in church.**
Wait. It is good to desire to serve God in church, and we can always pray for God to give us wisdom to serve Him. However, we are not yet at the age to teach, and therefore we should wait patiently while praying for God's wisdom to prepare us for when the time is right.
- **Help me invite my friends to church.**
Yes. God wants us to preach and He will delight in seeing more people come to learn about Him. Every day is a chance to preach, and we can always pray for God to give us the courage to invite our friends to church.
- **Don't let my mom find out that I told a lie.**
No. God does not want us to lie, and He will not help us cover or hide a lie. God sometimes allows us to learn a lesson so that we do not make the same mistake again.)

Today, we learned about how a healed leper praised God for deliverance from a terrible problem. We also learned, from Apostle Paul's story, how others may praise God when they see a Christian fully yielding to God's will. Paul understood the reason for his problem, and he could see that God's plan was the best. But sometimes, difficult or unpleasant things happen to us, and we can't understand the reason. What can we do then? [Let students share.] The better we get to know God, the more we can trust Him. His plans for us are good; we can depend on Him to take care of us the best way possible, even when we don't understand. As long as we seek to do God's will and strive to be thankful at all times, we can rest assured under any circumstances, knowing that we are in God's good hands.



Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs

2-5 Minutes

The Holy Bible

True Jesus Church believes that the Holy Bible is the word of God, written by inspiration of His Spirit, and that all Scripture always stands true. Therefore, in order to understand the will of God, we can always look into the Scripture for reference. God's will never contradicts His own words. The Holy Bible lays the basis for God's will, and therefore we should always seek to follow the Bible in our pursuit of God's will.



Check for Understanding

5 Minutes

- 1. Why were the ten lepers not allowed in the village?** Leprosy is believed to be contagious, and there was no cure for it at that time. All lepers were to be isolated once diagnosed with leprosy by the priests. In this case, the ten lepers were sent outside of the village.
- 2. How was Jesus' reaction to the lepers different than those of other people?** No one wanted to get close to the lepers because they were afraid to catch the same disease. However, when Jesus saw the lepers and heard them calling for Him, He had compassion on them and healed their leprosy.
- 3. Who was the leper who turned back to say thank you?** It was the Samaritan leper.
- 4. When Paul was suffering from his affliction, what did he do?** He prayed to God for his pain to go away.
- 5. What was God's answer to Paul's prayers?** God gave Paul the strength to endure his pain instead of releasing him from it.



Life Application

10 Minutes

1. Scenario: Putting God's Will First

[Hand out Life Application Worksheet #1. Read the scenarios with your students and have them discuss the questions that follow. If preferred, separate them into groups and have one person from each group report their answers to the whole class after the discussion. Facilitate each group's discussion as needed.]

Discussion Questions

- 1. Why did Stephanie get so angry with everybody? What do you think she was thinking about?**
Despite diligent practice and prayers, Stephanie wasn't confident about her performance because she doubted if God would help her, having missed two Sabbaths in order to practice. Observing the Sabbath is God's will, but Stephanie placed her own will, which is to shine at her performance, over the will of God. Stephanie probably knew that and got angry with everybody because she was not confident.
- 2. Stephanie prayed all week for God to bless her, but in the end, it seemed that He didn't bless her. Why do you think things happened like they did?**
God answers our every prayer, but only according to His will. God allowed things to happen like they did because He wanted to teach Stephanie the importance of observing Sabbath. God's blessing and answer to Stephanie's prayer was not a smooth performance, but rather a lesson to learn about following God's will. Stephanie will know better next time that while God is always willing to bless and guide us, we cannot and should not try to alter God's will, such as His desire for us to observe the Sabbath.
- 3. Do you ever feel like God isn't listening to your prayers? Share an experience. How can we always be thankful to God in all situations?**
Let students answer.

2. Submit to God's Will

Christians often wonder what God wants them to do concerning their desires and plans. It seems as though God's will is hidden in a buried treasure chest, and we have only small portions of the map to find its location. But is this true? In the Scriptures, we have all the guidance we need in order to live for Jesus Christ. God wants us to follow Him so that He can lead us step by step.

[Hand out Life Application Worksheet #2. For each box, read the reference verse as well as the short scenario with your students. Then, guide them to fill in the blanks in the explanations that follow. The explanations serve to provide a better understanding of the given verses, but do elaborate if necessary. Answers have been provided below.]

Reference Verse: *"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."* (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

Answers: prayers, joyful, thanks

*This is today's memory verse.

Reference Verse: *"Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is."* (Ephesians 5:17)

Answers: unwise, wisdom

Reference 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."* (Romans 12:2)

Answers: world, good, acceptable, will

Reference Verse: *"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 paths."* (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Answers: trust, heart, direct, acknowledge, understanding

Today, we learned about how we should always seek to do God's will instead of our own. However, this doesn't mean that we cannot pray about things that we want or that God never blesses us with what we desire. The right way to seek after God's will is to put His will above our own will. We need to acknowledge His wisdom and knowledge and place them above what we think is best for ourselves. That said, instead of just telling God what we want, we should always pray for His will to be done. The Bible says, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jer 29:11). Let's always remember that God has a beautiful plan for us and that we should never be afraid to let go of our own will and pursue after God's will for us. We must learn to rely on God and trust Him fully.

After this lesson, how would you change the way you pray? Think for a minute and write it down at the bottom of your worksheet. [The purpose of this question is to let students summarize the teachings of this lesson.]

HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

1. banquet
2. excuses
3. field
4. oxen
5. wife
6. The poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame
7. The heavenly kingdom
8. God
9. By attending Sabbath service and preparing ourselves by praying for the fullness of the Holy Spirit
10. By making up excuses to avoid God



Activity

Thank You, Lord!

10-15 Minutes

Objective: To give students an opportunity to hand out invitations for Sabbath service to their friends.

Materials

- Hymn book or copies of the hymn, "Thank You, Lord"

Instructions

1. Hand out copies of the hymn, or ask students to turn to "Thank You, Lord" in the hymn book.
2. Teach the students how to sing the hymn.
3. Explain the activity to the students.

Today, we're going to do a little lyric-writing project. First, make a list of things for which you want to thank. This shouldn't be difficult! Second, using this list, try to fill in the blanks on your Activity Worksheet. Keep in mind the melody of this hymn, as it will help you decide if your lyrics will go smoothly.

I thank the Lord for _____,
for _____ and _____.
My heart is filled with joy and praise,
Because He guides my way.

Thank you, Lord, for _____;
Thank you, Lord, for _____;
Thank you, Lord, for _____;
Thy will is always the best for me.

4. Assist each student as needed. After they have finished writing their lyrics, ask each student to share what they wrote. If time permits, pick a few students' work and have the whole class sing their versions of the hymn together. Below is an example. (Note: The melody has been embellished to match with the lyrics.)

1 I thank the Lord for True Je - sus Church, for friends and fa - mi - ly. My

5 heart is filled with joy and peace, be - cause He guides my way.

9 Thank you, Lord, for beau - ti - ful home; Thank you, Lord, for school and tea - chers;

13 Thank you, Lord, for food and good health; Thy will is al - ways the best for me.

MY DAYS AS A LEPER

ENTRY A

Today, I was brought to the priest because of a bright spot on my skin. People thought that it could be a _____ sore (Lev 13:2). It is _____ on the skin and does not appear to be _____ than my skin, and its hair is not white (13:4). To be safe, the priest is isolating me for _____ days (13:4). He said that he would check on me again after seven days and then decide if I am unclean. I am so worried! Leprosy is a scary disease; it's painful and disfiguring. It gets worse and worse as the sores spread all over the body until the person dies. I don't want to be a leper!



Entry B

Today is the seventh day since I got isolated and the priest came to examine me. Since the bright spot has not gotten any better, he decided to keep me isolated for another _____ days (13:5). I am starting to have a bad feeling about this... If the spot is just a scab, it should have healed by now. I really miss my family, and I want to go home!

Entry C

Two days have passed, and I feel hopeless. The hair on my bright spot has turned _____, and the sore appears to be _____ than my skin (13:3). It also has spread to other parts of my skin. I know already that this is leprosy. In five more days, the priest will come and pronounce me _____ (13:3) and keep me isolated for as long as my leprosy lasts. What should I do? I can only wait to die—to die in pain and loneliness.



Entry D

It's been a month since I was first isolated. There are nine other men here who also have leprosy. Even though they are all _____ and I am the only _____, they don't seem to care. The loneliness and despair of being lepers binds us all together in spite of prejudices. Anyhow, I really miss my family. I am so afraid that I will never see them again, not to mention I want to hug my wife and children so much. Still, even if I could see them, I wouldn't be able to stand close to them because leprosy is extremely contagious. I am afraid my children won't recognize me anymore because of these sores that have spread all over my body. Leprosy is taking away everything from me—my family, my health, my happiness, my future, and my life! There is no hope in my life anymore.



Entry E

I am home with my family right now as I am writing this diary entry... I have been healed from _____! I'll never forget this day. God is so good to me; He gave me the opportunity to meet _____ who healed me, as well as the other _____ lepers. At first, we weren't exactly sure why He wanted us to go to the _____, but as we began to walk towards the village, we began to feel the difference on our skin. I then knew that He had healed us! I ran back to _____ Jesus and fell on His feet to say _____. Words could not express how grateful I was, and I wanted to thank Him personally (Lk 17:11-19). If God didn't give me the chance to meet _____; if He wasn't so merciful and kind; if He didn't stop and help me... I would be waiting to die without any hope! I'm so glad to be with my family right now, and I won't take God's healing for granted. I will be kind to others just as He was to me. May all the glory be unto Jesus' name!



SEEK TO DO GOD'S WILL

Pretend that you are saying the prayers below. Which answer would you expect God to give each of your prayers—"Yes," "No," or "Wait"? Circle which answer you think God would give, and explain why.



a. Help me obey my parents.

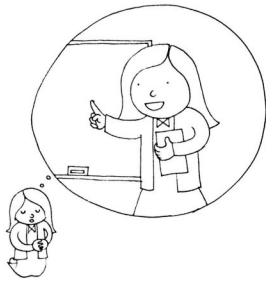
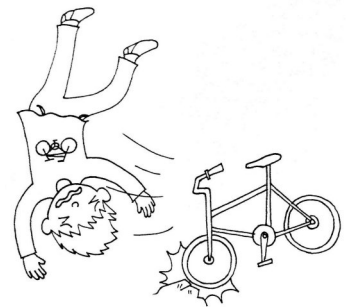
God's answer: Yes No Wait

Why would God answer in this way? _____

b. Make that mean Patrick fall off his bike and get hurt.

God's answer: Yes No Wait

Why would God answer in this way? _____



c. Let me be a teacher in church.

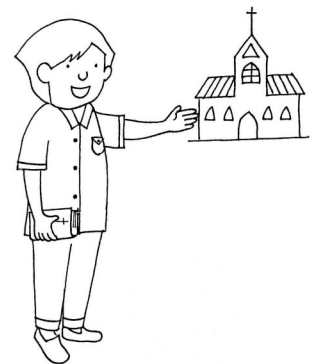
God's answer: Yes No Wait

Why would God answer in this way? _____

d. Help me invite my friends to church.

God's answer: Yes No Wait

Why would God answer in this way? _____



e. Don't let my mom find out that I told a lie.

God's answer: Yes No Wait

Why would God answer in this way? _____

SCENARIO: PUTTING GOD'S WILL FIRST

Stephanie was especially happy to go to school one day. This was going to be her day to shine. She was supposed to play the flute in front of the whole school. "Wow!" She thought blissfully. "I still can't believe that Mr. Pollack wanted me to do a solo performance in front of the whole school!" Stephanie remembered how thrilled she was when Mr. Pollack, the band instructor, told her that she would be performing for the whole school during a special student gathering. The mayor of the city was visiting the school and Mr. Pollack decided that Stephanie would perform. Stephanie knew what a big deal it would be to have the mayor come to the performance!



The whole event was scheduled to take place after lunchtime. During lunch, as Stephanie was practicing her flute, a group of fellow band members gathered around to listen to her. Stephanie started to get nervous. "Do you guys mind? I'm trying to practice here!" As Stephanie grew more and more panicked, she started playing a few notes off key. Then, Maria came up to Stephanie. Maria was Stephanie's substitute; she would play if Stephanie became sick or couldn't make it to school for the performance. Maria and Stephanie were close friends. Maria came to wish Stephanie the best, but Stephanie thought she was coming to make fun of her. "Don't even say anything, Maria. I know what you think, but I'm not going to do badly in the most important performance of my life! I'm going to shine!" Maria thought Stephanie was talking a bit weirdly ever since Mr. Pollack had asked her to perform, but now she understood that Stephanie was just under a lot of pressure. "Why are you saying that, Stephanie? I just came to wish you the best before your performance." Stephanie stormed off shouting, "I can do without your wishes, Ms. Perfection! I just know that God is going to help me. I have been praying this whole week! Now all of you just leave me alone!"

Stephanie found a quiet place in the schoolyard and began to cry uncontrollably. Why did she act that way to her friends? There was no reason for her to be so mean. After all, Stephanie was sure God would help her in the performance. But then, why did she feel so badly? Was it because she skipped two Sabbaths to practice her flute? "No, it couldn't be that," thought Stephanie.

Soon, the big moment had arrived. The mayor was probably ten feet away from Stephanie. The principle announced to the whole school that Stephanie was going to perform. Everyone clapped and then there was silence. Stephanie began to get nervous again. She whispered, "God, You better have listened to all my prayers," as she stepped on stage. Stephanie began to play the flute beautifully. People clapped loudly during the performance. But near the end, she blew one note too hard and made a funny noise. A few people began to laugh. Stephanie didn't find it so funny, and she made more mistakes.

That day, Stephanie went home an extremely sad girl. She had finished the performance with a messy ending. Stephanie thought to herself. "Why did I make such a fool out of myself? Why did God let this happen to me?" The more Stephanie thought about her humiliation, the angrier she became. She began to blame God and cried. When Stephanie's mother came home, she saw the tears all over Stephanie's face. "What's wrong?" She asked Stephanie. All of a sudden, Stephanie burst into tears. "God never helps me when I need Him. I prayed for a whole week for today's performance." Stephanie's mother replied, "Stephanie, of course God loves you! Now calm down and think about it. Do you remember when I told you that God didn't want you to skip the Sabbath because of this performance? Maybe God wanted you to learn something from this experience!"



As Stephanie wiped away her tears, she understood what her mother meant. "I've been under too much pressure and I let that get in the way of my faith. I put too much emphasis on my own success and not enough attention on obeying God's commandments." Her mother agreed, "You're totally right. God, in His wisdom, sometimes allows us to be laid low so that we do not come to trust too much in our own abilities. We are prone to rely too heavily on ourselves and on our own ability to work things out the way we want them to go. When we are successful, we tend to forget God and take the credit for ourselves." Suddenly, Stephanie brightened up. She said, "I understand now! If God didn't love me, He wouldn't have given me this humbling experience. He didn't want me to lose sight of Him because of my own pride." Stephanie's mom nodded and chuckled at Stephanie's happy face. She said to Stephanie, "Lesson learned! Sometimes, God allows us to make mistakes and feel discouraged, but only because He wants us to grow through these bad experiences. He is always there for us when we turn back to Him. He wants to restore us and help us get back on track."

In the end, Stephanie learned that God's grace is enough in all situations. In one of her prayers, Stephanie asked for God's forgiveness for all the things she said. Suddenly, Stephanie felt the Holy Spirit come down upon her powerfully. Stephanie was happy in the joy of the Lord.

Discussion Questions

1. Why did Stephanie get so angry with everybody? What do you think she was thinking about?

2. Stephanie prayed all week for God to bless her even though it seems that He didn't bless her. Why do you think things happened like they did?

3. Do you ever feel like God isn't listening to your prayers? Share an experience. How can we always be thankful to God in all situations?

SUBMIT TO GOD'S WILL

Christians often wonder what God wants them to do concerning their desires and plans. It seems as though God's will is hidden in a buried treasure chest, and we have only small portions of the map to find its location. But is this true? In the Scriptures, we have all the guidance we need in order to live for Jesus Christ. God wants us to follow Him so that He can lead us step by step.

Reference Verse: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Scenario: Lisa and her family moved to another state because of her father's new job. Lisa was having a tough time adjusting to her new school, and she missed her friends from her old school terribly. Even though Lisa didn't understand God's purpose for her to go through such a difficult change, Lisa remained joyful and prayed continually, giving thanks to God every day for keeping her family together safe and sound.



God has a perfect will for us. Even though at times we cannot see or understand it, we believe that with continuous _____, God will reveal it to us in His timing. Therefore, we should always be _____ and give _____ to God in all circumstances.

*This is today's memory verse.

Reference Verse: Ephesians 5:17

Scenario: Jorge was really tempted during the exam to glance at Jeremy's last answer since it was the only answer of which he was unsure. Jorge really wanted to get all the answers right. He said a silent prayer to ask God to help him overcome his temptation. As Jorge realized that true wisdom is not reflected on his exam but on his decision to be honest, his urge to glance at Jeremy's answer disappeared. Jorge gave thanks to God.



We know that true wisdom from God allows us to understand and submit to God's will. It is _____ to choose our own path rather than follow God's directions. We should always pray for God's _____ so that we may understand His plan and perfect will for us.

Reference Verse: Romans 12:2

Scenario: Sophie's uncle served some fruit after dinner. Knowing that he was a fervent Buddhist, Sophie bravely asked her uncle if the fruit being served had been used for worshipping. Not surprisingly, he replied yes. Sophie politely rejected the fruit and explained to her uncle that she was a Christian. Surprised at Sophie's faith, her uncle began to find out more about God from Sophie.



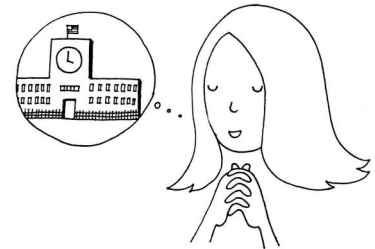
To say "no" to someone is not always easy. It may strain the relationship, at least for a while. It may hurt. We may seem rude.

Friends may even exclude us. However, there are times when we

have to firmly say "no." A very good example for us today is that of Daniel's three friends: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. The king, Nebuchadnezzar, had built a golden statue and wanted all his subjects to bow down to it. Everyone in the country was doing it. But, these three youths knew that they should not conform to the _____. They refused to bow down to the statue, even at the risk of their lives. Their bravery to defy the king was _____ and _____ and in accordance with the perfect _____ of God. In the end, although they were thrown into a fiery furnace for holding on to their faith, God delivered them and they walked out of the furnace unscathed.

Reference Verse: Proverbs 3:5-6

Scenario: Natalie's parents couldn't afford to send her to a private school even though Natalie was so sure that she would have a much better learning experience there than in a public school. However, Natalie acknowledged that God had a perfect plan for her and that she should always rely on God. She knew that she needed to let Him guide her paths instead of leaning on her own understanding. She prayed that God could give her faith to trust in Him with all her heart.



We don't know our future, but if we _____ in the Lord with all our _____, we can rest assured, knowing that He will Himself _____ all our paths. The key is to _____ Him in all we do and believe that His will, even at times beyond our own _____, is the best for us.

After this lesson, how would you change the way you pray?

_____’s Song of Thanksgiving

I thank the Lord for _____,
for _____ and _____.

My heart is filled with joy and praise,
Because He guides my way.

Thank you, Lord, for _____;

Thank you, Lord, for _____;

Thank you, Lord, for _____;

Thy will is always the best for me.

E2 Year 2 Book 2 Lesson 3—Seek to Do God's Will, and Be Thankful at All Times

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Weekly Bible Reading: _____

Bible Reading: Check each box when you complete that day's reading.

Prayer: Check each box after you pray to God that day.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Read							
Pray							

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____

2. _____

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse. **(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)**

Fill In the Blank

1. When the ten lepers saw Jesus passing by, they lifted up their voices and said, " _____, _____, _____!" (Luke 17:13)
2. One of the lepers, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and _____, _____. He was a _____. (Luke 17:15-16)
3. Paul pleaded with the Lord _____ times that his affliction might depart from him. And God said to him, "My _____ is sufficient for you, for My _____ is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:8-9)

Multiple Choice

4. ____: When the lepers realized that they were healed, they _____.
 - a. Thanked Jesus immediately
 - b. Went towards the village immediately so that they could show themselves to the priests
 - c. Asked Jesus from where His power had come
5. ____: Before God answered Paul's prayer, Paul prayed that _____ concerning his affliction.
 - a. God's will be done
 - b. He could glorify God with his physical suffering
 - c. God take away his pain
6. ____: God did not heal Paul because _____.
 - a. His will was for Paul to endure his pain and glorify His name through his suffering
 - b. Paul sinned against God before by persecuting Christians
 - c. It was not His timing yet

