

LIVING DAILY FOR GOD

JUNIOR 1 YEAR 3 BOOK 4



Teacher's Guide and Student Handouts

Fear, Love, and Honor God

Passages: As listed in the lesson.

Memory Verse

“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”
(Deuteronomy 10:12)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A reverential fear regards God’s will as greater than our own.2. Loving God requires us to seek a deeper relationship with Him.3. Learn to honor God when emboldened by the spirit and with a deeper understanding of Him.	God is a fearful, loving, and honorable God.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Learn how to identify and lay aside desires that draw us away from God.2. Practice fearing, loving, and honoring God through small actions in our everyday lives.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. The Fear, Love, and Honor of God
- B. Fearing God
- C. Loving God
- D. Honoring God

Life Application

1. Overcoming Our Desires
Activity: Identifying and Laying Aside Our Desires
2. Practice Through Positive Action
Activity: Small Steps to Honoring God

Memory Verse

Conclusion: God is the one who gave us everything that we have, and who, therefore, has the power and right to take it all away. When we fully understand this, and learn to fear, love, and honor God with every action we take, we can lay aside our sins and run the race towards salvation with endurance!

Events and Spiritual Teachings

Introduction

What is something that you love or honor? (*Allow students to answer.*) A common example is money, because of what you can do with it. Some people honor celebrities or superheroes, while others spend every penny on games or hobbies. Meanwhile, what we fear can be quite different. But quite often, we have fears related to our social standing, such as not “fitting in,” or being unable to “rise to the top.” Everyone is afraid of failure in some way, not always due to the consequences, but because of how everyone will view them after they have failed. We often fear rejection.

God has given us a great capacity for love and honor, and our fears help us to live wisely. Unfortunately, when these feelings are misdirected, they can lead to idolatry and sin. When we pursue our games, we may fail to follow our parents’ instructions. If we have a great love of money, we may prioritize our part-time job over Sabbath services. If we fear what our friends might think of our poor grades, we may drop our Bible studies in favor of studying. There’s nothing wrong with enjoying the blessings God has given to us, but God wants us to fear, love, and honor Him above all. Today, we’ll learn how to do this.

A. The Fear, Love, and Honor of God

Most of the time, we like to know why we ought to do something. So why should we fear, love, or honor God? There are three basic reasons why:

- God Himself is fearful, so He is worthy of our fear (Heb 10:31; Rev 14:7).
- God Himself is loving, so He is worthy of our love (Jn 3:16; Rom 5:8).
- God is our Creator, so He deserves our honor (Mal 1:6; 1 Tim 1:17).

If someone had the power to give us a failing grade in school, wouldn’t we treat them with respect? In much the same way, we should revere God, as He is the one who gave us everything that we have, so He has the power and right to take it all away. He is also our Lord who laid down His life for us, so that we might obtain salvation. God has the power to condemn or to save us. When we know and remember these things, it is easier to understand why we should afford God such respect.

It is also important to remember that God never asks us to do anything that He is unwilling to do. Jesus was God who became flesh, bringing us grace and truth (Jn 1:14). He made what was unseen about God visible (Jn 14:9; 1:18), so that through His example on earth, we might know the best way to fear, love, and honor Him. How exactly did Jesus show His fear, love, and honor towards God?

Jesus Christ had every opportunity to turn away from the heavy burden given to Him. But He didn’t. Instead, He chose to fulfill the Scriptures (Mt 26:53–54). This was because of His godly fear, His love for the heavenly Father, and His desire to honor God’s will (Jn 14:31; Mt 26:39; Jn 8:49; Heb 5:7). From this, we can see that Jesus taught us how we should act as God’s children: we need to hold a reverential fear towards God, love our Father in heaven, and honor Him above anything else in our lives.

B. Fearing God

We can have a better understanding of what it means to “fear” God by examining Jesus’ example in the Bible. Turn to Matthew 26:38–42. The Bible records that Jesus’ soul was “exceedingly sorrowful” when He prayed in the garden of Gethsemane. Luke 22:44 says that Jesus, “being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” But despite this, He still prayed that this cup be taken, “not as I will, but as You will” (Mt 26:39; cf. Lk 22:42). How does

this passage demonstrate fearing God? To fully understand this, we first need to recognize what Jesus was experiencing at this moment.

Why did Jesus make this prayer?

1. Fully human

It is important to remember that Jesus Christ was fully human. The Bible reminds us that He experienced all of our fears and emotions (Heb 4:15; Isa 53:3). At this moment, in the face of pain and death, He also had a human fear. He dreaded what He was about to experience.

2. The cross that He faced

The cross that He had to face was unlike any other. It was the deepest agony and anguish that we ourselves would never experience or understand. This is because His death meant carrying the world's sin and guilt. He would face all of God's wrath (Ezek 7:8; Isa 51:17) for all the sins that we have committed and will commit. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Jesus Christ knew that He would become a sin and a curse for us, and that He would have to experience the fullness of God's anger.

We can now see that Jesus Christ had a human nature. He felt dread and sorrow from the knowledge that He would carry the sins of the world and experience separation from God's love. But the amazing thing is that despite His fear of what He would face, His godly fear was greater still.

How did He show fear towards God?

1. He remained obedient

Jesus Christ foresaw how dreadful His impending death would be, so He asked God if the cup could be taken from Him. Yet because of His fear of God, He remained obedient to God's will. "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour" (Jn 12:27). He had a healthy fear of God because He reaffirmed His desire to do God's will and fulfill God's purpose, despite knowing that His soul would be crushed by the weight and power of the sin that He had to bear.

2. He willingly sacrificed Himself

Bearing the weight and power of our sins means that the suffering He had to endure went beyond the physical. It is difficult for us to understand what it means to be cut off from God so completely, but this is what Jesus had to undergo in order to fulfill God's will (Mt 27:46). "He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many" (Isa 53:12). This agony of "pouring out His soul unto death" was an essential part of His fear. He foresaw the physical and spiritual struggle that He had to endure, yet He was still willing to be crushed. Because of His godly fear, He sacrificed everything, so that He could redeem us with His precious blood.

God's will was more important to Jesus than anything else, including His own life. This is because He feared and respected God's will more than His own. Through His prayer and His actions, Jesus taught us that ultimately, God's will is greater than our own, and to fear God means to follow His will even if we don't like it or are scared to do it. In this manner, we can learn to hold a reverential fear towards God.

C. Loving God

Loving God is a two-way street. God desires that we abide in His presence, so that He can abide in us! Jesus demonstrated this mutual relationship throughout His life: His every action was in unity with God's

will. In turn, God abided with Him and visibly blessed Him throughout His ministry. Let's read a few verses to first understand why Jesus Christ had so much love for His Father.

1. A love before the foundation of the world

In His last prayer before His crucifixion, Jesus said, "for You loved Me before the foundation of the world" (Jn 17:24). Jesus' love for the Father comes from God's immense love for Him, a love that already existed even before the creation!

2. God's validation and blessing

Let's read Luke 3:22. "And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased." God repeated similar words at the mount of transfiguration, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" (Mt 17:5). God's words reveal the heart of a Father who loves and delights in His Son, and this became the foundation of Jesus' life. God's blessing was a source of strength, confidence, and purpose. His faith was deeply rooted due to the love of the Father. As a result, His life was never determined by what others said of Him, but by God's will.

3. The image of the invisible God

Jesus stated that "he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me" (Jn 12:45). God being Spirit, it is difficult for us to fully understand His presence. However, Jesus reflected God's glory and bore God's very nature. He was "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation" (Col 1:15). Because of this, Jesus said that "the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel" (Jn 5:20).

When we think of how to love God, we tend to think of how we can serve in church, how we can repay His love, or how we can sacrifice for others. These are all important acts of faith and loving service for our Lord. However, God desires us to be in His presence, and to have a deep and abiding relationship with Him. If we remain in His presence and let God's love fill us every day, God will show us how we can love Him back.

During His life on earth, it was natural for Jesus to love God because the relationship that He had with His Father was one of delight, not of duty. He loved His Father eagerly, so He gladly carried out His purpose. His entire life was anchored in what God wanted Him to do (Jn 14:31).

What is your relationship with God compared to this? Is it a loving one? Or is it one filled with frustration, where you do not understand how to establish a relationship or grow in your love for Him? Like Jesus Christ, God loved us before our birth, and even before the foundation of the world. If you reach out to God through His word, you will be surprised to find out how much He loves you! With time and patience, we can learn to receive His love, and in turn, we will experience the "fullness of joy" in His presence (Ps 16:11). He will "revive" you according to His "lovingkindness" (Ps 119:88).

D. Honoring God

Let's turn back to John 17:1. "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You." From His prayer in the garden of Gethsemane, we know that Jesus Christ was deeply distressed about what He was about to endure. But in His final prayer, He still prioritized God's glory over His own humiliation, suffering, and death. Let's turn to Matthew 26:53. Jesus Christ had every opportunity to turn away from the duty given to Him. "But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled" (Mt 26:56).

Whether we realize it or not, we tend to honor different things in our lives by placing special emphasis on things that we love. Perhaps we rush home every day to watch a TV show, diligently log in to one of our apps several times a day, or spend hours on our schoolwork. But as our Creator, God deserves our honor above all other things. The Bible reminds us that, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD” (Job 1:21). When we choose to honor things or people above God, we have forgotten that the Lord gave us everything that we have. Malachi 1:6 says, “A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am the Father, where is My honor? And if I am a Master, where is My reverence?”

Peter denied Jesus three times when Jesus was arrested. But after the descent of the Holy Spirit, when they were put on trial for preaching the gospel, Peter and John proclaimed, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). Emboldened by the Holy Spirit and their greater understanding of God, the apostles now feared God more than men. Because of this, they followed in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus and chose to honor God more than anything or anyone else in their lives.

Check for Understanding

- 1. What are the three basic reasons we should fear, love, and honor God?**
 - God Himself is fearful, so He is worthy of our fear (Heb 10:31; Rev 14:7).
 - God Himself is loving, so He is worthy of our love (Jn 3:16; Rom 5:8).
 - God is our Creator, so He deserves our honor (Mal 1:6; 1 Tim 1:17).
- 2. How did Jesus’ prayer in the garden of Gethsemane demonstrate a fear of God?** Being fully human, Jesus Christ experienced dread and sorrow from the knowledge of what He was about to experience. But He remained obedient because God’s will was more important to Him than anything else, including His own life.
- 3. How do we show our love towards God?** While it is important to do things for Him, such as serve in church, God also desires for us to be in His presence, and to have a deep and abiding relationship with him.
- 4. In what way do we often intentionally or unintentionally honor other things over God during our daily lives?** We honor different things in our lives by placing special emphasis on things that we love.
- 5. From Peter’s example, how might we learn to honor God instead?** Allow ourselves to become emboldened by the Holy Spirit and increase in our understanding of God so that we fear God more than anything else.

Life Application

1. Overcoming Our Desires

When we want things on this earth, our priorities shift, making us fail to fear, love, and honor God. These desires could be anything, from wanting to fit in, to spending more time playing our games, or even the desire for a specific job in the future. To learn how to keep God first in our lives, we must first identify the desires that drive us away from Him.

Activity (Part 1): Identifying Our Desires

On your own or with a partner, brainstorm three common desires in your daily life that interfere with your relationship with God. How exactly do these desires drive us away from God? Share your findings with the class. Then, in the following scenarios, identify what desire is driving each character. Once you have identified their desire, try thinking of ways to address the problem that they face in their faith.

Scenario 1

John's friend Billy has not been doing well in school lately, so Billy has been pressuring John to let him peek at his answers during tests. John knows that this is wrong, and he is afraid that the teacher will catch them. But Billy has been his friend for a very long time, too, and he doesn't want that to change. Besides, isn't it important to stay loyal to your friends and to treat them well?

- What desire or fear does John have? What possible solutions can you offer to John?

Scenario 2

Mary always feels thrilled when she is asked to perform at piano recitals. The applause and recognition that she receives is always something that she looks forward to. During the summer, her parents encourage her to attend church seminars to draw closer to God, but Mary doesn't want to go, as that would mean missing out on her piano lessons and events. If she puts her lessons on hold, who knows how much her skills will deteriorate? Besides, she has to keep pushing herself to become better and better now, while she has the time. She can always attend church events later, can't she?

- What desire or fear does Mary have? If she were your friend, what would you say to her?

Scenario 3

When Robert's parents finally gave him the new game he wanted, he immediately began playing non-stop. There were always so many things to do in the game, and there never seemed to be enough time to play. When his friends wanted to hang out in the park, he didn't feel like going, and when his parents told him to attend church events, he felt anxious about the play time he'd lose. Although he had always attended spiritual convocations in the past, this time, he was considering staying at home. After all, isn't it important to enjoy himself? And his parents paid so much for the game, he really should get every penny's worth of fun out of it.

- What desire or fear does Robert have? How can he balance his desires in a godly way?

Friendship, recognition for our skills, and enjoyment in life are not always a sin. But they become sinful when those desires grow out of control and draw us away from God. As a result, things that look like innocent enjoyment often end up becoming a snare for our faith that can cause us to sin. When we fear losing something worldly more than we fear losing God, our desires have become a hindrance to our faith. To avoid this, we need to make a habit of examining our lives and always asking ourselves: What desires are pulling me away from God?

Activity (Part 2): Laying Aside Our Desires

Once we recognize the desires that are putting our faith at risk, what steps do we take? Hebrews 12:1 instructs us to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." We must "lay aside" whatever weighs us down in our race to salvation. Unless we completely set aside the desires that control our lives, they will always be temptations for us, snares that can cause us to stumble in our faith.

Pick one or more of the desires that you thought of earlier. Then, list some steps that you can take to begin curbing these desires. Remember to start small! Realistically, you are more likely to cut fifteen minutes from your social media time than an hour! But after cutting fifteen minutes for several days, you can move that time up to thirty minutes, then forty-five, and so on. Perhaps your plan may not involve time management, but installing an app to prohibit your phone usage, moving your computer so that you can be held accountable, or simply leaving your phone in another room while doing homework. There are a variety of solutions, so try brainstorming several possible steps that you can take to help curb and eventually lay aside your desires. Once you have come up with a practical plan, share it with the class.

(Teachers: You may want to organize a follow-up discussion to this activity, perhaps the following week or at the end of the term depending on how detailed their plans are. You can also encourage them to help each other, especially if they are siblings, or check in with each other outside of church.)

Laying aside our desires is always easier said than done. God *wants* us to focus on Him, though, so He will help those who sincerely want to lay aside their sins and draw near to Him. Isaiah 40:29 says that God “gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength.” To receive His strength, we need to pray for the fullness of the Spirit (Rom 8:26), ask for help from our spiritual brothers and sisters (Eccl 4:9–10; Heb 10:24–25), and fill our hearts with things that are spiritual instead of worldly. As Paul wrote, “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col 3:2).

2. Practice Through Positive Action

We learned in today’s lesson that we cannot show our reverence to God simply in our words—we must show it through our actions in our daily lives! But what actions can we take to show God that we love, fear, and honor Him? When God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, He was testing Abraham’s love for God. We will face challenges, too—challenges that test our fear of God’s power, and our love for His will. Our response to such tests will show whether we honor God. Those tests may even simply be the habits that we form in our daily lives.

Activity: Small Steps to Honoring God

(Teachers: The idea behind this activity is to help your students understand that fearing, loving, and honoring God can be positive and enlightening, rather than just cause them to feel guilt-ridden over the sins they have committed or the habits that they struggle to break. The students can also incorporate the previous activity into this one, by using positive actions to gradually replace any worldly desires that they tend to follow.)

Recall your activities over the past two days, from the moment you woke up to the moment you went to sleep. Write them down in your notebook, using a fresh page for each day, in rough chronological order. Focus on what you did during breaks between classes, before or after school, and what you did the moment you get home. Once you have finished, examine your days, and ask yourself:

- “When can I do something for someone else, instead of for myself?”

These actions don’t have to be large or ostentatious. They can be something small, such as taking the time to greet a lonely classmate, helping your parents take out the trash, or spending a few extra moments in silent prayer. If you realize from your notes that you are spending too much time on a hobby or activity, then try taking small steps to reduce that activity by replacing it with something that will help someone. For example, if your day is littered with time spent on your phone, try setting it aside for half an hour and helping a friend or sibling with their homework instead.

(Teachers: If you’d like, you can brainstorm ideas as a class for this part of the activity. Focus on small, practical actions that your students can take, based on their lives at home, at school, and at church. “Vacuum the RE classroom” is an easier step to take than “preach to a friend during break,” for example – although if your students truly want to do so, there’s no reason to discourage them! Remind them to think of things that are helpful to other that would please God. Once you have finished brainstorming, students can look at the list and choose activities that they think they can do.)

Write down each new action you think of in a different color. If your page is ordered chronologically, you can write it down around the time you think you can do it, such as during lunch break, or just before you go to bed. If you are going to replace an old activity with this new action, cross off what you did previously and write your new item down next to the old one. This can help you remember in the future what you plan on cutting down on, and what action you hope to do instead.

Testimony: Persist in Fearing God

At times, the temptations, tribulations, or trials that we face can be overwhelming. It is during those times that it always feels easier to just give up and stop bothering with this whole Christianity business. Why do we have to expend so much effort in honoring God? Below is a short testimony from a believer who simply could not find any reason to continue enduring the persecution of the world, but in the end, realized the value of persisting in our fear and honor of the Lord.

In Jesus' name, I testify. Shortly after I became a Christian, I felt persecuted by the world and very lonely. As a teenager with few friends, it was difficult to find anyone who saw the value of fearing and honoring God. I heard things like, "Why do you pray so much?" "What's wrong with you?" "You're strange!" "You're no fun to be around. Bye." I became very depressed with my situation.

One night, as I sat on the edge of the bed, ready to sleep, I thought to myself, "It's too hard to be a Christian. Maybe hell is not that bad. I should just give up." Just as I thought this, I let myself fall back on my bed. But instead of hitting my pillow, I fell into a deep hole. I knew in the spirit that I was in the bottomless pit recorded in Revelation (Rev 9:1–2).

As I fell, I felt complete loneliness, darkness, and confusion. We may think that we have experienced loneliness or darkness, but while on this world, we can still reach out to others. The dark of the night is always cast away by the morning sun. As I descended down this pit, I experienced a deep loneliness that cannot be described. I knew that there was no end to this darkness. I began feeling cold spirits, like lost souls, running through my body. As they passed through, I sensed their pain and heard their cries. A deep spiritual darkness smothered me, and I found myself unable to breathe.

I then remembered a testimony. A brother saw himself awaiting his turn in a line of thousands before God's judgment throne. Jesus sat on it with eyes like a flame of fire (Rev 1:14), and a multitude of angels surrounded the throne. When a person was found worthy of salvation, the angels sang, and they were welcomed into God's kingdom. If the angels did not sing, two other angels took hold of the person's arms and carried them to a large pit that opened up before the throne. The brother saw those souls kicking and screaming as they were thrown into the pit.

Reflecting on this testimony, I realized my mistake and my need for God's help. I cried, "Hallelujah!" and repented of my wrong thinking. I told God, "Lord, I don't want this. Please save me!" Suddenly, I felt like God's hand took my spirit and lifted me back. I was so thankful to be back that I kept praising God. After that experience, I realized that I should never, ever give up on my spiritual life or stop fearing God, no matter how difficult the circumstances may be. As Hebrews 13:5–6 says, "For [God] Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say: 'The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?'"

– Anonymous

Memory Verse

“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”
(Deuteronomy 10:12)

Meaning

As His children, God requires that we treat Him as our Father and provider. Although fearing, loving, and honoring God is often difficult, He has promised to bless us abundantly when we do so. He told the Israelites to follow His commands, “that you may be strong, and go in and possess the land which you cross over to possess, and that you may prolong *your* days in the land which the LORD swore to give your fathers, to them and their descendants, ‘a land flowing with milk and honey’” (Deut 11:8–9).

In the same way, we will also receive strength and blessings from God when we love Him. But most importantly, He has promised us that if we do love Him, an inheritance in the promised land awaits us: the “land flowing with milk and honey,” which is the heavenly kingdom!

Conclusion

God has given us a great capacity for love and honor, and our fears help us to live wisely. But God wants us to direct these feelings towards Him, so that we can receive His blessings. To do so, we must remember the example that Jesus Christ gave us. When we are able to enter into a loving and fearful relationship with God, we will become emboldened by the Holy Spirit and increase in our understanding of God and His word. When we do so, we will learn to fear, love, and honor God with every action we take.

Lesson 1 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What does God require of His children? What has God promised if we do so?
God requires us to treat and honor Him as our Father and provider. He has promised to give us strength and blessings, and an inheritance in the promised land, which is the heavenly kingdom.
2. “But that the _____ may know that I _____ the _____, and as the _____ gave Me _____, so I _____. [...]” (John 14:31)
world, love, Father, Father, commandment, do.
3. Explain in your own words what it means to fear God according to the Bible.
See Events and Spiritual Teachings, Section B.
4. What is a prerequisite to being able to love God?
Loving God is a two-way street. God desires that we abide in His presence, so that He can abide in us! To love God therefore requires that we first develop a relationship with Him.
5. For each day of the week, write down at least one new thing that you did to show your fear, love, or honor towards God. Use the plans or actions that we discussed during class to help you along.

Sunday	
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	

Be a True Disciple of Christ

Passages: As listed in the lesson.

Memory Verse

“Then He said to them all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.’” (Luke 9:23)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A disciple’s life consists of spiritual growth and development.2. God requires His disciples to surrender their will to Him.3. Jesus learned obedience by the things that He suffered.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God is seeking those who follow Him.2. God blesses His followers.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Lay down my own will.2. Establish a daily quiet time to spend with God in Bible study and prayer.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Disciples of Christ
- B. A True Disciple

Life Application: Becoming a Committed Disciple of Christ

Memory Verse

Conclusion: God wants us to surrender ourselves entirely to Him so that our discipleship becomes our way of life.

Events and Spiritual Teachings

A. Disciples of Christ

The Lord Jesus loved us so much that He died a brutal death on our behalf, so that through baptism, we can begin a new life. This new life in Christ shouldn't be taken lightly, not only because of what Jesus had to endure, but also because of the salvation that awaits us at the end of it. If we choose to embrace this new life, we enter a lifelong process called discipleship. Let's first go over what a disciple is.

1. A disciple is a learner

The word "disciple" originates from the Latin word *discipulus*, meaning "student," or "learner."¹ A disciple was someone who had the discipline of a student and the willingness to be constantly learning. As Jesus' disciples, we must undergo constant spiritual growth and development in our lives. However long we live, we need to continually learn and grow in spiritual maturity through the many circumstances and trials that we face. Even Jesus Christ had to grow spiritually (Lk 2:52)!

2. A disciple is a follower

A true disciple isn't just someone who absorbs knowledge. Let's read Mark 1:17. The first thing that Jesus said to His new disciples was, "Follow Me." He wasn't just calling them to follow Him physically. A true disciple is also someone who follows the example of their teacher in their actions and words. So, to become Jesus' disciple, we need to learn how to choose thoughtful, deliberate actions that follow His example.

If we are His disciples, our primary goal is to become more like Jesus, because He is not only our chosen master and teacher, but also our sovereign Lord (Rev 4:8, 11). The more time and attention we spend on being His disciple, the more God will guide us through life. As the Bible says, "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the LORD" (Jer 29:13–14).

B. A True Disciple

Jesus used three phrases to describe the requirements of a true disciple. Let's read Matthew 16:24. "Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.'" What do these really mean, though? Let's go over each action.

1. Deny yourself

To deny something means to resist, reject, or refuse it. A classic example of when someone failed to deny himself is when Peter denied Jesus three times (Mt 26:69–75). Peter had been with Jesus for so long. He had witnessed Jesus' transfiguration, had seen the many miracles of healing and provision, and had walked on water with Jesus' help. But when confronted with the possibility of suffering or death, Peter denied his own master not once, but three times.

We need to learn to deny ourselves instead of deny Jesus. But what does it really mean to deny yourself? We might think of it as telling ourselves, "You're not allowed to have that snack!" or, "It doesn't matter what you feel!" But denying ourselves isn't physical abstinence, nor is it invalidating or ignoring our own feelings or self-worth. Denying ourselves means saying "no" to our inner desires, and saying "yes" to God's. It means saying, "Not by my will, but Yours" (Lk

¹ "History and Etymology for *disciple*", *Merriam-Webster*, s.v. "disciple", accessed October 15th, 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/disciple>

22:42; Mk 14:36). Denying ourselves means submitting to God's way instead of our own. Let's look at a few examples of when we can deny ourselves.

- When someone makes me angry, denying myself means choosing forgiveness, not revenge.
- When someone hates me, denying myself means choosing to show love to them anyway.
- When someone is rude to me, denying myself means choosing compassion and trying to understand the reasons behind their actions.
- When I can't see what is ahead, denying myself means choosing to trust in God.
- When someone ridicules Jesus' name, denying myself means standing up for my faith.

We often want to follow our will, and it feels like we suffer a lot when we don't. But Jesus experienced the same kind of suffering in order to deny Himself and follow God's will (Heb 5:8–9). We must learn to deny ourselves and obey the Lord, even if it is unreasonable, difficult, or painful. If we do so, then the Bible says that "whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven" (Mt 10:32–33).

2. Take up your cross

The Romans forced criminals to carry their crosses so that they would be shamed on the road to their crucifixion. Being nailed to the cross also meant that the convicted would die a slow, painful death. Jesus Christ knew that He would experience suffering, humiliation, and pain before a torturous death. This was the cross that He willingly took up of His own choice.

When Jesus calls us to take up our own cross, He is asking us to be willing to die for Him. In other words, He is asking us to surrender ourselves to Him, much the same way He surrendered Himself to God's plan. But what does it really mean to do this?

Let's read Romans 8:13. "For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live." Let's also read Galatians 5:24. "And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." From these verses, we can see that taking up our cross is a step beyond denying ourselves. It means being willing to suffer and die for Christ, which requires that we put to death any sin within us (*BSG: Matthew, 7.8*)².

3. Follow Jesus

As we learned earlier, a true disciple isn't just someone who learns, but someone who also follows. Peter wrote, "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps" (1 Pet 2:21). John also wrote, "He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked" (1 Jn 2:6), while Paul urged us to "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ" (1 Cor 11:1). Following Jesus means doing what He would do (Jn 12:26) (*BSG: Matthew, 7.8*). It is constantly asking ourselves the well-known question: "What would Jesus do?"

To follow Jesus, it is important to become familiar with His words and constantly develop our relationship with Him. We cannot follow Jesus on our own. We need His help, which we can obtain through prayer in the Spirit and through understanding the guidance that He offers in the Bible. This means that we must develop three basic qualities within ourselves:

² TJC Department of Literary Ministry, *Bible Study Guide: Matthew*, (Malaysia: True Jesus Church, 2012), https://bsg.tjc.org/tjc_bsg_lesson/matthew-24/?guide_id=153, 7.8: 13

- An understanding of His word
- Submission to His teachings
- The determination to follow His will

When we better understand His words, we can then learn how to submit to His teachings. But both steps require determination. When we determine to seek out God’s will, He will help us truly follow Jesus.

Check for Understanding

- 1. What are two attributes of a disciple?** A disciple is a learner and a follower.
- 2. What should our primary goal be as true disciples of Christ? Why?** If we are truly disciples of Christ, our primary goal will be to become more like Him, because He is not only our chosen master and teacher, but also our sovereign Lord (Rev 5:12).
- 3. What three commands did Jesus give His disciples? Briefly explain each.** He said, “[Let] him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”
 - To deny ourselves means to say “no” to our inner desires and “yes” to God’s. It means saying, “Not by my will, but Yours.”
 - To take up our cross means to be willing to suffer and die for the Lord, by putting to death any sin within us.
 - To follow Him means to walk in Jesus’ footsteps and to ask ourselves constantly, “What would Jesus do?”
- 4. What three qualities should we develop to follow Jesus?** We must develop an understanding of His word, submission to His teachings, and the determination to follow His will.

Life Application

Becoming a Committed Disciple of Christ

(Teachers: The below chart has been added to the Student Handout.)

To level up our discipleship, we first need to ascertain where we currently are. What kind of disciple do you think you are at the moment? Are you a casual disciple? A convinced disciple? Or are you a fully committed disciple of Christ? The following chart lists some characteristics of each. Highlight or mark which column describes you best for each item, and then see what kind of disciple you are.

A casual disciple...	A convinced disciple...	A committed disciple...
Comes to church but barely pays any attention, often playing, leaving the chapel, or doing other things during sermons.	Sometimes pays attention to sermons, and generally learns some sort of teaching to apply.	Pays close attention in sermons, and always walks away with a teaching or lesson that they try to apply to their lives.
Barely prays at home, and has trouble focusing during prayers, unless they need something.	Prays sometimes, and usually has thoughtful prayers that only sometimes lack focus.	Prays often and for a long time, and always has thoughtful, communicative prayers.
Rarely reads the Bible at home.	Sometimes reads and studies the Bible when they have time.	Reads and studies the Bible purposefully every day.
Rarely seeks out God’s will, and never bothers finding out what God wants of them when faced with a decision.	Normally tries to put God first when faced with big decisions, but sometimes forgets to seek out God’s will.	Actively seeks out God’s will. When faced with a big decision, spends a lot of time seeking what God wants them to do.

<p>Dives headlong into situations when emotionally charged, with barely a thought for the consequences or for how they should act as God’s child.</p>	<p>Sometimes acts upon strong emotions like anger or hate, but tries their best to avoid acting impulsively when they remember to.</p>	<p>Never acts upon strong emotions like anger, hate, or a desire for revenge or justice. Always strives to reflect God in their actions.</p>
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Once we’ve discovered which kind of disciple we are, we need to learn the steps that we can take to become a better disciple to the Lord. Becoming a better disciple requires three actions: laying aside our own will, spending quiet time with God’s word every day, and communicating with God through daily prayer.

1. Laying aside our own will

Our pride makes us resent being forced to abide by someone else’s decisions, especially when they are decisions involving ourselves, such as how we spend our time, or our plans for the future. Surely, we have the right to choose our career, or how much time we spend on our hobbies! But Jesus gave us everything, including His own life. This means that as His disciples, we need to give up everything of ours for Him! This includes our will and plans for the present and the future.

It isn’t bad to have dreams, but if we surrender our lives to Him, including our future, He can give us the wisdom and strength that we need to accomplish the dreams that we have. Moreover, He can turn our passions into something that can benefit others and glorify Him! Let’s take a moment to reflect. What aspect of my life have I not yet laid aside for God? Which parts of my life do I still hold on to, without regard for God’s will? Examples may be:

- Our anger at someone, or our desire for vengeance
- Our anxieties
- Personal hobbies that distract us from God’s will
- Pride in our abilities
- Our time and effort

The world around us often says that “surrendering” is a bad thing, but for Jesus’ disciples, surrendering to Jesus is what leads us to victory over Satan and the greatest reward of eternal life at His side.

2. Spending daily quiet time with God and His word

Let’s read Mark 1:35. “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.” Jesus showed us how to cultivate our relationship with God: amidst life’s chaos, set aside a time of solitude and quietness, when we can focus our thoughts entirely upon God, free of any distractions. Why do you think this is so important?

Of the many different types of offerings the Israelites had to give, there were two offerings that were made daily in the temple: two lambs, one in the morning and one at twilight, each along with a grain and drink offering. The Lord said, “This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet you to speak with you” (Ex 29:42). This daily offering was a “sweet aroma” to the Lord (v. 41). It reminded the Israelites of God’s presence, and it was a sign of their desire to meet God and speak with Him.

From this, we can see that setting time aside for God each day is a way of inviting Him to meet with us; it reveals our desire for a closer relationship with Him. Therefore, to grow in Christ and become a true disciple, we need to cultivate the discipline of having daily quiet time with the Lord. You can start by

picking a time when your mind is most alert and clutter-free, such as in the morning or before you sleep, and make sure you plan ahead. This might mean setting an alarm, placing your Bible on your desk or bedside table ahead of time, or asking a friend or parent to help hold you accountable.

What should I do during my quiet time with God?

(Teachers: See homework question #5 for additional discussion during this section, if time permits.)

Setting aside some time and finding a quiet place is just the start! What you do with those precious moments is very important. There are different methods that people use to communicate with God, but here are a few suggestions:

- Read the Bible to try and see what God wants to tell us.
- Fill our hearts and minds with His will by meditating on His word (Ps 1:2).
- Fill out a prayer and Bible study notebook or logbook.
- Use a journal to meditate upon God, track our spirituality, and weed out any sin in our hearts.
- Focus on something specific in your prayer, such as thanksgiving or intercession.
- Spend time singing hymns and studying any associated verses or teachings.

The tools are the same, but the methods can be different for everyone. For example, some spend a few minutes taking apart a single verse so that they fully understand it, then spend time praying about the verse, asking God to help them understand it and apply it to their lives. Another method might be to read a chapter, write out your thoughts in a daily Bible journal, and then pray about your thoughts or any questions you might have. Others might be more logical, and may choose to lay out specific prayers beforehand, or find an interesting topic to study and ask God about.

Whichever way you choose to spend your quiet time with God, He is willing and happy to meet you however you please! Regardless of our method, the deeper we go into God's word, the more our spiritual life will blossom. We simply need the determination to continue dedicating this time for God, no matter how busy or tired we may feel. With the help of the Holy Spirit—and maybe with the help of a spiritual friend—we will be able to grow in our spirituality and become a committed disciple of the Lord.

3. Communicating with God through daily prayer

A true disciple spends a lot of time speaking with their teacher, and there is no better way for us to do that than through prayer! Prayer is our main method of communication with God. For many Christians, prayer is a place of greatest comfort and nourishment. This is because we can pour everything out to God in our prayers, and in turn, we can receive comfort, strength, and wisdom from the Holy Spirit.

Prayers can be difficult for us because we often lose focus, get bored, or run out of things to say. When we don't put any effort into our prayers, we don't receive anything from them. But when we put consistent thought and effort into our prayers, God will give us an overwhelming response! To help us learn to pray with discipline and focus, let's learn a few different methods of prayer.

a. Praise

*"I will love You, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."
(Ps 18:1–2)*

Select an attribute of God. Write it down and meditate on it before you pray. Think about how this attribute affects your life, and let it fill your heart as you praise God for who He is.

b. Thanksgiving

*"[Giving] thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."
(Eph 5:20)*

Consider how good the Lord has been to you. What has He given? What has He done for you? List all the blessings that you have received from the Lord before you pray.

c. Confession

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." (Ps 51:1–2)

Be honest about your sins and admit them to the Lord. Ask Him for cleansing and forgiveness, and the strength to avoid repeating the same mistakes in the future.

d. Petition

"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." (Lk 11:9)

Write down your request, and reflect on it: Is this in accordance with God's will? If it is, in your prayer, ask earnestly with persistence and perseverance, and never give up in asking.

e. Intercession

"For this reason we also, [...] do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." (Col 1:9)

Do you know anyone who needs intercession? Pray to God on their behalf with sincerity.

Every time we set aside our own desires and pray for God's will instead, He will give so much more than we can even imagine (Eph 3:20)! Just as the angel answered Jesus' plea in the garden of Gethsemane, when we pray according to His will, He will strengthen us and guide us on our path to becoming a true disciple of Christ. Even if we don't think to ask for it, He knows our need and gives it to us.

Memory Verse

"Then He said to them all, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.'" (Luke 9:23)

Meaning

To become true disciples of Christ, we need to learn to surrender ourselves in three ways:

1. Deny ourselves by saying "no" to our inner desires, and saying "yes" to God's. This means saying "not by my will, but Yours."
2. Take up our cross and be willing to suffer and die for the Lord by putting to death any sin within us.
3. Follow Jesus by walking in His footsteps and constantly asking ourselves, "What would Jesus do?"

Conclusion

Jesus has called us all to be His true disciples. As true disciples of Christ, our primary goal is to become more like Him, because He is not only our chosen master and teacher, but also our sovereign Lord (Rev 5:12). The more time and attention we spend on being His disciple, the more God will guide us through life (Jer 29:13–14). He wants us to surrender ourselves entirely to Him so that our discipleship becomes our way of life. By becoming more like Jesus, He will bless us in so many ways in our daily lives and grant us salvation when He comes again to receive His true followers.

Lesson 2 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. Explain what Jesus meant by these three steps in your own words.
Jesus was telling us that to be a true disciple, we must: (1) deny ourselves by saying “no” to our inner desires and “yes” to God’s; (2) take up our cross by being willing to suffer and die for God and putting to death any sin within us; and (3) follow Jesus by walking in His footsteps and constantly asking ourselves, “what would Jesus do?”

2. “For if you _____ according to the _____ you will _____; but if by the Spirit you put to _____ the deeds of the _____, you will _____.” (Romans 8:13)
live, flesh, die, death, body, live

3. If *discipulus* means “learner,” what does that mean for our spiritual lives as Jesus’ disciples?
As Jesus’ disciples, our lives must undergo constant spiritual growth and development. However long we live, we need to persistently learn and grow in spiritual maturity through the many circumstances and trials that we face.

4. What three basic qualities do we have to develop within ourselves to truly follow Jesus?
We must develop an understanding of His word, submission to His teachings, and the determination to follow His will.

5. Pick a time of day to spend with God and make a determination to stick to this time for the entire week. For each day, write down what you did during your quiet time with God. It doesn’t have to be long at first. Try out the different methods of reading and prayer that we discussed during class!

Sunday	<i>Personal answers.</i>
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	

Teachers: You may want to brainstorm suggestions during class for this homework, if time permits. Encourage the students to start small, especially if they aren’t accustomed to studying the Bible or praying at home. For example, they can spend 5 minutes studying their memory verse, then pray about it for another 5 minutes. Another way to spend their quiet time is by reading a chapter or story in the Bible, then writing their thoughts, questions, or anything that comes to mind in a notebook. If they already have their own family altars in place already, then encourage them to spend their own time with God separately, as the purpose of this is to develop their own, personal relationship and method of communication with God.

What is most important in teaching them to develop a habit is specificity. Vague instructions give too much freedom, and as a result may deter them from trying this activity. Specific instructions (ex: 5 minutes memorizing a verse, 5 minutes praying about what you learned about the verse) will help your students actually carry out the plans that they determine to do.

Becoming More like Christ (I): Love, Joy, Peace

Passages: As listed in the lesson.

Memory Verse

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22–23)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God’s love is sacrificial.2. God’s joy is not dependent on our circumstances.3. God’s peace is found through peace in God’s presence, peace with ourselves, and peace with others.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God is love.2. He is the true source of joy.3. God is peace.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Demonstrate our love and joy for others in the power of the Holy Spirit.2. Strive to experience God’s peace.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Love
- B. Joy
- C. Peace

Life Application: My Action Plan

Memory Verse

Conclusion: True love requires selflessness, and joy must flow from us, not into us because of external factors. In the same way, true peace stems from our heart, and remains unaffected by the things of this world, because it comes from the Spirit.

Events and Spiritual Teachings

Introduction: Becoming More like Christ

Just like physical growth, spiritual growth also takes time. But it is slightly different in that we have to put effort into our spiritual growth. Paul told us “that we should no longer be children [...] but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him [...]” (Eph 4: 14–15). But how do we grow up spiritually? One of the ways is by growing in the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Today, we’ll be studying three traits of the fruit of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, and peace. These are not easy traits to develop, but Jesus said, “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5). If we abide in Him, then the Holy Spirit will help us bear more love, joy, and peace. Therefore, to grow spiritually and become more like Christ, the first step is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. But aside from this, what can we do to produce these characteristics? Let’s go into more detail about each to see how to develop them in our lives.

A. Love

“He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” (1 Jn 4:8)

First, how would you define “love”? Try completing the following sentence: “Love is...” (*Allow students to brainstorm answers.*) We tend to associate love with emotions and feelings, or at least rather vague ideas. But God’s definition of love goes beyond feelings. The Bible often refers to “love” with the Greek word *agape* (Gal 5:22). This same word refers to the perfect love that Jesus demonstrated by laying down His very life. It transcends human love and is the purest and highest form of self-sacrifice. This is the form of “love” that God wants us to develop within ourselves. For the following verses, write down or underline how we can show our love for others.

- 1 Thess 1:3 – “[Remembering] without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father.”
- Gal 5:13 – “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”
- Lk 6:27 – “But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.”
- 1 Jn 3:18 – “My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.”
- Jn 15:13 – “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.

There are many things in life that show love, but many find it hard to put love into action. From these verses, we can see that godly love can be seen in putting others first in our actions. It is something that requires “labor,” servitude, and sacrifice. The Bible even calls us to love our enemies! The love that we already have may exist when we receive it from others, making our love very self-centered. This is because it is easier to love when we are loved by others first. But Jesus’ love never depended on His mood, the environment, or what others said or did (Mt 5:46–48). God’s love is completely selfless. Knowing this, how do we live out this same kind of love when it’s so difficult to do?

Living Out the Love of God

Let’s read Romans 5:5. “Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” God has already given us His love! All we need to do is pray in the Spirit. When we do, He will fill us with His power, which will help us grow in our love for others and our love for God. When we do, instead of prioritizing our own desires, we will set aside our own plans for the sake of others, and act with patience and goodness towards those around us, even if they are difficult to get along with. We will be willing to sacrifice our time and energy to help others and

learn to love even when we don't feel like it. We will learn not to fail God (1 Cor 13:4–8). Now that we have a better idea of what it means to love, who can you show love towards today?

B. Joy

“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.” (Jn 15:11)

Let's move on to joy. First, how would you define joy? “Joy is...” (*Allow students to answer.*) Sometimes, we think that we will be happy if we have certain things. “If only I had this or that, I'd be so happy!” This is normally what we might think of when we think of being joyful. But there is a difference between happiness and joy. If something good happens, we feel happy as a result, but only for a short period of time. The joy that the Bible refers to is a deeper, lasting joy that can give us strength (Neh 8:10). But what makes it so different from the happiness we experience in the world? Let's read a few verses about joy in the Bible.

- Jas 1:2 – “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials.”
- Neh 8:10 – “[For] the joy of the LORD is your strength.”
- Ps 16:11 – “You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”
- Rom 15:13 – “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

From these verses, we can see that the joy God offers is different. It can give us strength, and we will always feel this joy as long as we are in God's presence. No one in this world can promise that we will be happy all the time, and yet this is exactly what God has promised us.

The Joy of the Lord

God is able to guarantee our joy, because the type of joy He brings is not earthly. Its source is not based on worldly things, or on other people. Rather, it is of the Holy Spirit, making it a joy that is internal, like a spring flowing forth from within us (cf. Jn 4:13; 7:38). The happiness of this world is based on material objects or our physical circumstances, but the joy of the Spirit springs from within our heart, making it possible for us to have joy even while experiencing trials, sorrow, or pain (1 Thess 1:6). But if we are self-centered and only think of our needs, this joy from God will never flourish. Here are some steps to help us increase in our joy:

1. In everything give thanks

Paul taught the Thessalonian church, “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thess 5:16–18). A joyful person is someone who recognizes the blessings that God has given them and gives thanks for them.

2. Seek out God's presence

David wrote, “I have set the LORD always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices;” and “You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy” (Ps 16:8–9, 11). The closer we come to God's presence, the greater joy we receive. Therefore, we need to put forth the effort to continually seek Him out.

3. Give generously even in trials

The most blessed and joyful people are those who give. In describing the Macedonian church, Paul wrote that despite their “great trial of affliction,” “the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty” led them to give more, not less, to the churches in need (2 Cor 8:2). As the Bible

teaches, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35), so to receive joy we should learn to give to those in need, whether it is physically, spiritually, or emotionally.

C. Peace

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (Phil 4:6–7)

How many of you know what “the peace of God” means? Before we define it, let’s first read a few verses:

- Col 3:15 – “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.”
- Jn 16:33 – “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”
- 1 Pet 3:11 – “Let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it.”

Just like love and joy, the peace described in the Bible is clearly different from the peace of the world. The peace of the world depends on the things of the world. For example, we associate peace with the absence of violence or war, or perhaps when family members stop arguing with each other. But a lack of verbal or physical conflict doesn’t mean that we are experiencing true peace in our lives. If peace always depended on the absence of conflict, then our peace would never last for very long! The peace of God is different because it doesn’t depend on these external factors. Instead, it is the highest form of tranquility that comes from harmony with God and with men.

The Peace of God

Let’s read John 14:27, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” Here, Jesus is offering us true peace. This peace comes in three levels: peace with God, peace with ourselves, and peace with others.

1. Peace with God

How do we obtain peace with God? Paul wrote, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 5:1). The first step to finding peace with God is by being reconciled with Him. We need to believe in Jesus Christ and repent of our sins. This is the beginning of our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, and the foundation of our faith. What is the next step once we have reconciled with God and established our faith?

Let’s read Psalm 119:165. “Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble.” We need to learn to love God’s law. When we do, we “will both lie down in peace, and sleep; for You alone, O LORD, make [us] dwell in safety” (Ps 4:8). When we obtain peace with God, our lives will change completely. Our thoughts will be centered on God, and we will choose actions that please Him. As a result, we no longer need to fear for our future, because when we love God’s law, we will have a deeper understanding of His love for us as our Father, and our God of peace. With this understanding comes the knowledge that He will take care of our future. We will no longer fear, but lean on Him entirely and, in this way, will be at peace with God.

2. Peace with ourselves

To have peace with ourselves is a difficult thing. We are our own worst critics—we are never good enough for ourselves. But when we come to know God and understand His will, we will

stop focusing on our flaws and instead focus on what God has given us and praise Him for it. Psalm 139:14 says, “I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are your works, and that my soul knows very well.” Peace with ourselves isn’t just the acceptance of what God gave us, though. It is also trust in God’s power and creation.

Isaiah 26:3 says, “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.” To have peace with ourselves means to first trust completely in God’s protection and guidance. When we trust in the fortress that is His power, and trust God with our lives, we will no longer be anxious or frustrated about our own lack of abilities or foresight. Instead, we will experience peace “like a river” (Isa 48:18): an ever-flowing peace that is constant and abundant, and a source of spiritual nourishment for ourselves and those around us.

3. Peace with others

Do you have someone you can’t get along with? Maybe it’s a classmate, a teacher, or even a family member. Maybe there’s someone we can’t seem to get along with no matter how hard we try, or perhaps we don’t care enough to even try to patch things up. However, when we harbor dislike, hatred, or anger against others, we cannot live a life that is pleasing to God. To rid ourselves of these feelings, we need to pray for the power of the Holy Spirit. Letting go of our anger or dislike on our own is often too difficult, but the Spirit can fill us with the compassion and love to help us forgive, forget, and get along with others with the peace of God.

It isn’t easy to find the peace of God. But when we allow God to work through us, we can live in harmony with others even if there is conflict, and we will ultimately become more like Christ.

Check for Understanding

1. **What are the characteristics of godly love according to the Bible?** Godly love can be seen in putting others first in our actions. It is something that requires “labor,” servitude, and sacrifice. The Bible even calls us to love our enemies!
2. **Why is the joy of the Lord so different from the joy of the world?** The happiness of this world is based on material objects or our physical circumstances, but the joy of the Spirit springs from within our heart, making it possible for us to have joy even while experiencing trials, sorrow, or pain (1 Thess 1:6).
3. **In what way is the peace of God different from the peace of the world?** It doesn’t depend on external factors. Instead, it is the highest form of tranquility that comes from harmony with God and with men.
4. **What are the three levels of peace that Jesus offered to us? Briefly explain each.**
 - a. *Peace with God:* This is a result of being reconciled with God, establishing our faith, and loving His law. When we do, we will no longer fear for our future because we will have confidence in His grace and salvation.
 - b. *Peace with ourselves:* When we trust in the fortress that is God’s power and fully trust in Him, we will no longer be anxious or frustrated about our own lack of ability or foresight. Instead, we will experience an ever-flowing river of peace that is constant and abundant, and a source of spiritual nourishment.
 - c. *Peace with others:* When we rely on the Spirit to help us let go of our anger and dislike, and instead fill us with compassion and love for others, we can then live a life that is pleasing to God.

Life Application

(Teachers: The below activity has been included in the Student Handout.)

My Action Plan

After learning more about these three characteristics of the Spirit, how would you rate yourself for each? On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the most), circle where you think you're at on the scale, then explain to the class why you chose that number.

<i>(Have none at all.)</i>			Love				<i>(Have a lot in my heart!)</i>		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Joy									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Peace									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Whether we feel like we have a lot or none of these characteristics, we can always practice and improve upon them! Let's go over each and see how we can act out each of them in our lives.

1. Love

We learned today that the essence of godly love is putting others first in our actions, even if it means sacrificing our time, effort, or possessions. What obstacles in your life hinder you from doing this? To help us get started on growing in love, choose two areas from the following list. On your own, or in a group, brainstorm practical ways you can put others' needs before your own in your chosen areas.

- Your home
- Your school
- Your neighborhood
- Your church

2. Joy

We learned that the joy of the Lord is not a temporary happiness, but a constant in our hearts, and a source of strength. Do you know anyone who genuinely experiences the deep and satisfying joy of Jesus Christ in their life? Is there anything you can learn from them? Do you feel the joy of the Lord in your heart, despite the daily grind of life? Why or why not? To help us experience more joy, we'll do another brainstorm. This time, write down things that you are thankful for. Be thorough! What blessings has God given you? Don't just think of your material possessions, but also the people around you, the school you go to, and the church that you attend. What are you thankful for in each of these places?

3. Peace

The peace of God is predicated on our complete trust in Him, and this is impossible without the power of the Spirit. But His peace also depends on the effort that we put forth to attain it, just like any other characteristic of the Spirit! When we pray with the Spirit, He can help us obtain His peace, but there are some steps that we should take on our own to demonstrate that we want to pursue this fruit:

- Is there someone you aren't at peace with? Identify him or her in your prayer and pray for them. In your prayer, ask God to help you change your attitude and actions towards that person so that you can be filled with His love and peace.
- Are you dissatisfied with something in your own personal life? Identify the source of dissatisfaction and pray to God about it.
- After you have devoted a length of time to these specific prayers, either talk to the person or re-evaluate how you feel about yourself. Although our conflict or dissatisfaction may not just suddenly disappear, continue praying about it and ask God to fill you with His peace.

Memory Verse

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22–23)

Meaning

God’s desire is for us to bear the nine characteristics of the Spirit in our lives so that we can become a blessing to others and a living testimony of His glory. They can only be achieved through the power of the Holy Spirit, so we must learn to ask for His help to bear them in our daily prayers. But the nine characteristics are also the result of hard work, deliberate pursuit, and particular attention and care.

Conclusion

Everyone in the world wants to have love, joy, peace, and patience in their lives. But our Lord Jesus Christ has taught us that real love and joy goes beyond simple feelings. True love requires selflessness, and joy must flow from us, not into us because of external factors. In the same way, true peace stems from our heart, and remains unaffected by the things of this world, because it comes from the Spirit. With this in mind, in order to obtain any of these, we must first develop our relationship with Jesus Christ, draw near to His presence, and ask the Spirit of God to teach, transform, and empower us so that we can bear His characteristics and ultimately become more like Christ.

Lesson 3 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. Why does God want us to bear the fruit of the Spirit? How do we do it, other than through prayer?
So that we can become a blessing to others and a living testimony of God's glory. They can only be achieved through the power of the Holy Spirit, but they are also the result of hard work, deliberate pursuit, and particular attention and care.
2. "Now may the God of _____ fill you with all _____ and _____ in _____, that you may abound in _____ by the _____ of the _____." (Romans 15:13)
hope, joy, peace, believing, hope, power, Holy, Spirit.
3. What makes the joy of the Lord different from the joy of the world?
The happiness of the world is based on material objects or our physical circumstances, but the joy of the Spirit springs from within our heart, making it possible for us to have joy even while experiencing trials, sorrow, or pain (1 Thess 1:6).
4. God's peace has three levels. What are they? Which do you need to work on the most, and why?
*Peace with God; peace with ourselves; and peace with others.
Personal answers.*
5. Of the three characteristics we studied in this lesson, which do you need to work on more? Explain why you believe this – what specific actions do you take that demonstrate the opposite of godly love, joy, or peace? Other than praying for the Spirit's help, come up with a plan to avoid acting similarly in the future.
Personal answers.

Becoming More like Christ (II): Patience, Kindness, Goodness

Passages: As listed in the lesson.

Memory Verse

“Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.” (Romans 15:14)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God’s patience leads us to repentance, and to bearing the fruit of the Holy Spirit.2. Goodness and kindness are attributes of God, and we are to bear His image.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God is patience.2. God is kindness.3. God is goodness.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God’s patience molds and shapes us to persevere under trials.2. Learn to rely on the Holy Spirit to help us show kindness and goodness to others.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Patience
- B. Kindness
- C. Goodness

Life Application: My Action Plan

Memory Verse

Conclusion: We are weak, but with the help and encouragement of God’s Spirit, our heart will change into one that is willing to extend patience, kindness, and goodness to the people around us.

Events and Spiritual Teachings

Introduction: Becoming More like Christ

We learned last week that spiritual growth is a lifelong process that requires our effort and dedication towards growing in the fruit of the Spirit (Eph 4:14–15; Gal 5:22–23). Today, we'll be studying three more character traits of the fruit of the Holy Spirit: patience, kindness, and goodness. These are not easy traits to develop, but if we abide in Jesus Christ (Jn 15:5), then the Holy Spirit will help us to bear them. Therefore, to grow spiritually and become more like Christ, the first step is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. But aside from this, what can we do to produce these characteristics? Let's go into more detail about each to see how to develop them in our lives.

A. Patience

"I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry." (Ps 40:1)

Can you think of the last time you became impatient? Who or what caused it? Is there someone or something that always makes you lose your patience? Perhaps a slow piece of technology, a family member who never "gets it," or the chores we always seem to get stuck with? There are a lot of things that make us impatient, especially when we get upset or frustrated with people who let us down, or when something we depend on runs into problems. We probably have also become impatient even with God when we pray for His help, but He doesn't answer our prayers.

To most people, having patience in any of these situations means being able to wait out the situation until it passes, or even simply enduring until a solution presents itself. But true patience according to the Bible isn't simply a game of waiting or a test of endurance. True patience affects how we feel and act while we wait. Do you get irritated or snappy when you've been waiting for a long time? Or do you remain calm—or even joyful—while working your way through a problem or chore? The way you act or feel is the marker of whether you have true patience in the Spirit.

The Patience of God

Part of God's nature is His patience. The Greek word for "patience" used in Galatians, chapter 5, is *makrothymia*, which can also be translated as "longsuffering," "steadfastness," or being slow to anger. Let's read a few verses that can help us understand the patience of God.

- 2 Pet 3:9 (NIV) – "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."
- 2 Pet 3:15 (NIV) – "Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation[.]"
- Rom 12:12 – "[Rejoicing] in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer[.]"
- Jas 5:7–8 – "Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand."

God's patience means coming to repentance and receiving salvation. A person who is patient in the Spirit is someone who can endure pain or suffering without becoming angry. They are able to persevere through a trial even as they willingly wait for God's timing. They may have the power to become angry or avenge themselves, but they instead choose to exhibit compassion. Proverbs 16:32 says, "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city." A person who is able to control their temper and abide in patience is better than a mighty warrior. To help us understand this characteristic better, let's look at a few examples in the Bible.

1. **Abraham:** God promised Abraham that a nation would be born from his son. Despite the twenty-five-year wait before Isaac's birth, and the fact that he would never actually see this nation in person, Abraham was fully convinced that God would do what He had promised (Rom 4:18–21). He waited patiently for Isaac's birth, and for the fulfillment of God's promise.
2. **David:** David was probably ten to fifteen years old when he was anointed by prophet Samuel. Between the time he served Saul and his time in exile due to the threat to his life, David had to wait for nearly fifteen years before he became king (2 Sam 5:3). He waited patiently for God's timing, ignored any opportunities to kill Saul, and through his actions, became a man after God's heart (Acts 13:22).
3. **Job:** Job lost everything in a single day, yet he waited on God's restoration and understood that God was in control even in the midst of his suffering and affliction. We don't know how long it took for him to regain what he had lost, but the Bible says of him, "Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful" (Jas 5:11).
4. **Jeremiah:** Jeremiah began his ministry in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign, and served through five kings of Judah: Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah (626–586 B.C.). For more than forty years, he warned Judah to repent. None listened, but he patiently continued to call the nation to repentance throughout his entire time as a prophet.

The trials and the waiting that each man endured was God's way of successfully testing and shaping their characters. Let's read Psalm 103:8–12. When we see how patient God has been with us in repeatedly forgiving us when we sin, what right do we have to become impatient with anything or anyone? The things that drive us crazy seem like nothing compared to what God has to put up with every day! So, we should pray for the Spirit's patience. With His power, any trials or tests that we endure will shape our spiritual character, filling us with God's patience and making us more like Christ. Ultimately, God's patience refines our faith so that we can also display the same patience toward others, especially to those who are in need of His salvation.

B. Kindness

"And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." (Eph 4:32)

Kindness isn't simply a matter of being nice or getting along with others. True kindness according to the Bible is part of God's divine nature, and is produced by the Spirit. It is an active demonstration of love and care, and is a characteristic born only out of selflessness. We can see this in the example of Jesus Christ, who demonstrated kindness beyond what humans can achieve on their own. As humans, we tend to prioritize our own needs. Jesus, however, consistently placed the needs of others over His own.

If we examine the gospels, we can easily see that Jesus was kind to the wicked and ungrateful, and provided for the people's needs without expecting anything in return (Lk 6:35). He gave hope when He saw suffering, healed those in despair, and gave the greatest gift of freedom from death—all while knowing that these same people would reject Him and later crucify Him. This is kindness from the Spirit: selflessly acting to meet the needs of others.

Kindness in the Spirit

David wrote, “How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings” (Ps 36:7). We have all experienced firsthand the kindness of God. It is out of His kindness that He meets all of our needs, whether they are physical, emotional, or spiritual. Although at times He may rebuke, correct, or discipline us, out of His kindness He still provides for us and cares for us. The Bible clearly explains that we should show the same kindness towards others:

- Rom 11:22 (NIV) – “Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.”
- Col 3:12 – “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering[.]”
- 2 Tim 2:24 (NIV) – “And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.”

From these verses, we can see that kindness is a divine attribute of God. This is why we need the Spirit’s help in producing it. Let’s examine an example of kindness in the Spirit. Let’s read 2 Samuel 9:1–3.

David had vowed to look after Jonathan’s family members (1 Sam 20:15–16). It was common practice for new kings to exterminate all members of the previous ruler. This was to avoid leaving any possible descendants to revolt against the new king and reclaim the throne. Now, years later and long after Jonathan’s death, David proactively sought one of Saul’s descendants, not to remove any threat to his power, but to show the “kindness of God.”

Let’s read 1 Samuel 20:4–13. From his psalms, we know that David was a person who had felt the kindness of God in his life. This affected him so deeply that he felt compelled to show that same kindness to others around him. He showed this in his actions towards Mephibosheth, and in the most royal way possible; David not only restored Saul’s lands to Mephibosheth, but also extended to him the privilege of living at the royal palace and eating at the king’s table, as if he were David’s own son!

Today, we are like Mephibosheth. We are spiritually crippled because we were born into sin, until God saved us out of His kindness. We should ask for the power of the Holy Spirit so that we can extend this same kindness to those around us just as David did, especially to those who are not saved. Ask yourself: is there anyone I can show this kindness towards?

C. Goodness

“He is good; his love endures forever.” (2 Chr 7:3 NIV)

We often say something like “he’s a good man,” or “she did a good thing,” but what do you think “goodness” means? What does it mean to be “good”? (*Allow students to answer.*) The dictionary has many definitions of the word¹: *Of a favorable character or tendency; Suitable, fit; Agreeable, pleasant; Amusing, clever; Deserving of respect: honorable; Virtuous, right, commendable; Competent, skillful.*

Looking at this list, it is apparent that no one person can be all of these at one time! A husband may treat his family well, but argue with his co-workers. A daughter may be thoughtful and considerate towards her friends, but ignore her parents’ words entirely. In these cases, are they good people?

¹ Merriam-Webster Dictionary, s.v. “good,” accessed November 26th, 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/good>.

Because there are so many meanings to goodness, it's easy to say that everyone has some sort of goodness within them. But God's goodness is much more specific than the way we understand it.

The Goodness of God

Let's turn to Psalm 34. Verse 8 says, "Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good." God's goodness is something that we can see, touch, and feel. The psalm can be divided into the following sections: vv. 4–7, 8–10, 15–18, 19–22. For each section, with a partner or as a class, write down what particular action God takes that reveals His goodness. (*Teachers: If your class is large enough, divide the students into groups and assign each group a section.*)

- vv. 4–7: He will deliver us.
- vv. 8–10: He will provide for us.
- vv. 15–18: He will hear our prayers.
- vv. 19–22: He will redeem us.

God's goodness stems from His justice and His mercy, which can both be seen in His actions towards us. Jesus once said to a young man, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God" (Mt 19:17). God Himself is the source of goodness, and He is the only one who is truly good. Therefore, to understand goodness, we need to understand what makes God so good. Micah 6:8 says, "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?"

The original Greek word used for "goodness" in Galatians 5:22–23 is *agathōsynē*. This word means "uprightness of heart and life." Therefore, to produce goodness in our lives means doing what is right in God's eyes. It means having a heart that is holy and choosing to do what is right over what is wrong. This should show in our actions, such as actively helping the church or our community, or going the extra mile to pray for those who have mistreated you. It means standing up for what is right and having the courage to reach out to a brother or sister who is weak in their faith. It means telling the truth even when there may be repercussions. These are ways we can demonstrate the goodness of God.

God's goodness exceeds our imagination. No one can really claim to be "good" when compared to the almighty Lord, because He is perfect and fulfills every aspect of the word. But when we rely on the power of the Holy Spirit, we can produce this same goodness. We only need to long for Him and ask God to fill us with Him! When we do, we will manifest this fruit in our lives through our actions by doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God with the help of God's Spirit.

Check for Understanding

- 1. What are the characteristics of a person who is patient in the Spirit?** A person who is patient in the Spirit is a person who can endure pain or suffering without becoming angry. He or she is able to persevere through a trial. He or she may have the power to become angry or avenge themselves, but instead chooses to exhibit compassion.
- 2. How did Jesus demonstrate kindness?** He was kind to the wicked and ungrateful, and provided for the people's needs without expecting anything in return (Lk 6:35). He gave hope when He saw suffering, healed those in despair, and gave the greatest gift of freedom from death—all while knowing that these same people would reject Him and later crucify Him.
- 3. How did David extend kindness to Mephibosheth?** He restored all the land that belonged to him; he gave him the highest privilege of living at the royal palace: he would always eat at the king's table, just like one of the king's sons.

4. **How would you define the goodness of God?** It is something that we can see, touch, and feel, and is something that stems from His justice and His mercy.
5. **What does it mean to produce goodness in our lives?** It means doing what is right in God’s eyes. It means having a heart that is holy and choosing to do what is right over what is wrong.

Life Application

(Teachers: The below activity has been included in the Student Handout.)

My Action Plan

After learning more about these three characteristics of the Spirit, how would you rate yourself for each? On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the most), circle where you think you’re at on the scale, then explain to the class why you chose that number.

<i>(Have none at all.)</i>			Patience				<i>(Have a lot in my heart!)</i>			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Kindness										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Goodness										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

Whether we feel like we have a lot or none of these traits, we can always practice and improve upon them! Let’s go over each and see how we can act out each of them in our lives.

1. Patience

We learned that the essence of patience is putting others first in our actions, even if it means not getting upset with our loved ones, friends, or waiting patiently for God’s will during a trial. What obstacles in your life hinder you from doing this? We know that we would like to be more patient, but often can’t do it on our own. When we try, we are probably just bottling up how we really feel and putting up a front. This is why God promised us the fruit of the Holy Spirit. He can help us obtain this patience. However, there are steps we must take on our own to demonstrate that we want to pursue this fruit.

- a. Identify someone or something you are often impatient with.
- b. Reread the passages recording the patience of God (2 Pet 3:9 NIV; 2 Pet 3:15 NIV; Rom 12:12; Jas 5:7–8). If God can be patient with us even when we don’t deserve it by any standards, we can pray for His Spirit to fill us with His patience.
- c. Pray for God to help you change your attitude. Come up with and complete an action plan to help you do this. To help you think of one, finish the following sentence:
 “Next time I feel impatient about _____, I plan to _____.”

2. Kindness

In Jeremiah 9:24, the Lord says, “But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight.” Jesus Christ exemplified this kindness in His life and taught us that God delights in the kindness that we show to others, making it an important trait to develop (Mt 10:42).

We learned today that kindness is an active demonstration of selfless love and care. Let’s read Matthew 25:34–40. From this passage, we can see that kindness is something that can be seen and heard. It

means willingly and selflessly giving something up—such as our time, our effort, or material possessions—for someone else. So how do we grow in kindness? Take a look at the following steps:

- Ask God to open our eyes and hearts to see if someone is in need of kindness.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to help us empathize with those who are hurting or need help. Ask God to soften our hearts so that we can extend His gentleness and kindness to the one in need.
- Put forth an effort to make ourselves available to help this person, even if it's just setting aside some time every day to pray for him or her.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide us and give us the wisdom to know of any further action we should take.

Now consider: Who can I show kindness to this week? Come up with a plan and share it with the class.

Goodness

From the original Greek definition, we can see that goodness is not simply acting with compassion. It means courageously doing what is right in God's eyes, even if there are consequences that we may face. But as humans, it is often difficult for us to know what is right in God's eyes. Let's read 2 Timothy 3:16–17. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." To act with God's goodness requires that we dedicate time to studying God's word and deepening our relationship with Him (Rom 15:14). This will help us to understand how to act in difficult situations and learn to stand fast in our faith.

Have you or someone you know ever faced a difficult decision involving your faith? For example, maybe you have been encouraged to participate in bullying a classmate or asked to lie for a friend. At home, maybe you have noticed your family arriving at church late each week or noticed your sibling straying in their faith. Try discussing possible actions that you can take. If you can't remember any specific situation, try coming up with any plausible scenarios that may challenge your sense of what is good in God's eyes. What actions could you take that would help you remain upright in God's eyes?

Memory Verse

"Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another." (Romans 15:14)

Meaning

God desires for us to be filled with two things: the goodness of God, and the knowledge of His word. Having both of these affects our servitude for the better. They make us better equipped to admonish one another and build each other up in faith.

Conclusion

We all know that we should treat others with patience, kindness, and goodness. But we may find that time and time again, we turn a blind eye to other people or simply cannot muster up the strength or courage to care. We are weak, but with the help and encouragement of God's Spirit, our hearts will change into one that is willing to extend patience, kindness, and goodness to the people around us. Let us pray for the Spirit to move us so that we can become more like our Savior.

Lesson 4 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. According to the memory verse, what does God desire us to be filled with? Why?
The goodness of God, and the knowledge of His word. Having both affects our servitude for the better. They equip us to admonish one another and build each other up in faith.
2. "And be _____ to one another, _____, _____ one another, even as _____ in Christ _____ you." (Ephesians 4:32)
kind, tenderhearted, forgiving, God, forgave
3. Describe the patience of God in your own words.
See Events and Spiritual Teachings, Section A: Patience.
4. How did David demonstrate kindness in the Spirit?
Despite it being standard practice for kings to eliminate the family line of previous rulers, David not only actively sought out Saul's remaining family members, but also treated Mephibosheth like royalty, as if he were David's own son.
5. What does it mean to produce goodness in our lives?
It means doing what is right in God's eyes, not our own. It means having a heart that is holy and choosing to do what is right over what is wrong.
6. Is there someone you have been impatient with lately? What do you need to do in order to show more patience and kindness towards them?
Personal answers.
7. Who can you show kindness to this week? Come up with a plan, then record what you did below.
Personal answers.

Becoming More like Christ (III): Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-Control

Passages: As listed in the lesson.

Memory Verse

“Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls.” (Proverbs 25:28)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God is faithful to us, even if we are unfaithful to Him.2. Gentleness is not a weakness, but a strength.3. God is the source of true self-control.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God is faithful.2. God is gentle.3. God wants His children to lead disciplined lives.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Demonstrate faithfulness to God and to others.2. Be gentle to others.3. Strive to live a self-controlled life with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Faithfulness
- B. Gentleness
- C. Self-Control

Life Application: My Action Plan

Memory Verse

Conclusion: With the abidance of the Spirit, we can learn to be faithful to our commitments, to practice gentleness to others, and to exercise self-control in our lives so that we are no longer susceptible to sin.

Events and Spiritual Teachings

Introduction: Becoming More like Christ

Today, we'll continue learning how to become more like Christ by studying the next three character traits of the Holy Spirit: faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. They may be difficult to produce, but if we abide in Jesus Christ (Jn 15:5), then the Holy Spirit will help us to bear them. It is important that we are filled with the Spirit in order to allow His attributes to grow within us. But we should also put forth our own effort by making a conscientious decision to seek out these traits. To do so, let's examine these three traits in greater detail.

A. Faithfulness

"Your faithfulness endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides." (Ps 119:90)

How would you describe God's faithfulness? What words would you use to explain it? (*Allow students to brainstorm answers. Examples may be: loyal, to never give up, to stay true.*) No one has been more faithful to us than God. He is the best example for us to learn from.

1. He never breaks His promises (Ps 89:1–8)

At the time of this psalm, Israel had already fallen into the hands of the Babylonians, but the psalmist still believed in God's promise to David and praised His faithfulness. The Lord once promised to establish David's throne forever, and although this didn't happen during the psalmist's lifetime, it did happen hundreds of years later, with the birth of Jesus Christ. Although we may continue sinning and disobeying God's commands, He is always faithful. Whether or not we deserve it, He will keep His word, just as He did for David.

2. He always provides our needs (Ex 16; Mk 8:1–13; Mt 6:31–32)

The Israelites repeatedly complained against God during their travels in the wilderness, but the Lord never failed to provide for them, and faithfully sustained them for forty years. In the New Testament, Jesus did likewise, never failing to neglect the needs of the people or of His disciples. We never have to worry about our daily necessities because God will provide everything for us.

3. He shows us compassion and forgiveness (Lam 3:22–23)

Jeremiah witnessed firsthand the steady deterioration of Judah at the hands of its kings, and knew that destruction was imminent. He constantly wept for the people and the land, yet in Lamentations, he also wrote a message of hope. The people were about to be exiled, but he knew God's mercy and compassion would prevail. Today, were it not for God's compassion and forgiveness, none of us would have the chance at salvation. We sin and yet God shows us His love every day, showing an aspect of faithfulness that is hard for many of us to grasp: to be able to look beyond the faults of others and still remain true.

4. He gives us strength and hope every day (Mk 5:21–36)

We easily get discouraged, especially when things don't work out the way we wished. Jairus lost all hope when he was told that his daughter was already dead. But Jesus' words immediately gave him comfort and hope, a ray of light in the depths of his despair. Our hope today lies not only in the healing God offers, but also in the strength that He gives us to live our lives. He answers all of our prayers and gives us hope every day, because He is faithful (Mt 7:7–8).

How Faithful Am I?

Solomon wrote, "Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, but who can find a faithful man?"

(Prov 20:6). Most people only care for themselves. Even if they have made a promise, they don't find it difficult to break when things are tough or don't work out the way they expected. So why should we bother sticking to our words when nobody else seems to care that much?

The Bible teaches us: "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much" (Lk 16:10). How many times have we failed to keep the secret we promised to keep, to do the homework we said we'd finish days ago, to help our parents when we said we would, or to form the prayer habit we promised to start after SSC? In which case, how can God expect us to be faithful to His work, or to God Himself? While it is normal and easy for others to break their promises or commitments, God wants us to be different. Whatever we promise, and to whomever we made it, God wants us to be faithful to our commitments. When we learn to be faithful in all of these little things, as Proverbs says, "A faithful man will abound with blessings" (Prov 28:20).

B. Gentleness

"[Rather] let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God." (1 Pet 3:4)

In society, being gentle may be perceived as a sign of weakness. Gentleness doesn't get us very far in the job market or when making deals. Rather, boldness and assertiveness gain more respect. But the Bible teaches us that gentleness does not contradict strength or boldness in a person. Moses, for example was described as the humblest man on earth, but he was not timid when leading the Israelites. Paul was also considered gentle but was also extremely bold in his speech.

The Lord Jesus said of Himself, "I am gentle and lowly in heart," (Mt 11:29), yet He also made a whip of cords to drive out the merchants doing their business in the temple (Jn 2:15)! The logic of the world says that these two actions are at odds with each other, but the Bible teaches us that gentleness is simply another form of spiritual power and strength.

Gentleness in the Spirit

What exactly is gentleness? *(Allow students to answer.)* Gentleness is not a weakness, but a form of strength. For example, if a gentle person speaks the truth, even if it is painful to hear, the message will be well received. A gentle person can be a source of strength or support for brothers and sisters who are in need of a listening ear. They can also diffuse a heated situation or conflict, or are relied upon for their consideration or willingness to learn. Non-believers should be able to distinguish us by our gentleness. It is an essential trait for all followers of Jesus Christ.

Why is gentleness in the Spirit so different from gentleness as defined by the world? And what makes it a powerful or effective attribute in our spirituality? Let's read Proverbs 15:1. "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." In the heat of the argument, it is easy for us to let our anger carry us into a shouting match. But gentle words have the power to calm both parties and turn away our anger, making gentleness more powerful than aggressive or forceful speech.

Let's read Galatians 6:1. "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted." From this verse, we can see that gentleness is a key element in building up and supporting each other spiritually. Paul once wrote to the Thessalonian church, "But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children" (1 Thess 2:7). Gentleness shows itself when we grow in the Spirit and support each other in faith.

C. Self-Control

Have you ever thought about how disciplined athletes are? It may seem like a glamorous life from the outside looking in, but their kind of lifestyle actually requires a lot of self-control. Many of them make a lot of sacrifices in order to fulfill their dreams. For example, they may have to get up very early for practices, eat the right foods every day, and stick to a very strict exercise regimen. God wants us to lead a life that is spiritually athletic, one that is controlled by the Holy Spirit. A life like that has its limits, but those “limits” are for our own good. Why is it so important to have a life of self-control? Let’s read the following verses:

- 1 Cor 9:24–25 (NIV) – “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.”
- 2 Tim 1:7 (NIV) – “For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.”
- Tit 1:8–9 – “[Be] hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.”

When we have self-control in our lives, we can see many positive changes occur. We are more able to put off self-gratification in order to bring glory to God instead. We can live a disciplined life, rule over our own actions, and control our boundaries. We are able to choose God’s word over our own desires and say “no” to temptation with the power of the Holy Spirit.

On the other hand, the Bible says that a person who lacks self-control is “[like] a city whose walls are broken through” (Prov 25:28 NIV). A city without walls is unable to defend itself, making it vulnerable to enemy attacks. Let’s read 1 Peter 5:8. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” Without self-control, we make it easier for Satan to “devour” us and draw us away from God. Unfortunately, most who lack self-control don’t feel this. They believe that they still have control over their thoughts and behavior when in fact, they are already a city without walls, vulnerable to temptation, sin, and death.

The Importance of Self-Control

“But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.” (1 Cor 9:27)

When we cultivate self-control with the Spirit’s help, we will be able to control our thoughts, emotions, and speech. But when we don’t have any self-control, we submit to temptation, are unable to control our thoughts, and often act or speak impulsively, without forethought. Let’s look at examples of two people who realized their lack of self-control the hard way. As we go over each, consider how their experiences are similar to what we face today.

1. Samson (Jdg 14:1–2; 16:1, 4). How did Samson lack self-control?

Samson was a Nazirite, chosen by God and set aside for His holy purpose. Unfortunately, Samson didn’t care. When he saw a beautiful woman, he went after her. He didn’t recognize his lack of self-control, and it was this very same lack that led to his downfall at Delilah’s hands.

Today, it is common for teenagers or young adults to give in to their desires. They decide that it’s more important to enjoy the moment than to restrict themselves. They reason that if God

didn't want us to enjoy ourselves, then why did He even create such enjoyments? Wouldn't God want everyone to enjoy His creations? But when it comes to marital relationships, God intended for it to be part of a sacred and holy union. Ultimately, it is easy for people of the world to try and justify their actions, rather than exert any form of self-control over their sexual desires.

2. Esau (Gen 25:27, 34). How did Esau lack self-control?

It is easy for us to judge Esau for how easily he gave up his birthright. At the moment, though, Esau probably wasn't even considering the importance of what he was giving up. He was too hungry to care, and the effects of a birthright were a far-off dream, too far for him to visualize or to value. He gave in to his desires and lost all perspective on what his impulsive decision would cost him in the future.

When caught up in the moment, we often find it reasonable to trade lasting benefits for immediate pleasures. This is because we lack self-control. We lose trust when we tell someone a secret just for the excitement of sharing something no one else knows. We lose our reputation when we fail to show up at an important event, just because something more exciting came up. In hindsight, is it worth losing our trust or reputation over a moment's pleasure? Like Esau, we don't always see clearly, which is why we need the Holy Spirit to help us.

Paul understood that most people don't have a lot of self-control when it comes to our bodies and minds. We find excuses and make up reasons to give in. Sexual desire is one of the most difficult temptations to resist, which is why Paul instructed that we ought to get married in order to avoid such temptations (1 Cor 7:5). There are many other things that we may succumb to. If we are greedy, then we may succumb to theft. If we are obsessed with a goal, then we may become more aggressive. If proud, then we may succumb to anger or hatred. Let's read Titus 2:11–14:

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

The grace of God is like a teacher that teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. Through grace, we have the power to become more like Him. This is why we need to pray for the fullness of the Holy Spirit to assist us in every situation. Let's turn to 2 Peter 1:5–6. From these verses, we can see that in order to grow in godliness and love, we need to have self-control and discipline. It is a long and ongoing process, but one that guarantees us a place in the heavenly kingdom.

Check for Understanding

- 1. Name four ways God has demonstrated His faithfulness to us.** He never breaks His promises; He always provides our needs; He shows us compassion and forgiveness; He gives us strength and hope every day.
- 2. How would you describe someone who has spiritual gentleness?** They can be a source of strength or support for brothers and sisters. They can diffuse a heated situation or can be relied upon for their consideration or willingness to learn.
- 3. Why is self-control so important?** When we cultivate self-control with the Spirit's help, we will be able to control our thoughts, emotions, and speech. But when we don't have any self-control, we

submit to temptation, are unable to control our thoughts, and often act or speak impulsively, without forethought.

4. Explain how Samson and Esau lacked self-control. What can we learn from each of them?

- a. Samson: Allowed his desires to lead him to imprisonment. It is common and easy for people of the world to try and justify their actions, rather than exert any form of self-control over their sexual desires.
- b. Esau: Allowed his immediate physical needs to cloud his judgment regarding matters of the future. When caught up in the moment, we often find it reasonable to trade lasting benefits for immediate pleasures.

Life Application

(Teachers: In addition to the Life Application worksheet, a story, "Table for Two" by Kirsten Burgess, has been included in the Student Handout. You may want to read this with your students if time permits or print out copies for them to read at home.)

My Action Plan

After learning more about these three characteristics of the Spirit, how would you rate yourself for each? On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the most), circle where you think you're at on the scale, then explain to the class why you chose that number.

<i>(Have none at all.)</i>				Faithfulness				<i>(Have a lot in my heart!)</i>			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
				Gentleness							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
				Self-Control							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		

Whether we feel like we have a lot or none of these traits, we can always practice and improve upon them! Let's go over each and see how we can act out each of them in our lives.

1. Faithfulness

It's easy to say that we always keep our word, but if we really had to examine ourselves, how faithful are we really? How faithful do you think you are to God? To your family? To your friends, or your studies? If you were to rank your faithfulness in each, which would be your highest ranking? Consider your level of faithfulness in each area, then discuss the following:

- Do you feel that it's okay to be more faithful to certain people more than others, or should we have the same level of faithfulness no matter who or what we are dealing with?
- Describe a time when you were unfaithful to God, a family member, a friend, or your studies. How did it feel? Did you do anything about it after? If not, what can you do about it after today's lesson?
- Pick the area you are least faithful in and discuss reasons why this is the case. Based on those reasons, is there a way to improve your faithfulness? Ask your classmates to help think of ideas.

Once we realize the myriad ways we break our faithfulness to others, we can see how easy it is to fail in our faithfulness to God. But understanding where we have failed is the first step. When we see when and where we lack in our faithfulness, we can begin to improve on it. Then, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can grow in our faithfulness to others and to God and receive "the crown of life" (Rev 2:10).

2. Gentleness

Gentleness is love in action. It means being considerate, meeting the needs of others, allowing time for the other person to talk, and being willing to learn. It is an essential trait for all followers of Jesus Christ. Paul told the Thessalonians, “But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us” (1 Thess 2:7–8). Of the following areas, which do you need to improve upon the most, and why? Is there an activity or task that you can do in order to practice it this week?

- I need to be gentle with my words.
- I need to speak words that build up one another.
- I need to be gentle with the weak.

3. Self-Control

We all struggle with self-control, especially when it comes to things involving the internet or apps on our smartphones. Read the following statements. Which ones apply to you?

- After school, you find that you lose track of time browsing the internet or using your smartphone.
- You stay up late because you’re glued to your screen, even after your parents tell you to sleep.
- When you wake up, the first thing you do is to check your phone.
- Your parents have expressed concerns about the amount of time you spend online.
- You sneak online, with a sense of relief and anticipation, when family members are not at home.

Although this may seem harsh or strict, many of us are in fact more addicted than we think. It’s a seemingly simple matter to convince ourselves that we can stop whenever we want, but realistically, it’s not that easy. Most people also lack self-control when it comes to eating, drinking, social media, shopping, spending money, or gossip. Unsuccessful diets, overspending, passing on rumors, sleeping in, or thinking about things we know we shouldn’t be thinking of, are all signs that we lack self-control.

There are so many things we can’t will ourselves to do, or not to do! This is why God gave us the help of the Holy Spirit. When we draw closer to God, He can help us achieve things we never imagined we could (Phil 4:13). Take a moment to consider and write down one area in your life in which you need more self-control. What can you do from now on to have better self-control in that area?

Memory Verse

“Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls.” (Proverbs 25:28)

Meaning:

If a city’s defensive walls are broken down, its people become vulnerable to attack. Like a city’s walls, self-control seems limiting, but it is necessary for our own protection. If we have no self-control, we leave ourselves open to attacks from Satan, and are more likely to fall into sin and death.

Conclusion

The fruit of the Spirit is called such because the fruit is only possible to bear with God’s help. Our own impulses override our spiritual priorities, making it a struggle for us to follow God’s will. But with the abundance of the Spirit, we can learn to be faithful to our commitments, to practice gentleness towards those around us no matter who they are, and to exercise self-control in our lives so that we are no longer susceptible to sin. With His guidance, we can conquer our desires and impulses.

Lesson 5 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. Explain the importance of self-control according to the memory verse.
Like a city's walls, self-control seems limiting, but it is necessary for our own protection. If we have no self-control, we leave ourselves open to attacks from Satan, and are more likely to fall into sin and death.
2. "[Rather] let it be the hidden person of the _____, with the _____ beauty of a _____ and _____ spirit, which is very _____ in the sight of God." (1 Peter 3:4)
heart, incorruptible, gentle, quiet, precious.
3. What are four ways God demonstrates His faithfulness to us?
He never breaks His promises; He always provides our needs; He shows us compassion and forgiveness; He gives us strength and hope every day.
4. Why is gentleness in the Spirit so different from gentleness as defined by the world?
Gentle words are more powerful than aggressive or forceful speech and is a key element in building up and supporting each other's faith.
5. What does it mean to live a life that is spiritually athletic? Why is it so important to do?
It means living a life that is disciplined. This lets us rule over our own actions and control our boundaries. We are able to choose God's word over our own desires and say "no" to temptation.
6. In what area of your life do you lack self-control? Write down your action plan for overcoming this weakness of yours. Focus on specific steps you can take, such as asking a family member to help hold you accountable or placing your computer in a common space instead of your own room.
Personal answers.

TABLE FOR TWO by *Kirsten Burgess*

He sits by himself at a table for two. The uniformed waiter returns to his side and asks, "Would you like to go ahead and order, sir?" The man has, after all, been waiting since seven o'clock—almost half an hour.

"No, thank you," the man smiles. "I'll wait for her a while longer. How about some more coffee?"

"Certainly, sir."

The man sits, his clear blue eyes gazing straight through the flowered centerpiece. He fingers his napkin, allowing the sounds of light chatter, tinkling silverware, and mellow music to fill his mind. He is dressed in sport coat and tie. His dark brown hair is neatly combed, but one stray lock insists on dropping to his forehead. The scent of his cologne adds to his clean-cut image. He is dressed up enough to make a companion feel important, respected, loved. Yet he is not so formal as to make one uncomfortable. It seems that he has taken every precaution to make others feel at ease with him. Still, he sits alone.

The waiter returns to fill the man's coffee cup. "Is there anything else I can get for you, sir?"

"No, thank you."

The waiter remains standing at the table. Something tugs at his curiosity. "I don't mean to pry, but..." His voice trails off. This line of conversation could jeopardize his tip.

"Go ahead," the man encourages. His voice is strong, yet sensitive, inviting conversation.

"Why do you bother waiting for her?" the waiter finally blurts out. This man has been at the restaurant other evenings, always patiently alone.

The man says quietly, "Because she needs me."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

"Well, sir, no offense, but assuming that she needs you, she sure isn't acting much like it. She's stood you up three times just this week."

The man winces and looks down at the table. "Yes, I know."

"Then why do you still come here and wait?"

"Cassie said that she would be here."

"She's said that before," the waiter protests. "I wouldn't put up with it. Why do you?"

Now the man looks up, smiles at the waiter, and says simply, "Because I love her."

The waiter walks away, wondering how one could love a girl who stands him up three times a week. The man must be crazy, he decides. Across the room, he turns to look at the man again. The man slowly pours cream into his coffee. He twirls his spoon between his fingers a few times before stirring sweetener into his cup. After staring for a moment into the liquid, the man brings the cup to his mouth and sips, silently watching those around him. He doesn't look crazy, the waiter admits. Maybe the girl has qualities that I don't know about. Or maybe the man's love is stronger than most. The waiter shakes himself out of his musings to take an order from a party of five.

The man watches the waiter, wonders if he's ever been stood up. The man has, many times. But he still can't get used to it. Each time, it hurts. He's looked forward to this evening all day. He has many things, exciting things, to tell Cassie. But, more importantly, he wants to hear Cassie's voice. He wants

her to tell him all about her day, her triumphs, her defeats....anything, really. He has tried so many times to show Cassie how much he loves her. He'd just like to know that she cares for him, too. He sips sporadically at the coffee, and loses himself in thought, knowing that Cassie is late, but still hoping that she will arrive.

The clock says nine-thirty when the waiter returns to the man's table. "Is there anything I can get for you?"

The still empty chair stabs at the man. "No, I think that will be all for tonight. May I have the check please?"

"Yes, sir." When the waiter leaves, the man picks up the check. He pulls out his wallet and signs. He has enough money to have given Cassie a feast. But he takes out only enough to pay for his five cups of coffee and the tip. *Why do you do this, Cassie?* His mind cries as he gets up from the table.

"Good-bye," the waiter says, as the man walks towards the door.

"Good night. Thank you for your service."

"You're welcome, sir," says the waiter softly, for he sees the hurt in the man's eyes that his smile doesn't hide. The man passes a laughing young couple on his way out, and his eyes glisten as he thinks of the good time he and Cassie could have had. He stops at the front and makes reservations for tomorrow. Maybe Cassie will be able to make it, he thinks.

"Seven o'clock tomorrow for party of two?" the hostess confirms.

"That's right," the man replies.

"Do you think she'll come?" Asks the hostess. She doesn't mean to be rude, but she has watched the man many times alone at his table for two.

"Someday, yes. And I will be waiting for her." The man buttons his overcoat and walks out of the restaurant, alone. His shoulders are hunched, but through the windows the hostess can only guess whether they are hunched against the wind or against the man's hurt.

As the man turns toward home, Cassie turns into bed. She is tired after an evening out with friends. As she reaches toward her nightstand to set the alarm, she sees the note that she scribbled to herself last night. 7:00, it says. *Spend some time in prayer.* Darn, she thinks. She forgot again.

She feels a twinge of guilt, but quickly pushes it aside. She needed that time with her friends. And now she needs her sleep. She can pray tomorrow night. Jesus will forgive her. And she's sure he doesn't mind.

Food for Thought

We have all been like Cassie, making promises to God and not keeping them. We say we will spend time with Him and we don't follow through. It demonstrates how unfaithful we really are. We would like to think that we are more loyal than Cassie but in fact, we make many excuses just like her to push aside our guilt. And it's not just with God. We make promises to our family and friends or to people at work. But we don't hesitate to break our commitments because it's the way things are in the world.

God has never done that. He remains faithful to His people, despite our lack of faithfulness. He cares for us, forgives us, and gives us hope. He wants us to learn from Him and be just as faithful, to learn to forgive others whether they deserve it or not, to keep our commitments no matter what. It's hard when we live in world where faithfulness isn't a big deal. The only way is through the power of the Holy Spirit. Let's pray that He will fill with Holy Spirit and help us reach that goal.

A Heart of Trust and Humility

Passages: Gen 39–41; Num 12:1–8

Memory Verse

“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:6–7)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Trust God in all circumstances by doing the best we can without worry or anxiety.2. Keep a humble heart by remembering God’s power and provision.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God is worthy of our trust.2. God loves those who are humble.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Applying trust in our lives requires and produces patience.2. Cultivate a heart of true humility.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Joseph’s Trusting Heart
 1. Joseph as a Slave (Gen 39:1–6)
 2. Joseph as a Prisoner (Gen 39:7–23)
 3. Joseph is Forgotten by the Cupbearer (Gen 40:14–15, 23)
- B. Moses’ Heart of Humility
 1. Moses as a Prince of Egypt (Ex 2:1–15)
 2. Moses as a Shepherd (Ex 2:16–22)
 3. Moses as the Israelites’ Leader

Life Application

1. Applying Trust in Our Lives
2. Living in Humility

Memory Verse

Conclusion: It is hard to be humble or to trust entirely in God because Satan uses pride as a tool to bring us down. This makes it even more important to remain vigilant and to keep our hearts and minds in check through spiritual cultivation.

Events and Spiritual Teachings

Introduction

Our teachers, elders, deacons, and preachers often tell us that we need to have a heart that trusts God, and to be humble in all that we do. We know that we should have these virtues, but how do we cultivate them and make them a part of us? We know that we should be humble, and that we should entrust all our problems to God. But we still wallow in our worries or attribute our successes to ourselves instead of God. How do we break such habits, and cultivate a heart of trust and humility? Today, we'll be looking at two examples in the Bible to help us learn how.

A. Joseph's Trusting Heart

Joseph had a childhood that was unlike any of our own. Most of us have grown under the safe protection of our parents, surrounded by the comforts of our home. We have food to eat, clothes to wear, and a safe bed to sleep in every night. Joseph, on the other hand, was only seventeen when his brothers sold him! Betrayed by his family, torn away from the comforts of his home, and faced with the often-dreadful fate of a slave, how did Joseph react? The answer is at once simple and deeply meaningful: he patiently waited and trusted in God.

1. Joseph as a Slave (Gen 39:1–6)

Egypt was a completely foreign land to Joseph. The people did not look like him, lived a different culture, and worshiped man-made gods. On top of this, Joseph was no longer the favored son of a large and rich family, but a slave, expected to work day and night for his master. At this point, Joseph could have given up on his faith and cursed God for the calamities that he faced. But he didn't, because he understood that there was no one else he could depend on except God. In this very lonely time in his life, with no friends, family, or even fellow worshippers, God was Joseph's only and closest confidant. Nothing in Egypt was familiar to him, but he still had God.

a. The Lord was with Joseph

Genesis 39:3 says that Joseph's master "saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hand." Despite being a Gentile, Potiphar clearly saw the true God reflected in Joseph. Later, the prison keeper saw the same thing and, like Potiphar, "did not look into anything that was under Joseph's authority, because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper" (v. 23). Why did Joseph receive such prosperity and blessings? The answer is simple: he feared God (v. 9).

b. Joseph's refusal to sin

Let's read Genesis 39:10. Many people would be worn down by the constant temptation, but Joseph remained steadfast in his faith. He clearly feared God more than anything, even his own desires and the potential punishment he could face from his master's wife.

2. Joseph as a Prisoner (Gen 39:7–23)

Although he established himself as a trustworthy servant, Joseph was thrown into prison for a crime he did not commit. His faithfulness to God seemed to have only gotten him into deeper trouble! It is worth noting that Potiphar could easily have executed Joseph on the spot. Instead, he chose to place Joseph, his slave, into the royal prison. This was a place that Potiphar himself seemed to be in charge of (39:1, 20). It is also likely that he specifically gave Joseph charge over Pharaoh's two imprisoned officers (40:4), an action curiously at odds with his anger.

His circumstances were dire, but Joseph once again escaped a worse fate. However, he had again been treated unjustly, and once again, Joseph had reason to complain against God. But he remained patient, with no expectations for God's plans. He simply continued doing what he did best: he trusted God, worked hard, and fulfilled his duties to the best of his ability.

3. Joseph Is Forgotten by the Cupbearer (Gen 40:14–15, 23)

Joseph had to face a third test of patience: he had faithfully interpreted the baker and the cupbearer's dreams, but the cupbearer forgot about him after being restored to his position. Joseph had to continue his days in prison. And yet, it is clear from when he stood before Pharaoh that he had not lost his faith in God.

Joseph could easily have demanded his release in exchange for his services. But his only answer to Pharaoh's request was deference to the one true God (41:16). In a court of pagan worshippers, Joseph boldly proclaimed the power of the true God without fear of any repercussions and without thought for his own release. He even told Pharaoh, "And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass" (41:32). Despite years of unjust suffering, he still declared his faith and fear towards the Lord!

Joseph was thirty years old when his patience was finally rewarded. Within a single day, he was abruptly freed from prison and elevated to a role where he was set over all the land of Egypt! For thirteen years, Joseph experienced a roller coaster of hope and disappointment. But he remained patient and trusting from the moment he was sold until the day he came to oversee Egypt. While the long wait was difficult, and maybe even painful, it was only clear after the fact that God was certainly watching over him, training him, and preserving him for His will.

B. Moses' Heart of Humility

The Bible records that Moses was humbler than any on the face of the earth (Num 12:3)! Why does the Bible say this about him? Let's study his life to see what he did to earn such a description.

1. Moses as a Prince of Egypt (Ex 2:1–15)

Moses was raised in a life of privilege as a prince in the palace of Egypt. He grew up in safety and comfort. But more importantly, he also received the finest education of the time. Stephen said Moses was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds" (Acts 7:22). However, Moses, stirred by the injustice, killed a taskmaster who was beating an Israelite. Moses was at the top according to the standards of men, but it was at this point in his life that he was impulsive, rash, and lacked discretion.

2. Moses as a Shepherd (Ex 2:16–22)

Although Moses' impulsiveness led to his flight from Egypt, it was God's will for Moses to live as a shepherd for forty years. It was a vastly different lifestyle from that of a prince, but the Bible says that Moses was "content" (v. 21). When God eventually called Moses through the burning bush, Moses repeatedly protested (3:11, 13; 4:1, 10, 13)! Do you remember his excuses?

- a. "I'm not important enough...What should I say?" (3:11, 13)
- b. "What if they don't believe me?" (4:1)
- c. "I don't know how to speak well!" (4:10)
- d. "I'm not as qualified as others." (4:13)

Four times Moses basically said, “Anyone but me!” His time as a shepherd had transformed him from a reckless prince to an uncertain herdsman. We can now see that God had deliberately used this time to train him in a characteristic that is necessary for all of His workers: humility.

3. Moses as the Israelites’ Leader

Imagine standing before the Red Sea and watching the waters part before your hand (Ex 14:21)! Wouldn’t any normal person feel proud of themselves? But throughout the many miracles recorded in the Bible, Moses remained humble and devoted to God. Even after accomplishing the impossible and freeing a nation, Moses treated his father-in-law with respect, and listened to his advice (Ex 18:7, 24). Let’s examine a few events where he showed his humility.

a. Moses’ treatment of the Israelites

When God told Moses that the people had committed idolatry, Moses prayed for the Israelites three times, even though he was also very angry at them (Ex 32:11–14, 30–32; 33:12–14). He even prayed that his own name be blotted out of God’s book! Offering himself as a sacrifice to save the Israelites could only have come from a heart of humility. Much later, when Korah rebelled, his followers accused Moses of acting like a prince, but Moses angrily responded that he had never abused his authority (Num 16:13–15).

b. Moses’ deference to God

As opposed to the brash young man who killed the taskmaster, Moses demanded of God: “If Your presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here” (Ex 33:15). His refusal to travel without God’s presence shows his understanding of his humble position before God, and his wholehearted reliance on God’s wisdom and direction. Later, when the Israelites refused to enter Canaan, God angrily declared that He would strike them down and make a nation out of Moses instead, one “greater and mightier than they” (Num 14:12). Let’s read Numbers 14:13–19. Moses didn’t care about birthing a nation. He only feared that God’s greatness would be diminished and cared only for God’s glory.

c. Moses’ respect for his co-workers

After being judged without cause, any normal person would feel a thrill of satisfaction if their accusers were justly punished. But when God afflicted Miriam with leprosy for dissenting against Moses, he begged for God’s mercy on her behalf (Num 12:1–3, 9–13)! In another instance, Joshua wanted Moses to forbid two men from prophesying in the camp (Num 11:28). But Moses answered, “Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the LORD’s people were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!” (v. 29). He wasn’t worried about his authority being undermined. In fact, Moses wished that all of the Israelites had the same relationship with God that he himself experienced.

The position God gave to Moses was the first of its kind. He was the very first Israelite leader, and the miracles that God performed through him were numerous and vast. But Moses remained humble. He knew that he could accomplish nothing without God’s power (Ex 32:11; 33:15–16). This should be the guiding principle in our lives, especially if we are blessed with beauty, intelligence, or a particular skill. If we are ever arrogant, James 4:16 says that “such boasting is evil.” We should always be vigilant, so that we do not fall into the trap of pride and remember that all that we have comes from God (Jas 4:14–15).

Check for Understanding

1. **Explain some of the sufferings that Joseph endured.** He was sold to Egypt as a slave; imprisoned for a crime he didn't commit; he was forgotten by the cupbearer and continued his days in prison.
2. **Why did God allow such terrible things to happen to Joseph?** It was all part of God's plan to train and guide Joseph into the role where he saw over all the land of Egypt, so that he could save his family during the famine.
3. **How long was Moses' training in the wilderness, and how did he change during those years?** His training was forty years. His time as a shepherd transformed him from a reckless prince to an uncertain herdsman.
4. **Why does the Bible say that Moses was the humblest man on the face of the earth?** Moses remained humble even though he had performed the greatest of miracles in human history.

Life Application

1. Applying Trust in Our Lives

Throughout his life, Joseph was willing to simply wait and see what God had in store for him. He never complained or acted rashly. From this, we can see that trust in God requires and produces great patience. In an age driven by instant gratification, waiting with no end in sight can be especially difficult to endure! Let's read two testimonies to try and understand the nature of trusting in God.

Testimony 1

Pinky is a smart student, and very confident in herself. She believes that she has a strong faith in God, and not only attends Sabbath every week, but also reads the Bible and prays at home every day. One day, Pinky began developing stomach problems, and she had to go to the toilet more often than usual. She promptly began to self-medicate with some anti-diarrheal drugs, with the thought that this was simply a minor medical issue that could easily be solved on her own.

After a few days of taking medicine, her problem transformed into one where she was unable to go to the toilet instead! Pinky was now deeply worried, so she tried a different tactic. As she was now facing a constipation problem, she decided to take some natural laxatives like cherries, instead of taking more drugs. She ate 500g of cherries, but her digestive problems persisted. It was then that Pinky realized: That entire week, she had forgotten to ask God for help, despite the fact that she prayed every day. She thought that this was too small a problem for God to help her with and had decided that she could solve it on her own. Only after being unable to fix a seemingly simple problem did Pinky realize that God wants us to turn to Him first, no matter how big or small the issue.

Pinky immediately prayed to God for forgiveness. She realized that God has power over all things, and that she should have been humble and trusted in God first, instead of relying entirely on her own limited abilities. After the prayer, Pinky was able to go to the toilet, and her stomach problems disappeared. The incident taught her that she should always trust God and give all of her problems to Him. God is an almighty God, and no problem is too big or small for Him!

– Anonymous

Testimony 2

When Joe and his family moved to a new country, for more than six months he could not find a job to support his family. One day, he was offered a job as a new house sales agent. The salary was high, and all he had to do was sit behind a counter and convince customers to buy newly built houses. It seemed like the perfect job, until Joe found out that his working hours would include Saturdays.

Joe was greatly tempted to accept the new job. His savings were running low, and bills still needed to be paid. He was in dire need of money, but he knew that the right thing to do was trust in God and continue hunting for other jobs. His wife told him to accept the job and look for other opportunities in the meantime, but Joe knew in his heart that the high pay would make it difficult for him to leave in the future. It was unlikely that other jobs would offer the same kind of salary. So, he prayed to God and decided not to take the job. His friends said that he was silly to give up such a hard-to-come-by opportunity, but Joe was patient, and he continued to trust in God.

Joe searched for another eight months before finally finding a job that allowed him to go to church. The salary was smaller, but it was sufficient for him to support his family. Moreover, it was close to home, with flexible working hours and a good boss. Joe had been jobless for a total of fourteen months! But he did not cave in to the temptation to take up a job that would draw him away from God. He continued to wait, despite the fact that God did not immediately give Joe a new job after he rejected the initial offer. Like Joseph, he patiently waited on God's will and did not rush to take matters into his own hands. After fourteen months without a job, Joe learned that trust and patience in the Lord is always rewarded in a way that God knows is best for us.

– Anonymous

Discussion: What do you think are some characteristics of people who trust in God? (Ex: They do not complain or take things into their own hands; They know that God will never forsake them, and they believe in God's love; They do not worry excessively, nor are they anxious about how things will turn out.)

Because we cannot know God's will, our trust in Him must be manifested in our patience. This means living a life free of anxiety. It means knowing that God will take care of us, and simply doing our best without worrying about the future. Let's read Proverbs 3:5–6. "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."

2. Living in Humility

Moses was a competent leader with the education of a prince in the most advanced civilization at the time, but we can also see that he knew his knowledge was still limited. He was still willing to listen to the counsel of his co-workers, and he still sought help from God for all of his problems. He truly lived a life that was free of pride. How can we do the same thing?

We enjoy dwelling on moments in our life that boost our self-esteem or our image. But the more we boost our ego, the more our humility falls behind. We begin seeking praise that we think we deserve, or we do church work not to serve God, but to show off. Eventually, all our actions drive our hunger for recognition, and we become resentful when we aren't acknowledged. Pride is an incredibly simple tool of Satan's, yet countless brethren have fallen to it. This is because it can be difficult to identify, and it shows itself in many ways. Let's study a few characteristics which are sure symptoms of pride.

a. Impatience

As a generation that has grown up with smartphones and fast computers, we are more computer-savvy, so we may become impatient when trying to help our elders use a smartphone or find something on the internet. But we cannot forget that as our elders, they have a wealth of experience in areas that we have not even ventured into yet. If we have a humble heart, then we can realize this and accept that it is wise to listen to their counsel (Prov 19:20). This is just one example of when our impatience is a result of our pride.

b. Boasting

An obvious symptom of pride is when a person often boasts of their accomplishments or riches. A boastful person rarely, if ever, attributes what they have to God. They believe that they have earned the right to brag, which means that they have forgotten the blessings and power of God.

c. False humility

False humility, or “humble bragging,” is when someone pretends to be humble, but says things that are specifically for the purpose of pointing out their achievements. It’s a more complicated form of boasting, but still a symptom of pride that we should be wary of. We must remember that true humility is not just a matter of lip service. God doesn’t consider us to be humble if we say that we aren’t good enough, all while secretly hoping to garner the approval of others.

d. Seeks validation

Another subtle sign of pride is when a person always wants validation or is afraid that everyone thinks poorly of him. This type of person cares a lot about their image and is deeply anxious about what others think of them. They hate to be humiliated or ashamed before others, so they always hide their shortcomings, and act or speak in a manner that elevates themselves. They often also harbor jealousy and hate admitting when they are wrong. But true humility comes with no hypocrisy. It comes from a heart that only seeks God’s approval, not mankind’s.

So, what can we conclude about true humility? A humble person doesn’t boast, is willing to ask for help, isn’t concerned with his image, and is able to admit his own shortcomings. James 4:6 says, “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” Therefore, we must learn to replace our boasting with compassion, and our self-esteem with the ability to admit when we are wrong. When we serve, serve with love for others, not for ourselves, and if we find that we have received much, take the opportunity to give secretly rather than show off. As James teaches us, “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up” (v. 10).

Memory Verse

“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:6–7)

Meanings

1. To have a humble heart means to remember that everything that we have comes from God. If we can learn to have a heart of humility, God has promised to bless us.
2. To cast all our cares upon God means to give all of our problems to Him, big or small. This requires a heart not only of humility, but also of trust. To trust in God means understanding that He is all-powerful and loving. We cannot solve all our own problems, but God will always take care of us when we give our problems to Him, because He cares for us.

Conclusion

We cannot please God if we do not trust in Him, because if we do not, it means that we do not believe He is the Almighty and powerful God. It is hard to be humble or to trust entirely in God because Satan uses pride as a tool to bring us down. This makes it even more important to remain vigilant and to keep our hearts and minds in check. If we do, eventually, we will grow in trust and humility, and will please God through our actions.

Lesson 6 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. How do we cast all our cares upon God? What do we need to understand to do so?
It means giving all our problems to Him, big or small. This requires a heart of trust, which means understanding that He is all-powerful and loving. We cannot solve all our own problems, but God will always take care of us when we give our problems to Him.
2. Reflect on yourself and share a time when you could have put more trust in God than in yourself.
Personal answers.
3. Pick an example of a proud person in the Bible and explain how they could have done better.
Personal answers. For example: King Nebuchadnezzar was arrogant with his achievements; Haman esteemed himself higher than Mordecai; Jonah thought that Nineveh didn't deserve forgiveness.
4. What are four characteristics of a prideful person?
Impatience, boasting, false humility, and seeking validation.
5. Pick one of the above characteristics that you have shown in the past and describe what happened. Then, write down how you can show trust or humility in the future if faced with a similar situation.
Personal answers.

True Worship

Passages: As listed in the lesson.

Memory Verse

“You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.” (Revelation 4:11)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. True worship means worshipping in spirit and truth.2. The Bible has taught us the importance of worshipping together with our spiritual family.	God is glory, honor, and power.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Learn the characteristics of true worship.2. Worship God during trials.3. Learn to set aside time for true worship.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. The Meaning and Purpose of Worship
- B. Worshipping God in Spirit and Truth
- C. Worshipping with Our Spiritual Family

Life Application: The Daily Habit of Worship

Activity: Tree of Worship

Memory Verse

Conclusion: When we keep a reverent and thankful heart, praise God with sincerity, and serve one another in love, we are worshipping God in spirit and truth. In exchange, we will draw closer to God every day, and our actions will become a sweet fragrance to the Lord.

Events and Spiritual Teachings

(Teachers: Note that the included activity is fairly involved, so please plan your time accordingly. If need be, you may want to prepare some materials ahead of time for the students.)

A. The Meaning and Purpose of Worship

The word “worship” can easily become meaningless to Christians, but we shouldn’t let this happen. It is important that we try to offer true worship to God not just on the Sabbath, but every day of our lives. This means understanding what it means to truly worship God. But first, why do we need to worship God in the first place?

- Because He created us (Rev 4:11)
- Because we are His people (1 Pet 2:9)
- Because He died for us (Rom 5:8)
- To declare God’s salvation plan (Rom 6:23)

All the things that we have are things that God has given us. He has even given us what we can’t see—love, joy, and a chance at salvation. When we fully understand all that He has done for us, it is easy to see why we should worship Him! But what is worship, and what does it mean to truly worship God? The first step is a heart of reverence and love. Let’s look at examples of true worship in the Bible.

1. Mary and Martha

Let’s read Luke 10:38–42. In this scenario, Martha seemed to be the dedicated one at first—she was busy being a good hostess, ensuring that Jesus and His followers were comfortable and well fed. Her sister might have seemed to be the lazy one to us! But what was Jesus’ response to Martha’s complaint? He said that Mary had “chosen that good part.” Mary did what was good and right by devoting herself to Jesus’ teaching. And unless we learn to do the same, we will dry up spiritually.

Too often we are more like Martha than Mary. While Martha labored, Mary listened. She found a place of stillness at Jesus’ feet and calmly listened to His words. Do you know what this means? When we come into church, we have come to see Jesus. And when we focus our attention on Him, the material things around us recede into the background. We should learn to worship like Mary, by sitting right at Jesus’ feet and listening attentively to the word of God.

2. The Canaanite Woman

Let’s now look at a second example of true worship in Matthew 15:21–28. This woman wasn’t just any woman, but a desperate mother, urgently calling for help. Jesus’ words might have discouraged anyone else, but she took the words for what they truly were—a chance to draw out her faith! So, she came and worshiped Jesus despite His seeming prejudice. What was His response to her action?

From that point, the Lord began to interact with her and draw faith from her. At the end of this dialogue, He said, “O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire” (v. 28). The title of “woman” is a title of affection, and is the same word that Jesus used to speak to His mother. It’s clear that Jesus wasn’t trying to destroy her faith or discourage her, but attempting to build up her faith and draw true worship from her.

Both of these examples show us three key characteristics of true worship:

1. True worship is humble and simple

In the Old Testament, Naaman was disappointed when receiving the simple instruction of bathing in

the river to rid himself of leprosy. But in the examples that we just read, the Gentile woman simply said, “Lord, help me!”, and all Mary did was sit and listen. Sometimes, we might feel like worship has to be complicated, grandiose, or special. But these instances prove that it doesn’t have to be any of those!

2. True worship means being personally engaged

The Gentile woman’s worship was straight from the heart, and she interacted directly with the Lord Jesus when He spoke to her. Meanwhile, Mary came right to Jesus to sit at His feet. When worship is a habit, our prayers don’t have any meaning, and the time we spend at church no longer adds to our faith. But true worship means actively engaging with God, seeking Him out, and learning about Him.

3. True worship is determined and sincere

When Jesus said, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs” (Mt 15:26), the woman simply accepted her status with humility, and begged for at least a tiny crumb of mercy. Her reaction showed that her worship may have been desperate, but it was born out of determination and her sincere faith that Jesus could save her child.

Mary and the Samaritan woman both offer vastly different, but equally important, examples of how to truly worship the Lord. One is in quiet and stillness, the other, determination and urgency. But both require faith in the Lord, a desire to seek after Him, and a heart full of reverence and love.

B. Worshiping God in Spirit and Truth

In New Testament times, the Jews went to the temple at Jerusalem to worship, but Samaritans went to Mount Gerizim. When a Samaritan woman asked the Lord Jesus where they were supposed to worship, Jesus replied that “true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (Jn 4:23–24). Jesus was teaching us the true place and form of our worship. But what exactly did He mean?

The “truth” is something unchangeable and immutable. To worship God, we must learn His word and put His teachings into practice. This is the only way we can worship in truth, because truth comes only from God (Jn 1:17; Jn 14:6). What about the Spirit? When we are baptized, God gives us new life, and pours out the Holy Spirit to dwell in us (Acts 2:33; Rom 8:9). He gives us new life in the Spirit. Therefore, to worship God in Spirit and truth means worshiping God through communion with the Spirit and submission to the truth.

Let’s return to the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. She was concerned about *where* they should worship; Jesus was concerned about *how* we should worship. We may attend church each week, but unless your heart is truly focused on God, do you think you are truly worshiping Him? Do you commune with the Holy Spirit? Do you submit to God’s truth in your daily actions, and in your heart? Let’s review a few ways we can worship God in spirit and truth.

1. Prepare our hearts

To worship God, we need to prepare our hearts. Let’s read Hebrews 10:22. “[Let] us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” This is the first step to preparing our hearts: we need to cleanse ourselves from within. This means repenting of any wrong against God.

2. Keep a reverent heart

To have a reverent heart means to respect and honor God. How do you act in church? Do you sleep during service, or play in the chapel in between sessions? Do you get moody or temperamental because you can't do what you want on Saturday? It is very easy for us to forget the primary reason that we are at church. While there is nothing wrong with coming to church to see our friends, it is more important that when we worship God in church, we keep a reverent heart. Ultimately, we should strive for:

- a. Stillness and quiet (Ps 46:10)
- b. Order (1 Cor 14:40)
- c. Joy (Ps 100:2)

3. Keep a thankful heart

Another attitude that we should maintain in our worship at church is a heart of thanksgiving. Because of all the blessings and grace that God has given us, we need to worship Him with a thankful and joyful heart! Paul understood the importance of thanksgiving, so he instructed us that "in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thess 5:18).

4. Praise the Lord with hymns

Psalm 28:7 says, "Therefore my heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him." But from this verse, and from the many other examples in the Bible, we can see that the time we spend praising God is also an important part of worshiping Him. Paul wrote that the members should "[speak] to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph 5:19). Let's encourage each other so that if we are singing during service, fellowship, or choir, we do not take it lightly, but participate with joy and praise God!

5. Serve one another

Let's read Matthew 25:35–40. God wants us to worship Him by serving one another. We can do that by helping our brothers and sisters in small ways that express our care and concern. Jesus set an example for us: He never turned away those in need. However, His servitude was not just to set an example. It was also out of love (Mk 6:34). Therefore, when we worship God through our servitude, we should serve out of love for God and for each other (Mt 6:1–4).

Mary once poured a jar of very costly oil on Jesus' feet, causing "the house [to be] filled with the fragrance of the oil" (Jn 12:3). Our worship should leave a fragrance, meaning it should leave an impact! Psalm 141:2 says, "Let my prayer be set before You as incense," and Revelation 8:4 says that "the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God." Worshiping in spirit and truth means that our actions should be a sweet aroma to the Lord and fill God's house with the fragrance of oil. This means that whether through prayers, praise, or servitude, our worship should leave behind a positive and lasting impact both on our own spirituality and on those around us.

C. Worshiping with Our Spiritual Family

Our spiritual family is much larger than our earthly family, as it includes all of the brothers and sisters who gather together to worship God. There is no distinction between race, gender, or culture. Once we are baptized, we all belong to this family, for we have become fellow citizens of God's household. As fellow citizens, the Bible teaches us to gather together to worship God.

1. Hebrews 10:25 – "[Not] forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching."

2. Philemon 1:7 – “For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.”
3. 1 John 1:3–4 – “[That] which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.”

Why does God want us to gather and worship as a spiritual family? Because worshiping with our spiritual family enriches our faith. As a group, we can offer each other joy, encouragement, comfort, and fellowship with our brothers and sisters. Moreover, we can help each other increase in spiritual knowledge. All of these help us draw closer to God in ways that those who are not in our spiritual family cannot help us to do.

Check for Understanding

1. **What are four reasons we should worship God?** Because He created us; we are His people; He died for us; and to declare God’s salvation plan.
2. **What was the difference between Mary and Martha?** Martha labored, but Mary listened. She found a place of stillness at Jesus’ feet, and calmly listened to His words.
3. **What are three key characteristics of true worship that we can learn from Mary and the Canaanite woman?** It is humble and simple; it means being personally engaged; it is determined and sincere.
4. **What are five ways we can worship God in spirit and truth?** Prepare our hearts by repenting of any wrong; keep a reverent heart by finding stillness and quiet, order, and joy; keep a thankful heart; praise the Lord with hymns and spiritual songs; and serve one another with love for God and for each other.
5. **Why is it important that we worship God together with our spiritual family?** Our spiritual family enriches our hearts. As a group, we can offer each other joy, encouragement, comfort, fellowship, and spiritual knowledge.

Life Application

The Daily Habit of Worship

When we go home after church, many of us immediately forget about God and focus on our daily lives. It is easy to ignore God when we are at home playing games, at school, or out to play with our friends. But worshiping God shouldn’t be limited to church. It should be a daily, frequent occurrence.

Let’s read Genesis 22:5, and Job 1:20–21. Abraham was likely feeling great sorrow even as he faithfully obeyed God. Job was also undergoing great pain, sorrow, and agony, yet his response was to worship God. They prove to us that no matter what we are going through in life, it is still possible to worship God, even when we are afflicted with pain, troubles, and tribulation. In fact, it is during these times that we must focus even more on our worship.

Worship is significant because it crushes our fears, renews our spirits, and adds to our joys. Focusing on God lets our troubles begin to recede into the background, and makes us more thankful for everything He has given us. Of course, it is also very easy to forget to worship God when we are anxious, busy, or involved with our hobbies or academics. So, we must make an effort to set aside time to worship God from our heart every day, both in times of joy and in times of tribulation! Let’s review what we learned about worshiping God, and discuss more specific actions that we can take.

1. Prepare our hearts

It is important that we focus our hearts and minds on God in order to worship Him. This sometimes requires physical steps, such as sleeping early on Friday night so that we are awake and on time for morning service! We can also prepare our hearts in prayer. When was the last time you truly and deeply repented of a sin? When was the last time you took even a few moments to prepare yourself before approaching the Lord or serving Him?

2. Keep a reverent heart

Keeping a reverent heart also requires both internal and external action. What actions do you think reflect a reverent heart in church? What about an irreverent heart? *(Allow students to brainstorm. Ideas for reverence might be: taking notes in sermon; paying extra attention to our prayers; or speaking quietly in the chapel. Examples of an irreverent heart might be: sleeping during service; chatting during hymn singing; or always being late to church or to class.)*

3. Keep a thankful heart

A thankful heart may not seem like a form of worship, but a heart of thanksgiving is a way to show our love for God, because it means that we understand that everything we have comes from God. What can you give thanks to God for? *(Allow students to brainstorm. Examples may be: His creation; His promised Holy Spirit; giving us a church where we can worship Him; His death on the cross; salvation; etc.)*

4. Praise the Lord with hymns

Praising God shows our joy in His presence, and our recognition of His love for us. Of course, praising God doesn't just have to take place at church! Do you sing in the car or the shower? Maybe while you do chores around the house? Singing praises at any time or place is a simple form of worship that shows our affection for God! Take a moment to think of your favorite hymn. It might be from the hymn book, choir, or from SSC. Share with the class the reason you like the hymn.

5. Serve one another

Take a moment and think of how you can serve others at home, at church, and elsewhere. As a class, brainstorm as many actions as you can, and put a list together. *(Teachers: This list can be used to supplement step one of the following activity.)*

Activity: Tree of Worship

(Teachers: An optional template has been added to this lesson for your use. This activity can be done as a class with a large tree on the wall, or individually. If individually, it is recommended that you keep the students' "trees" in the classroom, so that they don't forget to continue adding leaves. Prepare a banner that says "Tree of Worship" or "True Worship." Lead by example by adding your own leaves throughout the term and remind them to add their own each week before or after class.)

Step 1: Brainstorm!

Brainstorm examples of true worship. To help keep things organized, try categorizing them under the different ways of worshiping God in spirit and truth. Try to phrase each suggestion so that they are short and simple. *(Teachers: Examples have been provided to help get the students started. Once they have a list, you may want to type or write the list on a piece of paper and post it next to their trees to help them choose one or two things to focus on each week.)*

Heart	Reverence	Thankfulness
<i>Sincerely repented today. Spent extra time in prayer. Prayed before leading hymns. Slept early on Friday night. Good prayer today. Felt closer to God!</i>	<i>Remembered to walk in chapel. Didn't think of games all day. Paid attention during sermon. Took extra notes during class. Happy to come to church today! Memorized another verse.</i>	<i>Thanked God in my prayer for something that happened. Felt joy during a trial. Prayed before a hard test and experienced God's help. Gave extra tithe to thank God.</i>

Praise	Servitude
<i>Paid attention in choir. Sang hymns with family. Spent extra time practicing hymns on piano. Memorized favorite hymn. Added playlist of hymns to phone.</i>	<i>Helped a bro/sis with a task. Did extra cleaning at church. Put away misplaced garbage. Visited a truth-seeker with my parents. Helped parents wash dishes. Took care of sick sibling.</i>

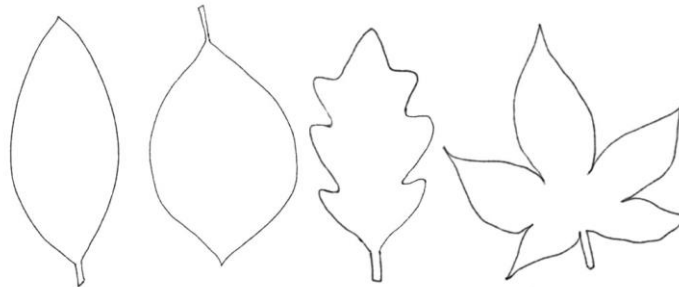
Step 2: Make a tree

(Teachers: If sharing one large tree for the class, the students may copy a larger version of the template. Alternatively, draw the outline on large poster paper ahead of time and let the students fill it with colored construction paper. If using individual trees, you may photocopy the template for them. If you would like more space for their leaves, simply cut out the tree and paste it on larger paper.)

Using colored construction paper, cut out a “tree” shape. Make sure to include various branches that stick out. The tree will look quite bare; that’s okay! We’ll be adding some leaves in a moment.

Step 3: Add leaves

(Teachers: If some of the students’ suggestions during step one are particularly long phrases, try making leaves that “open” – simply fold the paper in two and cut the same leaf shape, ensuring a portion of the fold remains uncut. This will create extra space for them to write, on the inside of the open leaf. Below are some examples of simple shapes that your students can use.)



Draw a few different leaf shapes, large enough to write on but small enough to match your tree’s size. Using these as templates, cut out several “leaves,” and write on them how you have offered true worship to God this week. Refer to our list in step one for ideas. Try to be specific; if you helped someone with a task, what task was it? If you only have one or two leaves, that’s okay! We’ll keep adding to our tree every week. By the end of the term, we’ll have a tree that has fully blossomed with our worship for God!

Memory Verse

“You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.” (Revelation 4:11)

Meaning

It is difficult to truly worship God unless we understand the reason we worship Him. One of the key reasons we attribute so much honor to Him is because of His status as Creator of all things. We are constantly discovering new things about the earth, how it works, and the intricate workings of all of creation. They are so complex that it is impossible for us to understand everything! All of this was made by God, and even we ourselves wouldn't exist if not for Him. Therefore, He deserves all of our praise and our worship.

Conclusion

We learned today that true worship is an important facet of our relationship with God, and also one that we must learn. True worship means that we are not simply going through the motions of worship, but interacting with God in a meaningful way. When we keep a reverent and thankful heart, praise God with sincerity, and serve one another in love, we are worshiping God in spirit and truth. In exchange, we will draw closer to God every day, and our actions will become a sweet fragrance to the Lord.

Lesson 7 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What is a key reason we attribute so much honor to God?
Because of His status as Creator of all things. The intricate world around us was made by God, and even we ourselves wouldn't exist if not for Him. Therefore, He deserves all of our praise and worship.

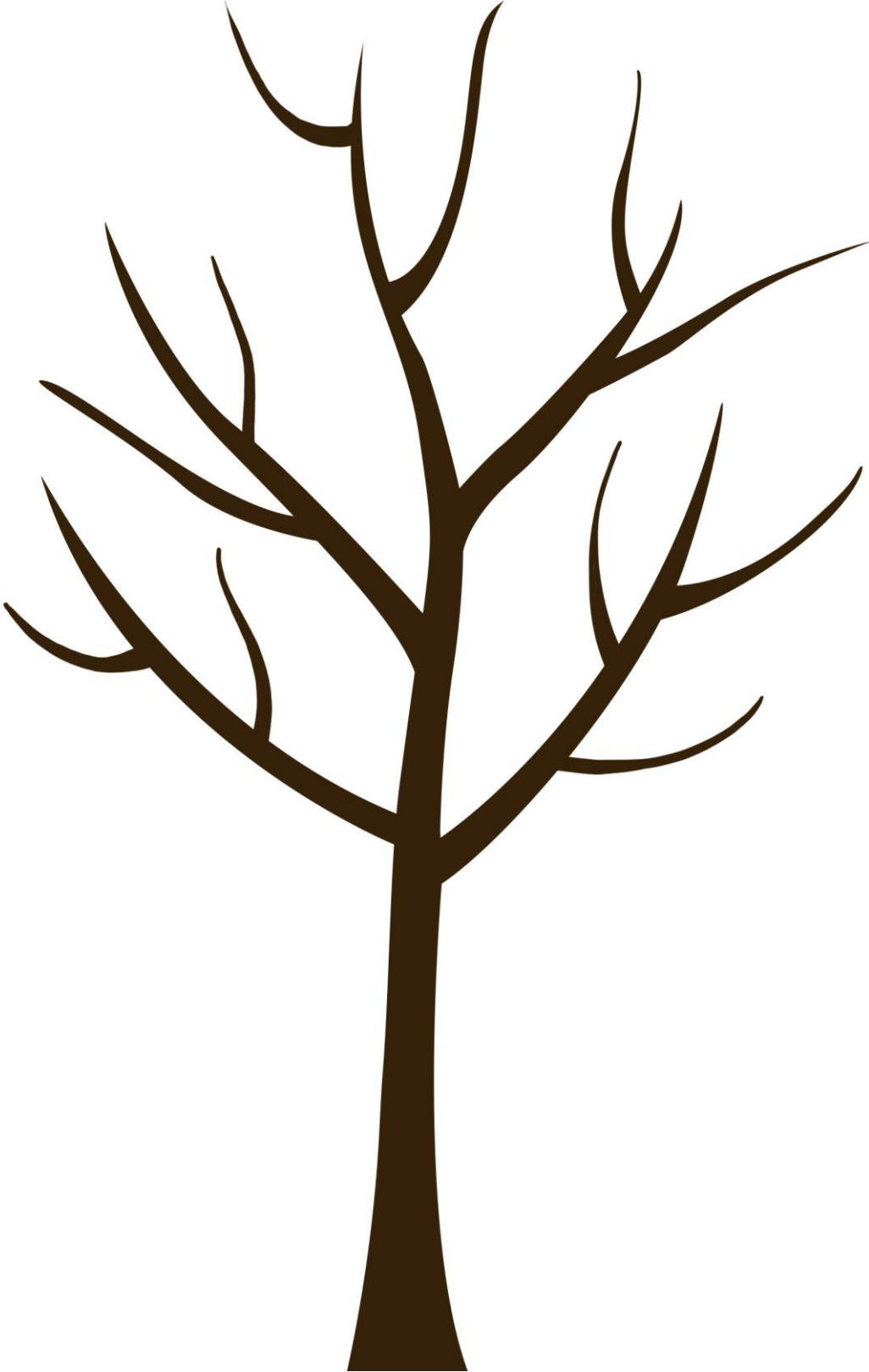
2. "But the _____ is _____, and now is, when the true _____ will _____ the Father in _____ and _____; for the Father is _____ such to _____ Him." (John 4:23)
hour, coming, worshipers, worship, spirit, truth, seeking, worship

3. Explain the difference between Martha and Mary. What can we learn from Mary's actions?
While Martha labored, Mary listened. When we focus our attention on God, material things recede into the background. We should learn to worship like Mary, by sitting right at Jesus' feet and listening attentively to the word of God.

4. What can we learn from Mary's use of fragrant oil to worship the Lord Jesus?
Whether through prayers, praise, or servitude, our worship should leave behind a positive and lasting impact both on our own spirituality and on those around us.

5. What are three characteristics of worship that we learned from examples in the Bible?
True worship is humble and simple, means being personally engaged with God, and is determined and sincere.

6. Of the five ways to worship God in spirit and truth, which two do you need to work on the most, and how can you improve upon them both this week?
Personal answers.



A Life of Integrity

Passages: As listed in the lesson.

Memory Verse

“Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who deal truthfully are His delight.” (Proverbs 12:22)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God has commissioned us to speak the truth and to walk in it.2. Dishonesty damages all relationships.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God hates lies.2. God is truth.3. God is involved in every detail of our lives.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Never compromise the truth.2. Take God’s word seriously and allow it to control our speech and actions so that we live a life of integrity.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. God’s Nature Is Truth
- B. The Father of Lies
- C. The Destruction of Liars

Life Application: Living a Life of Honesty

Memory Verse

Conclusion: It is easy to fall upon deception and dishonesty when we are in a tight spot, but our speech and actions should always reflect our identity as children of God. If, however, we live a life of deception, then we are declaring ourselves as part of the father of lies, and will share in Satan’s punishment.

Events and Spiritual Teachings

Introduction

What does “integrity” mean? If I asked you to think of someone who has integrity, what kind of characteristics would this person have? The dictionary definition for this word is, “The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles.”¹ If you know anyone who is incredibly honest, always truthful, and who never makes questionable decisions, then that is someone with integrity. A person who has spiritual integrity can also be described as righteous, upright, and God-fearing. One of the basic foundations of integrity is honesty or truthfulness, which is what we will be focusing on today.

A. God’s Nature Is Truth

When was the last time you let a lie slip out of your mouth? Have you ever told a half truth in order to protect yourself? Would you say you are honest all the time? Culture and society place great value on public image and self-protection. As a result, truthfulness takes a backseat in people’s lives most of the time. Some truly believe that it is okay to tell lies in order to make themselves feel good or look good to others. Even many Christians bend the truth, use flattering speech, or tell half-truths. This shows that they struggle to understand the heart and will of God.

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Proverbs 16:2 says, “All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the spirits.” This means that however we try to justify our actions, God judges us according to His values, not ours. What is God’s stance regarding truth and lies? Refer to the following verses and pick out the common characteristic of God that is described in each of them.

- Psalm 31:5 – “Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.”
- Psalm 51:6 – “Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.”
- John 14:6 – “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”

From these verses, we can see that God is truth, and the Holy Spirit is also truth itself. This means lies can never exist with God. His nature is the opposite of deception. And if we are to draw closer to Him and become more like Jesus, we must also learn to tell the truth as He desires us to do.

B. The Father of Lies

Satan has many names. The Bible also calls Satan a “deceiver” (Rev 12:9), “tempter” (1 Thess 3:5), “the ruler of demons” (Mt 10:25), and “Belial” or “wicked one” (2 Cor 6:15). Let’s read John 8:44. “You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.”

What does it mean to be the “father” of lies? It means that Satan was the originator of deceit; he was the first to use deception. This is Satan’s true nature. As the very first one to lie, all deceit comes from him, from the moment he deceived Eve in the garden of Eden by telling her, “You will not surely die” (Gen 3:4). His words were a half-truth. From this moment on, sin and death entered the world, and they became separated from God. They experienced physical and spiritual death due to their disobedience.

¹ *Oxford Dictionaries*, s.v. “integrity,” accessed October 4th, 2019, <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/integrity>.

It doesn't matter what kind of lie it is, or how "big" or "little" the lie. The Bible teaches us that "[a] false witness will not go unpunished, and he who speaks lies shall perish" (Prov 19:9). Revelation 21:8 also says that "all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." In this verse, they are named right next to the unbelieving, sexually immoral, and idolaters! Clearly, deception is a serious sin in the eyes of God. Let's now look at a few examples in the Bible.

1. Abraham (Gen 12:10–20; 20:1–28)

<p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abraham didn't tell the whole truth because he feared being killed. He lacked trust in the Lord's protection. 	<p>Results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> He suffered a loss of respect among his people. He lost the opportunity to bear witness to Gentiles.
<p>What can we learn about God? From these verses, we can see that God is involved in every detail of our lives. When we trust in Him, He can help us avoid sin. And even when we are faithless, God remains faithful.</p>	<p>How can I apply this to my life? Our fears often lead us to lie. We shouldn't let our fears control us. Instead, trust in God and place our faith in Him. Then, we will be less afraid, and will no longer see any reason to lie.</p>

2. Achan (Josh 7)

<p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achan didn't fear God nor take His commands seriously. He also didn't understand that we cannot hide anything from God. He thought that his actions were small and unimportant. 	<p>Results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Israelites suffered a humiliating and terrible loss at the hands of the city of Ai. Achan and his family were stoned to death.
<p>What can we learn about God? God sees everything we do, and He is not content with us doing what is right only when it is convenient for us. He wants us to do what is right all the time.</p>	<p>How can I apply this to my life? We must be careful not to rationalize our sins by believing lies, or by thinking that our actions are too small to affect anyone but ourselves.</p>

3. Micaiah, Ahab, and Jehoshaphat (1 Kgs 22:1–37)

<p>Ahab's Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is clear that Ahab did not respect the Lord God. The Bible even says that "Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him" (1 Kgs 16:33). Ahab only listened to what he wanted to hear; the truth was irrelevant. <p>Jehoshaphat's Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unlike Ahab, Jehoshaphat valued God's truth. He mistakenly sought for help from the wicked King Ahab. The prophet Jehu 	<p>Results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ahab's life of deception and disobedience to God resulted in a shameful and sudden death. Because he sought help from Ahab, Jehoshaphat almost lost his life in battle. Micaiah may have been physically punished for speaking the truth, but he ultimately refused to disobey God. As a result, his prophecy came true, and Ahab was killed in battle despite his disguise.
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<p>reminded him not to seek help from the ungodly (2 Chr 18:2–3).</p> <p>Micaiah’s Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Micaiah’s mocking words (2 Chr 18:14–15) transformed into a deadly proclamation for Ahab, despite Ahab’s power over his life. • Despite the messenger’s request, Micaiah courageously told the truth (2 Chr 18:13). Even with Ahab’s command that he be imprisoned, he spoke only God’s words. 	
<p>What can we learn about God? God wants us to seek Him instead of the ungodly. It is also apparent from Ahab’s death that no matter what measures we may try to take, we cannot fool the Lord. He is always in control!</p>	<p>How can I apply this to my life? We should seek out the Lord before making any big decisions and accept what He wants, even if it isn’t our preferred answer. We should also learn to stand up and tell the truth, no matter what others say or what may happen to us if we do.</p>

C. The Destruction of Liars

Let’s read Jeremiah 5:1–4, 12–17. In this chapter, the Lord told Jeremiah that if Jeremiah found just one fair and honest person in Jerusalem, God would spare the city. Jeremiah observed the poor and rich, and searched every level of society in the city, but he found no true followers of the Lord. Without even a single honest person in the city, God decided to bring their enemies to destroy the city, their possessions, and even the families within.

Let’s read Proverbs 6:16–19. Did you notice that lying appears twice on this list? This is because lying involves deception, cheating, and disregard for the truth. We should never join in such practices because deception can bring destruction to ourselves, to those around us, and even to the church. This includes false testimony against other people, something difficult to avoid in an age where social media serves as a breeding ground for false accusations!

Why should I live a life of honesty?

What are the rewards for living a life of honesty? What punishments do we face if we live a life full of dishonesty? Look up the following verses and write down what the Bible says the rewards and punishments are for being honest or dishonest.

- **Rewards for Honesty**
 - Proverbs 12:22 – *Our actions will delight the Lord.*
 - 1 Peter 3:10–12 – *The Lord watches over the righteous and listens to their prayers.*
 - Titus 2:7–8 – *Our enemies will be ashamed, being unable to speak evil of us.*
 - Matthew 25:23 – *We will be made ruler over many things and enter into the joy of the Lord.*
- **Punishment for Dishonesty**
 - Psalm 5:6 – *God abhors and destroys liars.*
 - Proverbs 19:9 – *We will experience punishment and death.*
 - Revelation 21:8 – *We will be cast into the lake of fire.*
 - Joshua 7:11–12 – *God will no longer stand with us but allow our enemies to destroy us.*

It is important that we strive to be different from the world, because to lie means to associate ourselves with the father of lies and share in his punishment in the end times. It is a serious sin against God (Prov 19:5), and there will always be consequences, no matter how “small” or well-intentioned our lies may be. Ultimately, we must always abide in truth and integrity because that is where God is. If we do, then God will watch over us and reward us with salvation.

Check for Understanding

- 1. What is God’s stance regarding truth and lies?** God’s nature is truth, and the Holy Spirit is also truth itself. This means lies can never exist alongside God. His nature is the opposite of deception.
- 2. Why is Satan called the father of lies?** He was the originator of deceit, the first to use deception. As the very first to lie, all deceit comes from him.
- 3. Why did Abraham lie about Sarah?** He was afraid of being killed. He didn’t trust in God’s protection.
- 4. What lessons can we apply to our life from the example of Achan in the Bible?** We mustn’t rationalize our sins by believing lies or think that our actions won’t affect anyone but ourselves.
- 5. What is the ultimate punishment for associating ourselves with the father of lies?** We will share in Satan’s punishment and be cast into the lake of fire.

Life Application

Living a Life of Honesty

The Bible has a lot to say about being honest! Why is God so keen about this command? It’s because truthfulness is one of the attributes and characteristics of God. He does not and cannot lie (Num 23:19), and He hates deception. Therefore, as His children, we need to be truthful as He is (Ex 20:15–16). So how can we begin to live a life of honesty?

1. What does honesty mean?

People with integrity bring out the best in both themselves and in others. Those who speak truthfully build up their character and promote harmony. On the other hand, someone who practices deception often has to hide things in their lives. When the truth is revealed, their words are no longer considered reliable, and they must accept the consequences for their deceptive words and deeds. Let’s brainstorm the characteristics of an honest person by finishing the following phrase: “An honest person...”

(Teachers: Allow students to brainstorm. Example answers have been given below.)

- ...tells the truth to others and to themselves.
- ...is completely trustworthy.
- ...has personal integrity.
- ...represents God in their words and actions.
- ...keeps their promises.
- ...doesn’t manipulate others.
- ...avoids taking shortcuts.
- ...helps others grow spiritually and live upright lives.
- ...speaks the truth with love.

In the world around us, most people prefer to abide by their own standards of honesty, and these standards are often ever-changing and flexible. But as we learned today, we must learn to do what is right in God’s eyes, not our own. And any form of deception is considered a sin against God.

2. Taking steps towards honesty

It’s clear that being honest requires a lot of thought! What seems normal to the world should not be normal to us. For example, “forgetting” a promise that you made, making up excuses when you fail to do your homework, or keeping quiet when you are undercharged for a purchase. But speaking the truth is a sign of maturity that also shows our love for God. Paul calls us to “put off falsehood and speak

truthfully” (Eph 4:25 NIV). To do so, we need to first identify when and why we fall upon deception in our lives.

a. Observation

It takes discipline to catch ourselves lying. If we examine our lives, we will likely notice some patterns. Consider the following: When do I tend to lie? Are there certain people I lie to the most? In what situations am I most prone to dishonesty? When we can pick out why we lie and the patterns involved, we can begin to take steps to avoid those same situations in the future.

b. Admission

When we notice our lies, it is important to admit to them and expose them. If you take God’s word seriously and truly want to commit His words to your heart, then you must be just as serious about removing any dishonesty from your life. This requires that we confess when we have lied or acted without integrity. The action of confessing our sins aloud and in our prayers helps us to become more aware of our sin and makes us less likely to repeat it in the future.

c. Determination

Removing deceit and lies requires two key ingredients: the power of the Holy Spirit, and determination! It is impossible to change without the power of the Holy Spirit. But even if we have the Holy Spirit, unless we have the resolve to change ourselves, the Holy Spirit cannot help us, which is why the second ingredient is determination.

d. Love

The last step that is required for honesty is love. We need to speak the truth with love, not brutality! God doesn’t want us to hurt people with the truth. Rather, He wants our words to become a blessing to those who hear us. Therefore, we need to grow in our love in order to speak the truth in accordance with God’s will.

3. How do I live a life of honesty?

a. Never compromise

Whenever we prioritize the approval of mankind, we are compromising the approval of God. Therefore, the first key to maintaining our integrity is to always put our faith first. We should always seek the approval of God over the approval of men and never make the decision to compromise our faith. The Bible says that “[the] fear of man brings a snare” (Prov 29:25). We often fall back on deception out of fear—perhaps we are scared of punishment, or of losing the respect of our peers. Honest people, on the other hand, are unafraid. They don’t fear the truth or its consequences. Let’s look at a few examples of ways we might compromise our faith by using deception.

- “If I told my dad the truth, he’d never give me an allowance ever again.”
- “If I told the teacher the real reason I didn’t finish my paper on time, she’ll deduct points.”
- “If I just tell a half-truth, my parents will be more likely to let me go to the party on Friday.”
- “I’ll get better marks if I just take credit for all of the work.”
- “I should just say something other than the truth so that my friend feels better.”
- “Who really cares if I lie about the number of hours I spend playing games?”
- “It’s the teller’s fault for giving me extra change. No one will care if I keep the money.”

As God’s children, we should always take the high ground, because everything that we say and do represents who we are. This is easier when we surround ourselves with honorable people,

who can inspire us to become a better person. But if we spend our time with dishonest people, our own integrity becomes affected, and we start to compromise our faith. Ultimately, refusing to compromise means never pushing the rules, but courageously speaking the truth and walking in God's commands no matter what others may think, see, or do in response.

b. Take God's words seriously

The world around us often misinterprets the Bible, dismisses its teachings as outdated or conservative, or simply ignores it. But we know that the Bible is important: it's full of God's instructions on how to receive salvation! So, we have to learn to be different from those around us, and take God's words seriously. Let's read Nehemiah 8:5. Ezra brought the Book of the Law of Moses out to the people to read it to them. The Bible says that "when he opened it, all the people stood up." This was a sign of the people's reverence and respect for God's word.

Is reading the Bible at the bottom of your list of priorities? Do you just read a verse or two and immediately forget what you read? Do you deliberately ignore the Bible's commands, or convince yourself that its warnings aren't that serious? Our spirit and our attitude towards the Bible determine how much we get out of it. If we don't take it seriously, God's word can't help us. But if we do take it seriously, we will be touched by teachings from the Scriptures. If we approach our Bible studies with the correct attitude, God will bless and encourage us.

Testimony

I lied so much during my high school years that I really didn't know who I was anymore. But God took hold of my heart one year when I went to NYTS! When I heard teachings about being pure and being right with God, I couldn't help but respond with a broken heart. During that NYTS, I truly encountered God – what He said, what He meant, and how important it was for me to stop lying. When I read God's word, it was like a mirror. It grabbed hold of me and stirred my emotions. God's word is truly like a sword piercing to the soul!

I couldn't hide it anymore; I told my counselor about my hidden sin. I repented and wept in all of my prayers as I asked God for forgiveness. I felt a deep sorrow for what I had done to my friends and family members, especially towards my parents. I sincerely asked God to renew me, and to help me recommit myself to the Scriptures and become a doer of His word. His words became my strength to stop lying, and I am now ready to face the challenge of being truthful.

– Anonymous

Memory Verse

"Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who deal truthfully are His delight." (Proverbs 12:22)

Meaning

God has created and continues to sustain us every day! If we truly love Him, then we should listen and follow His command by not telling lies. When we live upright lives by speaking only the truth, God delights in us and blesses us.

Conclusion

It is easy to fall upon deception and dishonesty when we are in a tight spot, but our speech and actions should always reflect our identity as children of God, so that we can be blameless before men and

glorify God with our lives. If we do, we can be confident of our salvation. But if we choose to live a life of dishonesty and deception, then we are declaring our identity as sons and daughters of Satan, the father of lies. Doing so means that we will also share in his punishment and will be cast into the lake of fire in the end times. Therefore, it is important to learn to live lives of integrity and honesty, so that we can please God and ultimately be blessed by Him.

Lesson 8 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What happens if we follow God’s command to live upright lives?
If we speak only the truth, then God will delight in us and bless us.
2. Why is Satan called the “father” of lies?
He was the first to use deception. As the very first one to lie, all deceit comes from him.
3. Write down one reward for honesty and one punishment for dishonesty, with biblical references.
 - a. *Rewards for Honesty*
Proverbs 12:22 – Our actions will delight the Lord.
1 Peter 3:10–12 – The Lord watches over the righteous and listens to their prayers.
Titus 2:7–8 – Our enemies will be ashamed, being unable to speak evil of us.
Matthew 25:23 – We will be made ruler over many things and enter into the joy of the Lord.
 - b. *Punishment for Dishonesty*
Psalm 5:6 – God abhors and destroys liars.
Proverbs 19:9 – We will experience punishment and death.
Revelation 21:8 – We will be cast into the lake of fire.
Joshua 7:11–12 – God will no longer stand with us but allow our enemies to destroy us
4. Today, we learned four steps that we can take towards living a life of honesty. Follow each step, taking the time to reflect upon yourself. Use another sheet of paper if you need more space.
 - a. **Observation:** Think of a recent situation where you were deceptive or dishonest.
 - b. **Admission:** Write a prayer to God explaining why you acted this way and repent of your mistake.
 - c. **Determination:** Continue your prayer from part (b), this time outlining how you will avoid acting the same way in similar situations in the future. Remember to ask for help from the Holy Spirit.
 - d. **Love:** Conclude with how you will show your love for God towards the person(s) you deceived.

Dear God...

(Personal answers)

Give Cheerfully

Passages: As listed in the lesson.

Memory Verse

“So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:7)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God has freely given all we have, and we should return what He has given us.2. God wants us to give willingly with joy.3. In giving, we will receive innumerable blessings.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God provides for our needs.2. God blesses and loves those who give cheerfully.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Tithing shows what we treasure in our hearts, and makes more room for God.2. Learn to be generous by giving ourselves first to the Lord.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Understanding Tithing
- B. Examples of Tithing and Giving
- C. Principles of Tithing
- D. The Results of Giving

Life Application

- 1. Learning to Tithe
- 2. Learning to Be Generous

Memory Verse

Conclusion: If we practice giving with a willing heart, it can become a very healthy spiritual habit! Like the Israelites, we should tithe to show our love for God, and to remind ourselves that everything we have comes from Him.

Events and Spiritual Teachings

Introduction

Try imagining the following scenario: At the end of every year, a “tithing ceremony” is held. One by one, each family brings one-tenth of their income, and the amount given is read out loud so that the entire congregation can hear. Whispering can be heard... “Oooohh...they’re dirt poor, aren’t they?” “I’m sure they make more money than that!” “Darn, they beat us by \$100. We’ll have to raise it next year!”

This scenario is an exaggeration, of course, and is probably one of the reasons tithing is not strictly enforced by God. He never intended for the act to become a competition or a burden upon His children, as it would were this type of event to occur. Instead, God wants us to tithe cheerfully and willingly. When we can give back what God has given to us, we can make room in our hearts for the grace of peace, joy, and love from God, things money can’t buy. The question is, are we able to give tithe willingly and joyfully?

A. Understanding Tithing

Tithing in the Bible

A tithe is a tenth of our annual produce or other source of income. In the Old Testament, there were three aspects to tithing.

1. First, one-tenth of the Israelites’ earnings was given yearly to support the Levites and priests (Num 18:26–28). After receiving it, the Levites were also required to offer a tithe, as that was considered their income. No one was exempt from offering back to God what belongs to Him.
2. Second, a portion of the yearly tithe was eaten during a celebration to remember God’s blessings (Deut 14:22–23).
3. Third, every year, the tithe was distributed to support the needy, widows, and orphans of the towns and cities (Deut 14:28–29).

From these, we can see that tithing had both spiritual and practical purposes. It wasn’t just to show a person’s spiritual dedication to God, but also a way to support God’s workers and to help the needy. The process was formalized over time, and in the New Testament, the Lord Jesus reminded the people of the essence of tithing.

Let’s turn to Matthew 23:23. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.” Jesus Christ admonished the Pharisees for being so meticulous about counting a tenth of such tiny seeds, but then forgetting the larger issues at hand. While we should always return to God what He gave us, we shouldn’t use tithing as an excuse to neglect our duties of justice, mercy, and faith.

Tithing Today

Why do we need to give tithe today? In the Old Testament, the people’s tithes supported the Levites, priests, and the needy, whether they offered livestock, grains, or money. But today, what is our tithe used for? Can you think of any reasons we should give tithe today? *(Allow students to brainstorm. Examples may be: to support church expenses, such as electricity, food, or supplies; to help the needy in both local and international churches; to serve as salaries for workers and ministers for God.)*

Tithing is a crucial element in God’s house. It is a concrete and consistent way of showing that we put God first in our lives. Our offerings are needed for practical purposes, such as paying workers and

ministers. They are also important because tithing is a reflection of our spiritual offering. If we practice it, it can become a very healthy spiritual habit. If we choose not to, however, then we are robbing God! Malachi 3:8 says, “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings.” Tithing may not be strictly enforced, but the Bible makes it clear that when we fail to tithe, we have taken what rightfully belongs to God. Therefore, we should always tithe to show our love for God, and to remind ourselves that everything we have comes from God.

B. Examples of Tithing and Giving

Let’s study a few examples in the Bible to understand more about tithing.

1. The Pharisee (Lk 18:10–14)

In this passage, the Pharisee’s attitude towards God is clear. How did he treat his tithe offering? To the Pharisee, his tithe was simply a part of his obligation, and a way to show off his religious devotion. Everything about his worship was for the purpose of keeping the law, not for the purpose of loving God.

2. The Widow (Mk 12:41–44)

Realistically, the widow offered very little! The contrast between their offerings is as if she offered a few cents right after someone dropped a hundred dollar bill into the box! It didn’t make a difference in the eyes of many, but Jesus commended her, saying that she offered more than anyone else. Why is this? What she gave was technically not very much, but it was all that she could give. Moreover, she gave it willingly, out of love and the goodness of her heart. It may have been very little, but it meant a lot for her to help others, despite her own predicament.

These two examples show us how much of a difference our attitude can make when offering to God! The Lord wants us to give what we have willingly, with joy, and with a heart to serve. He doesn’t want us to give like the Pharisee who simply tithed because it was his job, or because he wanted to look good. We should offer from the heart.

Let’s study one more example in 2 Corinthians 8:1–15. The churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea were suffering greatly because of persecution from the Jews. Here, Paul mentioned how the Macedonian Christians were offering money that they didn’t have to spare. Life was tough for the believers, yet they still gave as much as—if not more than—they could afford to offer.

In this passage, Paul wrote, “In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity” (2 Cor 8:2 NIV). Normally, the words “joy” and “poverty” don’t go together, but this is exactly how Paul described the Macedonian Christians! Moreover, the joy and poverty that they experienced didn’t make them any less willing to give. In fact, when they heard about the collection Paul was taking up, they gave as much as they could despite their own afflictions.

Paul brought up this subject because the Corinthians needed more motivation to give. They began a collection but soon forgot it. We don’t know the reasons for this, but we know that upon hearing that the suffering members needed help, the Macedonians responded. Their offering was a sacrificial giving—they were poor themselves, but wanted to help, so they experienced joy in giving what they could.

C. Principles of Tithing

What should our attitude be when it comes to tithing? What principles should we follow in giving tithes? It is important that we avoid tithing out of a sense of duty, or to make ourselves feel or look better. We need to examine our hearts when we tithe, and follow the principles that the Bible teaches us.

1. Giving is a matter of the heart (2 Cor 8:2, 12; 9:6)

The Bible encourages us to give, but it doesn't command us to sell all of our belongings and live in poverty! When Jesus commended the widow, He was teaching us to emulate her attitude. God knows that our ability to give is limited, especially when we are young and don't earn a lot or any money at all! But giving is a matter of the heart. When we give according to what our heart chooses, without any grudge or compulsion, then we will be like the Macedonians who gave with joy and servitude. Remember that God loves a sincere and cheerful giver!

2. Giving is a personal choice (2 Cor 9:7)

When we see someone donate something big like a piano or a large sum of money, we may feel like our five dollars is meaningless. But we shouldn't compare ourselves to others! Giving is a personal matter—it is okay to give according to our means. If we feel like we must give more because of other people, then we aren't giving from the heart, but out of a sense of obligation. If others suggest or force us to give a certain amount, or we perhaps offer a certain amount out of embarrassment, then we aren't giving with the correct attitude. We should choose the right amount for ourselves, and not let others affect our decision.

3. Give in proportion to what God has given (2 Cor 9:10)

Although we might be willing to offer one, five, or ten dollars each week, we must also remember to give in proportion to what God has given us. God stated a very specific number: 10 percent of our earnings! He still requires us to live on this earth to spread the gospel, so it doesn't make sense for us to sell everything and live in poverty! It would be extremely difficult for us to serve Him in that situation.

On the other hand, we cannot use our cheerful attitude when we tithe as an excuse to give less than we can. It is important that we avoid justifying ourselves by saying such things as, "Well, since I'm giving so willingly, a dollar a week will do. I really need to save up for that other purchase I really wanted!" When we choose to give less than we ought, we have forgotten that everything we own comes from God. Even if we need to save up for something important such as bills or tuition, when we offer accordingly, God will always give back to us.

In summary, God wants us to offer what we have chosen to give with a willing heart. He doesn't want to burden us, so it's our choice what we offer. But it is important to remember that "[he] who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully" (2 Cor 9:6). This is a principle that every farmer knows: you cannot reap what you do not sow. The person who gives only a little will receive back just as little. But if we give bountifully, then God will give us so much more!

D. The Results of Giving

What happens when we give from the heart? What can we expect as a result?

1. God will increase the fruits of our righteousness

Let's read 2 Corinthians 9:10. "Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness."

When we give from the heart, God will remember what we have willingly given and increase the fruits of our righteousness! He will give us our heavenly reward, and we will "enter into the joy

of [our] Lord” (Mt 25:21; cf. Lk 12:32–33).

2. God will enrich our lives

When we give, God enriches our lives in two ways. First, by supplying more of our needs, and second, by enabling us to give even more. When God gives us more, we shouldn’t keep it to ourselves, but continue to give so that we can become a channel for God in supporting His work. When we become a giver, God will take care of us, because giving guarantees God’s provision. Do you have faith that when you give, God will meet your needs?

3. We become partners in the ministry

In Philippians, Paul gives thanks for their “partnership in the gospel from the first day until now” (Phil 1:5 NIV). Their provision was a valuable contribution in spreading God’s word. Not all of us will become ministers or workers, but we can still help by giving. Think of members who travel the world to preach and help our churches grow! Whenever we give, we are supporting those who minister in remote or dangerous areas. This makes us partners in the ministry! Our giving also isn’t limited to financial donations—we can give through hospitality, supplies, or prayers. When we give what we can, we can support the church in so many ways. With the right heart, we can become the means that God uses to meet the needs of our coworkers in Christ!

4. Giving brings thanksgiving and glory to God

Giving isn’t just a gesture of our own thanksgiving—it also promotes thanksgiving within the church, because a need has been met and answered. Our tithe also brings glory to God, because others can see our obedience and our dedication to the Lord, as well as the blessings that He returns to us when we give from the heart. In describing cheerful givers, Paul wrote that “through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God” because their confession of the gospel was accompanied by both obedience and generosity (2 Cor 9:13).

The world’s logic dictates that if we were to give away 10 percent, then we have permanently lost 10 percent of what we gave. But the Bible teaches us the opposite: when we give back to God what belongs to Him, we will receive innumerable blessings, far more than the 10 percent we gave to Him!

Check for Understanding

- 1. Explain the three aspects of tithing in the Old Testament.** One-tenth of the Israelites’ earnings supported the priests and the Levites. Second, a portion was eaten during a celebration to remember God’s blessings, and third, it was distributed to support the needy.
- 2. What did Jesus remind the people of regarding the essence of tithing?** While we should always return to God what He gave us, we shouldn’t use tithing as an excuse to neglect our duties of justice, mercy, and faith.
- 3. What can we learn from the Macedonians’ response to the members’ needs?** Their offering was a sacrificial giving—they were poor themselves, but wanted to help, so they experienced joy in giving what they could.
- 4. What are three principles of tithing?** Giving is a matter of the heart; giving is a personal choice; and give in proportion to what God has given us.
- 5. What are the results of giving?** God will increase our righteousness; God will enrich our lives; we become partners in the ministry; and giving brings thanksgiving and glory to God.

Life Application

1. Learning to Tithe

After today's lesson, do you have a better understanding of why tithing is so important? Let's read Deuteronomy 14:23. The purpose of tithing is to teach us to always prioritize the Lord. When we give on a monthly, weekly, or daily basis, we are constantly reminding ourselves that God takes first place in our lives. But it is more than a reminder for us. The action shows us what we value in our hearts, and also makes room in our hearts for spiritual matters.

a. Tithing shows what we treasure in our hearts

In Matthew 6:21, Jesus explained that "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." The things we treasure are the things that we keep close to our hearts. And there is little more telling about what we value than where we put our money! If I keep my tithe in my wallet, then that's where my heart is. If I put my tithe in the offering box, then I value God more! Where we put our money reveals what is truly important to us, making the act of giving a test from God.

b. Tithing makes room in our hearts for God

Learning to tithe is especially important in a materialistic world that is always yelling at us to spend money for our own comforts and desires! When we ignore the advice of the world and give generously to others, we become less materialistic, leaving more room in our hearts for peace and joy from the Lord. Therefore, instead of accumulating all the "stuff" that we want, we should learn to give.

If we tithe faithfully and consistently, then we are not only proving to God that our heart is where it should be, but every time we give, we are making more room in our heart for His blessings! This all leads us to the important question: where do you put your tithe? Wherever we put it shows what is truly important to us. For those who struggle with giving things up, let's turn to Malachi 3:10.

Here, the Lord has challenged us to test Him. He has promised such great blessings if we dare to give what we have to Him! This means setting aside a mere ten percent of every dollar that we earn, and giving it all to God with joy (2 Cor 9:7). If we do choose to test God in this promise, then He will give us so many blessings that "there will not be room enough to receive it"!

(Teachers: The full version of the testimony referenced in this section is too long to include. However, a separate pdf with the full testimony has been uploaded alongside this lesson. You may read the full testimony with your students if you have time, or alternatively, give them a copy to read at home.)

Testimony: The Path to God's Blessings

In this testimony, a brother recalled how he and his wife barely offered tithe while living in Jakarta. Although their income was sufficient and their monthly expenses were quite low, their savings gradually shrank each month. This continued until they moved to Singapore, where they realized their sin. They deeply repented, and determined to offer tithe regularly. For each paycheck received, 10% first went to God, and the remaining 90% for themselves. The following is an excerpt from this testimony, following their decision to tithe regularly to God.

Our expenses [after moving to Singapore] became higher. My wife became pregnant with our first child in the year 2000, and we now had rent to pay, in a city that had a much higher cost of living compared to Jakarta. But thank God, He always provides what we really need!

While my wife was still pregnant, I received a special salary increase. The normal annual salary increase in Singapore is 2–3% per year, but I received more than 15%! In addition to this blessing, I

was suddenly offered a part time job, and began receiving some extra income. God truly knows what we need, and He will always provide. My meager income – which should have been barely enough to survive – became enough for us to live on. Not only that, we also somehow saved a little bit of extra money each month. As we gave tithe, we began to manage our money better than in Jakarta.

For a time, we continued renting in the city, which meant that we had to move every year. We went from Marine Crescent to Serangoon, then to Tiong Bahru, and from there to Aljunied Crescent. It became very tiring moving from one place to another. But thank God, although my Singapore Permanent Residence (SPR) application had been rejected twice, it was finally approved by the government in 2002. As an SPR holder, we were now allowed to buy a government flat from the open market, and could borrow money from the bank for up to thirty years.

[...] We began looking for flats to purchase, but realized that the selling price was always above our budget, with additional funds required for house renovations. We clearly needed money at the time, but we knew that 10% of my income still belonged to God, and that we should continue to offer tithe. There would be no bargaining in this! So we put the matter into our prayers, and asked God to give us the wisdom to decide whether or not it was the right time for us to buy a flat.

God answered our prayers. It was on a second floor, but we found a flat that was within our budget and required no renovations. In addition, it was near our church at Telok Kurau, which was our top priority while searching. Thank God, we then decided to buy the flat. However, our problems had not quite ended yet. Our existing rental contract had not yet expired, so we still needed to pay the rental fee for the next six months. In addition, I now had to pay additional monthly installments for our mortgage.

The Lord Jesus is always merciful, and never stops showering His blessings upon us. Not long after buying our flat, another opportunity came. I was offered a part time job again by the same company as before, and this time I was paid a sufficient amount to support our monthly expenses.

I really cannot count the blessings God has given my family. He is always there to help us when we need Him the most. It was not until years later that I realized that God's plan and timing were perfect as always. Looking back, I realize that the same year we purchased our flat – the year 2002 to 2003 – property prices in Singapore had dropped to a record low. Moreover, the USD to SGD exchange rate was the highest ever (we had kept the proceeds from selling our home in Jakarta in USD). The rejection of my SPR application, and its subsequent late approval in 2002, was all because of God's perfect timing. It is impossible to believe, but despite my initial belief that it would take us fifteen to twenty years to save enough for a flat, God helped me buy a house for my family three short years after moving to Singapore!

I hope that my testimony will help readers understand that when we are giving our offerings to God, we will never lose anything. When we return 10% to God, our quality of life is not reduced by 10%. In fact, we will receive so many more blessings (Mal 3:10–11)! He always provides what we need. We simply need to learn from the faithful widow who gave all she had in two copper coins (Mk 12:41–44). But because He has given us free will, we can choose to half-heartedly give one coin, or we can choose to offer our whole heart with two coins. Let's count the blessings that God has given us. Let's offer our two copper coins.

May all the glory be unto our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

2. Learning to Be Generous

There are two types of people: givers and takers. The world teaches us to be takers, but the Bible urges us to be givers. This is because every time we are generous towards others, we please God. As Jesus said, “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me’” (Mt 25:40). It doesn’t matter if the person who helped is aware of our actions. What matters is that we learn to be generous with what God has given to us.

Let’s read Proverbs 11:25. “The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself.” When we are generous to others, God in turn is generous to us. Jesus added to this teaching, saying that, “Give, and it will be given to you [...]. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you” (Lk 6:38). This means that God’s promise of generosity is predicated on our own generosity towards others. Unless we obey God in the matter of giving, He doesn’t give any guarantee to meet our needs. In fact, God isn’t at all obligated to meet any of our needs if we don’t first obey what He has told us to do! But it is easier for us to become attached to what we have than it is to be generous. So how do we learn to become givers as God wants us to be?

Give ourselves to the Lord before giving to others

It is in the giving of ourselves to God that we become able to give to others. Paul wrote that the Macedonians “first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God” (2 Cor 8:5). In much the same way, when we truly love God, we become more willing to give. When Paul was urging the Corinthian church to act, he wrote, “Therefore show to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love and of our boasting on your behalf” (2 Cor 8:24).

Our generosity is proof of our love for God! Therefore, it’s important that we first give ourselves to God in order to learn how to give to others with the correct heart and attitude. Take a moment to ask yourself, how much have I given myself to the Lord? Does the way I give show that I love God?

Memory Verse

“So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:7)

Meaning

Our attitude in giving is more important than the amount that we give! God is concerned about whether we are giving willingly, with joy. When we become cheerful givers, we please the Lord, and He will bless us.

Conclusion

Tithing is a practical and consistent way of showing that we put God first in our lives. If we practice giving with a willing heart, it can become a very healthy spiritual habit! Like the Israelites, we should tithe to show our love for God, and to remind ourselves that everything we have comes from Him. And as the Bible teaches us, when we give bountifully, then we will also reap bountifully!

Lesson 9 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What is the most important aspect of giving according to the memory verse?
Our attitude is more important than the amount that we give! God is concerned about whether we are giving willingly, with joy. When we become cheerful givers, we please the Lord, and He will bless us.
2. "Will a man _____? Yet you have _____ Me! But you say, 'In what way have we _____ You?' In _____ and _____." (Malachi 3:8)
rob, God, robbed, robbed, tithes, offerings.
3. "He who sows _____ will also reap _____, and he who sows _____ will also reap _____." (2 Corinthians 9:6)
sparingly, sparingly, bountifully, bountifully.
4. What principles should we follow when tithing according to the Bible?
Giving is a matter of the heart; giving is a personal choice; and we should give in proportion to what God has given us.
5. What do we receive as a result of tithing?
God will increase our righteousness; God will enrich our lives; we become partners in the ministry; and we bring thanksgiving and glory to God.
6. Where does your time and money usually go? What "treasures" do you keep in your heart?
Personal answers.
7. What is one action that you will try to take each week in order to increase your generosity?
Personal answers.

Testimony: The Path to God's Blessings

By Brother Lukman Pau Susilo, October 2019

“Where is Our Money Going?”

In the name of the Lord Jesus, I testify. When I lived in Jakarta, my faith was weak, and it was difficult for me to offer tithe. Sometimes I did, sometimes I didn't. But most of the time, I didn't. I knew that tithing is part of our duty as believers, and that it is God's command, but it felt too difficult for me to do it, especially when I was in need of money. I lacked the faith to return what belonged to God. This was partly because I did not budget my expenses properly. I spent first and offered later, if there was any money left to offer. I also felt that in giving 10% to God, I would have 10% less. My quality of life, I felt, would be reduced by 10%. I was of the mind that the money could be spent on other purposes instead.

While my wife and I worked in Jakarta, we lived with my mother, so we had no rent to pay. That meant less spending, and more money to save. The cost of living in Jakarta was also quite low at the time, and our income was average. We had just gotten married and had no children, so we had very few monthly expenses. However, every month we saw that our savings became smaller and smaller. We began to wonder, 'Where is our money going?' We had no answers to this question at the time.

From Jakarta to Singapore: Seeing our Sin

In July of 1999, we moved to Singapore after the big riot in Jakarta. Praise the Lord, when we arrived in Singapore, we realized that God had given us so many blessings! We became embarrassed and guilty that we had not been returning what belonged to God. The Bible calls our actions robbery (Mal 3:8-9). We had been robbing God of His tithe and offerings. Moreover, He had been openly watching, making it akin to daylight robbery! Of course we had sinned.

Thank God, we realized our sin, and repented. We concluded that no matter what happened, at least 10% of my income had to be returned to God. That was the minimum amount that we had to give back. This meant that instead of spending first and offering later as we had previously done, whenever I received my paycheck, we gave our tithe to God first, and then used the remaining 90% for ourselves.

In Singapore, I became the sole source of income. My wife was not working, and what I received was just enough to support my family. In our move, we had sold our house in Jakarta for 90 million Indonesian Rupiah and converted the money to USD, as it was not a good idea to keep money in Rupiah. This was roughly 18,000 Singapore Dollars (SGD) at the time, but we were surprised to find that the cost of a flat in Singapore was around 150,000 SGD, more than eight times the amount that we had sold our old house for! With my small income, it was impossible to buy even a small, simple flat. I realized that I couldn't afford one, even in the next fifteen to twenty years. I told my wife, "I'm sorry, I can't buy a house for our family." However, she was very understanding and replied, "It's OK; it's more than good that we are able to survive in Singapore."

Our expenses became higher. My wife became pregnant with our first child in the year 2000, and we now had rent to pay, in a city that had a much higher cost of living compared to Jakarta. But thank God, He always provides what we really need!

While my wife was still pregnant, I received a special salary increase. The normal annual salary increase in Singapore is 2–3% per year, but I received more than 15%! In addition to this blessing, I was suddenly offered a part time job, and began receiving some extra income. God truly knows what we need, and He will always provide. My meager income – which should have been barely enough to survive – became enough for us to live on. Not only that, we also somehow saved a little bit of extra money each month. As we gave tithe, we began to manage our money better than in Jakarta.

The Determination to Continue Tithing

For a time, we continued renting in the city, which meant that we had to move every year. We went from Marine Crescent to Serangoon, then to Tiong Bahru, and from there to Aljunied Crescent. It became very tiring moving from one place to another. But thank God, although my Singapore Permanent Residence (SPR) application had been rejected twice, it was finally approved by the government in 2002. As an SPR holder, we were now allowed to buy a government flat from the open market, and could borrow money from the bank for up to thirty years.

Despite this, at the time, it was very difficult for me to decide whether or not to buy a flat. As a fresh SPR holder, I didn't have much money in my retirement funds, which could be used to pay mortgage. This meant paying the down payment, monthly installments, and any other expenses with our very limited savings. On the other hand, we were tired of paying rental fees every month, and were especially tired of constantly moving.

We began looking for flats to purchase, but realized that the selling price was always above our budget, with additional funds required for house renovations. We clearly needed money at the time, but we knew that 10% of my income still belonged to God, and that we should continue to offer tithe. There would be no bargaining in this! So we put the matter into our prayers, and asked God to give us the wisdom to decide whether or not it was the right time for us to buy a flat.

God's Answer: Showers of Blessings

God answered our prayers. It was on a second floor, but we found a flat that was within our budget and required no renovations. In addition, it was near our church at Telok Kurau, which was our top priority while searching. Thank God, we then decided to buy the flat. However, our problems had not quite ended yet. Our existing rental contract had not yet expired, so we still needed to pay the rental fee for the next six months. In addition, I now had to pay additional monthly installments for our mortgage.

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May all the glory be unto our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

God’s Blueprint for the Family

Passages: As listed in the lesson.

Memory Verse

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise: ‘that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.’”
(Ephesians 6:1–3)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
The Bible contains blueprints for a successful Christian family, including each individual’s roles and responsibilities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God is love.2. God is a God of order.3. God honors those who honor Him.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Sincerely honor our parents.2. Obey our parents from our hearts by learning to love them and fear God.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Family Roles According to the Bible
- B. Families in the Bible: Failures and Successes
- C. A Christian Household

Life Application

1. The Importance of Honoring Our Parents
2. The Foundation of Obedience

Memory Verse

Conclusion: We each play different roles in our family, and we may find it difficult to follow them according to God’s will. But if we do choose to follow God’s blueprint for our family lives, He will bless, protect, and care for us!

Events and Spiritual Teachings

Introduction

- What is a blueprint, and what is it used for?
- Who uses blueprints?
- What would their jobs be like without any blueprints?

Many people say that if the job of a parent or a child came with a manual or blueprint, life would be a lot easier. Everyone would know what they were supposed to do at any given moment, and life would be less chaotic. For most, this blueprint is simply a wish. For us, however, this blueprint exists. God has given us the Bible to serve as a blueprint for our lives as children, parents, and Christians!

A. Family Roles According to the Bible

We each play many different roles in our lives. A father is also a son to their parents, a mother is also a wife, and you are not only a child to your parents, as you might also have the role of a sibling. Just as the Bible guides us on the structure of a family, God also teaches us how should act within each of our appointed roles. Paul summarized the Christian home in a few verses:

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.

Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

(Col 3:18–21)

Let's go over each of these roles in a little bit more detail and see what else the Bible says about how each member within a family should act.

1. Husband and Wife (Eph 5:22–28)

Husbands should love their wives as their own bodies, just as Jesus Christ gave Himself up for the church. This means that a husband should love his wife unconditionally, as the husband fulfills God's role as husband in the family. Since God is the head of the household, wives also should submit to their husbands in the same way they submit to God with love.

2. Father and Mother (Eph 6:4; 1 Tim 5:14; Tit 2:4–5)

God commands fathers to bring their children up "in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Eph 6:4). He also teaches fathers not to provoke their children, as this will discourage them. Mothers are taught to guide the house so that their children will grow up learning the proper order of authority over them. By teaching them submission with love, their children can learn how to submit to God.

3. Parent and Child (Deut 6:4–9; Ex 20:12; Eph 6:1–4)

Parents as a unit have the primary responsibility and God-given authority to teach their children about God and His commands. Together, they should raise their children in the discipline of the Lord so that they will know Christ. They are to set an example by having a God-centered home, teaching good manners, demonstrating the daily life of a Christian, and bringing their children to church to keep the Sabbath and serve the Lord.

Children, for their part, are to honor and obey their parents in the Lord. This is the first command of God that comes with a promise attached! Children should learn and understand

that their parents do everything out of love, even when their parents discipline them.

4. Siblings (1 Tim 5:1–2; Ps 133:1)

Having siblings can be a great blessing of childhood but being a sibling can also be a challenging role. Siblings are there to look after and care for one another, and they should grow up learning how to get along with each other. Caring sibling relationships take time to build, but if the family is willing to put effort into teaching God's ways, the relationship can, over time, become one of the closest bonds in the siblings' lives.

These roles all seem rather restrictive on paper! What is the benefit of following these instructions? Let's read Deuteronomy 6:3. "Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you—a land flowing with milk and honey." When we choose to obey God, we will be greatly blessed by Him, and we can remain confident of His protection, love, and promise of salvation.

B. Families in the Bible: Failures and Successes

Let's now look at a few examples of families in the Bible. For each example, write down the following:

- What were the names of the people in each family?
- Did they follow God's blueprint for a Christian family?
- What did they do to follow or disobey God?

(Teachers: Split your class into groups to research each family, then have them share their findings for the rest of the class to write down. The paragraphs below are supplementary teachings that you can give them in addition to their findings.)

1. Abraham and Isaac (Gen 18:19; 24:1–8; 26:1–5, 15–22)

Abraham obeyed God's will and focused on the religious education of his children. He taught his son to respect and submit to God, and sought a wife for Isaac from their homeland rather than from the Gentiles they lived amongst. Isaac learned well from his father and dealt with people in a manner that was pleasing to God. God was truly the head of his household, just as Abraham had taught him: God later called Himself the "God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Ex 3:6).

2. Eli and His Sons (1 Sam 2:12–17, 22–25, 27–36)

Eli may have been a good person, but he failed to discipline his children or teach them in the way of God. He spoke to them briefly about their sins, but they ignored his words completely, showing contempt and disrespect for their father. Their failure to submit to Eli also shows their failure to submit to God; they lusted after wealth, power, women, and control, and had no regard for God or God's house. As a result, they were cut off from God.

3. Timothy and His Family (Acts 16:1; 2 Tim 1:5)

Timothy was a second-generation Christian. His father wasn't a believer, but his grandmother and mother both understood God's command to teach their children the right path, and they both influenced Timothy's beliefs. He not only followed Paul on his missionary journey, but also took up the work of God and boldly preached the message of salvation. From these actions, we can infer that Timothy obeyed his mother and grandmother and listened to their words.

These examples teach us what kind of family we should or shouldn't be. If every member is a believer, then we need to help each other grow in the knowledge of Christ. If there are unbelieving members, or

members who begin to stray from the Lord, then it is our duty to bring them to know God and His love. Only then will the family be truly blessed by the Lord.

C. A Christian Household

After studying everyone's roles and looking at biblical examples, has your idea of a Christian family changed at all? What should a Christian home look like according to the Bible?

1. God-Centered

Let's read Psalm 127:1. "Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain." Without God at the center of our family, we will struggle to find joy and peace. But what exactly is a God-centered home?

A God-centered home is a place where family members speak, act, and relate to one another in accordance with the Bible's teachings. Every family experiences ups and downs and struggles through hardships. But when God is in the center, each member submits to Him in all things, resulting in a family that is spiritually stronger, and therefore more peaceful and joyful.

2. Full of God's Love

A very important ingredient to a Christian household is God's love (1 Jn 4:8). Love is the glue that holds the family together! When a household is full of love, it becomes a refuge where hurt family members can find peace, comfort, and healing. The home becomes seasoned with sacrificial love, humility, and respect. When family members experience unconditional love for and from each other, the members understand God's love more, having experienced it at home. By personally experiencing such love, children will be able to grow in love themselves, resulting in a home that is blessed by God.

3. Full of Godly Discipline and Order

In 1 Corinthians 14:33, Paul teaches us that "God is not the author of confusion but of peace." One of the foundations of a Christian home is, therefore, discipline and order.

a. Spiritual discipline

We are constantly bombarded with the messages of the world and the temptations of society. When we are surrounded by so many lies and confusing messages about how we should live our lives, it is often difficult to find the truth of how we should live. But when a family takes up spiritual discipline and diligently searches out the truth of the Bible, they can measure themselves by standards that will never change: God's standards. Only then can we hold strong as a family, no matter what trials we face.

b. Family discipline

Proverbs 10:17 says, "He who keeps instruction is in the way of life, but he who refuses correction goes astray." Discipline feels harsh and unjust when we are on the receiving end! But the goal of discipline is to teach us right from wrong. It teaches us obedience, righteousness, servitude, and godly living. Without it, we cannot do well at home, school, work, or in life in general. Parents are in charge of teaching and guiding their children's behavior, and the primary motive behind their discipline is love. It may feel long and painful, but those who have been trained properly yield the fruit of righteousness (Heb 12:11).

The word "discipline" does not only mean punishment. It can also be defined as training ourselves to do something in a controlled or habitual way. This means that to live a disciplined family life requires teaching ourselves the habit of living according to God's word. It means

training ourselves to be orderly in our conduct. When such discipline is integrated into our character, we will live according to God’s good purpose (Phil 2:12–13).

What if family members do not follow God’s commandments?

As children of God, our responsibility is to honor our parents. This means yielding to their authority, even if they lack godly wisdom. But what if you are told to do something that is against God’s will? The Bible’s stance is severe towards parents who sin and instruct their child in immoral or illegal deeds (Mt 18:6), and this is the only circumstance in which we should not honor our parent’s instruction.

What if we are told to do something that is against God’s commandment, such as lying, cheating, or stealing? Or if they purposefully hinder us from going to church? If this happens, the Bible teaches us that “we ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). The highest form of obedience comes from honoring and following God’s words. He has preeminence.

Special note for teachers:

If your students come from single, divorced, or dysfunctional families, or if they have been exposed to physical harm, vengeance, violence, or abuse, talk to the ministers in your local church and seek help and counseling. The parent needs guidance with God’s words and prayers by the grace of God.

Your student will need a lot of love, compassion, mercy, affirmation, and intercessory prayers, especially if they have been neglected or abused either physically or emotionally. But be reminded that the Holy Spirit can cleanse, heal, and restore broken relationships. Invite your student to pour out their problems to God. The Lord uses anyone and anything – even non-believer or abusive parents – for the good for those who love Him (Rom 8:28).

Check for Understanding

- 1. Explain how the Bible describes the role of the husband and wife in a family.** God commanded husbands to love their wives as their own bodies, just as Jesus Christ gave Himself up for the church. Wives also should submit to their husbands in the same way they submit to God with love.
- 2. Explain the roles of parent and child in a family according to the Bible.** Parents have the primary responsibility and God-given authority to teach their children about God and His commands. They should demonstrate the life of a Christian. Children should honor and obey their parents. If they do, God has promised to bless them.
- 3. Describe an example of a successful family unit in the Bible. Describe an example of a failed family unit in the Bible.** See Section B.
- 4. What three characteristics should a Christian home have, according to the Bible?** It should be God-centered, full of God’s love, and full of godly discipline and order.
- 5. How can a family maintain their spiritual discipline?** By diligently searching out the truth of the Bible, so that they can measure themselves by God’s standards, which never change.

Life Application

1. The Importance of Honoring Our Parents

Honoring our parents first appears in the Bible in Exodus 20:12. The fact that God made it one of the Ten Commandments shows that He values this command greatly. It is also repeated several times throughout the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments. The Lord Jesus used the command as an example of the Pharisees’ hypocrisy (Mt 15:3–6), and Paul also emphasized its importance several times.

Why do I need to honor my parents?

To honor someone doesn't mean to flatter them, and honoring a person isn't about acting for show. It is an act of deep sincerity from the heart. But first, why is it so important that we honor our parents?

a. Rewards

Let's read Ephesians 6:1–3. What rewards does the Bible promise to those who honor their parents? (*Things will be well with you, and you will have a long life.*) God has gone out of His way to tell us that He will bless us if we honor our parents. It is clearly an important matter to God!

b. Punishment

The Bible severely condemns those who dishonor their parents. The Mosaic laws state that if a man has a stubborn and rebellious son, "Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall put away the evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear" (Deut 21:21). They also state, "And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death" (Ex 21:17; Lev 20:9). The severe punishments show us how important it is that we never rebel against or curse our parents.

As a divine commandment, honoring our parents comes with great reward or devastating punishment if we obey or disobey. But to honor them, there are a few fundamental concepts that we need to learn:

a. Obedience

Though it is one of the foundations to honoring our parents, obedience is, of course, difficult for us to do, especially when we disagree with them! But by learning to obey our parents, we are also learning to obey the Lord. Even though the Lord Jesus was God Himself, He still obeyed His parents without ignoring them. The only circumstance in which it may be acceptable to disobey our parents is if they ask us to do something contradictory to God's teachings.

b. Humility

One of the reasons we resent our parents is because we have pride. It is important that we fill our hearts with humility, so that we become more willing to accept our parents' discipline. Let's read Hebrews 12:11. "Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." If we understand the reason our parents discipline us, then it becomes easier to accept it with a humble heart, knowing that they discipline us out of love and righteousness.

c. Respect

The Bible teaches us to rise for the elderly as a form of respect (Lev 19:32). Of course, this applies to our parents as well! As they grow older, they may seem more and more unreasonable to us, but this is not an excuse for us to disrespect them or to talk back to them. When situations are tough and unpleasant, it is easy to lash back with harsh words, but with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can learn to respect our parents with submission.

Let's take a moment to read a testimony about a brother who realized later in life how much his parents played a role in his faith, and how blessed he felt to have such parents.

Testimony

I would like to share with you how growing up in a Christian home is a blessing. I have been given godly parents and grandparents, religious education, loving brethren at church, and support from a church family. My parents faithfully served the Lord, and served as a model for what a strong

marriage looks like. Throughout my childhood leading up to my college years, I had been repeatedly taught about the love of God, His salvation, and ways to resist sin and live for Christ.

Aside from my many blessings, I have also been very protected. My parents did not only wisely limit my entertainment choices, they also carefully monitored my friendships and my exposure to the world. During high school, I was driven by a desire to be more popular, rather than live according to God's values. For a period of time, I believed the lies of the world. But I saw my parents praying for me every day, and they taught me how to search my heart and trust in God. Without these teachings, I could easily have continued believing the lies of the world, which may have led to serious consequences.

I have witnessed friends who appeared to be strong believers at church, but later walked away from their faith. But God gave me parents who guided me on how to live out my own faith, keep God in the center of my life, and walk with God while growing up. Because of their help, my spiritual life remained disciplined, and as I enter college, I can now say that I have been trained to evaluate my life according to the standards of the Bible.

One of the greatest blessings this training has resulted in, is that I don't have to break bad habits, or regret years of godless living. Even though I have been surrounded by the things of God, I can still be drawn to sin, or be tempted to live a double lifestyle, one that is seemingly faithful at church, but faithless outside of church. But I can always turn to my parents' unfailing guidance for advice and for their prayers when I am in need. Thinking of the first twenty years of my life, I am so thankful to my parents and to God's love and kindness towards me. It truly is a blessing to be raised in a Christian home, and I am determined to continue the tradition of godliness in my future family.

– Anonymous

While growing up, this brother very likely experienced the same resentment, frustration, and annoyance that we do when dealing with our parents. But over time, he understood how much they affected his life, both physical and spiritual, and learned to give thanks for them. Let's now try and appreciate our own parents or guardians in the same way! Take a moment to write a letter to them. Recall the good that they have done for you, express your gratitude and love, and recognize the sacrifices that they have made to raise you. *(Teachers: The following is an example letter that you can read to your students.)*

Dear Mom and Dad,

Please forgive me for failing to do what I should do as your child. I have not honored you to the best of my abilities, and I have not been the child that I could or should be. Please pray for me and continue to encourage and teach me. I understand that even if we disagree, you are doing the best that you can for me, and I will try to seize every opportunity to honor you as the Bible teaches. You're the best parents despite all of my flaws! Thank you!

With love, (Name)

(Teachers: What should a student do if their parents are deceased, separated, or divorced? Tell your students that it is still good to write down some things to the best of their ability, to acknowledge all their parents have done, and maybe share their letter with other family members. If their parents are separated, then teach them to ask God to give them the opportunity to share it with them.)

2. The Foundation of Obedience

We just learned that one of the key building blocks to honoring our parents is obedience! To obey can be a difficult thing to do, especially when we disagree with our parents. Even if we obey them physically, we may be filled with resentment or anger in our hearts as we do. Disobedience, even if only in our hearts, is likely one of the biggest obstacles between us and honoring our parents. To help us overcome this barrier in our spiritual lives, let’s go over the concept of obedience in a bit more detail.

In a passage where Paul describes the end times, he says, “For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, [and] unholy [...]. And from such people turn away!” (2 Tim 3:2–5; cf. Rom 1:30–32). Those who disobey their parents are listed right along with those who are unholy! This means that every time you didn’t do your homework, stayed up after curfew, spent their money without their permission, or perhaps got into a fight with them, you sinned against God Himself. With this in mind, how can we learn to be obedient?

a. Learn to Love

Let’s read John 14:15, 21. From these verses, we can see that a key ingredient to obedience is love. Those who love God are more willing to follow His commands. The same is true of children who love their parents.

b. Learn to Fear God

A true, genuine fear of God helps us develop and cultivate behavior that honors our parents. If we truly fear God, then we will obey our parents in order to obey God. Colossians 3:20 says, “Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.” If we truly fear God, then we will do our best to please Him by obeying our parents.

(Teachers: The following survey has been added to the Student Handout.)

Even if it is difficult for us to obey our parents, by cultivating our relationship with God and learning to love and fear Him, obedience towards our parents will come as a natural result of our developing faith. With the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, we can start to change ourselves and become children who honor their parents, and then we will be blessed by God! To start this change, let’s first evaluate where we are as obedient children. Fill out the following survey as honestly as you can, then add up your total at the end and see where you are.

Lesson 10 Survey: Obedience from the Heart						
Read the following statements. For each, circle where your answer lies along the scale. Be honest with yourself! At the end, add up your points and find out whether you measure up as an obedient child in the eyes of God. Remember, what counts is what’s in the heart, because the heart is what matters to God!						
1. I listen to my parents when they tell me or ask me to do things.	0	1	2	3	4	5
	Never		Sometimes			Always
2. I do my chores, such as washing the dishes, helping around the house, and running errands.	0	1	2	3	4	5
	Never		Sometimes			Always

3. I study hard and do the best work that I can at school.		
0 Never	1	2 3 Sometimes
4 5 Always		
4. I like being seen with my parents, such as when we go shopping or are simply taking a walk.		
0 Never	1	2 3 Sometimes
4 5 Always		
5. I talk to my parents about my problems, and they tell me their concerns.		
0 Never	1	2 3 Sometimes
4 5 Always		
6. I pray to God and ask Him to help me become more understanding and obedient towards my parents.		
0 Never	1	2 3 Sometimes
4 5 Always		
0 – 11 points: Hmmmm... Hopefully today’s lesson helped! Try to think of ways you can show more obedience to your parents.	12 – 23 points: Keep working! Sounds like you’re on the right track. Keep at it! Continue to pray to God for strength, guidance, and a heart of obedience.	24 – 30 points: Wow! Congratulations! Your parents and God must be proud of you, but don’t stop there! Give thanks and praise God!

Memory Verse

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise: ‘that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.’” (Ephesians 6:1–3)

Meaning

See Life Application section.

Conclusion

God wants us to pursue a God-centered family. He wants us to develop a home of love, discipline, and order, where everyone can speak, act, and relate to one another in accordance with the Bible’s teachings. We each play different roles in our family, and we may find it difficult to follow them according to God’s will. But if we do choose to follow God’s blueprint for our family lives, He will bless, protect, and care for us!

Lesson 10 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. Explain what it means to honor our parents.
It isn't about flattery, and it isn't about acting for show. It is an act of deep sincerity from the heart. To honor our parents requires a foundation of obedience, humility, and respect.
2. "Now no _____ seems to be _____ for the present, but _____; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable _____ of _____ to those who have been trained by it." (Hebrews 12:11)
chastening, joyful, painful, fruit, righteousness.
3. Name one example of a godly family from the Bible and explain why they are a good example.
 - a. *Abraham obeyed God's will and focused on the religious education of his children. We can see this in the fact that he didn't allow Isaac to marry a Gentile, knowing it was against God's command. Isaac, for his part, was submissive to God and dealt with people in a manner that was pleasing to God.*
 - b. *Timothy's father wasn't a believer, but his grandmother and mother both understood God's command to teach their children the right path, and they both influenced Timothy's beliefs. We can see his obedience to God in his decision to follow Paul on his missionary journey, and his work for God.*
4. What are three characteristics of a Christian household, according to the Bible?
God-centered, full of God's love, and full of godly discipline and order.
5. What are two important prerequisites to learning obedience? Briefly explain why for each.
Learn to love: Those who love God are more willing to follow His commands. The same is true of children who love their parents.
Learn to fear God: A true, genuine fear of God helps us develop and cultivate behavior that honors our parents. If we truly fear Him, then we will do our best to please Him by obeying our parents.
6. In what specific ways do I fail to honor and respect my parents? Write down how you will try to change this behavior from now on.
Personal answers.

A Godly Marriage

Passages: As listed in the lesson.

Memory Verse

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” (Genesis 2:24)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Marriage is established by God and needs to be honored by mankind.2. Marriage is a lifelong covenant.3. God wants our marriage to reflect the relationship between Christ and the church.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God has demonstrated the love we should have for our spouse in His self-sacrificial love for us.2. God does not want us to separate what He has joined together.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Prepare for a lifelong commitment by keeping God at our center, strengthening our prayer life, and becoming a godly Christian.2. Make a pledge to keep ourselves pure for our future marriage.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. The Origin of Marriage
- B. What God Has Joined Together
- C. Roles and Responsibilities in a Godly Marriage

Life Application: Preparing Ourselves for a Lifelong Commitment

1. Before You Say “I Do”
2. Becoming a Godly Christian
3. Activity: Keeping Our Purity

Memory Verse

Conclusion: Marriage may be far in the future for us, but we can and should start preparing ourselves today by strengthening our relationship with God and developing ourselves into godly Christians.

Events and Spiritual Teachings

(Teachers: This lesson will likely need extra preparation due to its length, density, and content. If you are limited on time or if students ask a lot of questions, you may need to skip or abbreviate some sections.)

Introduction

In today's day and age, the lines between dating and marriage have blurred to the point of invisibility, and most couples prefer to live together like a married couple without actually "tying the knot." With the world's casual and ever-changing standards, it is important that we as God's children fully understand His standards and intentions for marriage, and how He wants us to approach it.

A. The Origin of Marriage

In 1 Corinthians 11:9, Paul says, "Nor was man created for woman, but woman for the man." This tells us that Adam was incomplete without a helper, so God formed Eve from one of his ribs. Our ribs are in the central part of our body and protect important organs from injuries, such as our heart and lungs. Adam also called Eve, "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Gen 2:23). Being formed from a part of Adam made Eve a part of him. It was a partnership of equality, trust, and mutual care, and his words emphasized their spiritual oneness.

Genesis 2:24 adds that "a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." They are now one with each other, making their spouse's physical, spiritual, and emotional well-being their greatest priority after God. Moreover, to "leave" our parents' home is a sign of independence. We should marry only when we are ready to shoulder the financial, social, and spiritual responsibilities involved in the well-being of our family.

B. What God Has Joined Together

Discuss: What are a few common reasons couples tend to divorce these days? *(Examples may be: work-related conflicts, miscommunication or lack of communication, tragedy, sickness, finances, extra-marital affairs, lack of time spent together, etc.)*

Most regard marriage and divorce casually because for the world, you can be sexually intimate with many people. The Pharisees once asked about divorce, and why it was in the Mosaic laws (Mt 19:3). In response, Jesus said, "Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate" (Mt 19:6), and added, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery" (Mt 19:8–9; cf. Rom 7:2–3). This means that marriage is much more than a legal status. It is a spiritual, emotional, and physical oneness, where "the two shall become one flesh" (Mt 19:5).

1. Physical Oneness

Sexual intimacy with our partner is sanctioned and blessed by God, shown by the Bible's description of Adam and Eve, who were naked yet without shame (Gen 2:25). There were no physical barriers between them, and they loved each other's bodies as their own. God gave us natural desires so that we can develop and enjoy intimacy and pleasure within the confines of our marriage. Unfortunately, the world today encourages sexual openness, and many marriages are even based on the understanding that they can each have sex with others. This is sinful in God's eyes. We must avoid adopting such viewpoints and reserve ourselves for our marriage, so

that we can experience physical oneness with our spouse in accordance with God's will.

2. Spiritual Oneness

God intended for married couples to help, support, and encourage each other in their journeys of faith. Even if they support the believers' faith, a non-believer will not have the same spiritual understanding or experience. This may leave the believing spouse feeling alone, and the non-believer resentful if their partner prioritizes God over their marriage. A marriage of two Christians is not problem-free, but when they share the same spiritual purpose, goals, and values, the truth provides guidance amidst conflict. As Amos 3:3 says, "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?"

3. Emotional Oneness

It is in our nature to develop relationships and to desire closeness with others. God created marriage to meet our need for intimacy and for love—both to be loved, and to show our love for another. To become "one flesh" is not only a physical oneness, but also an emotional unity, where both share their joy, sadness, happiness, or frustration. Through open and honest communication, married couples learn to accept, encourage, and build each other up.

Do Not Be Unequally Yoked

To "become one flesh," a couple cannot base their compatibility on the same standards that the world follows. Paul wrote, "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). This is a teaching that many believers struggle to follow. But God warned the Israelites that if they married Gentiles, "they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods" (Deut 7:3–4). Nehemiah also rebuked the Israelites for transgressing against God's command and marrying pagan women, citing the example of King Solomon. There was no other king like him, and he was "beloved of his God." Yet "pagan women caused even him to sin" (Neh 13:26–27; cf. 1 Kgs 11:1–13).

The importance of Paul's teaching is even more apparent when we remember that we cannot simply "try out" marriage to several people. Our marriage is a singular, lifelong commitment. We must also consider how much our friends influence us. How much more so for the person we will be spending the rest of our life with! This makes it of vital importance that we focus on the primary factor when choosing our spouse: that we share the same faith and want to serve the Lord together.

A Lifelong Commitment

From the beginning, God planned for our marriage covenant to last a lifetime (Mt 19:6). Making a lifelong commitment is a deliberate and intentional choice. If our marriage is not founded on this choice, then cracks will soon appear. Whatever feelings we may have when entering the marriage, holding on to a promise of commitment nurtures our relationship into a lasting love that endures for a lifetime. To share the rest of your life with the one you love is the crowning glory of marriage. But the ultimate joy in your partnership is being able to experience salvation with your spouse!

C. Roles and Responsibilities in a Godly Marriage

A couple's roles are revealed when we study the true meaning of marriage: to live out the spiritual truth recorded in Ephesians 5:23–25. The church is the bride of Christ, purchased through the blood of Jesus (Acts 20:28), and the members are also the body of Christ, with Jesus as its head. Each family within the church acts out the same responsibilities: husbands must love their wives as Christ loves the church, and wives must submit to their husband's authority, just as Jesus Christ humbly submitted to the will of His

Father (Phil 2:8). Both sides have the responsibility to submit to one another as to the Lord (Eph 5:21–22). The love and respect that they have towards God must also be shown towards each other.

The roles that God gave to men and women may be different, but one is not greater than the other! The different roles are simply an order and arrangement that God appointed for us when entering a partnership of equals. What are the roles according to the Bible?

1. Towards Each Other

Let's read Ephesians 5:22–33. The culture of the world has instilled in us the value of being self-centered, outspoken, and proud regardless of our gender. Submission is seen as a weakness. But the Greek term that Paul uses for “submission” stems from a military term. It refers to a soldier's voluntary obedience to their commander, who is not only an authority figure, but who also bears the responsibility of leading his troops into victory. Many forget that authority is a two-way road that comes with responsibilities.

a. Submission

“Submission” does not mean that women are inferior, or that a wife should behave like a servant without a voice. A wife's submission is active, not passive, and is of foundational importance in a family's unity. In group activities, things progress more smoothly when one person directs everyone. With two leaders, they may disagree, and the group may be divided on who to follow. Nations fall apart when its citizens ignore its authority. In the same way, a family cannot hold together if wives do not voluntarily place themselves under their husband's leadership. But when wives “submit to [their] own husbands, as to the Lord” (Eph 5:22), they can use their strengths, talents, wisdom, and creativity to build up, counsel, and support their family.

b. Authority

Paul goes on to say, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her” (Eph 5:25). In other words, a husband's authority is a self-sacrificial leadership, not a self-serving one. In this passage, Paul emphasizes his comparison between the role of the husband and the role of Christ (v. 29). Jesus is our Creator, but He willingly washed His disciples' feet as a servant would, gave His life for our spiritual well-being, and sanctified us. This means that as the one with authority, the husband gives himself up, leads for the sake of his wife's well-being, and keeps his family sanctified by guiding them in obeying God. He acts out the same role that Christ has for the church: he leads the family into spiritual life.

c. Love and respect

The roles of both husband and wife are predicated on two concepts: love and respect. Ancient Greek illustrates this concept better by using several different words for love. For example, *eros* refers to a romantic or sexual love, such as Samson's relationships (Judg 14:1–3), while *agape* is the lasting, self-sacrificial love shown in Jesus' life and death. Paul uses the word *agape*, meaning a husband's love for his wife should not be an emotion that comes and goes, but is steadfast, constant, and self-sacrificing.

In the early stages of marriage, a couple's feelings are still very much centered on *eros*. Over time, however, these strong, romantic feelings wear off, and whether *eros* gives way to *agape* depends on their commitment and respect for each other and for Christ. *Agape* and

respect are a conscious act of will that we choose to follow whenever we forgive rather than quarrel, forget rather than be spiteful, and patiently listen even if we disagree.

2. Towards God

As Christians, we are not exempt from difficulties, because we were all born into sin (Eph 2:1) and have bodies that are more inclined to be selfish than selfless (Gal 5:19–21). We will face challenges and struggles which can pull marriages apart because of the resulting stress, sorrows, and anxieties. So, what is the best solution to ensure our marriage stays healthy and lasting? The answer is, of course, to place God into our marriage. Our status as His children must serve as the foundation for all of our relationships, including our marriage.

Picture a triangle. At the top of that triangle is God, and at the bottom left and right corners are a husband and a wife. By drawing closer to God at the apex, they also draw closer to each other. A spiritually healthy couple worships, prays, and serves God together by actively prioritizing Him in their lives. They value His words and uphold His teachings in unity. This is the kind of marriage God intends for us: where we walk together with Him, as Adam and Eve did in the garden. When we do, He will give us immeasurable blessings.

3. Towards Their Children

The Bible says that if you “[train] up a child in the way he should go,” then “when he is old he will not depart from it” (Prov 22:6). God commanded the Israelites to “teach [the laws] diligently to [their] children” (Deut 6:6–7), stressing the importance of training our children in God’s word and love. God wants parents to “bring [their children] up in the training and admonition of the Lord” (Eph 6:4), so that “the generation to come might know [His law], [...] that they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments” (Ps 78:6–7).

A family may receive help from ministers, R.E. teachers, and other church workers, but guiding children towards spiritual maturity and salvation in Christ is the parents’ responsibility, as children learn how to live through the example of their parents. God desires for His people to have children who will honor Him because our children are also God’s workmanship (Eph 2:10). Like their parents, God wants to use their unique talents in His kingdom so that they can be blessed. If a couple is successful in raising their children in God’s ways, they will receive incomparable joy!

Check for Understanding

- 1. What is a reason the world has a casual view on marriage and divorce? Explain why this is against the Bible’s teachings.** Because for the world, you can be sexually intimate with many people. For God, when a couple are married, it is a spiritual and physical oneness, where “the two shall become one flesh” (Mt 19:5). Therefore, “what God has joined together, let not man separate” (v. 6).
- 2. What does it mean for a couple to be spiritually one?** God intended for married couples to help, support, and encourage each other in their journeys of faith. When they share the same spiritual purpose, goals, and values, the truth provides guidance amidst conflict.
- 3. Paul wrote that wives should submit to their husbands. What does he mean by this?** Submission does not mean that women are inferior, or that wives should behave like servants without a voice. A wife’s submission is active, not passive, and is of foundational importance in a family’s unity.

4. **As head of the marriage, what are the husband's responsibilities?** To love as Christ loves the church, meaning he must give himself up, lead for the sake of his wife's well-being, and keep his family sanctified by guiding them in obeying God.
5. **How should a couple place God in their marriage?** He should be at the apex of their marriage. By drawing closer to God, they also draw closer to each other.

Life Application

Preparing Ourselves for a Lifelong Commitment

Any profession or skill requires the crucial steps of practice and preparation. Marriage is such an important and lasting stage of our lives, making it even more vital that we begin deliberately practicing skills necessary for our future. So how can we prepare ourselves for our future role as husband or wife?

1. Before You Say "I Do"

In an age where divorce is becoming the rule, not the exception, the wisest thing we can do is, "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" (Prov 3:5–6). Prioritizing God's will in our search for a spouse may be the greatest challenge in our lives. But God has promised to draw near to us if we approach Him (Jas 4:7–8)!

a. Step One: Keeping God at our center

Many church youths feel that they can pick their spouse on their own. From a human perspective, it often doesn't make sense to rely on God when choosing our spouse. But from a godly perspective, it makes even less sense for us to choose our partner without Him! This is because as humans, we can only judge what we can see, hear, or understand. We often judge beauty from outward appearances, define love by feelings of surface attraction, and base our compatibility on what little we know in the present time. But God sees our hearts and knows our future. We cannot know what will happen, so we can only know if someone is truly right for us when we keep God at the center of our decision (Prov 3:5–6).

b. Step Two: Prayer

God's workers and apostles often learned what to do or not do through prayer, teaching us one fundamental truth: prayers lead us to know God's will. But why don't we see the same straightforward guidance? The answer lies in our prayer life. While we might say a hurried thanksgiving before meals or a short and tired good night, the apostles prayed frequently, fervently, and consistently. Jesus fasted forty days and nights to prepare Himself for His ministry, and often withdrew from the crowds to pray. Strengthening our prayer life should be our greatest priority, because without strong communication with Him, we cannot know God's will. When we approach Him faithfully and consistently, He will direct our steps (Prov 16:9).

2. Becoming a Godly Christian

We do not magically develop the qualities of a good husband or wife when we get married. These are characteristics that are only developed with time, dedication, and practice. Even if we don't plan to marry, God wants us to cultivate ourselves so that we can better serve each other and the church, and as a result, "lay up for [ourselves] treasures in heaven" (Mt 6:20). Let's read 1 Timothy 4:12–13, 15, and then examine how we can follow Paul's instructions ourselves.

Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.

a. In word and conduct

James 3:6 says, “And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.” This seems a rather extreme description! But the conflicts we get into often stem from the words that are said out of impulse, anger, or self-defense. The way we speak and act affects those around us (Rom 12:18, 21), so it is important that we train ourselves to adopt godly words and conduct that will help our current and future relationships remain peaceful, lasting, and loving.

Discuss: Have you ever negatively affected a person or situation with your words or actions? Do you act or speak differently inside and outside of church, or stopped to consider what God would want you to do or say when making decisions?

b. In love and spirit

Developing the ability to love others is a learning process that requires not only time and practice, but also the Holy Spirit’s support. Although it may be impossible for us to reach the example Jesus set for us, He has given us His Spirit to strengthen and help us. Therefore, to set an example in love and in spirit requires that we first dedicate more time to God, so that we can dedicate ourselves to the well-being of those around us, including our future spouse.

Discuss: Let’s look up the Bible’s definition of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4–8a. Of these characteristics or qualities, which do you think you lack the most?

c. In faith and purity

One of the easiest ways to stray in our spiritual life is by failing to understand our own faith and failing to establish the spiritual values that we want to live by. James wrote, “Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works” (Jas 2:18). With true faith comes the desire to draw closer to God, and the understanding that we must be holy, because God is holy (2 Cor 6:16). Since a genuine faith in God will naturally produce good works and purity, becoming a godly Christian therefore requires a strong faith.

Discuss: What works have you recently done to show your faith? Is there anything in your current lifestyle that may pose a danger to your purity?

The actions that we take even now will affect our future. If we grow in our knowledge of God, meditate on these things, and give ourselves entirely to developing our character for Him, our progress will be “evident to all.” Our conduct, the choices that we make, and the priorities that we set for ourselves will work together to transform our character, skills, and lifestyle.

3. Activity: Keeping Our Purity

*(Teachers: Due to time constraints, you may want to assign this as homework and incorporate a follow-up discussion during the **review** class, as the following lesson on the topic of purity and sexual temptation is also lengthy.)*

Keeping our purity means fighting against the currents around us. The world’s tides can be inexorable, but with God’s help, we can stand firm by making changes to our lifestyle and learning how to spot and

prevent situations that can endanger our purity. To encourage ourselves to think of the future, let's write down a prayer, pledge, or resolution as a reminder to strive for purity. Here are a few examples:

- "To keep my integrity, I am resolving to 'flee' evil desires (2 Tim 2:22) and instead pursue righteousness in my life."
- "In order to stay holy and to keep my marriage bed pure (Heb 13:4), I resolve not to push boundaries or tempt myself to see how far is too far before I fall. God wants me to be obedient to His word by fleeing temptation, not testing myself!"
- "I resolve to 'put to death' my earthly desires (Col 3:5) by avoiding any movies, TV shows, or other forms of entertainment that will put my purity at risk."
- "I resolve to keep high standards in my life by never tolerating sin, because I know that sin, when fully grown, gives birth to death (Jas 1:14–15)."

Let's now think of our own personal resolution, pledge, prayer, or promise. You can use the above examples as a foundation if you'd like, but make sure you add your own personal words to God. Whatever you write, try to think of something that will serve as a reminder whenever you feel weak, or when you think you might forget why it is important for us to stay pure.

Memory Verse

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." (Genesis 2:24)

Meaning

(See Events and Spiritual Teachings, Section A: The Origin of Marriage, *and* Section B: What God Has Joined Together.)

Conclusion

God's original intent for marriage has become widely forgotten in the world around us, but as His children, we must hold on to His teachings and regard marriage as a partnership of equality, trust, mutual care, and spiritual union. By remembering that God hates divorce and instead focusing on making our marriage a lifelong commitment, we can nurture our relationship into a lasting love that endures for a lifetime. This may be far in the future for us, but we can and should start preparing ourselves today by strengthening our relationship with God and developing ourselves into godly Christians. By doing so, we can learn to make God the foundation of all our relationships, including our marriage and, as a result, receive immeasurable blessings.

Lesson 11 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What does the memory verse tell us about God's view regarding marriage compared to the world's view?
Marriage is much more than a legal status. It is a spiritual and physical oneness.
2. "For the _____ is head of the _____, as also _____ is head of the _____; and He is the _____ of the _____." (Ephesians 5:23)
husband, wife, Christ, church, Savior, body.
3. How does God want a couple to achieve spiritual oneness with each other?
By helping, supporting, and encouraging each other in their journeys of faith. When they share the same spiritual purpose, goals, and values, the truth provides guidance amidst conflict.
4. Explain the meaning of "submission" and "authority" according to Ephesians 5:22–33 in your own words.
Personal answers. See Events and Spiritual Teachings, Section C, #1.
5. Why should we keep God at the center of our decisions?
Because as humans, we can only judge what we hear, see, or understand. But God sees the deepest thoughts of our hearts and knows our future.
6. 1 Timothy 4:12–13 lists ways in which we should become godly Christians and set an example for others. Which do you need to improve on the most? Explain your answer.
Personal answers.

Understanding Purity and Sexual Temptation

Passages: As listed in the lesson.

Memory Verse

“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God.” (1 Thessalonians 4:3–5)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God created sexual intimacy for the purpose of marriage.2. The process of temptation begins in our own desires.3. Sexual temptation is closely tied to lust, which is a form of greed and possessive desire.	God is holy and wants us to be holy.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Swim against the tide of this world.2. God’s word and the fullness of the Holy Spirit will help us to overcome our desires.3. Be strategic in avoiding temptation.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. God’s Intentions: Sex Within Marriage
- B. The Danger of Sexual Desires
- C. Understanding Lust

Life Application

- 1. Swimming Against the Tide
- 2. Strategically Avoiding Temptation

Memory Verse

Conclusion: To follow God’s will, we need to understand the root of sexual sin – our own desires – and the nature of lust, which leads to destruction. This understanding, along with the power of God’s word and the Holy Spirit, will help us to overcome our desires and temptations.

Events and Spiritual Teachings

Introduction

Before we begin our lesson, I'd like to ask something: have you ever given in to temptation, only to regret it afterward? We have all experienced this regret. But why did you give in to temptation in the first place? It is likely that you gave in because you were neither alert to it nor prepared to face it.

The Bible teaches us repeatedly that we must be prepared because our enemy Satan will attack at any moment. His goal is to steal, kill, and destroy (Jn 10:10). Paul also taught us: "Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong" (1 Cor 16:13). We have to be ready because our enemy will attack us at any moment. Like a soldier at war, we have to remain strong and keep our guard up. And we already know the best way to do this. Jesus told us, "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mt 26:41).

The world today has casual and ever-changing standards. While there are many different temptations that we will face, one of the most difficult to resist is sexual temptation. The Bible teaches us many reasons why we need to avoid and flee this temptation, and how such temptation will affect us spiritually and physically. Today, we'll be taking a closer look at the Bible's teachings regarding worldly temptations and sexual purity.

A. God's Intentions: Sex Within Marriage

Some might ask why God invented sex if sexual purity is such an important matter. Let's read Genesis 2:25. It is important to remember that God invented sex. It is God's gift to human beings, designed to be a union between one man and one woman, and a beautiful thing within a marriage. God had even commanded Adam and Eve, "Be fruitful and multiply" (1:28). Within a marriage blessed by God, sex is good, pleasurable, and honorable. However, the world around us has distorted the boundaries that God intended during creation. God designed sex for marriage, but the world has twisted His intentions due to human desire.

The Importance of Purity

One question you may have heard or asked yourself is, why is purity—specifically sexual purity—such an important matter in our faith? Why should we keep our body pure? There are many good reasons why we need to keep our body pure. God's standard for us is a pure body and a pure spirit. His standard written in the Bible has not changed and will not ever change. And we need to make a commitment to God's standard. Let's read the following verses. According to them, what are the reasons we need to keep our bodies pure? Write down the reason for each verse in your notebook.

	Verse	Reason
1	1 Thess 4:3–5	<i>It is God's will.</i>
2	1 Cor 6:19	<i>My body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.</i>
3	1 Cor 6:20; 1 Pet 1:18–19	<i>I was bought at a high price with the precious blood of Jesus Christ.</i>
4	Heb 13:4	<i>God will judge fornicators and adulterers.</i>
5	1 Pet 1:15–16	<i>God has called us to holiness.</i>

God wants us to be set apart from the world. He loves us and wants us to be holy, because as a holy God, He cannot dwell or abide in sin. This means we must stay sanctified by keeping a strong conviction in God's word with the help of the Holy Spirit. When you are filled with the Holy Spirit, God will give you

the strength and guidance to stand strong, even against scorn, ridicule, misunderstanding, or pressure. The opinions and ways of the world matter less to you. But without the power of the Holy Spirit, you will be easily affected by the world's view on dating and sex. If you reflect on yourself at this moment, to what extent are you filled with the Holy Spirit? Do your convictions lie in yourself, or in God's word? Do you hold firmly to all of the verses that we read? Are you committed to God's standard?

B. The Danger of Sexual Desires

One of the reasons we require the power of the Holy Spirit is because sexual desires are dangerously alluring. Let's look at an example in the Bible to help us understand the process of being tempted by sexual desire, and the danger of letting such desires take control. Do you recall the story of Samson? He was one of the last judges, and even before his birth, he was dedicated to God as a Nazirite and a judge for Israel (Num 6:1–21; Judg 13:4–5). He was known for his immense strength, but he was also incredibly weak in his heart. Let's read Judges 14:1–3.

God has given us physical desires, such as eating or sleeping, and also internal desires, such as peace or love. These God-given desires have all been given to allow us to find fulfillment in our lives. This also includes our desire for physical intimacy. Sexual desire was also made and given by God, but only for the purpose of oneness and unity within a marriage. In which case, what was wrong with Samson's desire? To understand the problem, we need to understand the process of temptation according to the Bible.

The Process of Temptation

1. Step One: Desire

Let's read James 1:14–15. "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death." According to these verses, where does temptation start? (*It starts with our desire.*) When Samson saw this woman, he wanted to marry her immediately. He didn't even know her well. Rather, his rash decision was driven by his initial feeling of love and physical attraction. Despite being set apart by God, Samson let his desires take root.

2. Step Two: Drawn Away

James wrote that we are tempted when we are "drawn away" and "enticed" by our own desires. This is similar to being lured by bait, only to be caught in a trap. Like with a trap laid by a fisherman or hunter, the bait attracts the prey, but the result is only death for the creature who falls for it. Samson's desire drew him away, and what came after that? He told his father, "Get her for me, for she pleases me well" (Judg 14:3). He didn't care about God's will (Deut 7:3–4) nor his parents' opinion. Instead of exercising self-control, he let his desire for personal pleasure and happiness control his actions completely. It was a desire born from his sinful nature, which became problematic.

3. Step Three: Sin

After being drawn away, the temptation of desire is "conceived" and "gives birth to sin." Samson's desire for the woman was conceived in the form of his demand to marry her on the spot. Even King David fell into this same process of temptation. Let's read 2 Samuel 11:2–4. He saw that she was "very beautiful," and his desire resulted in a powerful temptation that he could not resist. In the end, he sent for her and slept with her. He gave in to sexual lust and caused two deaths: the death of Uriah, and that of his own son with Bathsheba.

From the above three steps, we can see that the desire that begins in our mind can result in a very serious consequence: eternal, spiritual separation from God, which is death (Rom 6:23). From David's example, and other examples, such as Eli's sons Phinehas and Hophni (1 Sam 2:25, 34), and Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1–10), we can see that sin can also produce physical death. This is why we should not allow ourselves to fantasize about anything that is sinful in God's eyes. Satan is a mastermind who knows how to slowly lead you away from God, using the desires that already exist within you. This is especially true of our sexual desires.

Samson's example teaches us how powerful and beguiling our sexual desire can be. Physical intimacy is something that God gave to us for us to share with our life partner, and no one else. Succumbing to sexual temptation outside of our marriage means giving up the sanctity that God has called us to, and letting our desires lead us to spiritual separation from God. So, it is vital for us to know how to deal with sexual temptation, and to practice curbing our sexual urges. If we fail to exert control over our desires and instead let them control us, they may lead us to sin, and from sin, to death.

C. Understanding Lust

Sexual temptations are closely tied to lust, which is an intense sexual craving. While it is not wrong to like someone, the Bible frequently cautions us of the dangers of fleshly lusts. As opposed to physical intimacy and oneness within a marriage, lust is a form of possessive desire that is fueled by greed. It is a selfish urge that focuses on pleasing oneself without considering the consequences. Feeling sexual desire is normal, but when it takes place outside of marriage, it becomes a dangerous tool of Satan's.

The Destructive Nature of Lust

1. Blinds us to the consequences of our actions

Let's turn to 2 Samuel 13:1–19. Amnon fell in love with his half-sister Tamar, to the point that he desired to sleep with her. This desire, however, was not love – it was lust, an intense sexual craving that consumed him. He ignored Tamar's desperate pleas, as well as her suggestion to approach their father. In the end, he raped her. But what happened after that? He immediately "hated her exceedingly, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her" (v. 15).

2. Leads to sin and destruction

As a result of Amnon's evil deeds, his love turned to hatred, Tamar became desolate and disgraced, and her brother Absalom widened the rift in their family by murdering Amnon two years later. Amnon should have known that nothing good would have resulted from his actions, but he was completely blinded by his lust. It is a "fire that consumes to destruction" (Job 31:12).

When we follow our desires and go against God's commands, it is easy to forget that our actions will have consequences. In the best-case scenario, we hurt ourselves. In the worst case, we hurt someone else, and even experience misery and spiritual death. God wants us to be sanctified (1 Thess 4:3–5). But fleshly lusts "war against the soul" (1 Pet 2:11) and lead us to sexual immorality.

As both Samson and Amnon demonstrated, lust is self-centered and thinks only of "I," or "me." It leads us into sin, makes us deaf to sound advice, and blinds us to the potential consequences, including our spiritual death. So instead of allowing our desires to control us and our lusts to blind us, we must learn to open our eyes to God's will and sanctify our hearts and minds with His word.

Teachers: The following teaching may or may not be appropriate for the age group in your class. You may decide whether to include it in the lesson.

To students who have questions about masturbation

Masturbation is an act that is solely for the purpose of bringing pleasure to oneself. More than that, it is a progressive sin that usually begins with sexual fantasies. Jesus Christ said, “But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Mt 5:28). Fantasizing sexually about someone involves lustful thoughts, and clearly violates God’s teaching about adultery in the heart. Apostle Paul also wrote that we should not be “brought under the power of any” (1 Cor 6:12). Masturbation is not only a form of sexual fantasy, but it is also addicting and habitual. It is an act that does not go away without the power of the Holy Spirit.

In order to keep ourselves pure and avoid this addictive form of self-pleasure, we need the power of the Holy Spirit to control our behavior, and we also need godly, mature, and spirit-filled mentors whom we can ask for guidance. This is because Satan likes to work in the dark, and exposing our weaknesses to the light - or in this case, confiding in a spiritual mentor and asking them to hold us accountable - gives us spiritual strength. Lastly, we need an escape plan to avoid indulging in sinful habits. When we know that someone is holding us accountable, and when we have an active plan for ourselves to follow when we realize we are falling into temptation, it becomes easier for us to rely on God’s power to make better decisions.

Check for Understanding

1. **What was God’s intention in creating sex and intimacy?** It is God’s gift to human beings, designed for a union between one man and one woman within a marriage.
2. **Why is sexual purity such an important matter in our faith? Name at least two reasons and their accompanying verses.**
 - a. It is God’s will (1 Thess 4:3–5)
 - b. My body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19)
 - c. I was bought at a high price with the precious blood of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 6:20; 1 Pet 1:18–19)
 - d. God will judge fornicators and adulterers (Heb 13:4)
 - e. God has called us to holiness (1 Pet 1:15–16)
3. **What are the three steps in the process of temptation?** (1) Desire; (2) drawn away; (3) sin.
4. **What is the difference between physical intimacy within a marriage, and lust?** Lust is a form of possessive desire that is fueled by greed. It is a selfish urge that focuses on pleasing oneself without considering the consequences.
5. **Why is lust spiritually and physically destructive?** It blinds us to the consequences of our actions, and it leads to sin and destruction, or spiritual death.

Life Application

1. Swimming Against the Tide

“We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one” (1 Jn 5:19). Satan is our enemy, and he uses the world as his vehicle to destroy our spiritual lives. Culture and media exert a strong pull in our lives and can easily brainwash us into following their patterns. In the world today, you’re weird if you don’t date for fun, and sex is a prerequisite for love. But such thinking is unbiblical, and we should not imitate the ways of the world because we are not of the world. God warns us, “Do not learn the ways of the nations [...]. For the practices of the peoples are worthless” (Jer 10:2–3 NIV). So how do we keep ourselves from going astray? How do we keep our way pure and follow God’s will when our desires are so strong?

a. Heed and hide God's word in our hearts (Ps 119:9–11)

This psalmist teaches us that to keep our way pure requires heeding God's word, and hiding His word in our hearts. Why is this such an important thing to learn? How does simply studying God's word help in fighting our desires? God's word is filled with guidance and wisdom, and His word also has power. We often feel like we are drowning in the cares of this world, to the point that we forget to set aside time to study the Bible. But memorizing and meditating on God's word is essential for our spiritual health.

There are two signs that we have taken heed of God's word: humility and obedience. Do you think you have these two qualities in the context of your faith? If not, it's time for you to set up a plan to read God's word daily and learn to hide His word in your hearts. Carve out some time every day to meditate on what God has taught us through His word. This step will help you to have more strength when facing temptations. *(Optional: Prepare a list of verses for students to copy down and memorize over a period of time. Any of the verses in this lesson would be appropriate for this activity.)*

b. Pray for the fullness of the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:24)

Even if we have been baptized, our bodies are still weak. As believers, we are called to continually be filled with the Holy Spirit because of our weaknesses (Eph 5:18). As God's children, navigating through society requires a greater dependency on the Holy Spirit in our lives. Otherwise, we are vulnerable to failing in our faith. This is because Satan wants to conform us to the image of this world, but the Holy Spirit will reveal the truth to us. He has the power to conform us to God's will instead. Only with His help can we "put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph 4:24).

Swimming against the tide means equipping ourselves for the unexpected. No one ever plans to screw up their own life! But sometimes we fail in our faith because we haven't prepared ourselves to face anything that may happen, so we end up swimming with the tide rather than against it. We end up following our desires and matching the ways of the world, instead of following God's will.

Since we cannot plan for the unexpected, the most important thing we can do is to keep our heart full of God's word and His Spirit. If we do, we will remain in control of our lives and resist temptation so that we can follow God's guidance each day. This is because through His Spirit, God's power will help us to break bad habits, constrain our lustful thoughts, and strengthen our "inner man" (Eph 3:16).

2. Strategically Avoiding Temptation

Aside from equipping ourselves with God's power and word, we also need to be strategic about how we can avoid temptation, and plan escape routes for ourselves ahead of time. Let's read a few testimonies about how three brethren in Christ did this.

Testimony #1: Making a Covenant with My Eyes

One brother in high school quickly noticed that he had some rather unhealthy habits. He tended to look at girls and his eyes wandered often, for example. However, this brother was also very diligent in attending church services. He also prayed every night and read a small passage before he slept to keep himself connected to the word of God. Because of this, he was able to make a resolution with himself: he resolved no longer to look at girls like they were objects, and instead treat them like pure sisters in Christ at church, or simply friends at school. He made a "covenant" with his eyes, promising

that he would no longer allow his eyes to wander. His daily connection to God and his diligence in prayer and in attending services helped him to understand his weakness, form a resolution, and see it through so that he was eventually able to rid himself of unhealthy habits.

Testimony #2: Two Are Better than One

One sister found herself often opening websites that encouraged lustful desires in her heart. To counter this temptation, she worked with her parents to set up a strict form of accountability to tackle the root of the temptation. They added software to remove any type of secrecy on her devices. The software that her parents bought was so strong that she couldn't even search common keywords like "hot"! Although she initially found it terribly inconvenient, she soon noticed that this accountability broke the pattern of temptation in her life. Instead of allowing her eyes to browse any type of website, the accountability software let her experience the power of God flowing through her. She didn't have to worry about anything anymore! She made use of the biblical teaching: two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor (Eccl 4:9–10).

Testimony #3: The Power of God's Word

One brother was studying in college with one of his school friends who was of the opposite sex. She had made it known that she found him very attractive. He thought the same of her, but he drew the line and made it clear to both of them: they would only be friends. One evening, they were studying in the library late at night, when she suddenly proposed something: why not stay together for the night? She even tried to convince him that no one would know, and they could resume their friendship as normal after. The brother felt himself shaking, hard—something that he firmly believes was the power of the Holy Spirit—and clearly remembered the word of God: "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen 39:9). The verse was so powerful that it was brought back into his memory at that moment.

On top of the Holy Spirit's warnings, the brother had actually already made a plan of escape should such a thing happen. He didn't try to moderate the situation or make an excuse. He didn't try to linger or suggest to her that they should talk about this later. He simply got up, hurriedly gathered his things, and left. After that evening, he cut off all contact and refused to respond to any of her messages. Because he had planned an escape beforehand and also had the power of the Holy Spirit, this brother was able to escape a dangerous situation and avoid a serious sin.

From these testimonies, we can see that maintaining our "purity" is not simply a matter of avoiding sexual intercourse before marriage. Keeping ourselves pure requires a lifestyle where we actively guard ourselves against the root of our temptations, our worldly desires. After today's lesson, how do you plan to guard yourself against sexual temptation? Discuss with the class different methods that you can take. For ideas, you can read the following short testimonies from various brothers and sisters:

Seeking God daily with integrity

- *"I was glad that K. and I were in a long-distance relationship before we got married. Being physically apart meant that we did not face the temptation to get too close physically. Instead, we learned more about each other by praying every day at the same time and holding weekly Bible studies online." – Sister L.*

Keeping a strong conviction before God

- *"I believe that keeping pure is a matter of self-respect. I want to keep God's word and be a pure bride to my husband when we get married. I expect the same of my future husband. Hence, I*

made a rule in my life that I will not engage in pre-marital sex, no matter how sure I am that I will be marrying the guy I'm dating." – Sister S.

Accountability before God and others

- *"I guess you can consider me 'old-fashioned,' but I never even held her hands until after we were married. This has been my conviction since I was young. Our dates consisted of very clean activities like watching movies with my family members, eating at restaurants with church friends, or doing church work with other brethren. We never dated 'in private' – we were always in public spaces. 'Public activities' did not stop us from getting to know each other better. In fact, the best way to know a person is to see how she behaves with other people." – Brother C.*

Do not become a stumbling block

- *"Guys, I have been told, are weak visually. I make sure that I am always dressed modestly so I do not give way to the devil to create any form of temptation for any brother." – Sister A.*

We learned earlier that lust is self-centered and thinks only of "I," or "me." It blinds us to the consequences and leads us from sin to spiritual death. But it isn't easy to overcome these desires. *"I'm just lonely." "My friends all do it." "It's not like it will hurt anyone."* It's easy to come up with excuses to follow our physical desires. But in the end, this is simply our hearts succumbing to our worldly desires and ignoring the will of our Father in heaven. Therefore, swimming against the tide requires that we do the opposite, and follow God's will instead. To do this, as we learned today, we need the power of the Holy Spirit to help us resist temptation, a strategic plan to escape any dangerous situations, and a determination to avoid following our desires.

Memory Verse

"For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God." (1 Thessalonians 4:3–5)

Meaning

1. What does it mean to be "sanctified"? It means separation and consecration. It means keeping ourselves apart from sin and seeking holiness.
2. To be sanctified, we must: (a) abstain from sexual immorality; and (b) know how to control our own body in a way that is holy and honorable (v. 4 NIV).

Conclusion

With the casual and ever-changing standards of the world, it is difficult to understand why we need to abide by God's unchanging will. But we need to remember that God wants us to be set apart from the world. He loves us and wants us to be holy, especially when it comes to our sexual desires, which He had created for union within a marriage. To follow His will, we need to understand the root of sexual sin – our own desires – and the nature of lust, which leads to destruction. This understanding, along with the power of God's word and the Holy Spirit, will help us to overcome our desires and temptations.

Lesson 12 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What does it mean to be “sanctified”? How do we become sanctified?
It means keeping ourselves apart from sin and seeking holiness. To do so, we must abstain from sexual immorality, and know how to control our own body in a way that is holy and honorable.
2. “For you were _____ at a _____; therefore _____ God in your _____ and in your _____, which are _____.” (1 Corinthians 6:20)
bought, price, glorify, body, spirit, God’s
3. What was God’s intention in creating sex and intimacy?
It is God’s gift to human beings, designed to be a union between one man and one woman within a marriage.
4. Why are our sexual desires so dangerous?
Physical intimacy is something that God gave to us for us to share with our life partner, and no one else. Succumbing to sexual temptation outside of our marriage means giving up the sanctity that God has called us to, and letting our desires lead us to spiritual separation from God.
5. What is the difference between physical intimacy within a marriage and lust?
Lust is a form of possessive desire that is fueled by greed. It is a selfish urge that focuses on pleasing oneself without considering the consequences.
6. How do we follow God’s will when our desires are so strong?
We need to hide God’s word in our hearts, pray for the fullness of the Holy Spirit, and be strategic in avoiding temptation.
7. What are your personal thoughts on why it is important to stay pure, and how you can stay pure?
Share your thoughts and reflections in two or three paragraphs. Use a separate page if necessary.
Personal answers.

Junior 1 Year 3 Book 4 Review

Memory Verses

Instructions: Fill in the blanks correctly using the provided words.

knowledge	longsuffering	delight	sanctification
will	right	lying	serve
one	leave	spirit	follow
deny	rule	exalt	joined
walk	honor	power	fear
care	fruit	faithfulness	truthfully
heart	glory	promise	obey
cheerful	abstain	desires	walls
admonish	goodness	humble	necessity

Ephesians 6:1–3	Deuteronomy 10:12	Galatians 5:22–23	Genesis 2:24
2 Corinthians 9:7	1 Peter 5:6–7	Proverbs 12:22	Proverbs 25:28
Luke 9:23	Romans 15:14	Revelation 4:11	1 Thessalonians 4:3–5

1. “And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to _____ the LORD your God, to _____ in all His ways and to love Him, to _____ the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” (_____)
2. “Then He said to them all, ‘If anyone _____ to come after Me, let him _____ himself, and take up his cross daily, and _____ Me.’” (_____)
3. “But the _____ of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, _____, kindness, goodness, _____, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” (_____)
4. “Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of _____, filled with all _____, able also to _____ one another.” (_____)

5. "Whoever has no _____ over his own _____ is like a city broken down, without _____." (_____)
6. "Therefore _____ yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may _____ you in due time, casting all your _____ upon Him, for He cares for you." (1 Peter 5:6-7)
7. "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive _____ and honor and _____; for You created all things, and by Your _____ they exist and were created." (_____)
8. "_____ lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who deal _____ are His _____." (_____)
9. "So let each one give as he purposes in his _____, not grudgingly or of _____; for God loves a _____ giver." (_____)
10. "Children, _____ y your parents in the Lord, for this is _____. 'Honor your father and mother,' which is the first commandment with _____: 'that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.'" (_____)
11. "Therefore a man shall _____ his father and mother and be _____ to his wife, and they shall become _____ flesh." (_____)
12. "For this is the will of God, your _____: that you should _____ from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and _____, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God." (_____)

Multiple Choice

1. ____ : When Abraham and Sarah went to Egypt, what did he tell her to say to the Egyptians?
 - a. She was his wife.
 - b. She did not know him.
 - c. She was his cousin.
 - d. She was his sister.

2. ____ : Which of the following did not happen in Joseph's lifetime? (Lesson 6)
 - a. He was sold to Egypt as a slave.
 - b. He went to his brothers for food during the famine.
 - c. He was falsely imprisoned.
 - d. He was forgotten by the cupbearer.

3. ____ : According to the Bible, a Christian household is _____. (Lesson 10)
 - a. God-centered, full of obedience, full of godly discipline and order
 - b. God-centered, full of God's love, full of sacrifice
 - c. God-centered, full of God's love, full of godly discipline and order
 - d. God-centered, full of obedience, full of sacrifice

4. ____ : Which of the following is a reason why we should love, fear, and honor God? (Lesson 1)
 - a. God is our Creator.
 - b. God is fearful.
 - c. God is loving.
 - d. All of the above.

5. ____ : Which is not one of the steps in the process of temptation?
 - a. Lying
 - b. Desire
 - c. Sin
 - d. Drawn away

True or False

1. ____ By being a good hostess, Martha was said by Jesus to have "chosen that good part."
2. ____ A portion of the Israelites' tithe was eaten during a celebration to remember God's blessings.
3. ____ To honor our parents means to flatter them and to seem to act in the way they want.
4. ____ Lust is not only physically destructive, but it also leads to spiritual death.
5. ____ David treated King Saul's grandson Mephibosheth as his own son.

Becoming More like Christ

Instructions: As mentioned in Galatians 5:22–23, there are nine fruit of the Spirit. For each of the descriptions below, write down which fruit the description applies to.

Fruit of the Spirit	Description
	1. When we put others first in our actions, through servitude or sacrifice, we are showing this.
	2. Samson and Esau both lacked this, which led them to make unwise decisions.
	3. Someone who is a source of support for brethren and can defuse heated situations has this.
	4. By being kind to the wicked and providing for needs, Jesus was showing this.
	5. Through the Spirit, we can have this even when experiencing trials, sorrow, or pain.
	6. Someone who perseveres through a trial and endures pain without becoming angry has this.
	7. Someone who does right in God’s eyes, and has a heart that chooses to do right, has this.
	8. It is the highest form of tranquility that comes from harmony with God and with men.
	9. By never breaking His promises and always providing our needs, God is showing this to us.

Discussion

1. Of the nine fruit of the Spirit listed above, which do you feel you display the most, and why?

2. Of the nine fruit of the Spirit listed above, which do you feel you need to work on the most, and why?

3. What actions will you take to work on this fruit of the Spirit?

Short Answer

1. (Lesson 1) Before we can love God, what must we do first? What does it mean to fear God?

2. (Lesson 2) What three commands did Jesus give to those who wanted to become His disciples? Explain the meaning of each command.

3. (Lesson 6) How do we cast all our cares upon God? What do we need to understand to do so?

4. (Lesson 7) What are three characteristics of true worship that we learned from the Bible?

5. (Lesson 8) Why is Satan called the “father” of lies? What happens if we follow God’s command to live upright lives?

6. (Lesson 9) What are the three principles of tithing? What are the results of giving?

7. (Lesson 10) Explain the roles of parent and child in a family according to the Bible.

8. (Lesson 11) What does it mean for a couple to be spiritually one? How should a couple place God in their marriage?

9. (Lesson 12) What does it mean to be “sanctified”? How do we become sanctified?

Junior 1 Year 3 Book 4 Review Answer Key

Memory Verses

1. "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul." (Deuteronomy 10:12)
2. "Then He said to them all, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.'" (Luke 9:23)
3. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22–23)
4. "Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another." (Romans 15:14)
5. "Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls." (Proverbs 25:28)
6. "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you." (1 Peter 5:6–7)
7. "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created." (Revelation 4:11)
8. "Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who deal truthfully are His delight." (Proverbs 12:22)
9. "So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7)
10. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother,' which is the first commandment with promise: 'that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.'" (Ephesians 6:1–3)
11. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." (Genesis 2:24)
12. "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God." (1 Thessalonians 4:3–5)

Multiple Choice

1. ____ : When Abraham and Sarah went to Egypt, what did he tell her to say to the Egyptians?
 - a. She was his wife.
 - b. She did not know him.
 - c. She was his cousin.
 - d. She was his sister.**
2. ____ : Which of the following did not happen in Joseph's lifetime?
 - a. He was sold to Egypt as a slave.
 - b. He went to his brothers for food during the famine.**
 - c. He was falsely imprisoned.
 - d. He was forgotten by the cupbearer.
3. ____ : According to the Bible, a Christian household is ____.
 - a. God-centered, full of obedience, full of godly discipline and order
 - b. God-centered, full of God's love, full of sacrifice
 - c. God-centered, full of God's love, full of godly discipline and order**
 - d. God-centered, full of obedience, full of sacrifice

4. ____ : Which of the following is a reason why we should love, fear, and honor God?
- a. God is our Creator.
 - b. God is fearful.
 - c. God is loving.
 - d. All of the above.**
5. ____ : Which is not one of the steps in the process of temptation?
- a. Lying**
 - b. Desire
 - c. Sin
 - d. Drawn away

True or False

- 1. *False; Mary was said by Jesus to have "chosen that good part" by sitting next to Him to listen.*
- 2. *True; A portion of the Israelites' tithe was eaten during a celebration to remember God's blessings.*
- 3. *False; To honor our parents means to act out of sincerity with obedience, humility, and respect.*
- 4. *True; Lust is not only physically destructive, but it also leads to spiritual death.*
- 5. *True; David treated King Saul's grandson Mephibosheth as his own son.*

Becoming More like Christ

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| <i>Love</i> | 1. When we put others first in our actions, through servitude or sacrifice, we are showing this. |
| <i>Self-Control</i> | 2. Samson and Esau both lacked this, which led them to make unwise decisions. |
| <i>Gentleness</i> | 3. Someone who is a source of support for brethren and can defuse heated situations has this. |
| <i>Kindness</i> | 4. By being kind to the wicked and providing for needs, Jesus was showing this. |
| <i>Joy</i> | 5. Through the Spirit, we can have this even when experiencing trials, sorrow, or pain. |
| <i>Patience</i> | 6. Someone who perseveres through a trial and endures pain without becoming angry has this. |
| <i>Goodness</i> | 7. Someone who does right in God's eyes, and has a heart that chooses to do right, has this. |
| <i>Peace</i> | 8. It is the highest form of tranquility that comes from harmony with God and with men. |
| <i>Faithfulness</i> | 9. By never breaking His promises and always providing our needs, God is showing this to us. |

Discussion

Refer to Lessons 3, 4, and 5, Life Application section.

Short Answer

1. (Lesson 1) Before we can love God, what must we do first? What does it mean to fear God?

Loving God is a two-way street. God desires that we abide in His presence, so that He can abide in us! To love God therefore requires that we first develop a relationship with Him. Through His prayer and His actions in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus taught us that ultimately, God's will is greater than our own, and to fear God means to follow His will even if we don't like it or are scared to do it.

2. (Lesson 2) What three commands did Jesus give to those who wanted to become His disciples? Explain the meaning of each command.

Jesus Christ told them, "[Let] him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." To deny ourselves means to say "no" to our inner desires and "yes" to God's. It means saying, "Not by my will, but Yours." To take up our cross means to be willing to suffer and die for the Lord, by putting to death any sin within us. To follow Him means to walk in Jesus' footsteps and to ask ourselves constantly, "What would Jesus do?"

3. (Lesson 6) How do we cast all our cares upon God? What do we need to understand to do so?

It means giving all our problems to Him, big or small. This requires a heart of trust, which means understanding that He is all-powerful and loving. We cannot solve all our own problems, but God will always take care of us when we give our problems to Him.

4. (Lesson 7) What are three characteristics of true worship that we learned from the Bible?

True worship is humble and simple, means being personally engaged with God, and is determined and sincere.

5. (Lesson 8) Why is Satan called the "father" of lies? What happens if we follow God's command to live upright lives?

He was the first to use deception. As the very first one to lie, all deceit comes from him. If we speak only the truth, then God will delight in us and bless us.

6. (Lesson 9) What are the three principles of tithing? What are the results of giving?

Giving is a matter of the heart; giving is a personal choice; and give in proportion to what God has given us. God will increase our righteousness; God will enrich our lives; we become partners in the ministry; and giving brings thanksgiving and glory to God.

7. (Lesson 10) Explain the roles of parent and child in a family according to the Bible.

Parents have the primary responsibility and God-given authority to teach their children about God and His commands. They should demonstrate the life of a Christian. Children should honor and obey their parents. If they do, God has promised to bless them.

8. (Lesson 11) What does it mean for a couple to be spiritually one? How should a couple place God in their marriage?

God intended for married couples to support and encourage each other in their journeys of faith. When they share the same spiritual values, the truth provides guidance amidst conflict. God should be at the apex of a couple's marriage. By drawing closer to God, they also draw closer to each other.

9. (Lesson 12) What does it mean to be "sanctified"? How do we become sanctified?

It means keeping ourselves apart from sin and seeking holiness. To do so, we must abstain from sexual immorality, and know how to control our own body in a way that is holy and honorable.