

YEAR 2 BOOK 4

# JUNIOR 2

Student Workbook



**THEME:**

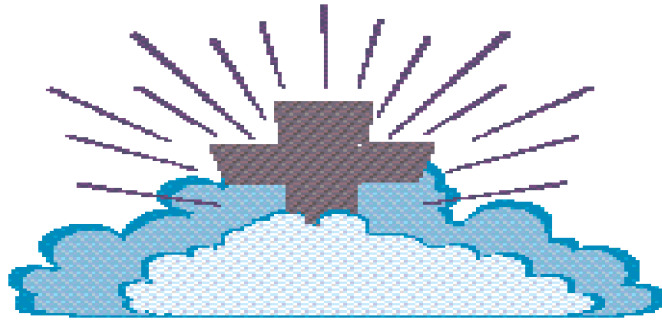
Bible Characters



# Student Devotional—Even a little will shine golden in His eyes!

*“Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.” (1 Cor 3:16-17)*

---



Once Jesus is laid as the foundation, each of us brings something to build up the church. Some bring gold, some bring silver, and some bring precious stones. Others bring wood and straw. God will test each one's work by fire when all these are added together. For those whose hearts are true to God, the test of fire will purify them and their labor will not burn up but will become even more refined.

This is a reminder to us that as long as we have faith, love and a true heart towards God's work, even a little of whatever we can offer will shine golden in His eyes.

*“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”*

**2 Timothy 4:7**



## BIBLE READING FOR THIS QUARTER

1. Isaiah 1-5
2. Isaiah 6-10
3. Isaiah 11-15
4. Isaiah 16-20
5. Isaiah 21-25
6. Isaiah 26-30
7. Isaiah 31-35
8. Isaiah 36-40
9. Isaiah 41-45
10. Isaiah 46-50
11. Isaiah 51-55
12. Isaiah 56-60

### Unit 1: Germination

- |    |                              |    |
|----|------------------------------|----|
| 1. | Abraham, the father of faith | 1  |
| 2. | Zacchaeus,                   | 5  |
| 3. | Cornelius the Centurion      | 9  |
| 4. | Naaman and Gehazi            | 16 |

### Unit 2: Growth

- |    |                              |    |
|----|------------------------------|----|
| 5. | Daniel and His Three Friends | 21 |
| 6. | Simeon and Anna              | 26 |
| 7. | Isaac                        | 30 |
| 8. | Lot of Sodom                 | 35 |

### Unit 3: Maturation

- |     |                             |    |
|-----|-----------------------------|----|
| 9.  | Apollos of Alexandria       | 38 |
| 10. | Ezra, the Scribe            | 41 |
| 11. | Lydia, the Seller of Purple | 45 |
| 12. | Eli the Priest              | 50 |
| 13. | Review                      | 56 |

# Bible Characters

## UNIT THEMES:

### unit 1:

#### Germination

With one single step of faith out of the land of Ur, Abraham set into motion the salvation plan of God. This plan culminated in the Lord Jesus who came to the world to save all sinners. In this unit our students will learn about characters such as Abraham, Zacchaeus, and Cornelius who all responded to the call of the Lord. They responded to God's calling with immediacy, earnestness and simplicity of faith. They turned from their unbelief to a total commitment in God. While it is important to get off to a good start, it is even more crucial to hold onto our faith to the very end. Naaman and Gehazi

provide our students with an interesting antithesis of those who started off well in their faith and those who failed tragically at the end. Our students will learn that faith is a seed that has to be planted and constantly nurtured and pruned through the plethora of life's experiences so that we progress from a dependent faith to one that is mature and independent.

#### unit 2: Growth

After conversion a long and rugged journey lies in front of us before we reach our final destination, the heavenly kingdom. This journey involves making endless choices. Some choices are harder to make when under conflict, pressures and temptations in life. But

each choice will determine the outcome of our faith. In this unit our students will study characters such as Daniel and his three friends and Isaac who all faced many choices in life yet remained uncompromising in their faith. In every aspect of their lives, God was their first priority. Lot too faced many choices. But his decisions were based on his heart's desires rather than on God and as a result he strayed further and further away. Our students will realize that we should not sell our soul for a moment of pleasure but to be like Simeon and Anna who were content to lead reverent and hope-filled lives, with faith that stood the test of time.

#### unit 3: Maturation

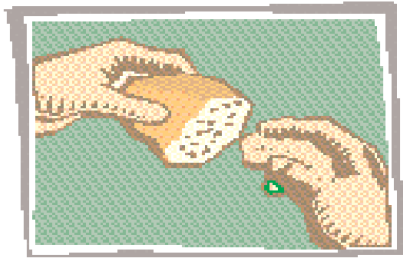
A mature Christian knows how to repay the love of

God through acts of service. In this unit, students will study several great workers in the Bible. Lydia, like most of us, led a very busy life. Yet in spite of all her secular obligations, she was able to balance out her spiritual, family and career life.

Our students will further learn of characters such as Apollos and Ezra who both demonstrated how a person's willingness to know and practice God's word have a direct effect on how God uses his/her life and how effective their service is. Our students will learn that while it is important to serve God, it is more crucial to have daily spiritual cultivation. Otherwise, we will suffer the same consequences as Eli who failed to examine the condition of his heart and after many years of service was rejected by God.

## MEMORY VERSES FOR JUNE, JULY, AUGUST

---



1. "For what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.'" (Rom 4:3)
2. "Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ." (Phil 3:8)
3. "But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him." (Ac 10:35)
4. "For we share in Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end." (Heb 3:14)
5. "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Rom 12:2)
6. "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined." (Isaiah 9:2)
7. "Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand." (Phil 4:5)
8. "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If any one loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 Jn 2:15)
9. "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim 2:15)
10. "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night." (Ps 1:2)
11. "Charm is deceitful, and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised." (Prov 31:30)
12. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." (Prov 22:6) "Your father in heaven." (Mt 5:16)







A)  
**FAITH**  
part 1

**Abraham** is most commonly known as the “Father of Faith.” His original name, Abram, which means “father of high”, was later changed by God to Abraham, which means “father of a multitude of nations” (Gen 17:5-6).

◀ **What is faith?** ▶

- Faith refers to the body of truth which constitutes the whole of the Christian message (Jude 3).
- Faith can mean a belief in the Lord Jesus and His redemptive plan.
- Faith encompasses complete confidence and trust in God.
- Faith is believing every single word and promise that is written in the Bible about what God is, what He has done, is doing and will do for His saints. This belief culminates in obedience to His will.

▶ **1. ABRAHAM'S CALLING**

- He departed from Ur not knowing where he was to go
- He had to travel a long distance
- He had to leave his country, kindred and father's house
- Abraham departed from Ur having not yet received the Promised Land

✓ **Questions:** .....

Why do you think God asked Abraham to do such a difficult thing as to leave his loved ones?

When it comes down to a choice between following God's will and going against the wishes of someone you love, what would you choose to do?

Uncertainty, difficult circumstances, lack of assurance and giving up things that are precious did not hinder Abraham from responding to God's calling. Of these things, which ones might prevent you from doing the same?

What things would be hardest for you to let go?

Check for Understanding

**WARM-UP**

*Read the following inscription of a poem that was written on a wall in a concentration camp.*

I believe in the SUN  
Even when it is not shining  
I believe in love  
Even when I feel it not.  
I believe in God  
Even when He is silent

- What is your definition of faith?
- How does the poem illustrate the true meaning of faith?

1



A) FAITH part 1

1. PROMISED A SON

Believing the impossible

When God appeared to Abraham, God promised that "a son from your own body shall be your heir" and that his descendants will be as innumerable as the stars in the night sky. Even though Abraham had no child at the time, he believed in the power of God. And God credited it to him as righteousness (Gen 15:6).

This is what true faith is. Faith faces the facts. Abraham had no illusions that physically speaking, he and Sarah were "as good as dead". Yet Abraham believed in God's promise against all hope (Heb 11:3).

2. OFFERED UP HIS ONLY SON

- a. He obeyed immediately
- b. He obeyed totally
- c. He obeyed even when it didn't make sense
- d. He believed that God would revive his son

✓ Questions: .....

Define true obedience.

---



---



---



---



---

To you, what are the hardest and the easiest things to give to God?

---



---



---



---

Were you ever asked to do something that didn't make sense? How did you respond?

---



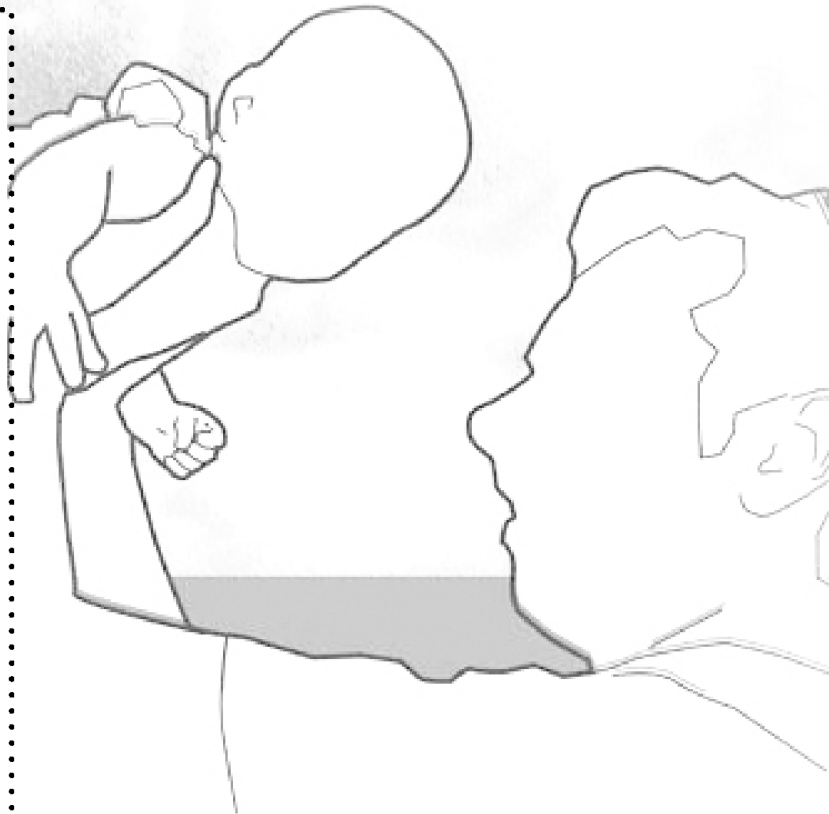
---



---



---



Check for Understanding



A) LOVE part 2

3. ABRAHAM'S LOVE FOR LOT

- a. Gave Lot first choice
- b. Rescued Lot
  - Overlooked people's wrongs
  - Risked his life to save his nephew
  - Sacrificed his all



Questions:

We often show kindness and concern for others only when it is convenient for us or when we are in the mood. What does Abraham's actions teach us about true love?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

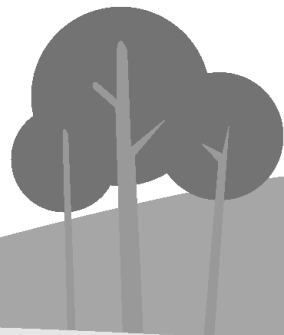
With what kind of attitude do we help others?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Check for Understanding



4. WELCOMED THE THREE VISITORS

In Biblical times, showing hospitality was a common practice and required in the Law of Moses (Lev 19:34). However, from this incident we will find that Abraham went far beyond the law's requirement.

Let's pay close attention to Abraham's actions as he sees the three men approaching:

"In the heat of the day, Abraham ran from his tent to meet them."

Keep in mind that Abraham was not a young man at the time; he was 99 years old.

"Then he bowed himself to the ground ..... hastened into the tent .....

he then ran to the herd .....

he took curds and milk and the calf which he had prepared ..... he stood by them under the tree while they ate."

What does Abraham's actions teach us?

- Abraham did not take the easy way out.
- Abraham offered his best to his guests.
- Abraham did not show partiality.

Check for Understanding



Questions:

- Compare your attitude with that of Abraham's when asked to entertain strangers. What differences or similarities do you notice?
- Why is showing hospitality to others important?
- Share a testimony where people were blessed on account of welcoming others.



## ► Journey of Faith

Each person's faith is built up from a plethora of life experiences such as births or deaths among family and friends, receiving the Holy Spirit, having a prayer answered, being involved in an accident, disappointments, relationships and so on. Through the ordinary and extraordinary events in life, our faith, trust and knowledge of God deepen. Each event is a stepping stone to higher planes so that we progress from a dependent faith to one that is mature and independent.

In this exercise, we are going to map out the experiences that enabled us to know God a little better. For example, Abraham's first contact with God was in Ur when God called him. Our first realization of God may have been during RE classes when we were young. We can plot these various "contacts" with God on a map of our own design. We can also plot the times when we were disobedient to God and the lessons we learned from those experiences. These maps will give us an idea of how God has used these experiences to deepen our knowledge of Him in our journey of faith.



Childhood



Junior High



Church



High School



## A) ZACCHAEUS' Search for the Lord

part 1 *The conversion of Zacchaeus demonstrates how the good news is for everyone. Zacchaeus was the son of Abraham but he had lost his way and departed from God. This compelling story tells how the Lord came to seek him out. Zacchaeus also teaches us about the kind of response and attitude that we should have when responding to God's calling.*

### 1. Grabbed hold of the opportunity

Most of the crowd that flocked to see the Lord Jesus came out of sheer curiosity. Zacchaeus, however, sought to see God from an inner desire and thirst. He knew this was his chance. Throughout our lives we are given opportunities by God to do certain things such as study, honor our parents, get married, and even believe in God (Eccl 9:11). Like Zacchaeus, we should take hold of the opportunity because opportunities may pass us by.

### 2. Pursued the Lord

Zacchaeus means "pure or justified", but how conflicting the meaning of his name was with his daily actions. Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector, a man of authority and wealth but these things could not satisfy Zacchaeus' inner emptiness nor buy him joy and acceptance. Zacchaeus sought love and acceptance which he found only through the Lord Jesus.

### 3. Had an earnest desire

Although Zacchaeus sought to see the Lord, the multitude and his short stature were obstacles to him. However, his earnest desire propelled him to overcome these barriers. It is no wonder that the Lord Jesus beckoned to him and chose him. The Lord loves and blesses those who are poor in spirit and seek him eagerly (Jer 29:13; Mt 7:7-8).

### 4. Faced problems with courage

Zacchaeus was hated and despised by the multitude that had gathered to see Jesus. Yet, he entered into the crowd and faced his obstacles head on. Because of his short stature, Zacchaeus clambered up a sycamore tree to see the Lord. Oftentimes when we choose to draw closer to God and seek after Him, obstacles will arise. But we need to imitate Zacchaeus who faced his problems head on with courage and wisdom.



### Questions:

- How can we have an intense desire for God?
- Zacchaeus was not afraid of losing decorum for the sake of Christ. Have you ever faced a similar situation? What were your thoughts?
- What obstacles prevent you from seeing Christ? Have you overcome them? If so, how?
- Do you know of anyone who lost a precious opportunity to believe in the Lord? Do you know of anyone who grabbed hold of the opportunity to believe and be baptized just in the nick of time?

---



---



---



---



---



---



---

Check for Understanding



## B) ZACCHAEUS' part 2 Repentance

### 1. Received the Lord with gladness

When the Lord called to Zacchaeus, he received the Lord joyfully. Zacchaeus sets us a very good example in how we should respond to God's words. His actions (sought to see, ran, climbed, made haste, received the Lord joyfully) demonstrate the eager and active response to God's words. How have we responded to God's words?

### 2. Active repentance

Zacchaeus demonstrated what true repentance is. Repentance means a rejection of the old values on which his life had been based and a commitment to the values of Jesus. He gave up what was important to him in exchange for what was important to the Lord.

### 3. Chosen by the Lord

Out of the great multitude that had gathered that day, the Lord chose only to be a guest at Zacchaeus' house. What an honor and blessing this was! Like Zacchaeus, we were once lost in sin but Christ handpicked us and despite our unworthiness came to be a guest at our house.



### Questions:

- What does repentance mean to you?
- How did Zacchaeus demonstrate the meaning of true repentance?
- What changes do you need to make in your life?
- Have you welcomed the Lord into your heart?
- What did it take for you to welcome Him?
- What changes did you experience in your life afterwards?

Check for Understanding

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



#### Opportunity to learn (Eccl 9:10)

- Moses had an opportunity to be instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians (Ac 7:19-22)
- Paul was educated in the greatest academic centers and under the greatest teachers (Ac 22:3)
- Daniel and his three friends had a chance to learn (Dan 1:4,17)
- Peter was an uneducated, common fisherman (Ac 4:13)

#### Opportunity to marry (Gen 2:22)

- Isaac met with a good opportunity from the Lord (Gen 24:12)
- God gave Ruth an opportunity to meet Boaz (Ruth 2:1-6)

#### Opportunity to serve (Jn 9:4)

- Perceiving that she would not always have the Lord, Mary seized the moment to prepare for Jesus' burial (Jn 12:1-7)
- The people offered for the building of the tabernacle (Ex 35:20-29)
- A group of woman came to the Lord's tomb to anoint His body, but the Lord had already resurrected (Mk 16:1-6)
- David wanted to build a temple, but had no opportunity (1 Chron 22:6-8)

#### Opportunity to believe in the Lord (Is 55:6)

- The Ethiopian eunuch grabbed the chance to be baptized (Ac 8:27-36)
- The criminal that was crucified along with the Lord Jesus believed (Lk 23:39-43)

#### Opportunity to do good (Prov 3:28; Gal 6:10)

- The Good Samaritan (Lk 10:30-37)
- Shunammite woman showed kindness to Elisha the prophet (2 Kgs 4:8-10)
- Nabal refused to provide for David (1 Sam 25:9-11)

**Opportunity  
Knocks!**

Today we learned that besides God's choosing, another reason why Zacchaeus was able to receive salvation was because he knew how to take hold of opportunities.

In life we may have ample opportunities to do different things, but it is the Lord who provides us with these opportunities and gives us success in them (Gen 27:20).

Ecclesiastes 9:11 says, "Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to the men of skill; but time and chance happen to them all." Let us therefore use our opportunities wisely and not as a means to indulge in the flesh (Gal 5:13).





**Opportunity to listen to God's words (Eccl 5:1; Is 51:4)**

- Mary sat at the feet of the Lord to listen to His teachings (Lk 10:38-42)
- Eutychus did not use the opportunity to listen to God's word attentively (Ac 20:9)

**Opportunity to repent (2 Pet 3:9)**

- David repented immediately (2 Sam 12:1)
- Although Jesus gave Judah repeated opportunities to repent, he missed them all (Jn 13:10-11)
- The rich man who had no pity on Lazarus while on earth repented while in Hades. But it was already too late (Lk 16:19-25)

**Opportunity to preach the gospel (2 Tim 4:2)**

- Priscilla and Aquila took the opportunity to preach to Apollos (Ac 18:24-26)
- Paul seized every opportunity to preach the gospel (Ac 25:23ff; 16:25-34; 17:16ff)
- Jonah at first refused to preach to the city of Nineveh (Jonah 1:1f; 3:1-4)

**Opportunity to be successful (Deut 8:17-18)**

- Isaac obeyed God's command by not going down to Egypt. God blessed him and made him a very rich man (Gen 26:12)
- Peter had fished for an entire night but caught nothing. But casting his net on his right at the command of the Lord, he caught many fish (Jn 21:3-11)

**✓ Questions:** .....

- What is an opportunity?
- Are there right or wrong opportunities?
- Have you ever missed an opportunity?
- What were your thoughts and what lessons did you learn from it?
- Do you feel you have utilized the opportunities God has given to you?

Check for Understanding

---



---



---



---



---



---

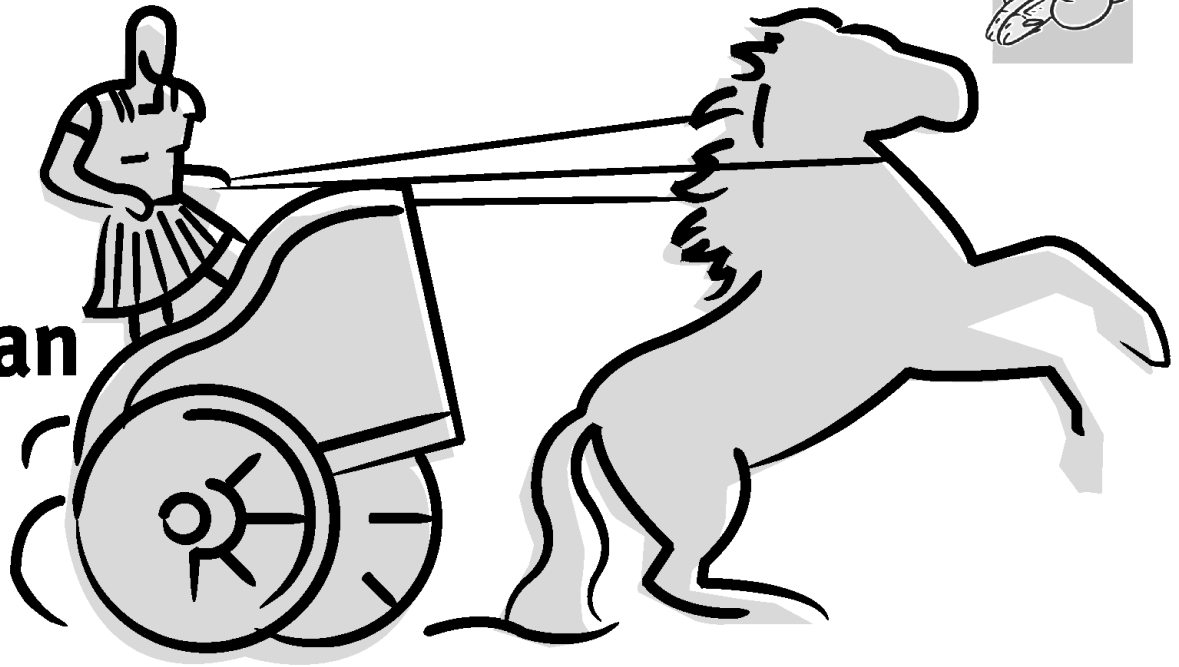


---

**Opportunity Knocks!**



A)  
**Cornelius  
 the Man**  
 part 1



*“Before His ascension the Lord Jesus commissioned His apostles to be witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Ac 1:8). Suddenly in Acts Chapter 10, we read about the Spirit’s sovereign activity in a gentile army officer stationed on the Mediterranean coast. The conversion of Cornelius and his family was an epoch-changing moment. The door of the gospel was now swinging wide open to the gentiles and to the world.*

**1. A charitable and devout man who feared God**

What does fearing God mean?

- It means to have respect and reverence for God and to feel in awe of His majesty and power.
- To fear God is to recognize Him for who He is and who we are.
- To fear God is to gladly submit and choose God’s way in all things.

**2. A man of prayer**

Cornelius was a man of prayer but also a devout man with good deeds. The effectiveness of our prayers comes as a result of changing ourselves to meet God’s will. Our behavior affects our prayer just as prayer affects our behavior. If we are friends with the world, if we possess sin or have incorrect motives - all these will affect our prayers.

✓ **Questions:** .....

- What does fearing God mean?
- How can we learn to fear God?
- How does fearing God correlate with our actions?

Check for Understanding

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

✓ **Questions:** .....

- What relationship does the effectiveness of prayers have with our daily conduct?
- Reflect on how effective our prayers have been – is there some sin or obstacle that hinders our prayers from reaching God?

Check for Understanding

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

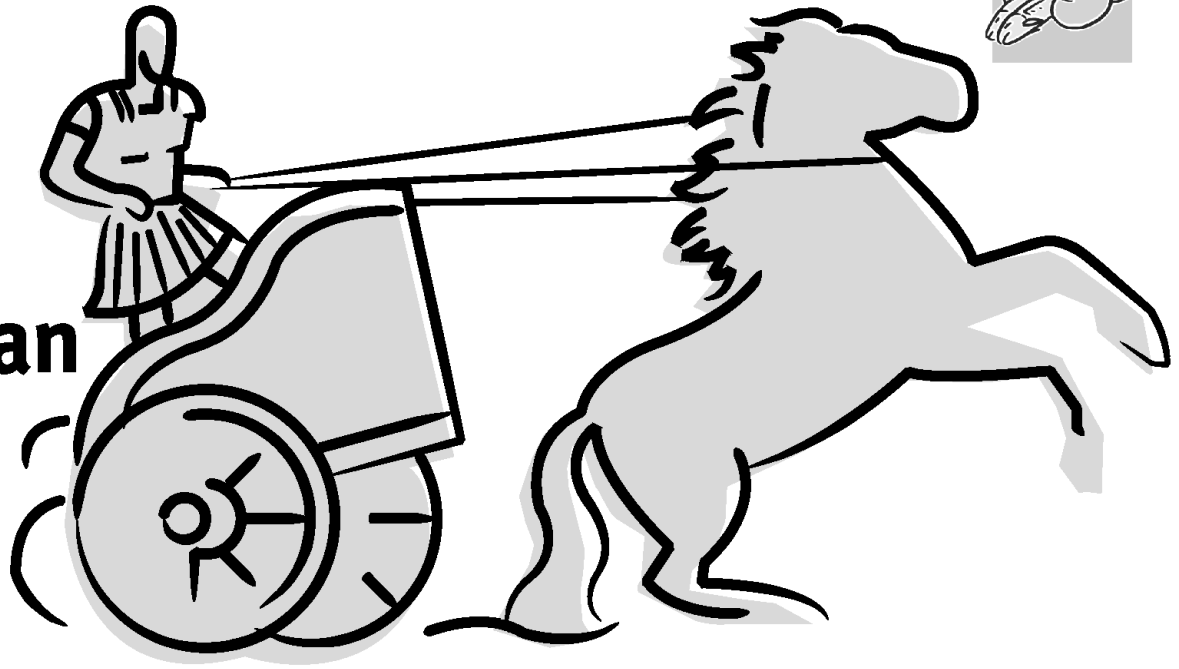
---

---



## A) Cornelius the Man

part 1



### 3. A man of humility

Cornelius was a centurion, a man of power, authority and means. Men like Cornelius are used to giving orders rather than taking them. But Cornelius was very humble. When the angel appeared to him and told him to send for Peter, Cornelius obeyed immediately. Although Peter was not a Jewish leader, but a mere fisherman and a subordinate, Cornelius did not allow worldly differences and prejudices to prevent him from recognizing the truth. In God's household there is no rank. We should treat others without partiality.



### Questions:

- Why is treating others with partiality a sin?
- How was humility a key factor for Cornelius to accept the truth?
- Reflect on the way we treat others in church – are we prone to remain within a certain circle of friends, excluding others? What is our reaction to someone who comes to church dressed in rags, and someone smartly dressed?
- How can we get rid of partiality?

---



---



---



---



---

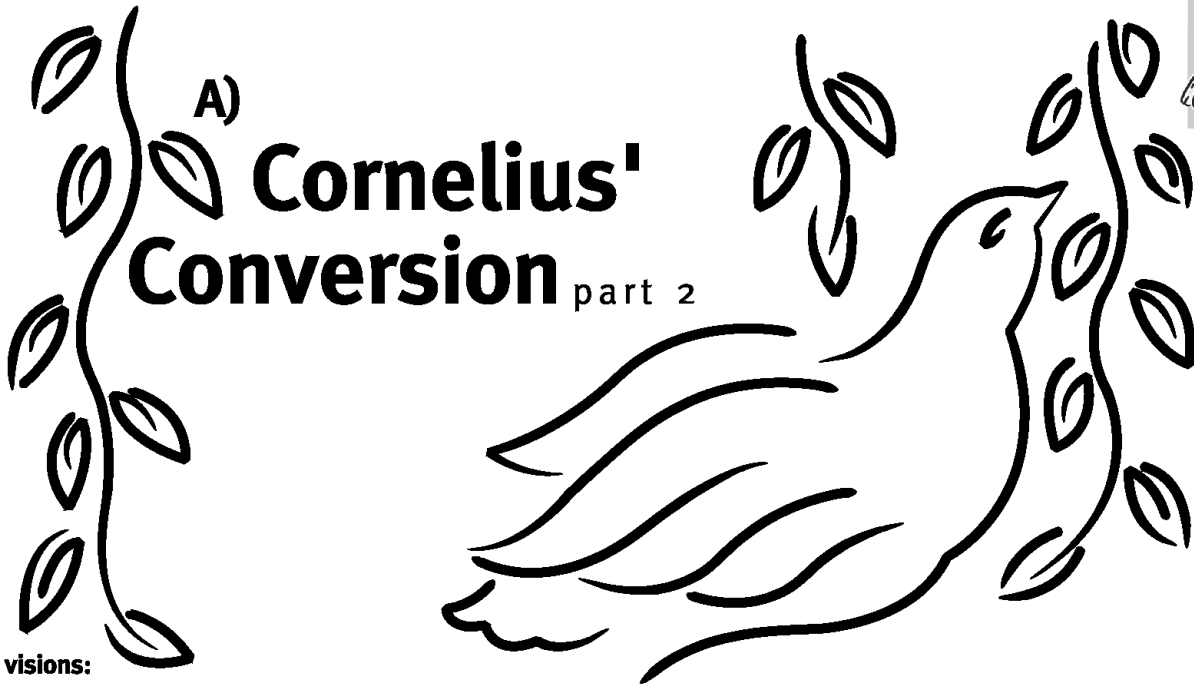


---



---

Check for Understanding



1. Through visions:

a. The Revelation to Cornelius

One day an angel appeared before Cornelius in a vision telling him that his prayers and his alms had reached God.

b. The Revelation to Peter

God not only showed a vision to Cornelius, God appeared to Peter too. Through the vision, Peter's mindset was changed. When doing God's work we should put aside our own thoughts, customs, habits and will. It is important that we welcome everyone into Christ without prejudice.

2.The Apostles' testimony

When Peter arrived at Cornelius' house, his kinsmen and close friends were already waiting. Peter began to preach that the Lord Jesus was God and Savior. When they heard the message, Cornelius and all those who had gathered believed and were baptized. Cornelius had a magnanimous heart. He wanted to share the good news with those around him. As believers, we need to be active in spreading the gospel.

3.The down-pouring of the Holy Spirit

To confirm to Cornelius that what was preached was the truth, God poured down His Spirit upon them while they were listening. Although Cornelius was a religious and devout man, he was still spiritually separated from God and needed to be brought into the right standing with God through the baptism of water and Spirit.

✓ Questions: .....

- Peter's mindset was changed through the movement of the Holy Spirit. Has there been a time when your viewpoint was changed completely by God? Share your experience.
- Have you ever avoided preaching to certain people because you felt s/he just didn't seem to be the type to believe in God?

---



---



---



---



---



---



---

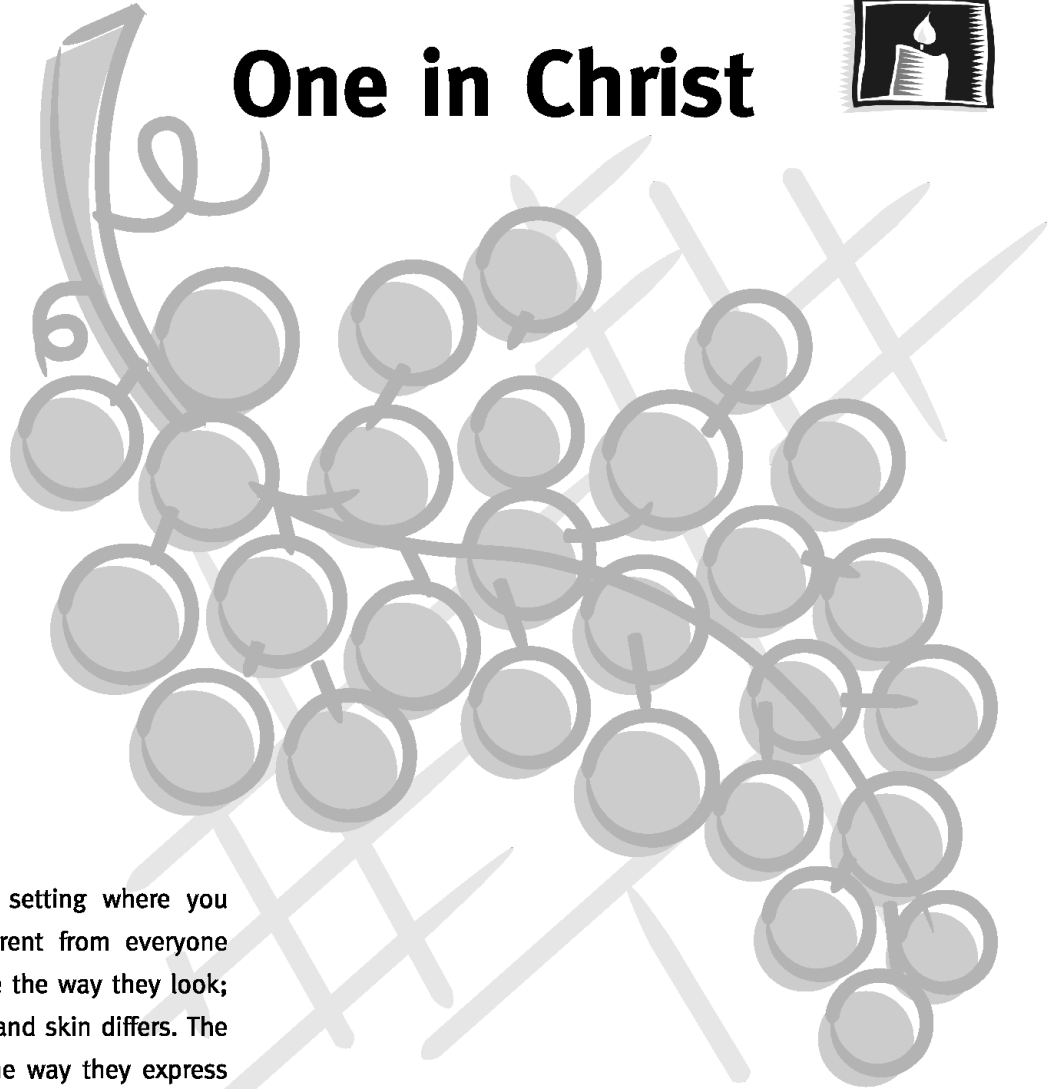


---

Check for Understanding



# One in Christ



**H**ave you ever been in a setting where you were the only person different from everyone else in the room? You notice the way they look; the color of their hair, eyes and skin differs. The language they speak and the way they express themselves, their culture and their background are all different from the way you were brought up. What were your feelings? How did you respond? Did you try to mingle or did you just sit in the corner feeling totally left out? Worse still, did you end up walking out?

Such a culture shock was probably not far from what Peter felt when God told him to meet Cornelius, who was a gentile. Even today, there may be some truthseekers or even believers who face this kind of culture shock when they come to church. Some truthseekers continue to study the truth but they never quite feel as if they belong, while for some, they never come back again. Some believers stay out on the perimeter because they never feel like part of

the group. Since the Lord Jesus has commanded us to go and make disciples of all nations, how can we make the church more welcoming to those who are different from us? How can we address their needs?

*Read the following article which illustrates what one church did to incorporate people of all races in the church, and then discuss the questions listed below.*



# One in Christ

*“A Multiethnic Church: Is It Really Possible?”*

*(Manna, issue 31 April-June 2000)*

Jesus Christ gave His disciples two great commissions before ascending into heaven; to care for His church and to preach the gospel to all nations (Mt 28:19; Lk 24:47). This was a command to the first Christians, and similarly it is a command to us today. Because it is a command, we have assurance that we can succeed in this mission.

The unity of cultures corresponds to the Lord’s will (Gal 3:28; Col 3:11; Is 11:6-9) and should not pose an obstacle for the church today. Harmony between members despite differences of culture shows that we are united by the power of the Holy Spirit, the one faith, and the will of God. We should try our best to carry out this mission so that all people can see our union of love, peace and joy.

## Addressing Multicultural Issues

Many problems arose when the church in Jerusalem, which comprised primarily of Jewish members began to include Gentiles. There were theological problems (i.e., should Gentiles be circumcised?), cultural differences (i.e. should women be veiled?) and no doubt communication issues (i.e. which language should sermons be delivered in or translated into?). Today some people think that the solution to multicultural issues in the church is to separate the cultures, but that would be a serious mistake. First, this is not the example set by the apostolic church. Second, the multiethnic church is proof that unity comes from our faith and from the Holy Spirit. If the other churches fail, we the True Jesus Church can succeed because we are the only church united by the one true faith and the Holy Spirit. Although it is the will of God for all nations to be unified in His church, the task is not necessarily an easy one. It requires a good understanding of God’s will and a lot of effort from the believers.





### *The Apostolic church and the True Jesus Church (part 2)*

#### **Background of France**

France is traditionally a Catholic country. However, the majority of the French do not read the Bible and do not believe that it is the Word of the living God. Generally, people go to church for baptisms, marriages, and funerals; some attend midnight mass on December 24th. In French history, the church was responsible for much bloodshed. Unable to overlook the past, most French reject Christianity and consequently reject Jesus.

French philosophers like Descartes spread the humanistic view that people are intelligent enough to detect God's presence; and since they cannot prove it, therefore God does not exist. This concept led most French to become atheists. There are also some French who, having been disappointed by Christianity and rationalism, have turned to Buddhism. These confused circumstances make it difficult for the True Jesus Church to preach the gospel in France, but if we keep our eyes on our almighty God, we need not be discouraged.

#### **A church for all people**

When the Paris church was first established, members were conscious of the difficulties of preaching in the Western Hemisphere and were prepared to integrate. They wanted others to know that this is the Church of God – not a “Chinese Church”. Some of our church buildings in western countries display the name “True Jesus Church” only in Chinese. This reinforces the popular notion that the Chinese tend to congregate and to recreate their native environment wherever they go. The non-Asians who pass by take no notice at all because they think it is a Chinese church – not a place where they belong. Although in Paris the majority of the members are Chinese, the name of the church is displayed in French. This shows nonmembers that this is a church for all people, not just for the Chinese community.

#### **Bridging the Gap**

When you come to the Paris church, you often feel touched by the love and kindness of the members who approach you with slightly broken French, trying their best to make you feel at ease. You also hear everybody singing hymns in French, except on rare occasion when there are visitors from abroad.

Realizing that it is hard for people to be touched by hymns in a foreign language, the Paris church worked hard to produce a French hymnbook. The members learned to sing in French in order to evangelize to the native population. The Chinese members put aside their Chinese hymnbooks to sing in a language they barely understand, practicing each hymn and learning the meaning of the words.

For the native French members, this was a tremendous blessing. It showed the members' spiritual growth and their love for those who have not heard the Truth. These acts, which reach out to people of other cultures, are a kind of holy work that should not be overlooked. Today, the Asian members have improved their French through sermon translations (from Mandarin to French) and by communicating with the native French believers.

#### **Celebration of Brotherly Love**

Last year, the Paris Church made further progress by holding the annual New Year's meal on the French New Year rather than the Chinese (lunar) New Year. During this celebration, one Chinese mother cooked a French dish for the members who preferred French cuisine, and a French mother cooked a Chinese







*The Apostolic church and the True Jesus Church (part 3)*

dish for her Asian brothers and sisters! The food is not the issue here; it is that these acts of thoughtfulness show brotherly love and kindness. Through the grace of God, this is the spirit of the Paris church today. We still have a long way to go, but for the majority of the Paris members, there is no such things as “Chinese” or “French” because we are all one in Christ Jesus!

**Unity – Everyone’s Responsibility**

In the True Jesus Church it is possible for all cultures to come together in Jesus, and this quality shows the world that we are the only church of the last days. But this is only possible through the power of the Holy Spirit, which is manifested by a concrete willingness to love God and to love men.

Paul said that he was free from all men, but he became a servant to all so that he would not be an obstacle for the spreading of the gospel. He became all things to all men so that he might by all means save some (1 Cor 9:19ff). Of course, Paul did so within the bounds of the gospel. Paul’s

attitude reminds us to try our utmost to become Kenyan in Kenya, a Canadian in Canada, a German in Germany, and a Cambodian in Cambodia - out of love, out of duty, and to have a part in the blessing of the gospel (1 Cor 9:23).

The Paris church still needs to improve in many areas, and it should not be seen as the ideal church. Through its example, however, we can see that cultural unity requires everyone’s effort. Although it is the will and command of God, there are many things we must do to achieve it. May God help us as we encourage one another to accomplish His will and to preach to all nations. Amen!



**Questions:** .....

- From the article how did the brothers and sisters of Paris church deal with some of their differences?
- Draw up the demographics of your local church. Consider the make-up of your church (ethnically, socially, and age-wise). Are there some people who would just assume that your church is not for them? Are there some forms of practices you could change to remove those barriers?
- Peter and Cornelius represent cultural and religious differences. What cultural parallels are there in our church today?
- Discuss how we can find harmony with people with whom we differ in the church.
- Do you think the needs of the different ethnic groups in your church are met? If not, suggest ways for improvement.

Check for Understanding

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---







### 3. Relied on his wealth and abilities

Armed with an exorbitant amount of gifts of silver and gold and expensive garments, Naaman went seeking for help. He was willing to pay whatever it took. But God's grace and blessings cannot be exchanged or bought with wealth or status. It is given freely to whomever He pleases.

### 4. Filled with pride

After the long trek to Israel, Naaman arrived at Elisha's house. Expecting the prophet to come out personally to greet him and heal him of his sickness, Naaman was greeted by a messenger instead. This was too much of an insult. Naaman was soon to learn that God's ways are not man's ways. Sinners need to come before the Lord with a humble and repentant heart to experience the true power of God.

### 5. Preconceived ideas

Naaman was instructed to "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times". He was willing to give sacrifices, perform great deeds - anything but wash seven times in the River Jordan. The idea was just too bizarre. God has a standard that we need to follow. This standard is the truth. We need to abandon our own expectations, our old ways and former beliefs to receive the grace of God.

### 6. Complete obedience

Bathing seven times in the River Jordan was training Naaman's faith and obedience. Similarly, God trains each person that comes before Him in the same way. A sinner needs to have complete faith and obedience in God's word to be saved.

### 7. Thanksgiving

After experiencing God's miraculous healing, Naaman gave thanks to God and testified openly about God's grace. God's grace is not only for us to enjoy, but it is a means by which He may be glorified and others may get to know Him.



### Questions:

- Naaman boasted of his wealth, power and ability. What things are we proud of?
- What aspects of Naaman's behavior are typical of those who are seeking the truth?
- What examples can you give of people who use their own righteousness to be saved?

---



---



---



---



---



---



---

Check for Understanding

# A) The Healing of Naaman

part 1





## A) Gehazi, the servant of Elisha

### part 2

*Gehazi's name means "valley of vision". He was the servant of Elisha the man of God. Gehazi assisted Elisha in his work and showed many fine characteristics. However, Gehazi had a tragic ending. Due to a moment of greed, Gehazi fell into temptation and lost his divine calling and blessings.*

#### 1. Living in blessing but not appreciating it

To be a servant of the prophet was an honorable and privileged status. Unfortunately Gehazi did not treasure what he had or recognize its value. We too often fail to appreciate or value what God has already given us. We turn our attention to the luster and splendor of the things of the world. May the Lord give us the spirit of wisdom to see beyond the present things of the world and to know how great and immeasurable the calling and choosing of our Lord is.

#### 2. He did not care for God's glory

Elisha refused to accept Naaman's gifts because he wanted to bring glory to God by enabling Naaman to understand that the God of Israel was the one true God and He offers His grace freely to men. Gehazi on the other hand forgot all about giving glory to God the moment he laid eyes on the gifts. While we live in this world our ultimate purpose is to glorify God and not to seek our own pleasure or enjoyment.



#### Questions:

- How did Gehazi show his discontent with his current situation?
- Are you content with what God has given you?
- How do you demonstrate your appreciation?

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

Check for Understanding



# A) Gehazi, the servant of Elisha

part 2

### 3. Listened to the stirrings of his heart

What Gehazi wanted was not wrong. However, Gehazi allowed his desire to get out of control. He craved these things to the point that he could no longer hear God's words and devised a scheme to satisfy his greed (1 Tim 6:10). We have to be extremely careful to keep our desires in check and guard our hearts with the word and Spirit of God (Prov 4:23; Eph 6:10-18).

### 4. Lost discernment

Although Gehazi had first hand knowledge of God's laws, he could no longer see or discern clearly under temptation. He forgot that God's name is holy and powerful and cannot be taken in vain. We have to be cautious that we do not allow sin to deceive our minds and harden our hearts, leading us to unbelief and rejection of Christ (Heb 3:13).



### Questions:

- How did Gehazi sin in this incident?
- Do you put boundaries on your desires, or do you tend to go after everything you see or desire?
- Some ask, "How do we know what things are ours and what things are not if we do not pursue after them?" How would you respond?
- How does temptation cause us to lose discernment?
- In what ways can we overcome temptation?

Check for Understanding

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

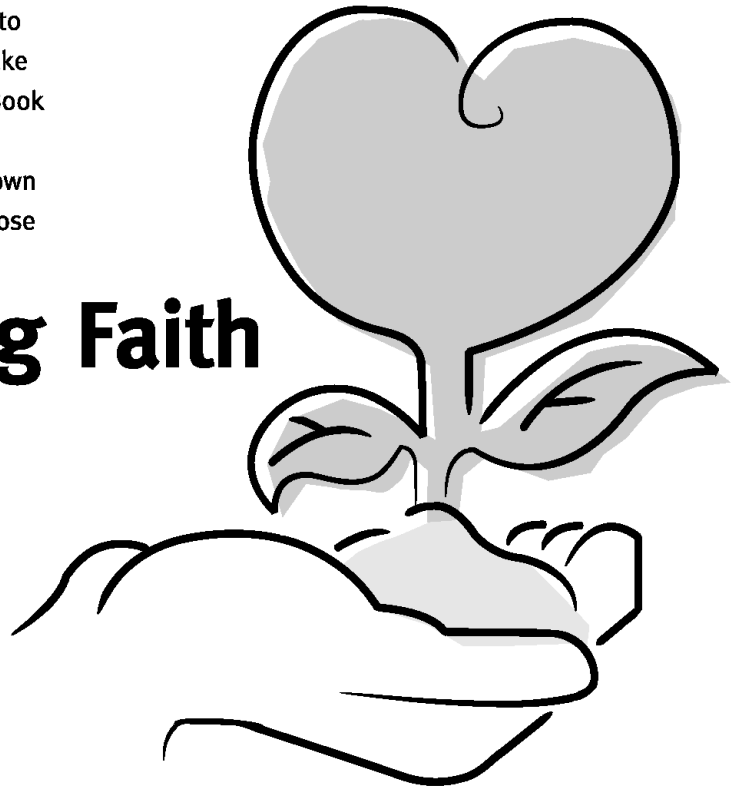
---



In any contest, the start is important, but the finish is even more crucial. Often a front runner will lose strength and fade into the middle of the pack. And there is the tragedy of the brilliant beginner who sets the pace for a time, but does not even finish. He quits the race, burned out, exhausted or injured.

Today's lesson about Naaman and Gehazi reminds us that on our earthly journey, it is imperative for us to sustain our faith right up to the point where we take our last breath, in order to obtain salvation. The Book of Hebrews 10:23 exhorts us to hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for a crown of righteousness which will be awarded only to those who remain steadfast.

## Never-Changing Faith



### Discussion:

A. How can we hold fast to our faith until the end?

B. What is spiritual cultivation?

Why is spiritual cultivation so important?

What are our goals in spiritual cultivation?

What symptoms will occur when we do not spiritually cultivate daily?

How much time do you spend in spiritual cultivation each day?

What are some of your difficulties or challenges in spiritual cultivation?



Once there was an emperor in the Far East who was growing old and knew the time was coming to choose his successor. Instead of choosing one of his assistants or one of his own children, he decided to do something different. He called all the young people in the kingdom together one day. He said, "It has come time for me to step down and to choose the next emperor. I have decided to choose one of you." The kids were shocked! But the emperor continued. "I am going to give each of you a seed today. One seed. It is a very special seed. I want you to go home, plant the seed, water it, and come back here one year from today with what you have grown from this one seed. I will then judge the plants that you bring to me, and the one I choose will be the next emperor of the kingdom!"

There was one boy named Ling who was there that day and he, like the others, received a seed. He went home and excitedly told his mother the whole story. She helped him get a pot and some planting soil, and he planted the seed and watered it carefully. Every day he would water it and watch to see if it had grown.

After about three weeks, some of the other youths began to talk about their seeds and plants that were beginning to grow. Ling kept going home and checking his seed, but nothing ever grew. Three weeks, four weeks, five weeks went by. Still nothing. By now others were talking about their plants but Ling didn't have a plant and he felt like a failure. Six months went by—still nothing in Ling's pot. He just knew he had killed his seed. Everyone else had trees and small plants, but he had nothing. Ling didn't say anything to his friends, however. He just kept waiting for his seed to grow.

A year finally went by and all the youths of the kingdom brought their plants to the emperor for inspection. Ling told his mother that he wasn't going to take an empty pot. But she encouraged him to go, and to take his pot, and to be honest about what happened. Ling felt sick to his stomach, but he knew his mother was right. He took his empty pot to the palace. When Ling arrived, he was amazed at the variety of plants grown by all the other youths. They were beautiful, in all shapes and sizes. Ling put his empty pot on the floor and many of the kids laughed at him. A few felt sorry for him and just said, "Hey, nice try."

When the emperor arrived, he surveyed the room and greeted the young people. Ling just tried to hide in the back. "My, what great plants, trees and flowers you have grown," said the emperor.

"Today, one of you will be appointed the next emperor!"

All of a sudden, the emperor spotted Ling at the back of the room with his empty pot. He ordered his guards to bring him

to the front. Ling was terrified. "The emperor knows I'm a failure! Maybe he will have me killed!" When Ling got to the front, the emperor asked his name. "My name is Ling," he replied. All the kids were laughing and making fun of him. The emperor asked everyone to quiet down. He looked at Ling, and then announced to the crowd, "Behold your new emperor! His name is Ling!" Ling couldn't believe it. Ling couldn't even grow his seed. How could he be the new emperor? Then the emperor said, "One year ago today, I gave everyone

here a seed. I told you to take the seed, plant it, water it, and bring it back to me today. But I gave you all boiled seeds which would not grow. All of you, except Ling, have brought me trees and plants and flowers. When you found that the seed would not grow, you substituted another seed for the one I gave you. Ling was the only one with the courage and honesty to bring me a pot with my seed in it. Therefore, he is the one who will be the new emperor!"

## The Emperor's Seed



### ✓ Discussion: .....

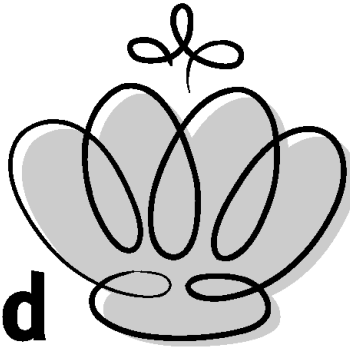
What did you learn from this story?

What kind of person was Ling?

What kind of people were his peers?

What would you have one if you were Ling?





# Daniel and His 3 Friends

*Daniel's name means "God is my judge". He was also known as "Belteshazzar" meaning "His life is protected" (Dan 4:8). Daniel was about 16 years old when he was taken captive. He was from the line of Judah and of noble descent (Dan 1:3-6). Daniel was in Babylon for about 73 years and he lived to about 90 years as an exile in Babylon. During this period from 606 B.C. to about 536 B.C., Daniel served three empires: Babylon (King Nebuchadnezzar and his son Belshazzar), Medes (King Darius) and Persia (King Cyrus).*

## A. Separate as holy

### 1. Remained spiritually watchful

Although Daniel and his three friends were well treated, they remained spiritually alert. The youths knew clearly who they were, where they came from and why there were there. Besides knowing themselves, they were aware of their environment and of the things that might jeopardize their faith. May the Lord grant us the faith, to know ourselves and to see the world for what it truly is.

### 2. Made a strong resolution

Although Daniel and his three friends lived in a pagan land, their purpose was not to strive for a good future nor indulge in the things of the flesh. Their purpose was to live a godly life and bring glory to God. We need to know what our direction and purpose in life are in order to overcome temptations.

### 3. Ready to sacrifice themselves

Daniel and his three friends were able to overcome their environment because they were willing to forego the pleasures that others were enjoying. To overcome the temptations of the world, we need to willingly give up what is important to us and have the courage to be different from everyone else.



## Questions:

- What are the foods that we must abstain from taking today, both materially and spiritually?
- How do you decline someone's offer to do something that is in fact sin, when the offer is made out of goodwill?
- What resolutions have you made to preserve your spiritual identity?
- What often keeps you from taking a stand for God?

---



---



---



---



---



---

Check for Understanding



# Daniel and His 3 Friends

## B. Humility

### 1. Daniel gave glory to God

Daniel recognized that his ability to interpret dreams came not through his own wisdom but through the revelation of God. He realized that he was a mere instrument of God to enable the king and the people of this gentile land to know about the God of Israel.

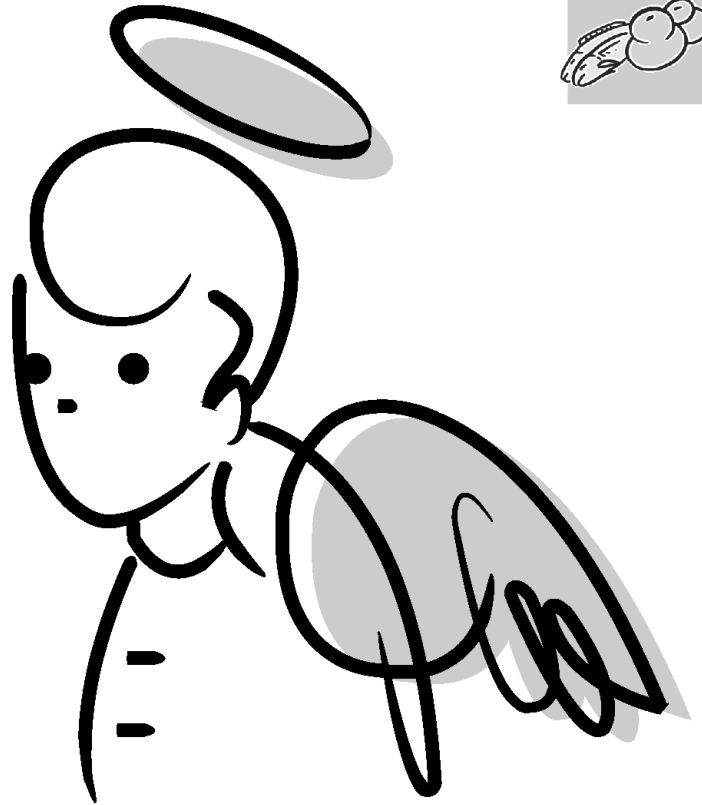
### 2. Daniel remembered his friends

When God revealed the interpretation of the dream to Daniel, Daniel's humility shone through when he acknowledged his three friends before the king and had them promoted too. The society that we live in encourages individualism and self-accomplishment. Daniel however, did not use his gifts to promote himself but to bring glory to God.

## C. Faithful unto death

One of the greatest trials for Daniel's three friends was when King Nebuchadnezzar built a golden image to be worshiped by all. Through this incident, the depth of their faith was manifested through their three statements and actions. Why did these three men possess such faith?

- They knew God.
- They understood that the value of their faith surpassed everything, even their own lives.
- They were determined to maintain a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.



## Questions:

### B2. Daniel remembered his friends

- How can we promote team spirit?
- Are there times when you have taken credit for something instead of giving glory to God?
- How can we maintain a humble spirit even though we are in fact better at some things than others?

### C. Faithful unto death

- What are the spiritual teachings with respect to the worship of the golden image (cf. Col 3:5; Mt 6:24)?
- Have ever given yourself excuses for not obeying God? Share your experience.
- Have you faced a situation in life where you were led to the "fiery furnace"? Share your experience.

Check for Understanding



# Daniel and His 3 Friends

## D. A man of excellent spirit

### 1. He feared God

What does fearing God mean? The verb “to fear” refers to a deep respect and reverence of God. To fear God we need to understand who God is and who we are. When we understand who God is, our goal is to please Him, and we will remain within the boundaries set by God. Those who do not fear God are ignorant of God’s awesomeness. They fail to understand that besides being merciful, God is righteous.

### 2. He prayed incessantly

Throughout his life, Daniel led a consistent life of prayer. His daily spiritual cultivation enabled him to be close to God and understand the things of God. We should not give ourselves feeble excuses or allow daily things to distract us from our time with God.

## E. Showed loyalty to God and man

### 1. Daniel was loyal to his king and country

During his life, Daniel served under four kings. One of the reasons for Daniel’s success was that he did not serve for personal or selfish gain. Similarly, we need to work with the goal of pleasing our employers and bringing glory to God through our hard work and faithfulness.

### 2. Daniel was loyal to God

Daniel was a loyal and faithful prophet of God in a gentile country. When Daniel had to explain the meaning of the various dreams to the kings, he was not afraid to speak words of doom. Daniel did not try to beat around the bush, or try to soften the truth. Sometimes we are afraid of certain consequences and so we shade the truth or keep quiet. But to be faithful workers of God, we should imitate the courage of Daniel in knowing how to stand up for God and speak the truth directly and tactfully.



## Questions:

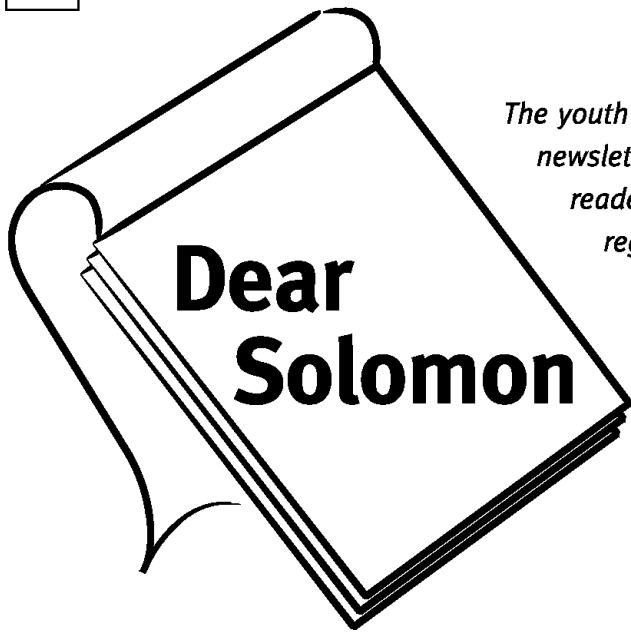
### D2. He prayed incessantly

- What is your understanding of fearing God?
- How can we improve upon our daily prayers?
- What are some of the things that distract us from our daily bible reading and prayers?
- Why did Daniel risk his life to pray to God as usual?

### E2. Daniel was loyal to God

- How was Daniel faithful to his king and country?
- How was Daniel faithful to God?
- Has there been a time where you had to stand up for your principles? How did you react?

Check for Understanding



*The youth group in your local church publishes a monthly newsletter. One of the features is Dear Solomon, where readers are invited to write in their questions or concerns regarding faith and everyday life. As the editor of this section, read the following letters and write a response to your readers.*

**1. Dear Solomon,**

I have a good friend at school called Pete. He also happens to be a homosexual. Aside from his sexual orientation, Pete is a warm, sensitive and funny guy. I know from passages in the Bible such as Romans 1:26-27 and Leviticus 18:22; 20:13 that homosexuality is wrong and an abomination in God's sight. Pete has come to church once, but he doesn't like the attitudes that other people in church have when they find out about his sexual orientation. I believe that God is an all loving God who accepts us just as we are despite our sins and weaknesses. I'm annoyed at the narrowmindedness and judgmental attitude that our believers have. The church needs to open up and embrace all peoples and be tolerant of differences.

Signed,  
Angry and Hurt

**2. Dear Solomon,**

Maybe you can help sort out something my mom and I have been constantly bickering over - what I wear. She always complains that the clothes I wear are not appropriate. They're either too short, too tight, too revealing etc. I tell her that these are what are on the racks these days and that it's a matter of individual taste. Besides, what we wear has nothing to do with salvation. God looks at us from the heart and not from our outward appearance. Don't you agree?

Signed,  
Fashion Conscious

**3. Dear Solomon,**

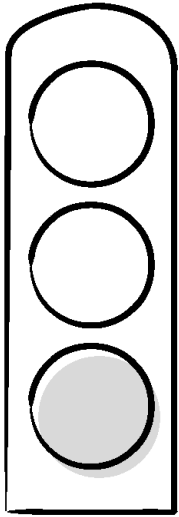
Each Christmas the staff at the place where I work has this tradition where we get a secret santa. For the entire week we buy small gifts or do good deeds for each other while maintaining our anonymity. At a Christmas luncheon at the end of the week, each person tries to guess who their secret santa is. Knowing our church stance on Christmas, I did not participate in all of this. I sat there during lunch watching everybody laughing and opening gifts. I prayed I would go unnoticed. Tough luck! Someone noticed that I did not have any gift and asked me why. In front of everyone I had to explain that I did not celebrate Christmas. I returned home that night thinking that next year I'm going to take part in the festivities. Would it be wrong to join in the festivities without believing in it?

Signed,  
Embarrassed and left out.

**4. Dear Solomon,**

My best friend is Jake who is not yet a Christian. As for me, I was invited to the True Jesus Church by Kyle. Not long after attending services there, I received the Holy Spirit. I later got baptized and changed many of my former bad habits. The problem, however, is Jake. He's upset that I can't hang out with him on Saturdays like I used to. He's asking me how come I'm all holy now and why we never go to the places we used to, to check out the girls. He wants our friendship to go back to the way it was. Last month, he asked me to go to a dance party at this friend's house. I declined and this infuriated him so much that he didn't talk to me. Eventually, I agreed and have started going back to the places we used to go to. I feel like I've betrayed God by going back to those places and doing the things I used to before I knew Him. At the same time, I feel I can't disappoint Jake because that hurts our friendship. What do you suggest?

Signed,  
Pressured



## A) Simeon part 1

### 1. Knew God's will

Simeon (whose name means, "One who hears and obeys") was a righteous and devout man, who led a life of pursuing God. As a consequence of his deep communion with God and his desire for God's salvation, the Holy Spirit revealed to him that before his death, Simeon would see the Messiah. The key to understanding God's will lies in spiritual renewal in Jesus Christ. The more we become like Jesus, the deeper we can comprehend the heart of God.

### 2. Waiting for God's deliverance and fulfillment of hope

Simeon's desire was to see the coming of the Messiah, but he had to wait for a long time. Simeon was willing to endure the wait because he recognized the importance of the Messiah. When we desire something it needs to be worth the wait. Waiting for God is not easy. However, through waiting for God we learn to put our trust in Him. We learn to be humble as we let God take control of our lives.

### 3. Complete joy in God's salvation

Simeon had been waiting for the Messiah throughout his life, and on seeing the Lord with his own eyes, Simeon was willing to die. To see Jesus is to see God's salvation and deliverance. Would we be happy and contented with Jesus only?

## Check for Understanding



### 1 Questions: .....

- How do we find out God's will in our lives?
- Has there been a time when you were confused as to what God's will was? How did you deal with it?

---



---



---



### 2 Questions: .....

- What things should we wait for?
- What things will prevent you from waiting to the end?
- What are some of the common behaviors of those who need to wait?
- Share an experience where you had to wait. What lessons did you gain from it?
- What things are you waiting for at this time?

---



---



---



### 3 Questions: .....

- How important is salvation to you?
- What things would cause you to exchange your salvation?

---



---



---

## B) Anna the Prophetess

part 2



### 1. She overcame her circumstances

The meaning of Anna is “favor or grace”, or “prayer”. Anna was the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher. Although Anna was a widow for most of her life, she did not lead a life of despair and unproductiveness. Instead, she spent her years in the temple, occupying herself with God’s work and turning to God for consolation and hope. When we face negative events in our lives, we should use these circumstances as a means to examine ourselves, draw near to God and give thanks in all circumstances.

### 2. She led a God-centered life

a. She did not depart from God’s temple  
After the death of her husband, Anna remained in the temple of God. God’s temple is a place in which people can call on God’s name, a place where God can be found and where God and His people can meet and communicate. Therefore, to find God we need to worship Him in the church which He has chosen.

b. She led a life of fasting and praying  
By reducing her physical and earthly pleasures and needs to a minimum, Anna was able to focus on God and serve Him more acceptably. Fasting can be for various purposes:

- To seek scriptural understanding
- To propagate the gospel
- To increase in spiritual strength
- To confess, repent and request the forgiveness of sins

### Check for Understanding



#### 2a Questions: .....

- Do you believe that the True Jesus Church is the church that God has designated to be His church?
- What makes the True Jesus Church unique among all the other churches?
- Have you made a commitment to yourself to remain in God’s church always?

---



---



---



---



---



---



## B) Anna the Prophetess

part 2

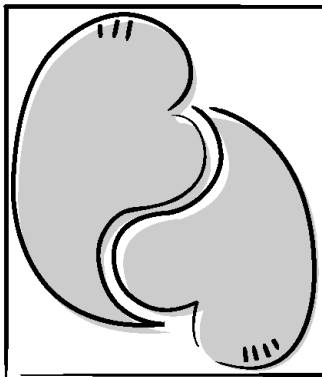


### 3. She was a thankful person

When Anna saw the Messiah she gave thanks to God. Despite her unfortunate circumstance, Anna was able to give thanks because of Christ. In giving thanks, we set aside our own problems and complaints in order to celebrate God's generosity, love and mercy. We have to adopt an attitude of gratitude knowing that whatever comes our way, be it good or evil, it is permitted by God and everything is in God's almighty hands.

### 4. She was a grateful person

When Simeon saw the Savior, his deepest desire had been fulfilled, and he was willing to die. Anna on the other hand began to tell others of Christ. The advent of Christ was good news of great joy which concerned all people and she knew how important it was for people to know this. Have we spoken of Christ to our friends and family?



### Check for Understanding

#### ✓ 3 Questions: .....

- List several reasons why thankful people are usually happier people.
- How do you think it makes God feel when we are thankful?
- How do you think it makes God feel when we complain?

---



---



---



---



---



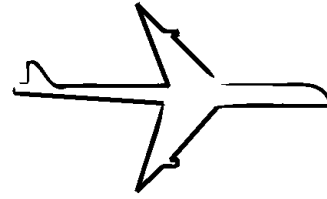
---



---



# Waiting for God



We live in a world where speed counts: fast food, fast cars, and fast service. We have grown used to things being done quickly and promptly, so that even when we pray to God, we demand an immediate or swift answer. The art of waiting and patience has become lost to this generation. Yet, to be able to wait is vital. There are characters in the Bible such as Joseph and Isaac who were able to perfect the skill of waiting for God's time. Because of this, they were richly blessed by God. There are also those who could not. Jacob and Saul, among others, were those who suffered because they did not wait for God.

Read the following scenarios and identify the common errors that we commit while waiting. Then look up the following Bible verse(s) to find out the correct attitude we should have and the things that we should do while we wait.

### Scenario 1 (Read Psalms 62:1):

Last week, Penny got into a misunderstanding with Lily over some minor issue. No matter how Penny tried to explain her intentions, Lily refused to listen. Penny was very hurt. She prayed to God to help her resolve the conflict. In her prayers she could sense that God understood. As Penny waited for God to clear the misunderstanding, she shared the incident with another sister in church. Then that evening, she poured her heart out again to someone else who inquired about the incident.

### Scenario 2 (Read Revelations 14:12; Ps 37:34):

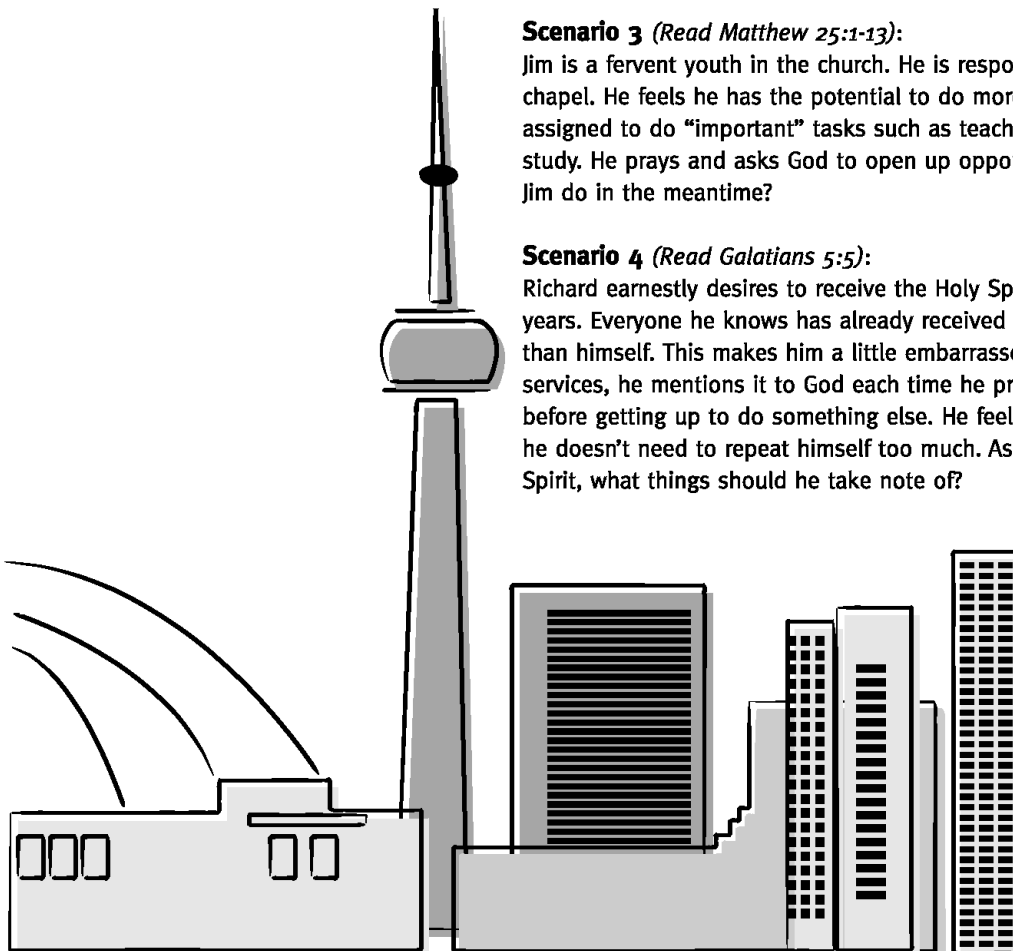
Helen is thirty-two years old and she has been praying to God about her marriage. She hopes to find a partner with the same beliefs. Meanwhile, Helen has a friend outside the church who is interested in her. She has turned him down. However, as time goes by Helen knows she's not getting any younger and her friend is still waiting for her. She understands the Bible teachings regarding marrying non-believers, and although she continues to pray, her prayers remain unanswered. Helen decides to take the plunge.

### Scenario 3 (Read Matthew 25:1-13):

Jim is a fervent youth in the church. He is responsible for hymn leading and cleaning the chapel. He feels he has the potential to do more for the Lord. However, he hasn't been assigned to do "important" tasks such as teaching an RE class or leading the Bible study. He prays and asks God to open up opportunities for him to serve. What should Jim do in the meantime?

### Scenario 4 (Read Galatians 5:5):

Richard earnestly desires to receive the Holy Spirit. He has been praying for almost 20 years. Everyone he knows has already received the Holy Spirit, even children younger than himself. This makes him a little embarrassed. During prayer sessions before services, he mentions it to God each time he prays, but he only prays for a short while before getting up to do something else. He feels God already knows what he wants, so he doesn't need to repeat himself too much. As Richard waits for the promised Holy Spirit, what things should he take note of?

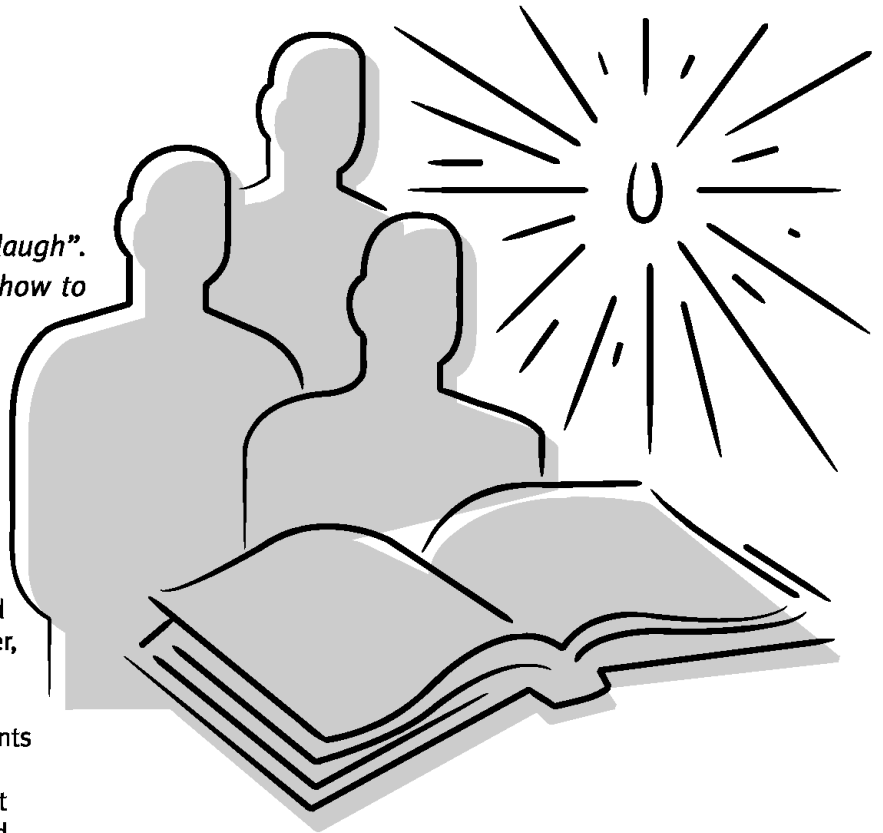




# Isaac

## part 1

*Isaac's name means "he laughs" or "he will laugh". Isaac's life can serve as an example for us in how to lead a quiet life based on God's will.*



### A. Faith

Isaac's faith can be seen when he was to be offered as a sacrifice. Like a lamb being led to the slaughter, Isaac silently obeyed and trusted his father. Often when we are asked to do something illogical or incomprehensible, we question and doubt our parents and God. We react in this way because we lack the trust and faith to see that they will provide the best for us. We need to be like Isaac who quietly obeyed even though he did not understand. In time, God's will and plan will be revealed to us.

### B. Obedience

#### a. Obedient to his father

As Isaac grew older Abraham instructed his servant to go back to his homeland to bring home a wife for Isaac. Isaac thus took Rebekah as his wife and loved her. Isaac's decision was not based on what he liked or disliked, but in knowing that all this came about with God's guidance and was the will of God.

#### b. Obedient to God

When a great famine came upon the land of Israel God instructed Isaac to remain in Gerar and not to go down to Egypt. God wanted to see what Isaac's choice was: to obey God and stay in a famine-torn Promised Land, or disobey God and travel to Egypt, a gentile land of plenty. If we leave the land of Israel, i.e. the church, we will be spiritually endangered even though we may have material gain. We need to remain within the boundaries and protection of God's blessing and grace regardless.



### Questions:

#### A. Faith

- From this incident, how is Isaac's faith manifested?
- On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your faith?
- How would you react when asked to do something illogical or incomprehensible? Why?

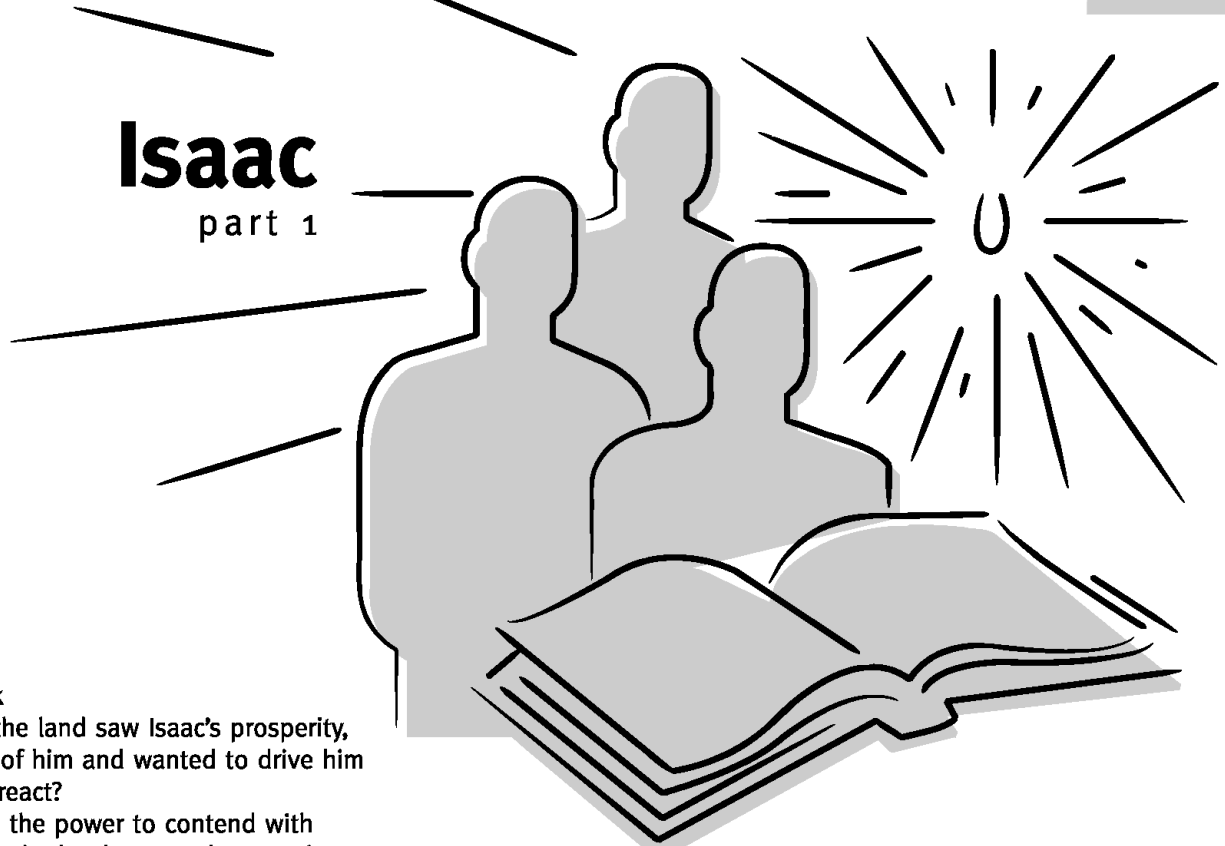
#### B. Obedience

- Does obedience come easily for you? Why or why not?
- What can we do to be more obedient?
- When reflecting upon our own faith, are we fair-weather Christians, or do we follow God come rain or shine?



# Isaac

part 1



### C. Peaceful and Meek

When the people of the land saw Isaac's prosperity, they became jealous of him and wanted to drive him away. How did Isaac react?

- Although Isaac had the power to contend with these men, he took the harder route by repaying evil with good.
- Isaac refused to fight his enemies because he understood that God was in control and would take revenge for him (Rom 12:19).
- Isaac was able to give up the wells because he did not place emphasis on his rights or material gain.

### D. Quiet and Meditative

Isaac was a quiet and thoughtful man who knew the benefits of removing himself from the noise and the busy-ness of life to be alone with God. When we are constantly surrounded by people, our hearts and minds focus more on the people around us and our environment than on God. As a result, we lose our sense of direction, become easily agitated and make mistakes. Therefore, we need to take time each day to think and meditate upon God's words and our actions.

### ✓ Questions:

#### C. Peaceful and Meek

- How do you normally react when faced with injustice or conflict?
- Why was Isaac able to be meek and gentle even in the face of injustice?

---



---



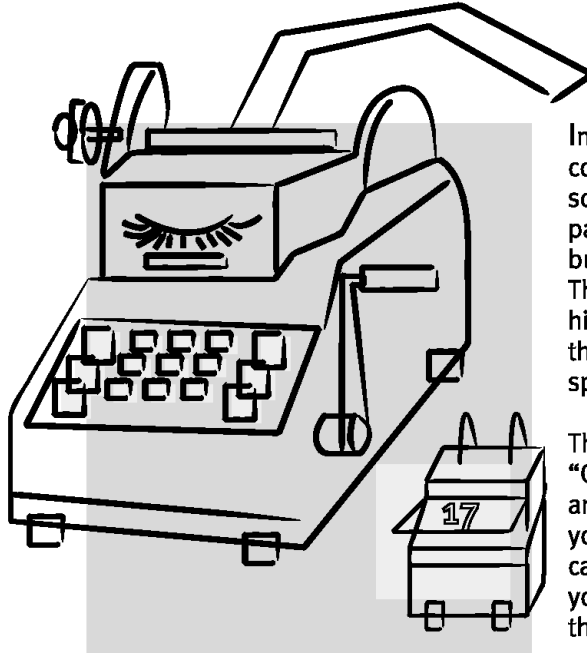
---

#### D. Quiet and Meditative

- What are the benefits of daily meditation?
- In the next week allocate some time each day to think and reflect - it could be as short as 15 minutes a day. Be sure to remove yourself to a quiet place where you can be alone. Think about what you did during the day and examine what things you can improve. Meditate upon a verse or passage in the Bible or God's presence in your life. As you develop this habit, notice the change that begins to take place.



# Turning the Other Cheek



In my last column I introduced the Six Habits, a collection of handwritten advice that my Dad scrawled on an 8.5x11-inch sheet of type-writer paper. While my title is a shameless rip-off of a business bestseller, the tips are uniquely Dad. They're nuggets of wisdom from a man who had a highly successful thirty-year career, and yet who at the same time took care of his family with love and spent much time in the service of God.

The first tip was about getting along with others: "One enemy would be too many. Be appreciative and congenial." But there are times, even when you're doing good and being the best person you can be, that people will still wrong you. What do you do then? Well, Dad covered this situation with the second tip on his list:

2) Never get mad. If someone is not nice to you, have a lot of patience. This is the time to practice being a good Christian. The moment you start doing work that involves dealing with other people, you'll have many wonderful opportunities to start making enemies. All of us have different backgrounds, different values, and different things that drive us. And when we aren't in complete agreement with others, discord usually sets in. Sometimes we handle it well, but inevitably we face situations where we have enemies. And before you say that a Christian shouldn't have enemies, consider that nearly every good person in the Bible, including Christ, had them.

## Human Strategies vs. Godly Solutions

I took a project-management class at my company once, and one of the topics was "Conflict Management." These classes have it down to the science; to deal with conflict, you "Compete, Avoid, Accommodate, Collaborate, or Compromise." You need to choose a conflict-management strategy based on the particular situation you're in, although there are positives and negatives to each approach. Every individual has patterns of motivation that cause him or her to interact with others: some combination of "altruistic-nurturing," "assertive-directing," or "analytical-autonomizing." These classes typically have a lot of catchy mnemonics and use lots of fancy, made-up words like "autonomizing," and "synergy."

And yet after classes, even though you can usually recognize the unhealthy interactions and behaviors that go on around the office, you still can't do anything about them. That's because, try as you might, human processes and strategies sometimes can't solve spiritual issues.

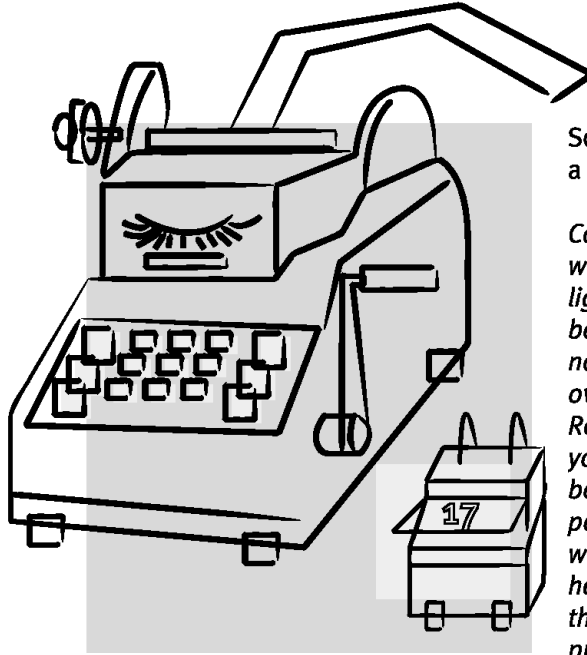
Paul gave this advice: "Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. 'if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.'" (Rom 12:17-21)

One of the key phrases in this passage is, "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you." You can't control what other people do, but you can control yourself. Keep a clear conscience.

Why? Read 1 Peter 3:16-17: "... So that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil." One of the best ways to defeat an enemy is to do good to him after he's going to great lengths to make your life difficult. In reality, it's nearly impossible for someone who doesn't believe in God to do this. In a world where God doesn't exist, the rule is survival of the fittest. If someone hurts you, you hurt that person back, taking special care to make sure that you hurt him more than he hurt you. If you don't exact revenge, others will perceive you as weak, and you'll lose credibility and power.



# Turning the Other Cheek



Someone with God in his or her heart, though, has a different perspective.

*Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act. He will bring forth your vindication as the light, and your right as the noonday. Be still before the LORD, and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over him who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices! Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil. For the wicked shall be cut off; but those who wait for the LORD shall possess the land. Yet a little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look well at his place, he will not be there. But the meek shall possess the land, and delight themselves in abundant prosperity. (Ps 37:5-11)*

## Dad's Tip – Put to the Test

Strangely enough, only a few months into my job, I had the opportunity to put Dad's second tip into action. Being an eager new employee, I went out of my way to help the company. I did my job to the fullest. On top of that, another project was under a deadline to be delivered, and since I had some expertise in that area, I stepped in and voluntarily gave up my own time to help do some work on that project.

There were rumors that the upper management was very impressed with my work. One day, one of the higher-uppers came in to our location, but I happened to be in a class that day. When I got out of the class, I found out that the colleague of mine who sat in the desk across from me was given –and accepted– the credit for the work I had done. And in all his discussions with the manager, my name was never even mentioned.

He was given a promotion, a nice job and his own office. To add insult to injury, the job he got was pretty much my dream job, one that I was uniquely qualified to do! And in the meantime, my own job became more and more tedious and thankless.

So I had a choice. I had every right to publicly accuse this person of taking credit for my work. I could have stormed into the boss' office and made a scene, and I would've been justified. Most of my colleagues knew full well what really happened, so I could have rounded them up as witnesses to accuse the one who took credit for my work. But I didn't.

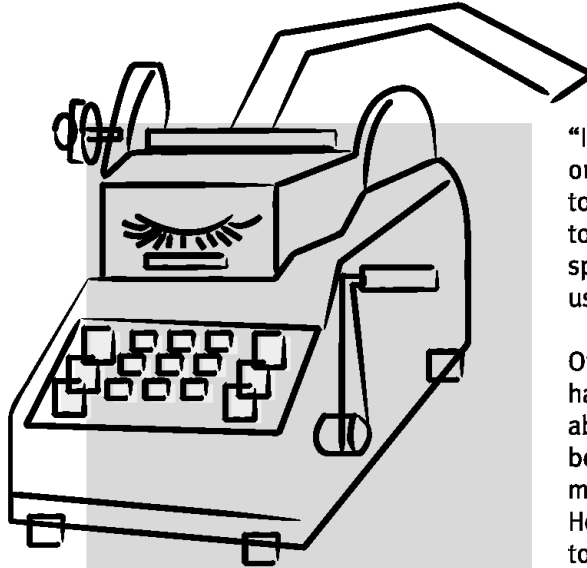
Now, I didn't just sit aback and just take it either. I wrote an e-mail to the manager who had promoted my colleague. It wasn't a scathing letter, nor did I accuse or complain. But, in a very Christian way, I told her objectively and professionally my feelings about what had transpired. And through it all, I took great pains to show respect –for this manager, for my colleague, and also for myself. Before I did that, of course, I prayed that God would give me the wisdom to be genuine.

As is my custom with this type of e-mail, I waited twenty-four hours, read it over again, and then sent it off. But I heard nothing back for months. It hurt. Bad. In my mind I tried to comfort myself by repeating over and over again the story of Isaac and the wells, which I've heard at so many Student Spiritual Convocations.

*But when Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found there a well of springing water, the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water is ours." So he called the name of the well Esek, because they contended with him. Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that also; so he called its name Sitnah. And he moved from there and dug another well, and over that they did not quarrel; so he called its name Rehoboth, saying, "For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." (Gen 26:19-22)*



# Turning the Other Cheek



“Isaac was a chump,” I’d grumble. Well, if you read on in that passage, you’ll find that Isaac went up to Beersheba that night, where the Lord appeared to him and reminded him of the blessing He had spoken to Abraham. The same blessing applies to us: “Do not be afraid, for I am with you.”

Of course I’m no Isaac, but a funny thing happened. A few months later, that manager was about to leave her job. But she did one last thing before she left; she gave me a call to tell me that my co-worker wasn’t working out in his new job. He was struggling and she regretted the decision to promote him. She asked if I would like the position, and I accepted. A little while later, the co-worker gave me a call. He acknowledged that I was the right person for the job. I ended up doing that job for a few years and doing it well.

[ *Six Habits of Really Effective Christians (Part 2), Manna Issue 32 July – Sep 2000, p.49.* ]

If I had ranted and raved back when the offense took place, I would have lost the respect of everyone. But the fact that I kept quiet, when everyone knew I had every right to rant and rave, showed character.

When the Pharisee came up to Jesus and tried to goad Him into saying something rash or losing His temper, He invariably replied with a soft answer. He had every right to shout and scream. He was accused of doing miracles through Beelzebub. He was accused of cavorting with “tax collectors and sinners.” He was accused of brazenly breaking the traditions of the elders and the Law. But each time, He chose to reply with patience and without resentment. And each time, the Pharisees were left speechless and frustrated.

In my few years at my company, this sort of thing happened to me several times. Each time, I responded with meekness. And each time, the person who wronged me ultimately ended up with egg on his face. Or, to use the Bible’s term, “burning coals”. Meekness is not the same as weakness. Mr. Webster defines meekness as “enduring injury with patience and without resentment”. It’s a choice – one that arises not out of a lack of one’s own power, but from an abundance of God’s power and complete trust that God is there and knows what He’s doing.

Paul’s advice in Romans 12:20, which he quotes from Proverbs 25:21-22 sums up what all the fancy corporate training courses could not; how to truly resolve a conflict. The next time you encounter a situation where you are slandered, misrepresented, or plain taken advantage of, try putting Dad’s advice to the test. Repay evil with love. Then sit back, and let the Lord do His work.



## Discussion:

- “Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth” (Mt 5:5). How can we marry society’s view of “standing up for yourself” with the Biblical view? Where do we draw the line?
- How can we cultivate this virtue in our daily lives?
- Which of these areas are you most likely to face conflicts - in the family, at school, with friends or the general public?
- Think of a situation where you were in conflict with others. How did you respond? What did you learn from the experience?





## Lot part 1

### 1. Lot follows Abraham

Lot's name means "envelope" or "covering". It is believed that Lot lost his father at a young age and it was Abraham, his uncle, who raised him. Lot followed Abraham wherever he went. He observed and learned from Abraham's many virtues. We need to learn from the experiences of our older generation, observe how God has worked in their lives and imitate their steadfast faith.

### 2. Lot departs from Abraham and settles in Sodom

As Abraham's and Lot's possessions and herds increased, there was discord between their herdsman. When Abraham asked Lot to select first from the land, Lot chose the more prosperous and populated valley areas, leaving Abraham with the less-populated hill country. Slowly Lot moved his tent closer and closer to Sodom. Lot's choice and behavior exemplifies the characteristics of the people of the world:

#### a. Seek for comfort and luxury

Lot's choice for the Jordan valley reflects his desire for comfort, prosperity and pleasures of the world. He based his decisions upon his own benefits and the physical life rather than the spiritual. Abraham however, set his mind on things above and considered God in every decision. Are our hearts facing God or Sodom?

#### b. Seek for success and power

Lot was sitting at the gates of Sodom. The gate was the focus of city life and a place of authority and status where one could see and be seen. Lot had made it. Over time, power, status and wealth entangled Lot and made him stay on in Sodom despite the sins of the city. Let us be watchful that we do not allow the achievements and things of the world to subtly draw us away from God.

#### c. Compromise with the world

Living in Sodom, Lot's faith became weak and he began to lose spiritual judgment and discernment. Many of his actions reflect the state of his faith:

- He had befriended the world (Js 4:4).
- Lot failed in bringing up his family in the Lord.
- Lot was willing to betroth his daughters to the wicked men of Sodom.
- Lot had lost his credibility as a witness of God.

#### d. Unrest and strife

When Lot, his family and all his possessions were captured by the four kings, Lot did not use this experience to reflect upon his life and faith and turn back to God. Today, the Lord uses brothers and sisters to come to our rescue to save us from further backsliding. We need to repent and depart from all unrighteousness.

#### e. Neglect the family's spiritual upbringing

Lot's pursuit of the pleasures of the world brought a tragic end to his family. His love of the world caused him to neglect his family's spiritual welfare and consequently they were individuals who did not know God. God does not want us to focus on making a name for ourselves in this world, but to train up godly children to glorify Him (Mal 2:15).

### 3. Lot flees from Sodom

The sins and wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah had reached such proportions that God resolved to destroy them. The very things that Lot desired and spent much of his life pursuing were destroyed and could not save him. Knowing that one day this world will be overthrown by fire, we need to use our time wisely and pursue for things that are imperishable.

### Questions:

- Compare Lot's and Abraham's outlook on life and how it reflects their choices.
- How are Lot's choices reflective of people of this world?
- Reflect on your own life and think how effective a witness you are.
- Knowing that the Last Day is near, how should we live our lives?
- Would it be difficult for you to remove yourself from company or environments that were not beneficial to your faith? Why?

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



## On Values

Our value system consists of all the things that we think is “right” or “wrong”. Through the course of time and varying experiences, whatever we believe is right, necessary, or important becomes part of our value system. Once our values are established, they will affect our decisions and actions. It will also reflect on how we live our lives, spend our money, use our time (including spare time) and our energy. It will also determine what thoughts and memories we hold on to and cherish. Let’s examine our own value system and see how it compares with a Christian’s value system.

### 1. From the list below, circle five things that you feel to be of value:

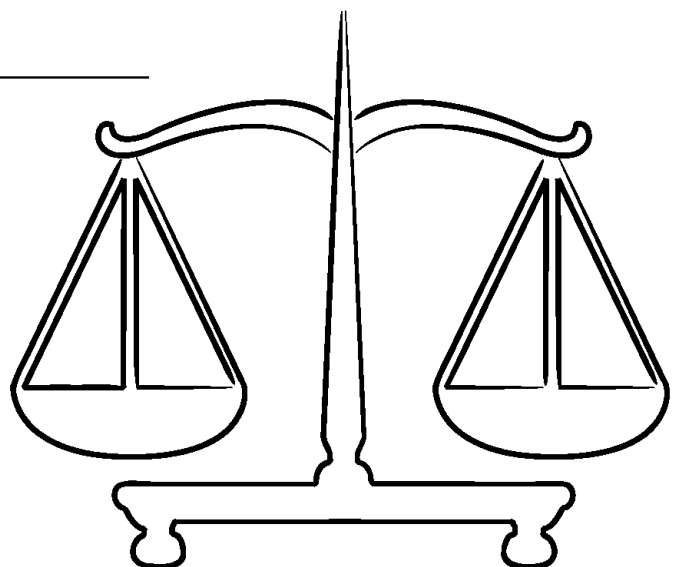
Money	Life
Acceptance from peers	Equality
High school diploma	Safety
Health	Self-conviction
Faith	Wisdom
Friends	Leadership qualities
Love	Doing holy work
Freedom	Independence

### 2. Which of the following things would you invest most of your time and energy on? (Please check one)

Clubs and organizations  
 Field trips  
 Youth fellowship in church  
 Homework  
 Exercise  
 Arts classes

### 3. If you had a lot of money how would you spend it? (List according to 1,2,3 preference)

A car  
 Food  
 Clothes/ make-up  
 In helping the church and others  
 Entertainment such as books, magazines, videos, games  
 Music  
 Vacations  
 Others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_







## On Values

4. Life consists of many aspects. Below is just a selection. Where would you place most of your time, money and energy?  
(List according to 1,2,3 preference)



### Discussion: ...

In many instances, the Bible does not give us specific details concerning how we should live our lives and the choices we should make. However, the Bible does provide us with principles and values a follower of Christ should adhere to.

Look up the following Bible verses to learn how a true disciple of Christ should live his life.

- **Philippians 3:7-8**
- **Acts 20:24**
- **Hebrews 11:25-26**
- **1 Peter 1:7**
- **Matthew 6:19-21**
- **2 Corinthians 6:14**
- **Thessalonians 4:3-4**
- **1 Peter 3:3-4**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Entertainment
- \_\_\_\_\_ Faith
- \_\_\_\_\_ Education
- \_\_\_\_\_ Family
- \_\_\_\_\_ Friendships
- \_\_\_\_\_ Love
- \_\_\_\_\_ Career

5. If you were choosing a marriage partner, which criteria would be most important to you?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Faith
- \_\_\_\_\_ Appearance
- \_\_\_\_\_ Job
- \_\_\_\_\_ Education
- \_\_\_\_\_ Character/personality
- \_\_\_\_\_ Interests
- \_\_\_\_\_ Life goals

6. In selecting a college major, what things will influence your decision most?

- \_\_\_\_\_ It's something I am interested in
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am guaranteed a good job and good pay in future
- \_\_\_\_\_ It's something that I can use to serve God and utilize the gifts that God has given me
- \_\_\_\_\_ It gives me the opportunity to be most creative
- \_\_\_\_\_ It's what my parents want me to do
- \_\_\_\_\_ Others (please specify)

7. In shopping for clothes, what things would you look for?  
(List according to 1,2,3 preference)

- \_\_\_\_\_ The brand name
- \_\_\_\_\_ Good quality
- \_\_\_\_\_ In fashion
- \_\_\_\_\_ Practicality
- \_\_\_\_\_ Within my budget
- \_\_\_\_\_ Style

### Conclusion:

Paul says in Romans 14:8, "If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's."

Our lives are transient. As Christians we should not be like Lot who vainly invested his time and effort in the world. Rather, we need to invest this limited time on earth to pursue eternal life and blessings.





Once upon a pew I sat  
And heard the preacher ask,  
"We need someone to teach a class,  
Now who will take this task?"

Then God sat down beside me there  
And said, "Son, that's for you."  
But, Lord, to stand before a class  
is one thing I can't do.

Now Brother Forbes would be the man to call,  
There's nothing he won't do.  
I'd rather hear the lesson taught  
From here upon my pew.

Once upon a pew I sat  
And heard the preacher ask,  
"We need someone to lead the songs,  
Now who will take this task?"

Then God sat down beside me there  
And said, "Son, that's for you."  
But Lord, to sing before a crowd  
Is one thing I can't do.

Now Sister Jenkins will do the job,  
There's nothing she won't do.  
I'd rather hear the music played  
From here upon my pew.

Once upon a pew I sat  
And heard the preacher ask,  
"I need someone to keep the door,  
Now who will take the task?"

Then God sat down beside me there  
And said, "Son, that's for you."  
Saying things to strangers, Lord,  
Is one thing I can't do.

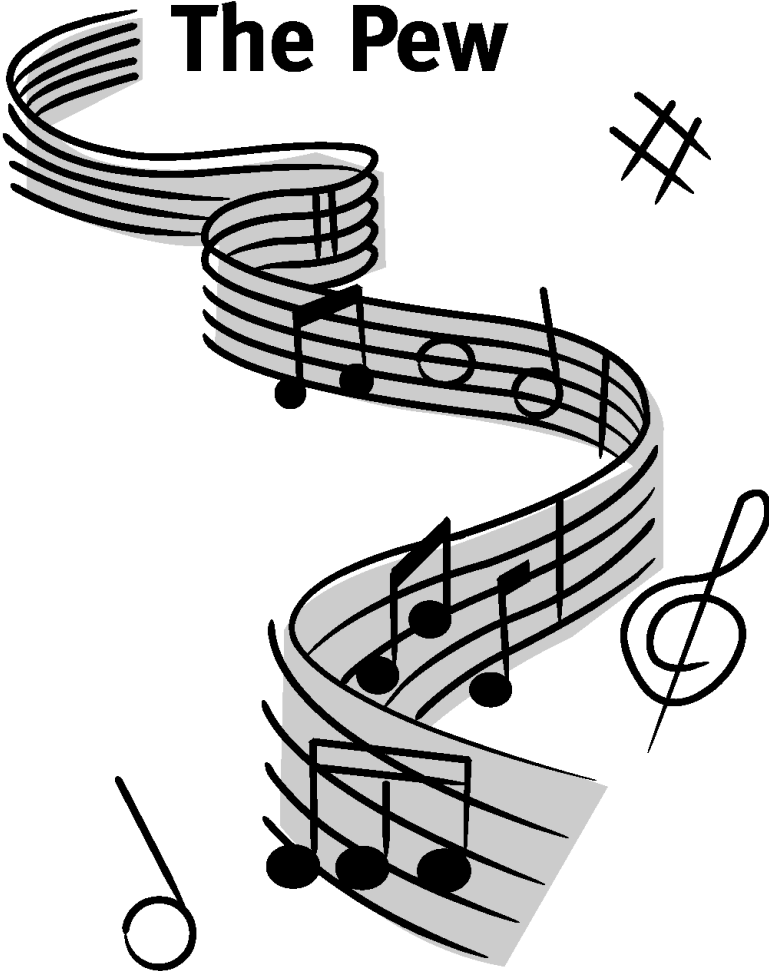
Now Brother Neal can talk to people, Lord,  
There's nothing he won't do  
I'd rather someone come to me  
And greet me on the pew.

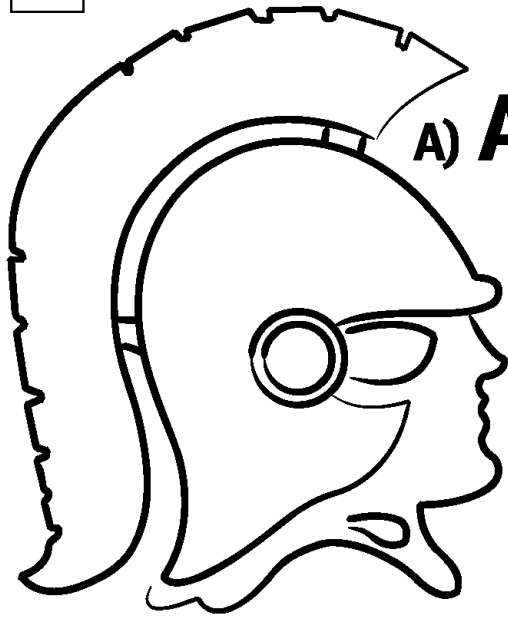
As years just seemed to pass me by,  
I heard that voice no more.  
Until one night I closed my eyes  
And woke on heaven's shore.

There were four of us together there  
To face eternity.  
God said, "I need just three of you  
To do a job for me."

"O Lord," I cried, "I'll do the job,  
There's nothing I won't do."  
But Jesus said, "I'm sorry, Friend,  
In heaven there is no pew."

## The Pew





## A) Apollos

### part 1

#### 1. Apollos was zealous for the word

How did Apollos demonstrate his zeal for the truth?

##### a. Preached the word

Apollos demonstrated his zeal for the truth by speaking and teaching about the Lord Jesus. While it is important to equip ourselves with the truth, it is our duty to share with others the complete gospel and God's wonders in our lives. We do not need to be an expert in the Bible before we preach. All it takes is zeal, faith and love.

##### b. Defended the truth

Apollos was well versed in the Scriptures and because of this he was able to powerfully confuse the Jews through the Scriptures. In this day and age, heresies and false teachings abound. They serve to lead people away from the truth. To defend the truth, we need to be well grounded in the word of God in order to identify, confront and eradicate false teachings and teachers.

##### c. Obeyed the truth

There are many people in other denominations and religions who serve God fervently, love God deeply, and are very zealous for the word of God. Despite such efforts and sincerity they have an incomplete understanding of the true gospel. Salvation is only for those who believe and obey the word of God and is not obtained through our own righteousness.

#### 2. He learned with humility

Although Aquila and Priscilla were tentmakers and were not of high standing, Apollos did not scorn them. When he realized his insufficiency, he immediately accepted what they said and became obedient to the truth. We should not allow worldly wisdom and knowledge to become obstacles to receiving the truth. Sometimes, it could be through the most unlikely people that God speaks to us.

#### 3. Apollos was fervent in spirit

Apollos comes through as a very active and dynamic worker. Such proactiveness is inspired from a fervent faith. To rekindle our love and zeal for God, we have to eat God's word and drink the spiritual water, which is the Holy Spirit.

#### 4. Apollos utilized his gifts

With the education and gifts that he possessed, Apollos contributed greatly to the holy work. No matter what kind of skills we have, we can employ them for the benefit of the Lord. What seems trivial to us is actually necessary to build up the body of Christ.

*Apollos was a Jew, a native of Alexandria. Apollos was an important worker in the early church. Besides his eloquence and special gifts in pastoring the church, Apollos is noted for his meekness, willingness to accept correction, zeal and spirit of service.*



#### Questions:

- 1 How did Apollos demonstrate his zeal for God's word?
  - In the last days false teachers will arise even in the True Church. How can we identify who they are?
  - Why is it important to contend for the truth?
- 2 Why is it difficult for people with pride to accept the truth?
  - If you were Apollos, how would you have responded if you were corrected by people who were inferior to you in learning and social standing?
- 3 Throughout our lives, we go through spiritual peaks and valleys. What do you do when you are at a spiritual low?
  - Share an experience where you were fired up by the Spirit of God.
  - Suggest ways how can we maintain a fervent faith.
- 4 How have we utilized the gifts we have received to serve God?
  - What are our reasons for receiving an education?



# A Life of Service

*While it is important to serve God, correct attitudes and motives are essential to determine whether our service is acceptable in God's sight. How pitiful it would be to dedicate our lives in service yet none of it is recognized by God. To God, the condition of the heart is most important. Read the following case studies and identify some of the common misconceptions and faults we have when serving God.*

## Case 1:

Annie had brought two of her friends from college to attend Friday night service. After service, while the pastor was talking to her friends, Annie went to get some refreshments. Seeing that Annie's hands were full, Sarah took the initiative to help. Annie however, replied curtly, "I will take care of them myself" and took the drinks from Sarah's hands. Sarah was stunned by Annie's reaction. Identify Annie's weakness and suggest how we can prevent this from happening in our service to God.

## Case 2:

Linda's family recently moved to the area because of her father's job. Linda was excited about getting to know the brothers and sisters in the church. Soon she begins to take notice of Tom, who is an active and outstanding brother in the church. She joins the Bible studies and youth activities as a means to know Tom better. Some of the youths in the group have noticed this and are unsure of whether to assign her tasks because of this. Why is Linda's motive for doing church work wrong? What are some of the wrong motives that we may have for doing church work? What should we do when we find that our motives are wrong?

## Case 3:

Vera has been asked to lead Bible study. Each time, Vera has refused because she feels incapable. Vera feels she would not be able to match up to the standards of the other Bible study leaders. How can we help Vera have the correct concept? Have we declined to do holy work for this reason before?

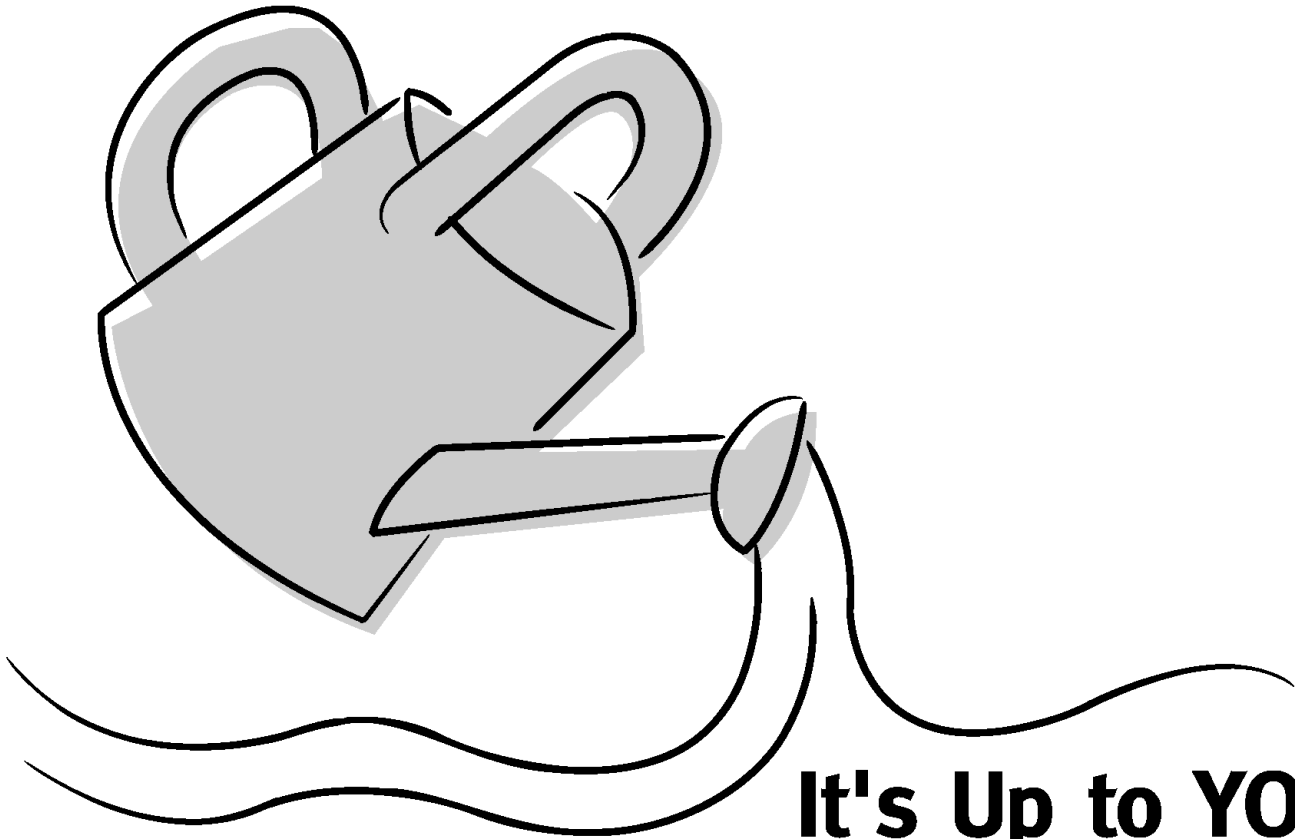
## Case 4:

Rob was the class leader for the Junior 1 class. During lunchtime, he reminded Sam, a fellow teacher, that he was teaching that afternoon. Sam shook his head and said it was not his turn. Rob asked if he had checked the schedule which he had given to Sam a while back. Sam said that he had lost it. This has not been the first time Sam lost the schedule. Rob is frustrated and annoyed at Sam's attitude. Now Rob has to go and teach instead. Sam on the other hand feels compelled to teach because there are not enough teachers but he feels he doesn't work well with kids. Have you experienced similar conflicting feelings as Sam? How did you deal with it?

## Case 5:

Mandy has been a member of the choir for some time. She sings in the alto section. One thing she's noticed, however, is that whenever solo parts come up, it's always given to the same people. She feels that if given the chance she could do just as well. In fact, she's noticed that the things she is assigned to do in church are menial tasks. As the youth counselor, help Mandy solve her problem and suggest ways to help her.





## It's Up to YOU

One song can spark a moment  
One flower can wake the dream  
One tree can start a forest  
One bird can herald spring  
One smile begins a friendship  
One handclasp lifts a soul  
One star can guide a ship at sea  
One word can frame the goal  
One vote can change a nation  
One sunbeam lights a room.  
One candle wipes out darkness,  
One laugh will conquer gloom  
One step must start each journey  
One word must start each prayer  
One hope will raise our spirits,  
One touch can show you care  
One voice can speak with wisdom  
One heart can know what's true  
One life can make the difference  
You see, it's up to you!

*By Catherine Manceaux*

part 1

1. He resolved to learn the word of God

Although Ezra was born in Babylon during the captivity, he held onto his faith and developed godly qualities and virtues. Ezra did not assimilate into the culture and practices of the land. Rather, he resolved to study the words of God and continued to have faith in God and His promises, even when God's law no longer seemed relevant.

2. He resolved to perform the word of God

Ezra not only studied the word of God, he resolved to do it. True understanding of the word of God involves putting it in practice and experiencing it (Jn 7:17). To truly benefit from God's words we need to listen with the intention of practicing it in our lives.

3. He resolved to teach the law of God in Israel

Ezra recognized that God sent the Israelites into captivity because they did not follow His laws. To prevent the people from committing the same sin, he resolved to study the law and to educate his people. Let us find out where the breach is in our lives and church and take the initiative to do something about it.



Questions: .....

- 1 How did Ezra manifest his faith?
  - What was Ezra's attitude towards learning the laws of God?
  
- 2 Why is it that God blesses the doers of the word of God and not just the listeners?
  - Have you ever done something purely because you wanted to obey God's word even though you did not feel like it? What were your thoughts?
  
- 3 What resolutions did Ezra make?
  - What resolutions have you made in your faith?
  - When there is a need in the church, are you most likely to jump up and volunteer your services, wait to be drafted or hide in the woodwork?

Check for Understanding

# A) Ezra's Resolutions

*Ezra was a man who had a great determination to help his people in their darkest and desolate time. Ezra's name means "help" or "my helper". He was from a priestly lineage and was also a scribe skilled in the Law of Moses. Ezra was born in Babylon at a time when the kingdom of Judah had been destroyed for a long time. Although brought up in a foreign land, Ezra provides for us many valuable lessons on how to preserve our faith and do extraordinary works for God.*



**Questions:**

1 If you are a RE leader, choirmaster, or a youth leader of some sort, reflect on how you have led others. Do you lead others to God?

3 When Ezra discovered that there were no Levites among the returning group, he told men to encourage them in the work. What lessons can we learn from Ezra regarding those who are not eager to do God's work?

- Why was Ezra so meticulous in counting the temple treasures?

4 What makes Ezra a good spiritual leader?

- Is there anything in our lives that causes us to sin?
- Are there any character traits or weaknesses in us that separate us from God?
- What steps do we need to take to actively remove the root of these problems?
- How do you respond to problems in the church – do you tackle difficult issues head on or do you avoid confrontation and ignore the problem?

Check for Understanding

## part 2

**1. Led the people back to the homeland**

Those who were to return to Israel with Ezra were about 1,754 people. To prepare for the long and dangerous journey, Ezra not only made physical preparations but spiritual preparations too. Ezra did not rely on the help of men, but led the people to beseech the help of God through fasting and praying.

**2. Summoned all the Levites**

Not long into their journey, Ezra discovered that no Levites were among the group. These men were important to the service of God, yet they were unwilling to go when their services were needed. Ezra therefore sent men to encourage the Levites to join them.

**3. Publicly calculated the temple treasures**

Ezra appointed twelve of the leading priests to make an inventory of all the treasures that were to be brought back to Jerusalem. Why did Ezra go into such detail in counting the temple treasures?

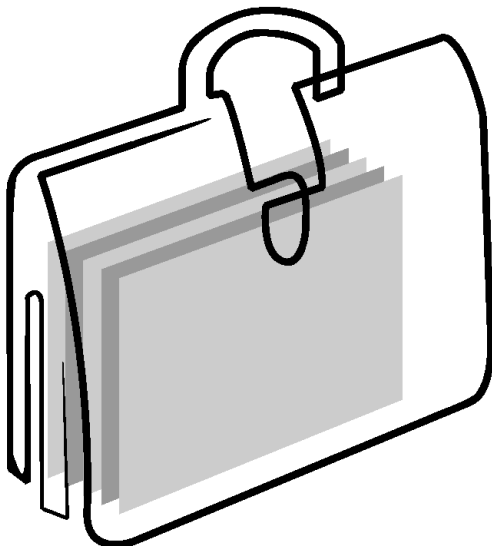
- By counting the vessels, Ezra was making a distinct separation from things that were God's and things that were not.
- Ezra teaches us to be meticulous when doing church work. We need to be accountable for whatever God has entrusted to us.
- By giving a clear account of all the treasures, Ezra wanted to prevent future misunderstandings.

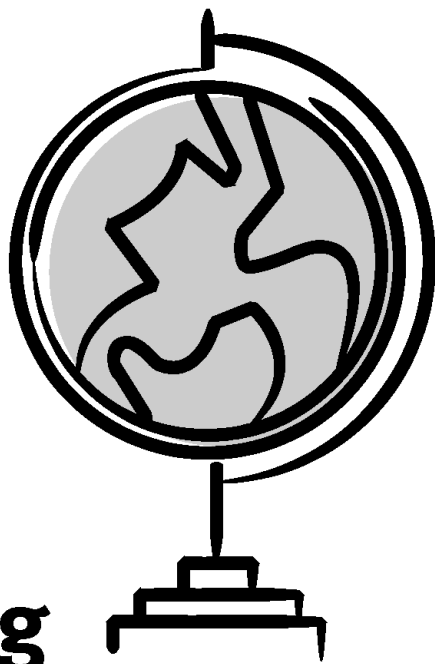
**4. He restored the faith of the Israelites**

When Ezra arrived in the holy city, he was greatly grieved to learn that the people of Israel had not kept themselves separate from the peoples of the land, but had intermarried with them. How did Ezra deal with the sins of the people?

- Deeply grieved, Ezra fasted and prayed (Ez 9:3-15). He identified himself amongst the offenders.
- Ezra was very sensitive to sin. Ezra viewed their sins as a serious violation against God. He did not compromise with sin, but removed the cause of sin courageously.

## A) Ezra's Work





# Making a Difference

*When I was a young man, I wanted to change the world.  
 I found it was difficult to change the world,  
 so I tried to change my nation  
 When I found that I couldn't change the nation,  
 I began to focus on my town  
 I couldn't change the town and as an older man,  
 I tried to change my family.  
 Now, as an old man,  
 I realize the only thing I can change is myself  
 And suddenly I realize that if long ago I had changed myself,  
 I could have made an impact on my family  
 My family and I could have made an impact on our town.  
 Their impact could have changed the nation and  
 I could indeed have changed the world.*

*Unknown Monk*

**O**ur lives are short. It is commonly believed that the most meaningful life is one in which after we have departed from the world, we can say we have helped to make the world a better place. Many of us may have dreams and ideals to change the things around us or achieve great things for God. But making a difference in our lives and in the lives of others does not happen immediately, or involve a big gigantic leap. Rather, changes most often occur over a span of time consisting of many little steps. Today we learned that Ezra's resolutions greatly impacted the faith of the Israelite nation and prevented them from heading for another spiritual decline. But Ezra was given a chance to make a difference starting with himself. He resolved to find out about God's will in his life. He resolved to study and learn God's word, to practice it and then to teach others.

In the following exercise, reflect on the various areas of your life and character that you need to improve on. Be honest with yourself and get into the nooks and crannies. Often we tend to neglect the small things, but it is these very things that may hinder our progress in faith. For example, we may be a person who flares up easily. Think of the reasons why we get so hot-tempered. What are the things that cause us to flare up? Have we done anything about it? What does the bible say? How are we going to apply those teachings in our daily life so that we actively remove it?

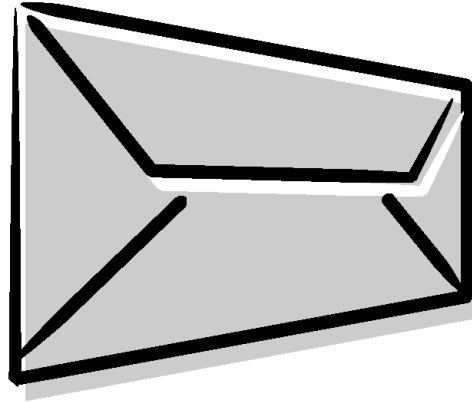
If we continue to examine ourselves in this way and apply the words of God in our daily lives, we will surely see a change in ourselves and the people around us.

Things I need to change	What does the bible say about this?	How am I going to put it into practice?	How am I going to teach others?





# Dear Friend,



**H**ow are you? I just had to send you a note to tell you how much I care about you. I saw you yesterday as you were talking with friends. I waited all day, hoping you would want to talk with me too.

I gave you a delightful sunset to close your day, and to rest you... I waited, but you never talked to me. It hurt me, but I still love you because you are my friend. I saw you sleeping last night and longed to touch your brow, so I spilled moonlight upon your face. Again I waited, wanting to rush down so we could talk. I have so many gifts for you! I love you!

You awoke and rushed off to your daily activities. My tears were in the rain. If you would only listen to me! I love you! I try to tell you in the deep blue sky and in the stillness of the night. I whisper my love to you in the quietness of the silent snow, shout it in the mountain streams. I give the birds songs to sing to you. I clothe you in fresh, clean air filled with the scents of nature.

My love for you is deeper than the ocean and bigger than the deepest need in your heart! Ask me! Talk with me! Please don't forget me! I have so much to share with you! I won't bother you any further. It is your decision. I have chosen you and I will wait. I love you.

Your friend,  
Jesus

*Lydia was converted when Paul visited Macedonia during his second missionary journey. On the Sabbath while preaching by the riverside God worked with Paul and moved Lydia to accept the truth, making her the first believer in Europe. Because of Lydia's good example, the church in Philippi became an exemplary church in Macedonia. Today, Lydia's virtues can be an example for all.*



**A. Daily Life**

1. Lydia was very diligent  
Lydia was from the city of Thyatira and was a seller of purple goods, a valuable and expensive material often worn by the nobility or royalty. Lydia also had a family. She was not an idle woman, but fulfilled her duties by working to support the family.

**B. Spiritual Life**

1. Lydia was a fervent worshipper of God  
Lydia was a God-fearing person who prayed and attended services regularly. In spite of all her secular obligations, Lydia was able to balance out her career and spiritual life. Because Lydia was willing to put aside her work, God occasioned an opportunity for her to listen to the gospel. No matter how busy we are, we should put aside our work to attend services.

2. She observed the Sabbath  
On the Sabbath, Lydia went to the place of prayer by the riverside to pray and listen to God's law. Lydia recognized the importance of the Sabbath as God's holy day and a day of rest from her worldly labors.

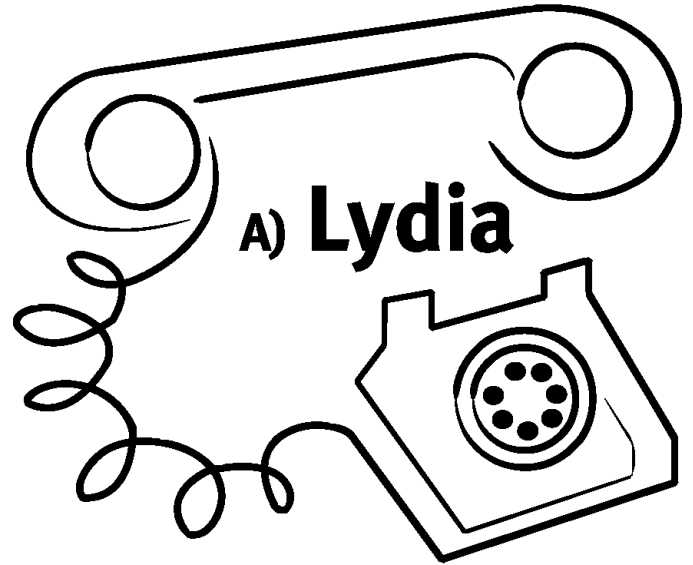
3. She opened her heart to give heed to the word of God  
Out of all the woman who had gathered at the meeting place, Lydia was the only person who received the truth. What made her different from the rest of the women who had gathered? Lydia attended services with a reverent heart and God opened her heart to understand the message. What is our attitude when we attend services?

**C. Life of Service**

1. She led her entire family to the Lord  
After Lydia understood the truth, she shared it with her family so that she and her household were baptized. Do we still have family members who are not yet believers? We need to pray for them and inspire them through our good faith and conduct.

2. She welcomed visitors  
After her baptism, Lydia beseeched Paul and those with him to stay at her home. The Lord promises that by receiving others we will not lose out on our reward even if we offer something as minute as a cup of cold water. Jesus particularly mentions receiving those who live by and preach the word of God. By receiving them we are supporting and participating in the divine ministry.

3. She used her wealth for the Lord  
Lydia used her business and all her possessions to help God's servants in their ministry. God desires that we be good managers of the material possessions He has entrusted to us.



**Questions:**

- C1** Do we have non-believing family members?
  - What have we done to bring them to the Lord?
  - What challenges are there in bringing our family members to church compared to binging non-family members?

---



---



---

- C3** What kind of jobs can women take on in the church?
  - What is the bible's teaching on showing hospitality?
  - How have we utilized the wealth, talents, and wisdom that God has bestowed upon us?

---

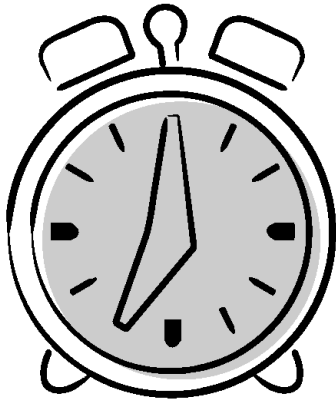


---



---

Check for Understanding



# Time Management

*From our lesson today, we learned that although Lydia was a busy career woman with responsibilities towards her family and her business, she was able to maintain a close relationship with God and supported the ministry.*

*Today we all lead very busy lives. The most common complaint is that there is not enough time to fit everything in, let alone pray and read the Bible. However, each day, God hands us 24 hours to live life to the fullest. That's 1,440 minutes. How we manage and prioritize our time is up to us but the outcomes are drastically different. Some people can spend more than an hour a day dressing and grooming, but can't find a small amount of time to spend with God. Some can spend hours in front of the television, but, spend no time with God. But how we invest our time will be what we get in return. The results of spending time with God each day are a meaningful and abundant life on earth as well as a future eternal life. Thus in Ephesians 5:15-17, apostle Paul reminds us to "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil" (Eph 5:15-17).*

Follow the steps in the exercise below, and then discuss the questions listed.

**Instructions:**

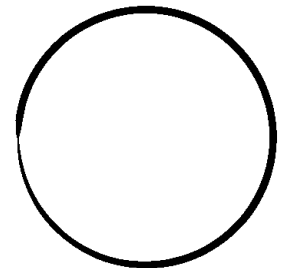
1. Fill in your typical weekly schedule (See Appendix - Version A)
2. Categorize the time spent into the 6 major categories (to the nearest hour or 15 minutes, see categories below)
3. Rank the 6 categories and calculate the percentage by category
4. Fill in the time pie using the calculated percentage
5. Set a goal in terms of how much time (in percentages) you would like to dedicate to God
6. Based on your newly-identified goal, fill in what your weekly schedule would be like with the improvement (See Appendix - Version B).
7. Put/post up your Version B schedule at some place very visible (such as on your computer, on your mirror, in your organizer/notebook) for a few weeks to remind yourself of the change you need to make.

**Time Pie Analysis**

**Categories:**

1. Sleep & Daily Living Routine
2. School & Studying
3. Work
4. Church, Cultivation & Holy Work
5. Leisure
6. Other

Rank	Categories	Hours	Percentages
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
Total			



**Discussion:**

- From the exercise, what did you discover about the way you use your time? (Students will probably find that they normally spend less than 10% of their time on or for God and the rest of the time on themselves. If we are to apply the concept of offering tithes to our time, we should all aim to dedicate at least 10% of our time for God's use).
- How does your time management reflect your priorities in life?
- Why is it difficult for most people to have a consistent time with God each day?
- Suggest some ways that can ensure quality time with God.  
(Do not let excuses or interruptions dictate your time with God. Set aside a specific time where you can give your fullest attention. Find a quiet place without interruptions. Determine what you hope to accomplish).



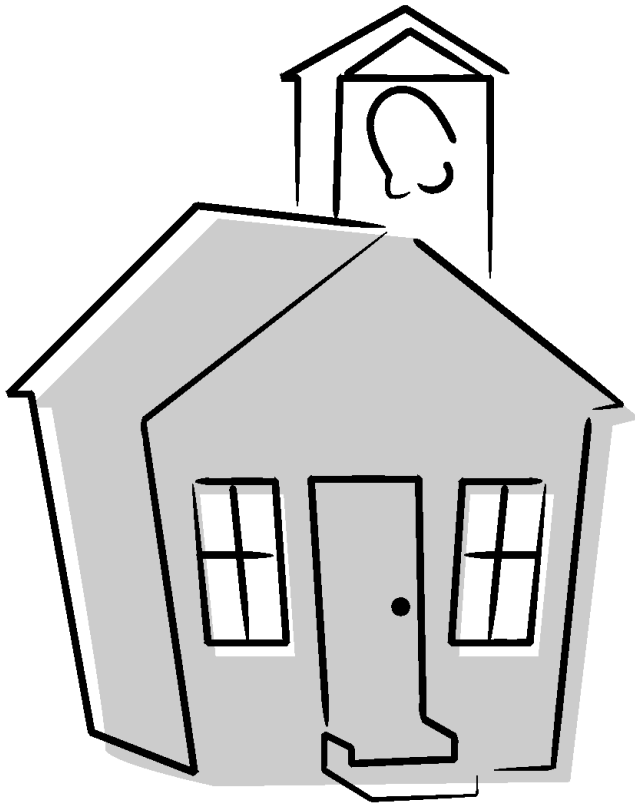
**Appendix:  
Weekly Schedule For Version A**

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
12:00AM							
1:00 AM							
2:00 AM							
3:00 AM							
4:00 AM							
5:00 AM							
6:00 AM							
7:00 AM							
8:00 AM							
9:00 AM							
10:00AM							
11:00AM							
12:00PM							
1:00 PM							
2:00 PM							
3:00 PM							
4:00 PM							
5:00 PM							
6:00 PM							
7:00 PM							
8:00 PM							
9:00 PM							
10:00PM							
11:00PM							



Appendix:  
Weekly Schedule For Version B

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
12:00AM							
1:00 AM							
2:00 AM							
3:00 AM							
4:00 AM							
5:00 AM							
6:00 AM							
7:00 AM							
8:00 AM							
9:00 AM							
10:00AM							
11:00AM							
12:00PM							
1:00 PM							
2:00 PM							
3:00 PM							
4:00 PM							
5:00 PM							
6:00 PM							
7:00 PM							
8:00 PM							
9:00 PM							
10:00PM							
11:00PM							



## A) The Failure of Eli

*Eli means "Jehovah is high" or "My God". Eli belonged to the tribe of Levi and for years he acted as a judge and high priest in Israel. Despite his good beginning, his life ended in ignominy. In old age, Eli was supposed to receive his reward for his many years of service, but he received a curse instead. His tragic end and weaknesses in character serve as warnings for us today.*

### part 1

#### A. The failure of Eli

##### a. Spiritual eyesight dimmed

Not only did Eli age physically, he had allowed himself to age spiritually too. Although Eli was a priest and a judge, he lacked spiritual discernment. We cannot allow ourselves to disintegrate spiritually in our faith but we must pursue for renewal each day.

##### b. Eli's heart was distant from God

Although Eli was the priest, God did not reveal Himself to him as Eli's heart had drifted far from God. God spoke to the boy Samuel instead. God will abide with us and speak to us through His Spirit and His words only when we obey His will and draw close to Him.

#### B. Eli failed as a priest

##### a. Allowed the priesthood to fall into disrepute

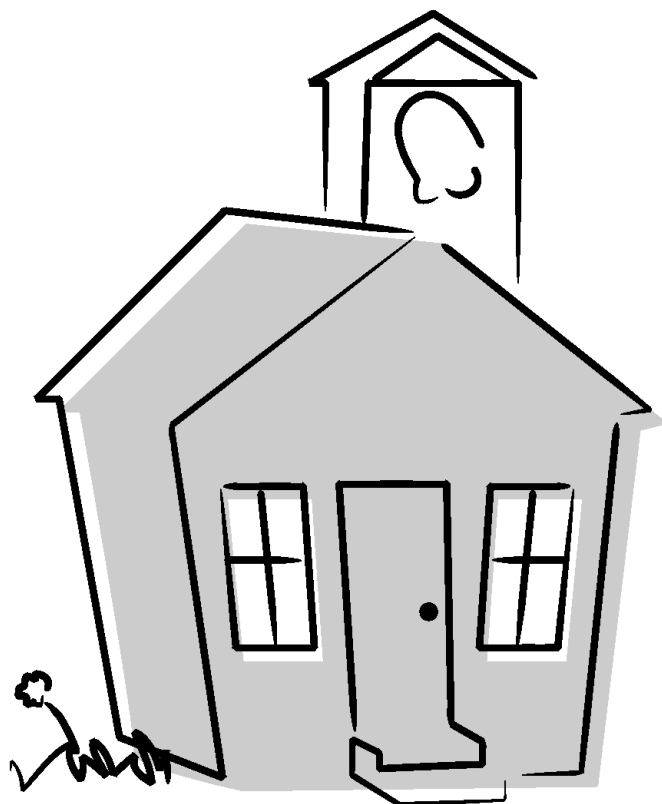
Although God had especially chosen Eli to serve Him, Eli did not live up to his role. As a priest, he had the responsibility to instruct the people concerning fearing God and how to behave in the temple. However, Eli failed to establish any respect for the priesthood and instead allowed sin and corruption to dwell within.

##### b. Did not set his heart right before God

Although Eli had served many years as a priest, his heart was not right before God. Eli misused his authority and status to "fatten himself". He appeared to be godly and devout, but inside he was full of selfish gain. We are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation (1 Pet 2:9); therefore, we have to set our hearts right before God. Otherwise our service will be meaningless and we will be rejected by God.

##### c. Did not choose a good successor

Although Eli's two sons were priests, they were corrupt men who had no regard for the Lord. Eli did not train or appoint good successors. God therefore appointed the young Samuel as the prophet of the Lord instead. As the future pillars and workers of the church, we should recognize the responsibility that will be placed upon us and prepare ourselves to receive the baton for the glory of God.



part 1

C. Eli failed as a parent

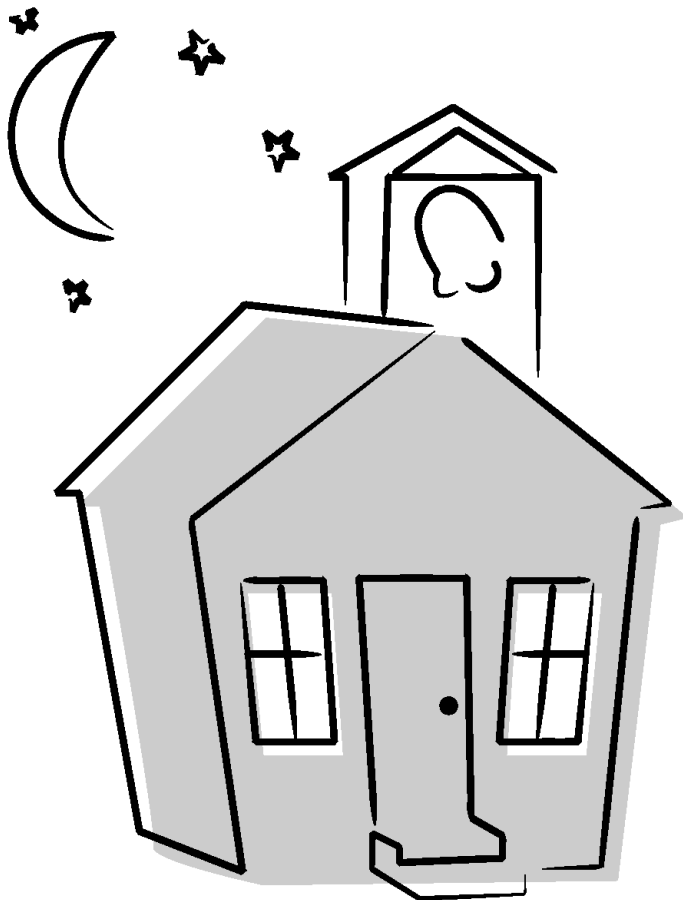
1. Eli's sons showed contempt towards God  
Eli's two sons were raised in a priestly family, and yet their conduct was worse than gentiles.
  - a. Hophni and Phinehas failed in their priestly duties.
  - b. They treated the offering of the Lord with contempt (1 Sam 2:13-17; Mal 1:7-8).
    - They did not follow the custom of the law in taking the meat (Lev 7:31-34; Deut 18:3-5). They took more meat than was due to them.
    - According to the law, the fat was considered the best part of the animal and was to be offered to God but Eli's sons robbed God of the best.
    - They would demand meat, and when refused, they took it by force (1 Sam 2:16).
  - c. They laid with the women who served at the entrance of the tent of meeting.
2. Eli failed to take severe disciplinary measures  
Even though Eli knew of his son's wicked deeds, he failed to take severe measures to punish them or stop them from serving God. Eli thought only of his sons but not of God or His people.
3. Eli loved his sons more than God (2:29)  
Eli was twice warned that judgment would overtake him and his sons, but he would not take action against them because he dearly loved his sons. Eli was not willing to stand up for the truth and he had become ineffective as a parent as well as a priest. As a result God took the necessary disciplinary action that Eli would not.

# A) The Failure of Eli

✓ Questions:

Check for Understanding

- A One of the common weakness among believers is that the longer we believe in God, the less dynamic our faith becomes. How can we counteract "spiritual aging"?
  - How does the faith of Eli and Samuel differ?
  - How can we gauge ourselves to ensure a close relationship with God?
- B How did Eli fail as a priest?
  - From Eli's example what insights can be drawn concerning spiritual cultivation and service?
  - When Eli saw corruption and sin infiltrating the temple, he did not do anything about it. What should we do if we see sin and weakness among the brothers and sisters we know?
  - How have you prepared yourself to receive the baton as future pillars of the church?
- C What sins did Eli's sons commit?
  - How did Eli fail in disciplining his sons?
  - What is the difference between spoiling our children and loving our children?



part 2

A. The consequences of their failure

1. Affected the people of God  
Eli's passivity and his sons' wicked deeds caused the people to despise the priesthood and to lose faith and hope in God. All kinds of irreverent activities such as drunkenness and sexual immorality pervaded, and the word of God was rare so the people did not experience the power and presence of God.

2. Eli's family was cursed  
Because of their sins, God sent a prophet to pronounce judgment upon Eli and his house.

1. There shall not be an old man in his house forever (2:31-33). All will die early.
2. Both his two sons will die on the same day (2:34)
3. Eli's family line will lose the priesthood (2:36)
4. God will punish Eli's house forever because his sons were blaspheming God and Eli did not restrain them (3:13)
5. Sins will never be forgiven by sacrifice or offering (3:14)

3. The kingdom of God is shamed  
Because of the failed priesthood, the sins of the people increased. They disregarded God and went their own way. A Christian's conduct not only affects him or her personally, but also the glory of the church and God's kingdom.

# B) Eli Failed as a Parent

✓ Questions:

- 3 Do any of our words or actions affect the faith of others?
  - Share an experience where your actions negatively affected others. What did you learn from that experience?
  - Do our speech and conduct enable others to see Jesus in us?
  - Do godly parents always produce godly children? Explain.

---



---



---



---



---



---

Check for Understanding





From our study today, we have learned that Eli was not altogether a bad or wicked person. In fact he comes across as a very mild priest. Eli's weakness was his growing complacency and lack of sensitivity to sin. Although he was a judge, he could not discern between right and wrong and he valued familial relationships more than God and His people.

Eli is a good reminder for us, especially as the Day of the Lord draws near, to examine the condition of our faith. Most of us were baptized as infants. Over the years, we have come with our parents to attend services and RE classes. We are well acquainted with many of the biblical stories and characters and are well-grounded in our church doctrines and teachings. Despite all this, however, we need to ask ourselves, "Do I truly know and believe in God?" In 2 Corinthians 13:5, Paul exhorts the believers to "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are holding to your faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you? --unless indeed you fail to meet the test."



## Know the Condition of Our Faith

In the following survey, check the box or circle the answer that most applies to you. As you evaluate yourself, look at yourself objectively and honestly. Try to see yourself as you are now and not what you hope to be in the future. Sometimes seeing ourselves and discovering our faults and weaknesses is a hard process. And there are times we don't like to face the truth. But by seeing ourselves clearly we can make improvements and turn back to God and be healed (Is 6:10).

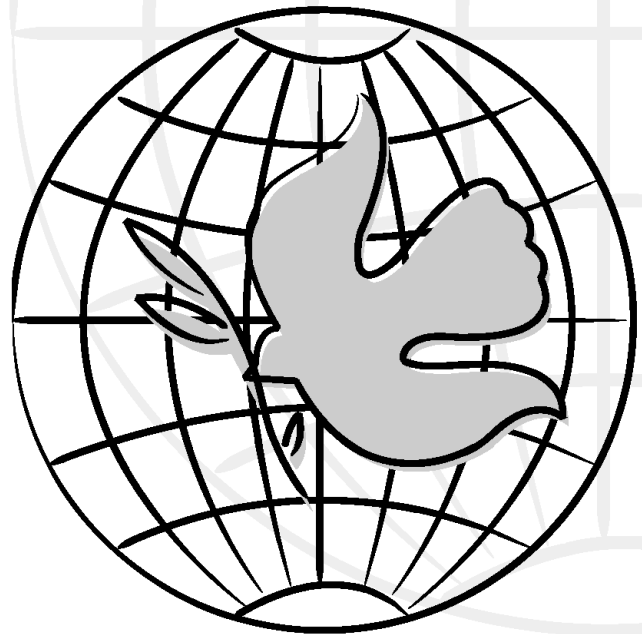
**Questions:**

Check one of the following:

1.
  - I am a bro/sis
  - I am in high school / college / working
  - My entire family are believers / my parents are non-believers/I am the only believer / others
2. On average I have attended services (not including RE classes) at least ..... throughout the entire year
  - 0 times
  - Once a month
  - Twice a month
  - Three times a month
  - More than 4 times a month
3. I attend church services because .....
  - I want to listen to the truth
  - I want to catch up with friends
  - My parents insist that I go
  - It's a habit
  - Others (please specify)
4. The reasons why I do not / cannot go is because I... (Select at least one answer and three at the most. List your answers in the order of 1,2,3.)
  - Have classes
  - Find services boring
  - Live too far from church
  - Prefer to watch TV and be with friends
  - Was offended by someone in church
  - Others (please specify)
5. This year...
  - I am implementing a plan on reading the Bible
  - I have a plan but have yet to implement it
  - I read the Bible often but have no plan
  - I read the Bible now and then
  - I rarely read the Bible
  - I have never read the Bible at home
6. During the week, I read the Bible....
  - Every day
  - 3 - 4 times a week
  - Seldom
  - Never
7. My knowledge of the Bible is ....
  - Very good
  - Good
  - Not good
8. What is the current state of your prayers?
  - I receive much strength from prayer
  - I get distracted easily
  - I recognize the importance of prayer, but I constantly feel weak in prayer
  - I feel tired during prayer
  - I dislike prayer
9. How have you contributed to the holy work?
  - I have a specific responsibility (please specify – go to Q10)
  - I often help when there is a need (go to Q10)
  - I sometimes help out
  - I rarely take part in holy work (skip Q10, go to Q11)
  - I have never taken part in holy work (skip Q10, go to Q11)
10. How do you feel when you are involved in the holy work?
  - I feel it's very meaningful
  - I learn many things
  - I feel weighed down by all the responsibilities
  - Others (please specify)
11. I rarely or have never taken part in holy work because....
  - I've been too busy with homework
  - I don't have the capabilities
  - It takes too much of my time
  - I don't know where to start
  - I have no interest
  - My parents have prevented me from taking part
  - Others (please specify)
12. When I feel low, I usually....
  - Call up a good friend and talk it over with him/her
  - Sleep
  - Exercise, or take a walk
  - Pray
  - Others (please specify)
13. The things I value most are ...(List down your 1st, 2nd, 3rd choices)
  - Education
  - Money
  - Faith
  - Family
  - Friends
  - Health
14. Aside from school, the things I devote the most time on are.... (List down your 1st ,2nd and 3rd choices)
  - Listening to music
  - Reading books
  - Exercising
  - Hanging out with friends
  - Services and church work
  - Others (please specify)



15. The times for Spiritual Convocation and SAT classes are conflicting. My choice would be to...
- Attend Spiritual convocation (state reason)
  - Attend SAT classes (state reason)
16. Do your classmates know that you are a Christian?
- They all know
  - Some know
  - They don't know (state reason)
17. Usually, I am...
- More active at school than at church (state reason)
  - More active in church than at school (state reason)
  - More or less the same at school and at church
  - Not active in either
18. How often do you preach?
- Often
  - Sometimes
  - Rarely
  - Never
19. The difficulty about evangelizing to others is ....
- The fear of rejection
  - The fear of getting laughed at
  - Lack of knowledge
  - Lack of conviction of the truth
  - Others (please specify)
20. The greatest benefits in believing in the Lord Jesus are...
- To be able to be saved and have eternal life
  - Have peace and trust
  - Higher morality
  - Have not given it much thought
  - Others (please specify)
21. What is your attitude to your faith at this time?
- I strive hard
  - I have not striven hard enough
  - I have neglected my faith
  - I can do without it



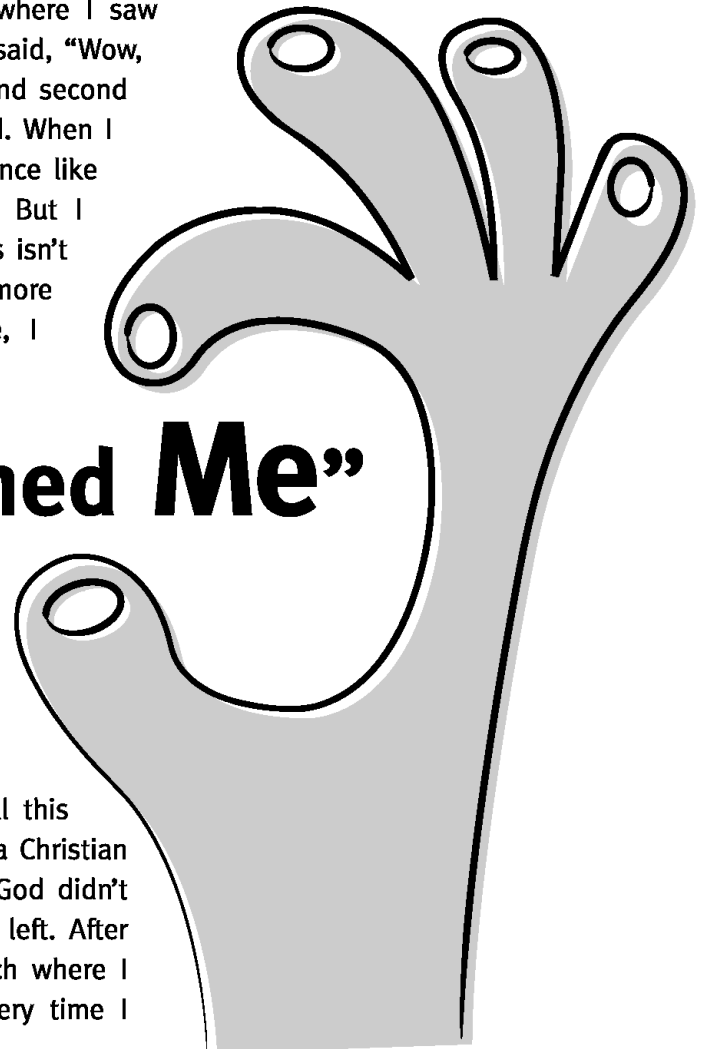


In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I testify. I was born in Cambodia, and I came to the United States in 1981, when I was nine years old. From 1975 to 1979 there was a genocide in Cambodia: out of 6 million people, 3.5 million died during those years. Every day, people died from starvation or execution—even my relatives and my loved ones. I always asked myself, *what kind of God created people, and then allowed them to die like that? How can this God be a good God? Can't He see that all these people are dying?*

After I came to this country, I started having nightmares. It was the same nightmare every night. Five evil spirits would grab me: two of them would tie my hands, two of them would tie my feet, and one would choke me. I was so afraid of going to sleep. Growing up, I worked two or three jobs because I didn't want to sleep. All this time, I was so fearful and lonely. When I read the Buddhist sayings that the world is full of suffering, I really believed it. I had been seeking the truth and looking for God all my life, but I still felt so lonely in my heart. I said to myself, "Life must be better than this". In college, I went to parties where I saw people dancing, drinking, and having so much fun. I said, "Wow, this is what happiness is, huh?" So during my first and second years in college, I went out and I drank and I danced. When I went to parties, I would get up on the stage and dance like crazy. People would yell my name, "Vuthy! Vuthy!" But I couldn't find happiness. Finally, I said to myself, "This isn't the way". I almost flunked out of school my sophomore year. When I realized what was happening to me, I settled down a little bit during my junior year, but I still felt so lonely. I thought that maybe, when I get out of college, I'll get a job and make some money, and that will make me happy. But after I graduated and got a good job, my heart still felt empty.

## "God Touched Me"

I was still constantly searching for the truth all this time, but without any success. For a while I went to a Christian church, where I was baptized for the first time. But God didn't move me and I didn't see God in that church, so I left. After that, my mother took me to a Greek Orthodox church where I was baptized the second time. But I fell asleep every time I



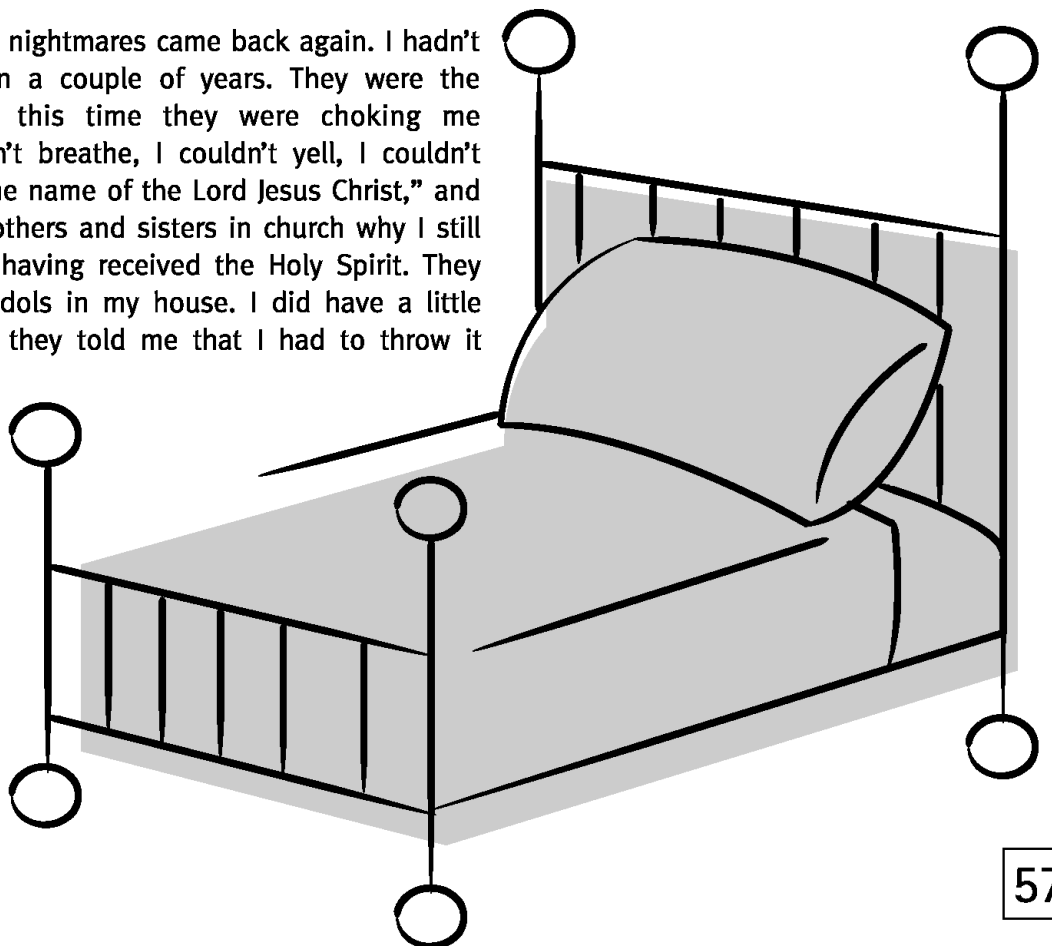


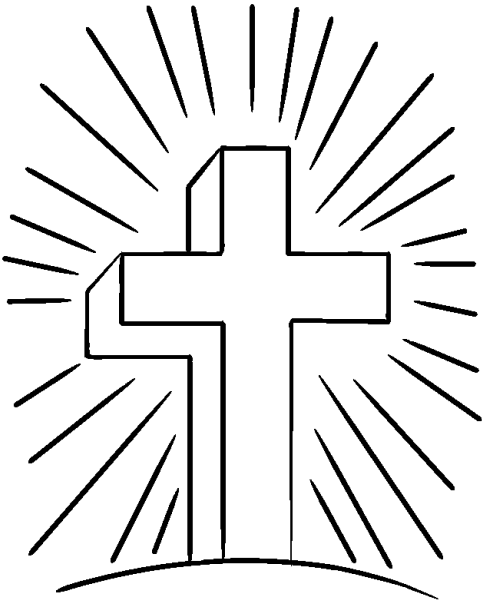
After I left this second church I said to myself, “Forget it, God doesn’t exist.” I just focused on working at my agency. One of the women who worked there belongs to the True Jesus Church. One day she saw my Bible on my desk and asked me to attend a Bible study. I thought, “Why not, I have nothing to lose,” and went to the Bible study. At the end, when they knelt down and prayed in tongues, I was really scared. One of the sisters must have been praying for me, because the next week I couldn’t wait to go to Bible study. At that meeting, I felt God move me. I started going to Bible study, and then I started to attend church services regularly. I felt that God was there, even though we gathered in only a prayer house. I started to pray sincerely every night because I felt the movement of God. Every biblical teaching that I learned and followed came true.

One night when I was sleeping, God’s power came over me and said, “Vuthy, get up and pray.” So I said, “Okay,” and I started to pray. I said, “Hallelujah,” and this power came into me, and I started to speak in tongues. I started to weep from joy because I felt so much love and mercy from God. This was the first time I felt joy in my heart, and I knew it was from God. During that prayer God made me realize what kind of a person I was, and all the sinful things I had done in my high school and college years. While I was praying, God moved me to say, “Turn to 1 Peter.” I didn’t even know where 1 Peter was in the Bible. So I got up, switched on the lights, and turned to 1 Peter, chapter 1. As I was reading, the words of God came alive, almost like they were three-dimensional. Every word came to me like it was living, and it really touched me.

A few days later, my nightmares came back again. I hadn’t had those nightmares in a couple of years. They were the same five spirits, and this time they were choking me especially hard. I couldn’t breathe, I couldn’t yell, I couldn’t scream. But I said, “In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,” and they left. I asked the brothers and sisters in church why I still had nightmares despite having received the Holy Spirit. They asked me if I had any idols in my house. I did have a little gold Buddha head, and they told me that I had to throw it away. So in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I flushed it down the toilet.

The next night I had another nightmare, but this time there was only one spirit. This big, black spirit was choking me, and I couldn’t see its face. It really scared me because this was something new. I said,



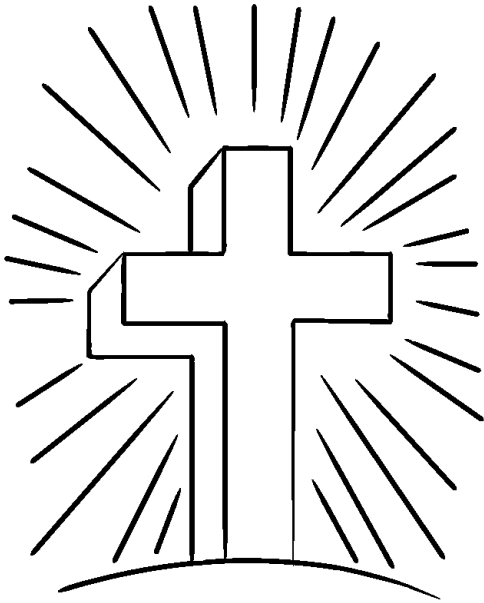


“In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,” and I started choking the spirit back. I turned the spirit over on my bed, and I saw that its face was corroded and full of worms. Then suddenly, it disappeared. Again I asked the sister at church why I still had these nightmares. I didn’t know what was causing them; I didn’t think I had anything else in my house. She said that I should check again. So I searched and searched, and finally I found another Buddha head that my mom had given me a long time ago. I had forgotten that it was in my jewelry box. So again in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I flushed it down the toilet.

After I was baptized in the True Jesus Church, I started to tell my father about God. My father is seventy-three years old. Ever since he was a young man in Cambodia, he has always practiced witchcraft. It was known all over town that no one could kill him by shooting or stabbing him. When I was a child I felt proud of this, but I didn’t really believe it. When my family came to the U.S. in 1981, we were terribly mistreated. Our house was burned down twice. The second time, my father went outside and started fighting with the arsonists. One of them tried to hit my father with a baseball bat, but my father put his hand up and broke it in half. After that, I started to believe that my father really did use witchcraft. The first time my father went to a Christian church after he came to America, he became so sick that he almost died. His “spirit master” of witchcraft warned him that he would kill him if he continued to go to church. So from 1981 until 1999, my father never went to church.

In June 1999, I went fishing with my father. By then, I’d been regularly attending services in the True Jesus Church. I really believed that God exists and I felt His love. So I said to myself, “This is a great opportunity for me to talk to my father about God.” I told him, “I’ve never asked you to do anything in my entire life. But I’ve found God, and I want you to come to church only five times. If after five times you don’t feel anything, you don’t ever have to come back.” He agreed, “Okay son, I’ll do it for you.” That same night, my niece was in my father’s room. Suddenly, she started screaming, “Grandma, grandpa, someone’s trying to kill me!” My father looked around and there was no one there. Then he realized that it was his spirit master again. He told me about it the next day, but I told him not to worry because God is all-powerful, and only He can take away life.

The next Friday at Bible study, I asked the brothers and sisters what I should do about all the Buddhism paraphernalia in my father’s room. They advised me to pray and to remove it, but who would dare go into his room and remove all of it? My father wouldn’t do it, and I didn’t have enough faith to do it myself. So the only thing we could do was pray. Thank God, my father came to church that Saturday. After the prayer, I asked him how he felt. He said, “I felt cold and full of chills.” I thought, that doesn’t sound right. Sure enough, I found out that he was wearing a big Buddha head around his neck. So I told him, “That’s the problem, you need to get rid of that. You need to get rid of all the other things in your room, too, if you really want to pray to God.” So with God’s help, my father removed all his Buddhism paraphernalia (including his necklace), and he began to pray every night.



The next Sabbath, my father came to church and knelt down to pray again. I had never described to him what the Holy Spirit felt like. After the prayer, he said that he felt this tingling all through his body, and it felt really good. I really thanked God. During that same week, my father's left leg began to hurt so badly that he couldn't even walk. He didn't understand why this was happening to him. On the way to

church he said to me, *"If your God is the true God, let Him heal my leg."* So I thought, "We have him, Lord." My father

is a man of his word. I knew that all we would have to do was to have faith and pray, and God would heal him. His leg hurt for a week, and then one night he woke up crying from the pain. The minute he got up, he felt this power from his foot all the way to his knee, and he was able to walk. He called and told me about it, and I was so joyful. The brothers and sisters at church had prayed really hard for him.

On our way to the next Sabbath service, he told me, *"Son, I will follow your faith; I have already told your mother that I will follow your faith and follow your God."* I really thank God. My father has practiced Buddhism all his life, just like his grandparents

and great-grandparents before him. For him to believe in God and come to church is a miracle. Now my father, mother, and brother are attending Sabbath services regularly. God's love and mercy is beyond my imagination. When we pray with sincerity and faith, everything is possible through God. May all the glory and praise be unto our Lord Jesus.

Vuthy Nol-Mantia—Boston, Massachusetts, USA



**Discussion:**

1. In which ways did this brother receive salvation on earth?
2. How do we know that this brother feels hope for eternal life in heaven?
3. Do you think it is easier for an atheist or a person who practices another religion (i.e., Buddhism) to convert to Christianity? Explain your answer.



1. Provide two points to support how God is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent (see Lesson 4 for possible answers).

---

---

---

2. Describe how Jesus Christ is the Savior of this world. Use two illustrations to support your answer (see Lesson 5 for possible answers).

---

---

---

3. Write about 3 prophecies in the Old Testament that concern God's promise of salvation.

---

---

---

---

4. Describe how salvation was fulfilled on the cross.

---

---

---

---

5. How do we know that salvation is for everyone? Provide three points to support your answer.

---

---

---

---





6. What kind of an attitude should we have as we wait for the Lord's second coming? Elaborate on 3 things you should be doing.

---

---

---

7. What is the definition of the church?

---

---

---

---

8. What are the 3 important qualifications of the true church?

---

---

---

---

9. Why is our church called the True Jesus Church?

---

---

---

---

10. List the four great missions of the true church and then elaborate on one of the them (see Lesson 10 for additional information).

---

---

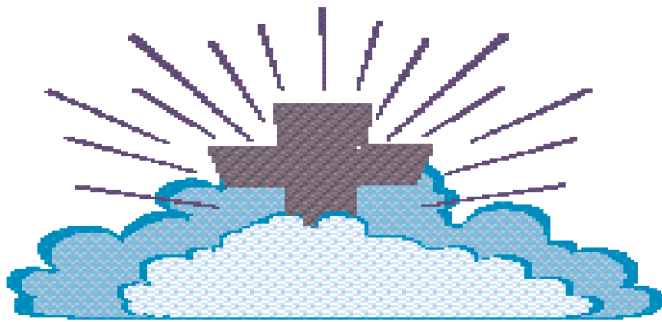
---

---

---

We must be **totally committed** to restoring our neglected **relationship** with God.

---



Satan cannot prevail against a wall of godly people fighting Him **on their knees** through the invincible **power** of God!

*"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."*  
**(Jas 5:16)**

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking,  
correcting and training in righteousness."

2 Timothy 3:16



## YEAR 2 BOOK 4

General Assembly of the True Jesus Church

[HTTP://WWW.TJC.ORG](http://www.tjc.org)  
printed April 2005