

# LESSON 9

## THE NEVER-ENDING OIL

### BEFORE YOU TEACH

#### Debts in the Old Testament

Debtors could repay their debts by selling themselves or their sons as slaves. In this story, the woman incurred some debt through her dead husband. As a widow, she did not have the means to support herself. It was possible that her children were young and could not work to earn money. If they were taken away, she would have trouble supporting herself in the future because her sons would not be available to support her.

In Deuteronomy, God gave specific instructions to lenders. He instructed them to be sensitive to the poor and to debtors by forgiving their debts every seven years (Deut 15:1-18). God had also instructed the Israelites to care and provide for widows and orphans. They could not oppress or abuse them. Anyone that professed to have a pure and undefiled religion had to care for the widows and orphans (Jas 1:27).

In this story, the creditor failed to show compassion to the poor as God had commanded. The kindness Elisha showed reminded the Israelites that God wanted them to care for those in need.

#### Oil in the Bible

In Palestine during Elisha's time, oil was both a luxury and a necessity. The Israelites used olive oil daily. The Egyptians used oil extracted from vegetables and animals.

The most common type of oil was olive oil. To extract the oil, the Israelites would press (Lev 24:2) or step on (Mic 6:15) the olives. More commonly, the Israelites crushed the olives in an olive mill to extract the oil. This process was very time-consuming, leading to the high cost of olive oil. One olive tree yielded about ten gallons of oil a year.

There were many purposes for the oil. Israelites used oil in oil lamps, medicine, cooking, cosmetics, and soaps. In the tabernacle, pure olive oil was used in the golden lamp stand. Injuries to animals and humans were rubbed with olive oil to help them heal. Priests, prophets, and kings were anointed with the finest of olive oils. Queens would also apply oil to their bodies.

### BIBLE TEXT

2 Kings 4:1-7

### BIBLE TRUTH

God always helps those in need.

### LESSON OBJECTIVE

To encourage the students to rely on God and to help people in need.

### MEMORY VERSE

"God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble."

(Psalm 46:1)

### PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. Lord Jesus, thank You for giving us faith in You. We know that You are always here to help us. Sometimes, we do not have enough faith to ask for Your help. Please increase our faith and strength. We know that You love and care for us deeply and will give us all that we need. Help us to trust You more and to glorify Your name. Hallelujah! Amen.

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

In this story and many others, people trusted God with a simple faith.

For example, Noah built the ark well before there was rain; Abraham and Sarah waited patiently for the heir promised by God; Joshua and the Israelites marched around Jericho for seven days and with a blow of the trumpet, the walls of Jericho fell; the widow of Zarephath followed Elijah's instructions, and she never ran out of oil and flour. And in today's story, the woman collected jars without questioning Elisha's motives. Because these characters had a simple faith and believed without question, they received God's grace.

At their current age, your students likely have a simple faith, the innocence of which Jesus often spoke. They believe that they can ask God for anything in prayer and that by asking for it, they will receive it. However, the

students must learn that God answers in His own way. He might say "Yes," "No," or "Maybe later."

Sometimes, God responds in a manner they may not anticipate. It may not make a lot of sense at that time, but they need to believe that God will be there.

Other times, God's instructions may come in the form of parental guidance. The students might find that they disagree with their parents many times, but their parents work to the best of their abilities to prepare the best for them, just as God prepares the best for everyone.

When placing her trust in Elisha, the widow also placed her trust in God, even though she did not know what the results would be. Your students need to have faith, because God will always provide. "And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive" (Mt 21:22).

### VOCABULARY

**debt:** something that is owed to another person, usually money

**compassion:** to understand others' problems and to show love by helping them

**widow:** a woman who has lost her husband by death and has not remarried

**trust:** to firmly believe in someone or something

**prophet:** a person who declares the word of God and can tell what is to happen in the future

**refuge:** a safe place where people can hide from danger

### TEACHING IDEAS/REVIEW

#### Teaching Ideas

To illustrate how the widow collected empty jars from her neighbors and friends, hide empty cups around the classroom. Have the students search for them during the lesson. Fill a small jar with water in preparation for the demonstration of the widow pouring the oil (refer to the Bible Story section "Elisha Instructs the Woman").

#### Review

Last week, we learned how God chose Elisha to be His worker. Elisha learned how to serve God through his master, Elijah. God planned to take Elijah to heaven. Before God took Elijah, Elijah asked Elisha if there was anything he could do for him.

What did Elisha ask for? (A double portion of Elijah's spirit because he wanted to work for God with power.) Elijah said that only God could grant this request, but if Elisha saw him when he was being taken up to heaven, God would grant his request.

Just then, a chariot of fire and horses of fire came and separated them. Elisha saw Elijah being taken up to heaven by a whirlwind. Elisha took the cloak his master had dropped and used it to part the Jordan River so he could cross to the other side. He then began his work for God with great power.

## BIBLE STORY

Prepare a bag containing items that represent difficulties your students may face: death of a friend or family member (framed picture), death of a pet (stuffed animal), moving away from friends, friends moving away, sickness, bullies, and bad grades.

Have the students take an item from the bag and ask the students, "How do you feel when this happens to you? Who do you ask for help when you feel sad, angry, or alone?"

God is always ready to help us solve our problems. He will use many different methods to help us. Today, we will see how God helped a widow and her two sons when they encountered a difficult problem.

### A Woman's Debt

Immediately after God took Elijah to heaven, Elisha took up Elijah's cloak and began his service to God.

One day, a widow met Elisha and told him of her distressful situation. Her husband recently passed away, leaving her and her two sons with a large debt. Because she was a woman and her sons were young, she could not earn money to repay the debt.

She told Elisha, "The creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his slaves." This caused the woman great distress. If the creditor took away her sons, she would have nothing left. Imagine if someone took something you loved away from you. How would you feel? The woman felt sad and helpless.

### Elisha Instructs the Woman

After hearing the widow's story, Elisha had compassion on her and said to her, "What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?" And she said, "We are very poor. All we have left is a little jar of oil."

Elisha said. "Go to your neighbors' and friends' houses. Ask them if you may borrow their empty jars. Try to get as many jars as you can. When you have collected them, take the jars home and shut the door so that only you and your two sons are in the house."

After hearing Elisha's instructions, the widow believed that God would help her. She knew Elisha was God's prophet and that God spoke through him. If she followed his instructions, God would help her. So she went with her sons to all her neighbors' and friends' houses and asked them for empty jars. She got many, many jars: tall jars,

small jars, fat jars, and skinny jars. When they had collected as many jars as they could, she and her sons went home and shut the door behind them, just as Elisha had instructed them to do.

Now, I want you to pretend that you are the widow. I want you to go around the room and find and collect as many cups as you can.

[Give the students one minute to collect as many cups as they can, and then have them return to their seats and sit down.]

Wow! Look at all of the cups you all found! Now, let's find out what happens next in our story. Elisha told the widow to start pouring the oil from her little jar of oil into all the other jars that she had borrowed. Let's do the same.

[Take your jar of "oil" and start filling the cups.]

What do you notice? That's right! We weren't able to fill all of our cups. Our jar of oil became less and less. Let's find out if that's what happened to the widow.

### The Never Ending Oil

The woman remembered that Elisha had told her to pour the oil from her little jar into all the other jars. So she asked her son to bring her one jar. She poured the oil slowly into the empty jar until it filled to the top. She and her sons continued filling the jars for a while. All this time, her jar of oil never ran out, even after filling up many jars.

When she had filled up the jars in front of her, she told one of her sons, "Bring me another jar." Her son replied, saying that there were no more jars left. After hearing that, she looked into her own little jar. It was empty and there was no more oil left!

### The Woman

The woman hurried off to find Elisha the prophet and said to him, "Every jar in my house is full of oil!"

"Good!" said Elisha. "Now you can go and sell the oil. You will have enough money to pay your bills."

Just as Elisha had told her, when the woman sold all the jars of oil, she had enough money to pay her debt. She even had some money left over! Now she didn't have to worry about people taking her sons away from her.

This story tells us that God watches and cares for the widows and those in need. Just like the widow, we should thank and praise God deeply with all our heart.

## MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

Please reinforce the memory verse every week.

You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

**"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." (Psalm 46:1)**

## CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

### Fill In the Blank/True or False

1. The poor widow only had a small jar of \_\_\_\_\_ (oil) left in her house.
2. The widow's sons were going to be taken as \_\_\_\_\_ (slaves) if she could not pay her bills.
3. The first person that the widow went to for help was \_\_\_\_\_ (Elisha).
4. Elisha instructed the widow to gather as many jars full of oil from her friends and neighbors as she could.  
False; Elisha asked her to get as many empty jars as possible.
5. When the widow heard Elisha's instructions, she believed and followed exactly as he told her. True.
6. When the widow poured the oil from the jar, she had enough oil to fill most, but not all, of the jars. False; she had enough oil to fill all of the jars.
7. When the widow sold the oil, she had enough money to pay off her debt and to pay for her family's daily needs. True.
8. This miracle was a demonstration of Elisha's power. False; it was a demonstration of God's power.

## SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

### 1. God is our helper.

The widow faced a problem she could not solve. After her husband died, she was left with a large debt. If she did not pay that debt, the creditor would take her sons and sell them as slaves. The widow went to the only person who she thought could help her: Elisha. She went to Elisha because he was God's prophet; he would ask God to help her.

Just as this widow asked God for help, we can also ask God for help. We often encounter many problems that make us feel sad, hurt, or alone. These problems can be so large and numerous that we do not know how we can solve them. There is one Person we can always go to for help. Who is He? [Let students answer.] That is correct; we can always ask God for help.

Although we cannot see God, He watches over and protects us from harm. When we encounter problems, God will send His angels to help us. He uses different ways to help us. God may use our parents, grandparents, teachers, or friends to help us, just like how God used Elisha to help the widow. Have you ever prayed about a problem that God helped take away soon after your prayer? Here is a story of a young girl who prayed sincerely to God about a problem, a problem that God helped her with after hearing her prayer.

When Paulina started third grade, she was getting ready to attend the Student Spiritual Convocation (SSC) along with her sister and her mom. Even though Paulina's dad was an unbeliever, it seemed that he did not mind if they went. However, when he saw them all packing their suitcases to get ready to attend the SSC, he suddenly changed his mind and refused to let them go.

As hard as they tried to make their dad change his mind, he still refused. Paulina's sister cried and rushed to her room, and then slammed her door shut. Paulina's mom also said that maybe they could try again next year. Everyone was upset. Seeing that everyone was upset, Paulina's dad said, "If any of you can guess the exact number of coins I have in my pocket, you can all go to the SSC."

Paulina decided to try. She said a quick prayer in her heart, asking God to help her because she was really looking forward to attending the SSC. Then she made a guess. "Fourteen?" Paulina's dad counted all the coins in his pocket and miraculously, they added up to exactly fourteen. Paulina's dad could not believe that Paulina had guessed right. He began to count the money again and again to make sure. There were definitely fourteen coins, and, in the end, they were all allowed to go.

Thank God that Paulina had a great time at her first SSC and that she also received the Holy Spirit. Paulina knew that it was God who had helped her guess correctly and who had allowed her to attend the SSC.

*(Adapted from "Fourteen Coins," Manna, Issue 59, April-June, 2009)*

What a powerful testimony that demonstrates the power of God's help! The Bible says, "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 Jn 4:4). We are God's children and our heavenly Father will always watch over us. Here, He reminds us that He is the God of heaven and the earth. There's no problem too big for Him! Remember that problems are bound to come; no one in this world is without problems. The key is: where do we find a helper? As children of God, we are very lucky that God, the ruler of EVERYTHING, has promised to be our helper. Whatever our problems are, submit them to God and He will never turn us down. What is there to fear about when we have God as our big helper?

*"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." (Isa 41:10)*

This is God's promise!

## 2. Be a good helper.

*"And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward." (Mt 10:42)*

God wants us to be good helpers. He wants us to love one another just as He loves all of us. The Bible tells us that if we offer a little help to someone, even if it's just giving a cup of cold water, God will remember that and reward us in due time. This person may be a little child, a stranger, or a poor person who doesn't have anything to pay you back for your help. God doesn't reward us because of what we do but because of our desire to help. Remember that we are Christians and everything we do affects others' perceptions of Christians. When we are good helpers, other people can see that God's children are good and that His instructions are favorable to all. We can glorify God's name by helping others!

In today's story, Elisha helped the widow who had a big problem. Have we ever helped someone who has had a problem? Everything that God has made can help us and help others. I will share an example with you. Have you ever seen a ladybug?

Although ladybugs are small, they are very helpful insects. Most people don't mind having them around, especially people who like to grow fruits, vegetables, and flowers. These people are glad to see the ladybugs because ladybugs help eat the insects that hurt and kill the plants and vegetables.

A long time ago, the farmers in California had a big problem. Some very harmful insects called cottony-cushion scales were eating and killing all their orange trees. They found out that the bug had been brought over from Australia by mistake on some ships. The insects weren't so bad in Australia because Australia had ladybugs that ate the cottony-cushion scales.

These farmers knew that they needed the Australian ladybugs to help them save their trees. So, 500 ladybugs were sent to California. When they arrived, they started eating the cottony-cushion scales, and within two years, the trees were saved. Yes, those ladybugs were very helpful! The trees didn't have to die and were able to live to produce sweet oranges.

If something as small as a ladybug could be helpful to the orange trees that were in trouble, we can be helpful to others, too. Have we comforted a friend who had been upset? When our mom or dad became sick, did we pray for them, bring them a glass of water, or make them a card to help them feel better? Next time you see a ladybug in your garden, you can remember to be helpful and kind like Elisha.

Have we given someone a nice gift? Have we hugged a friend who felt lonely?

What are some ways that we can be helpful and kind to others?

Here are three scenarios. In each scenario, we can see the love and kindness that was shown by others to those who were in need.

1. Alicia was bullied in school. In her deepest sadness, she called Jennifer, her best friend. Here's their phone conversation:

**Alicia:** Hi, Jennifer. Do you have a second?

**Jennifer:** Of course! Is something wrong? You sound kind of sad.

**Alicia:** ...I was bullied in school today. A group of older students came to me during lunch today as I was pulling out my lunch money and took my money. I asked them to give it back, but they gave me an evil look and walked away.

**Jennifer:** Really? How could they do that to you? First of all, are you OK? How do you feel?

**Alicia:** I feel horrible...! This is so unfair. They took my money, and even threatened me. I'm so scared that they'll come take my money again.

**Jennifer:** I'm sorry this happened, Alicia, but don't worry. We can go to the teacher together and report them. These bullies should apologize for what they did.

**Alicia:** Thanks, Jennifer. I'd really appreciate it if you could go with me. I really want to tell the teacher about this, but I'm so afraid to go to the teacher by myself.

**Jennifer:** Don't worry about it, Alicia. There's no reason to be afraid. You didn't do anything wrong.

**Alicia:** That's great! I feel so much better. Thanks again, Jennifer!

Jennifer kept her promise and went with Alicia to their teacher to tell them everything that had happened. The teacher then found the bullies and had them apologize to Alicia and return the money. Without Jennifer, Alicia would not have had the courage to go to their teacher by herself. She trusted Jennifer's words and was greatly comforted.

2. Shawn's dad is suffering from stomach cancer. Ever since his diagnosis, Shawn and his mom have been preaching to him since he is not yet a believer of Christ. Sometimes, Shawn can see that his mom is very exhausted and wearied. As a housewife, she's always been very busy. Now, she even has to take care of his dad who is sick in bed. On top of everything, she spends so much time to pray and study the Bible in order to preach to his dad. Shawn realizes that he needs to do something to help his family. Here's what he did to be a good helper:

- 1) *He prayed for his dad.* Shawn has been praying for God to heal his dad. He knows that stomach cancer is a scary thing and that only God can comfort and heal a person with such illness. Shawn prays that his dad will come to believe in Christ, and be comforted and healed.
- 2) *He studied the Bible and preached to his dad with his mom.* Shawn really wants his dad to come to know God and His healing power. Therefore, he stays up every night to join his mom in prayer for his dad. Moreover, Shawn prepares many testimonies to share with his dad.
- 3) *He comforted his mom.* Shawn knows that his mom is both physically and emotionally drained. Even though God has comforted her greatly, Shawn knows that being positive and encouraging will help his mom a lot. Therefore, Shawn always shares Bible verses with his mom to comfort her.
- 4) *He helped his mom with chores around the house.* Since his mom has to take care of his dad, Shawn has been helping his mom with chores so that his mom can take more time to rest and take care of his dad.

A few months later, Shawn's dad received baptism, and his health has only gotten better since then. Shawn's dad later testified that during his battle with cancer, God sent his family a wonderful helper who demonstrated the love of Christ through his help—he was, of course, talking about Shawn, his 8-year-old son!

3. Emily's family is moving away to another state. Emily is very sad because she has so many good friends in church that she's going to miss very much. She's afraid that she won't fit in at the new church and will feel lonely. Emily's friends at church, too, are bummed out that Emily is leaving. However, they know that Emily faces the most challenges as she moves forward with a new chapter of her life and that she needs her friends to be happy and strong for her. In this regard, they agree to help Emily together by writing a card to her every week to encourage her. Emily, on the other hand, is starting her new life in a new state. Even though she's busy moving in and starting at her new school, she often misses her friends back home. Nevertheless, she doesn't feel lonely at all because she receives a card from her church friends back home every week. She still feels that she belongs with her friends back home, and she's reassured that her friends haven't forgotten about her. Emily always looks forward to receiving her card every week and writing back to her fellow brothers and sisters!

When you help someone, Jesus will see your kindness and remember what you have done.

## HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

1. C
2. C
3. B
4. She was able to pay off her debts.
5. She was probably very thankful and happy.
6. We should turn to God and believe that He will help us.
7. oil
8. slaves
9. God is our **refuge** and **strength**, a very present **help** in **trouble**. (Psalm 46:1)
10. Whenever I am **afraid**, I will **trust** in **You**. (Psalm 56:3)

## ACTIVITIES

### 1 Olive Oil Sample Tasting

*For the activity, prepare small cubes of bread, olives (deseeded and cut into small pieces), and a small bowl of olive oil. Before the lesson, find out from parents if students have certain allergies or food intolerances to olives, olive oil, or white bread.*



Today, we learned about a poor widow, whom God blessed with a jar that flowed endlessly with oil. For this activity, we will learn about the oil that the widow used.

During Elisha's time, the people used oil daily. The oil came from vegetables or animals. In Israel, the most common type of oil was olive oil.

Olive oil comes from olives, which grow on olive trees. Today, we use olives in different ways. We add olives as toppings on our pizzas or salads. We use olive oil to cook or to dress our salads. [Show the students an olive; have them pick it up and smell it.]

An olive tree lives for hundreds of years and every year it produces a crop of olives. The olive farmers harvest the olives from the trees. To make olive oil, the farmers commonly crush the olives in an olive mill to extract the oil from the olives. The oil is then sold to different people who use it for many purposes.

There are many uses for olive oil. The oil is used in lamps to light a room. It is also used for cooking. Additionally, the oil may serve as a balm to help injuries. Some people will rub the olive oil on their skin to help make their skin soft. It can also be used to make soap. Because olive oil has many uses, it can be expensive.

Today, we can get bottles of olive oil at the supermarket. We cook with it, dress our salads with it, or dip bread in it. Would you like to find out what olives and olive oil taste like?

Prepare small, bite-size pieces of bread and place them on a plate. Have the students dip a piece of bread into a small bowl of olive oil and eat the bread. Additionally, cut up some olives into small pieces for the students to sample.

After the tasting, have the students dab the olive oil on their skin. Ask them how the oil makes their skin feel.

2

**How Many Jars?**

How many jars did the widow fill from her own small jar of oil? The Bible doesn't say, but it was probably a lot! How many jars of oil can you find hidden in the picture? Four? Five? Maybe six or more? Find the jars in the picture and color them in.





E1 Year 2 Book 2 Lesson 9—The Never-Ending Oil

# Homework Assignment

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

**Bible Truth:** God always helps those in need.

**Lesson Objective:** To encourage the students to rely on God and to help people in need.

**Bible Reading:** Please put a check mark in the space when you complete the reading each day.

**Prayer:** Please put a check mark in the space provided on the days you prayed to God.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bible Reading							
Prayer							

## Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse.

(Psalm 46:1)

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## What I Learned from the Bible This Week

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

# Homework Assignment

*Understanding What You Have Learned*

## Multiple Choice

1. \_\_\_\_ : The first person that the widow asked for help was \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Her neighbor
  - b. The prophet Elijah
  - c. Elisha the prophet
  
2. \_\_\_\_ : Elisha told the widow to go to her neighbors' and friends' house to borrow \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Ten jars of oil
  - b. As many jars of oil as she could
  - c. As many empty jars as she could
  
3. \_\_\_\_ : When the widow heard Elisha's instructions, she \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Asked Elisha why she had to do that
  - b. Believed and followed exactly as he told her
  - c. Could not believe what he said and walked away

## Short Answer

4. What was the widow able to do after she sold all the jars of oil?

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5. After the widow saw the miracle, how do you think she felt?

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6. When we face a problem, what should we do?

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## Fill In the Blank

7. The poor widow only had a small jar of \_\_\_\_\_ left in her house.
8. The widow's sons were going to be taken as \_\_\_\_\_ if she did not pay the creditor.
9. (*trouble, strength, refuge, help*)  
 "God is our \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, a very present \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_." (Psalm 46:1)
10. (*You, trust, afraid, I*)  
 "Whenever I am \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ will \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_." (Psalm 56:3)