

WORKERS OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

JUNIOR 1 YEAR 1 BOOK 3

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WORKERS OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

USGA

Teacher's Guide and Student Handouts

Memory Verse

“The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry.” (Psalm 34:15)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Work [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God uses His people to accomplish His plan.2. The births of John and Jesus Christ are the saving acts of God, fulfillment of His promise to His people.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God is all-knowing.2. God is all-powerful.3. God does the impossible to fulfill His prophecies.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Entrust our worries to God with faith.2. Wait patiently for God to answer us in His timing.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Who were Zacharias and Elizabeth?
- B. An Angel of the Lord Appears to Zacharias
- C. Elizabeth Becomes Pregnant
- D. The Birth of John the Baptist

Life Application

1. We should never give up on the things we have entrusted to God.
2. No situation is impossible for God to solve.

Memory Verse

Conclusion: God used His people to accomplish His plan of salvation. God is all-knowing, all-wise, and all-powerful; He will answer our prayers in His time, in His way, and in His power.

Events and Spiritual Teachings

A. Who were Zacharias and Elizabeth?

Zacharias and Elizabeth were both godly parents. Both were descendants of Aaron; Zacharias was a priest from the tribe of Levi who served the Lord during the reign of Herod in Judea. His name means, “the Lord remembers.” His wife Elizabeth’s name means, “the oath of God.” They had been born and raised in homes of priestly families who served the temple in Jerusalem. They were also related to Mary, the mother of Jesus.

The Bible said they were “righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless” (Lk 1:6). What does this tell us? Both Zacharias and Elizabeth:

- Were blameless in the sight of the God;
- Walked in His commandments;
- Submitted to the will of God;
- Obeyed the word of God; and
- Lived a righteous life.

In other words, they led lives pleasing to God. They cared more about how God viewed them than how men viewed them.

Zacharias and Elizabeth Were Childless

Though Zacharias and Elizabeth both led lives that pleased God, the Bible tells us that they had one problem: “But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years” (Lk 1:7). We don’t know how old they were, but we can place them somewhere between late middle to old age, and definitely past child-bearing years.

In their society, barrenness was considered shameful, so their lives would not been without difficulty. But instead of allowing the judgments of others to impact him, Zacharias prayed about it (Lk 1:13). He committed his problem to the almighty God.

The stigma of barrenness must have weighed heavily on Elizabeth’s heart. But Elizabeth pursued God and sought to be called “blameless” in His eyes. She refused to allow her sorrow to drag her faith down; instead, she reached out for God’s strength. They both walked “in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord” (v. 6).

B. An Angel of the Lord Appears to Zacharias

Let’s read Luke 1:8–17.

While Zacharias was performing his priestly duties, the angel Gabriel suddenly appeared, “standing on the right side of the altar of incense” (v. 11). Though frightening, it must have been amazing to be in the presence of an angel. Gabriel reassured Zacharias not to be afraid, informing him that his petition had been heard. His wife would bear him a son, and he would name him John. Not only that, he would have joy and gladness, and many would rejoice at the birth of John. Clearly, Zacharias’ child would not be a normal person. He would be the Messiah’s forerunner, prophesied by Malachi (Mal 3:1; 4:5–6).

Can you imagine what must have been going through Zacharias’ mind? He and Elizabeth had been praying for a child for so long and, after all this time, an angel told him that he would have a son! The

message seemed too good to be true, so Zacharias asked, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years” (Lk 1:18).

Even though Zacharias was a priest of God, he still had his human weaknesses. His question, “How shall I know this?” and mentioning that Elizabeth was “well advanced in years” revealed his doubt that God could do the impossible. He found it difficult to believe that his aged wife could still give birth. In other words, he found himself unable to trust God’s promise because of his limited human knowledge. Even though he had been praying to God for a son, he had already lost hope.

Therefore, God gave him a sign. “But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time” (v. 20). Here is a clear indication that Zacharias was in disbelief.

When Zacharias left the holy place, he was mute. “But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless” (v. 22).

C. Elizabeth Becomes Pregnant

“Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying, ‘Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people’” (vv. 24–25). Elizabeth’s pregnancy was truly a miracle given by God. When Zacharias and Elizabeth had lost all hope, the impossible happened! God’s timing is perfect, and His work is beyond human understanding! God really is the only one who can truly solve all our worries and problems. No doubt Elizabeth’s faith was strengthened through this miracle!

Why did she hide herself five months? In response to God’s love in answering her prayers, Elizabeth chose to live five months in isolation and privacy. The Bible does not record the exact reasons for her decision, but it is possible that Elizabeth needed time to commune with the Lord. It is also possible that she was simply waiting until her pregnancy was confirmed.

A Visit from Mary

Let’s now read Luke 1:39–45. Mary was Elizabeth’s young cousin from Nazareth. Mary had hastened to see Elizabeth because the angel Gabriel had told her about the pregnancy (v. 36). Elizabeth was six months pregnant already. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the Holy Spirit filled her, and she blessed Mary. Pay attention to verses 42 and 43: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?”

This short passage gives us a deeper understanding of Elizabeth’s character and of her relationship with God.

1. She understood God’s plan for His people.

The words Elizabeth used reveal that she understood the significance of Mary’s child. She called Mary, “the mother of my Lord.” She recognized and acknowledged that Mary would give birth to the Messiah, the Son of God. “My Lord” is a messianic term taken from Psalm 110:1, “The LORD said to my Lord.”

2. She was full of humility.

Elizabeth was older than Mary, but she honored Mary before her. In fact, she did not even feel

worthy of Mary's visit. Even though Elizabeth played a key role in God's plan of salvation, her focus was always on the Lord, never on herself. She appreciated God's mercy and kindness; she praised God for giving her a son but did not become prideful for her own role in God's plan.

3. She knew her pregnancy was to fulfill God's plan.

God did not bless Elizabeth with an ordinary baby. God blessed her with John the Baptist—a forerunner of the Messiah who would preach repentance and purify the hearts of the people. John the Baptist was a child upon whom the hand of God was evident from his earliest days, a person whom Jesus Christ would call the greatest man (Mt 11:11).

Elizabeth had an important role to play in God's plan. Though barren for many years, she had not given up on her prayers and trust in God. It is true that we may not always understand God's plan, but we should never give up trusting Him. Not only that, she was blessed with the role to raise John the Baptist for God's work! This role could not be taken lightly.

D. The Birth of John the Baptist

Let us continue by reading Luke 1:57–66.

As was the custom in those days, relatives and friends came to rejoice with Zacharias and Elizabeth on the eighth day of their child's birth, the day of their child's circumcision. Everyone was so happy to see the child, and they expected Elizabeth to name him after his father as was traditional, but she said he would be called John (v. 60). The people were perplexed—no one in her family had this name. When they asked Zacharias what the baby should be named, he asked for a tablet and wrote, "His name is John." Everyone marveled at this, and at once Zacharias' mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he began to praise God (vv. 62–64)!

Zacharias' Prophecy

Zacharias made a song to magnify the name of God. After John's birth, able to speak again, he was filled with the Holy Spirit. Let us read Luke 1:67–79.

Understanding the Prophecy

1. The Meaning of Salvation

- **Verse 68: "He has visited and redeemed His people."**
The reason He has come is to redeem us from the slavery of sin.
- **Verse 69: "He has raised up a horn of salvation for us."**
An animal's horn represents power and strength. God has raised up a horn of salvation, meaning the Savior has the power to save us.
- **Verse 71: "That we should be saved from our enemies."**
Victory over our enemies is guaranteed. Salvation is deliverance from the hand of Satan, who holds the power of sin and death (Acts 26:18; Col 1:13; Heb 2:14). Through the Lord's redemption, we are no longer under the control of our sinful nature. Our lives are now free from Satan's oppression and dominance (cf. Eph 2:1–2) (*BSG: Luke, 7.2*).¹
- **Verses 74–75: "To grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear [...] before Him all the days of our life."**
Having been freed from the power of sin, we may now serve the Lord God by offering our

¹ TJC Department of Literary Ministry, *Bible Study Guide: Luke*, (Malaysia: True Jesus Church, 2012), https://bsg.tjc.org/tjc_bsg_lesson/luke-5/, 7.2: 5

bodies as instruments of righteousness, living a holy and blameless life (Rom 6:11–14; 1 Thess 1:9).

- **Verse 77: “To give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins.”** Salvation is through the remission of sins. Christ has conquered sin through His death and resurrection. Through baptism, the blood of Christ washes away all our sins and our old self is crucified (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom 6:1–7). Having been justified, we will not have to face condemnation (Rom 5:9–11).
- **Verses 78–79: “Through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us [...] to guide our feet into the way of peace.”** Finally, the sun has risen above the horizon of a dark world! Salvation is like the light of dawn that gives us hope and joy (Acts 26:18; Mt 4:15–16). The way of salvation is also the way of peace—we are reconciled with God, and we can have the peace of Christ in our lives (Jn 14:27; 16:33; Phil 4:4–9). When Jesus comes into our lives, the shadows flee. That is the unmatched grace that Jesus Christ brings to us.

2. John’s Mission

The miracle of John’s conception and the loosening of Zacharias’ tongue made the people clearly aware that John was no ordinary child, and that the Lord’s hand was with him. The name “John” means “God is gracious.” The meaning of this God-given name and the fact that God opened the mouth of Zacharias the moment the child was named must have sent a powerful message to everyone that God was with John. Therefore, through these miraculous events, God began preparing the people’s hearts for the gospel.

The angel Gabriel told Zacharias before that his son John would “turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God [...] to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Lk 1:16–17). Like Elijah, who turned the hearts of the Israelites back to God through his faithful perseverance and divine power, John would also carry out a powerful ministry. He would declare God’s message of repentance and announce to the people about the coming of the Savior, who would deliver them from sin.

After Zacharias could speak once again, he praised God through a prophecy concerning the kingdom and the salvation of the Messiah. He clearly remembered the covenant that God had made with Abraham in which God promised to bless the descendants of Abraham. At that time, many Jews were beginning to think that God had forgotten His promise, but through the miracle of the conception and birth of John the Baptist, the nation once again experienced the hope that God had promised. From his birth and his life’s work, we can see that the prophecies that God proclaimed through Malachi and Zacharias came to pass (Mal 3:1; Lk 1:76). It is clear that God often does the impossible to fulfill His prophecies, which will surely come to pass. Our God is a God of promise. When He promises something, He will do as He has said!

Check for Understanding

1. **What was Zacharias and Elizabeth’s family background? What was their character like, based on verse 6?** Both were of the tribe of Aaron and raised in priestly families. “And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless” (Lk 1:6).
2. **How did Zacharias show his unbelief when the angel Gabriel told him the news?** He asked the angel Gabriel, “How shall I know this?” (Lk 1:18). Even though he had been praying to God, he had

already lost hope.

3. **What did Gabriel say this child would accomplish?** “And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Lk 1:16–17).
4. **What does Elizabeth’s reaction to Mary’s visit tell us about her character?** She understood God’s plan for His people; she was full of humility; and she knew her pregnancy was to fulfill God’s plan.
5. **What impact did the miracle have on Zacharias? How about on the people?** The miracle made Zacharias and the people clearly aware that John was no ordinary child and that the Lord’s hand was with the child. The name “John” means “God is gracious.” The meaning of this God-given name and the fact that God opened the mouth of Zacharias the moment the child was named must have sent a powerful message to everyone that God was with John. Therefore, through these miraculous events, God began preparing the people’s hearts for the gospel.

Life Application

1. We should never give up on the things we have entrusted to God.

When we find that our prayers have not been answered, it is easy to give up. Often, we only focus on our immediate circumstances. When God does not act as we expect, we begin to doubt whether God is listening or whether He is able to do what we ask. This mentality needs to be changed. Instead of giving up on God, we need to wait patiently without losing faith. The angel said to Zacharias, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard” (Lk 1:13). We do not know when Zacharias prayed for a son; it may even have been many years ago, when Elizabeth was still of child-bearing age. The angel makes it clear that not only did God already hear Zacharias’ prayer, He also remembered it. God hears all of our prayers immediately, but sometimes He delays in giving us an answer.

Learning to be patient while we wait is one of the most difficult things for us to do. While we can only see what is in front of and around us, God looks at the bigger picture. He will carry out His will in His time (cf. Isa 55:8–9). We must trust that God will do what is right and best for us, even if He does not do according to what we ask (Rom 8:28, 32). God’s timing is perfect. He is never early or late. The Bible does not tell us to stop praying because we have not received a timely answer or because we are discouraged. In fact, it tells us the opposite (Eph 6:18; Rom 12:12; 1 Thess 5:17). Therefore, never give up!

2. No situation is impossible for God to solve.

Zacharias and Elizabeth were beyond childbearing years. Even Zacharias believed that he and his wife were too old to conceive. But God answered his prayer. At times, it seems that God has let a situation reach the point of hopelessness. But from this example, we can see that no situation is impossible for God to solve. Just when we may be ready to give up our hopes and dreams, His answer comes!

The story of Lazarus’ resurrection illustrates this. Jesus intentionally delayed in seeing Lazarus, waiting two more days after receiving news of his illness before traveling to him. It seemed to others that He did not care. When Martha told Jesus that Lazarus had been dead for four days already, Jesus replied, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” (Jn 11:40). After the stone was taken away from Lazarus’ tomb, Jesus commanded him to come forth.

Jesus waited until resolving the situation was humanly impossible, and then worked a miracle with His power. This is why we give all the glory to Him! There are plenty of stories that illustrate the importance

of waiting for God to answer our prayers. When we respond in trust, in that moment, we will realize that the waiting actually builds our faith!

Questions to Think About

- How has your prayer life been lately?
- Are you willing to let God answer your prayer in His own timing? In His own way? In His own power?
- Are you willing to let God answer your prayers for His purpose?
- Are you praying in harmony with His nature, His heart, and His purpose for your life?

Memory Verse

“The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry.” (Psalm 34:15)

Meaning

God wants us to be righteous; He wants us to pursue righteousness, earnestly seeking to follow and honor Him with our lives. If we live a life of righteousness, we never have to wonder if He is listening to our prayers. Moreover, we have the assurance that God is there to hear every request that we cry from our hearts in every prayer! He is watching us with His eyes and caring for us!

Conclusion

Both Elizabeth and Zacharias were well advanced in years, and despite their blameless lives, they remained childless. But did Zacharias turn away from God during these years? Did he become bitter since God had not answered his prayers? No, he and Elizabeth both remained faithful, serving and loving the Lord diligently.

When we are faithful, God remembers His promise to reward our faithfulness and to hear our prayers. Thus, God mercifully healed this couple’s pain of barrenness. Elizabeth’s name means, “God is my oath,” or “God is my fortune.” God did not fail to be a “fortune” for Elizabeth, as her name signified. He blessed her with an extraordinary child—John the Baptist, a forerunner of the Messiah!

From this passage, we have learned two major teachings. First, God uses those faithful to Him to accomplish His plan of salvation. Through Zacharias and Elizabeth, John the Baptist was born. Secondly, God is all-knowing, all-wise, and all-powerful; He will answer our prayers in His time, His way, and in His power.

Lesson 1 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What does the memory verse teach us about what God wants for us?
He wants us to pursue righteousness and earnestly seek to follow Him in our lives. He also wants us to be assured that He is there to hear every request that we make to Him.
2. What kind of stigma did Zacharias and Elizabeth have to live with? How did they deal with it?
They had no children, and being childless was considered shameful at the time. They dealt with it by drawing closer to God and serving Him obediently so that they could be regarded as blameless in His eyes.
3. What does Zacharias' reaction to Gabriel's words tell us about his faith at the time?
Although he had given his problems to God in prayer, he still doubted the angel's words and was unable to trust in God's promise because of his limited human knowledge; he had already lost hope and did not understand that with God, the impossible can be made possible.
4. What does Elizabeth's reaction to Mary's greeting tell us about her relationship with God?
She understood God's plan for His people, she was full of humility, and she knew that the purpose of her pregnancy was to fulfill God's plan and to glorify Him.
5. What key lesson does this story teach us about God's response to our prayers?
We should never give up on what we have entrusted to God in our prayers because He often waits until the situation is humanly impossible before He answers us. As long as we pray according to His will, He will always answer us, but always in His own time.
6. Have you ever prayed for a long time with seemingly no answer from God? After today's lesson, how will you deal with this in the future?
Personal answers.

Mary and Joseph

Passages: Mt 1:18–25; Lk 1:26–55

Memory Verse

“Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord.” (Luke 1:45)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Work [Behavior]
God chose Joseph and Mary to be part of His salvation plan.	God has the sovereignty to choose and use whom He wills.	1. Prepare ourselves to be a useful vessel for the Lord. 2. Trust in God’s plan for our lives.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Joseph
 - 1. The Upright One
 - 2. A Man of Faith
 - 3. A Spiritual Father
 - 4. A Caring and Responsible Father
- B. Mary
 - 1. Favored by the Lord
 - 2. A Humble Servant
 - 3. Kind-Hearted
 - 4. Kept and Pondered Things in Her Heart
 - 5. A Loving Mother to the End
- C. Their Roles in God’s Salvation Plan

Life Application

- 1. A Vessel Useful for the Lord
- 2. Trusting In God’s Plan

Memory Verse

Conclusion: Today, we must cultivate and prepare ourselves so that we can be useful vessels for the Lord.

Introduction

Called to be the earthly parents of Jesus Christ, Mary and Joseph were used by God to raise the Son of God. Through their care, Jesus Christ grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men. Today, let us look at their many virtues that allowed them to be vessels used by the Lord to raise the Man who would become the Savior of all.

A. Joseph

1. The Upright One

Let us first turn to Matthew 1:18–25. The Bible describes Joseph as “a just man” who did not desire for Mary to be “a public example, [so he] minded to put her away secretly” (v. 19).

Though his fiancée Mary was pregnant with a child that was not his, Joseph did not want to publicly shame her. Instead, he wanted to take care of this matter quietly. From this, we can see that Joseph was able to find the balance between justice and mercy. Though it appeared as if Joseph had been wronged, he made the decision to keep the news from growing into a great scandal. It was not until after the angel of the Lord appeared to him that Joseph understood that Mary had actually conceived through the Holy Spirit.

2. A Man of Faith

Apart from being just, Joseph was also faithful, illustrated in his submission to the will of God. After his dream, he did not question God’s message, but did exactly as the angel of the Lord commanded him (v. 24). He took Mary into his home to be his wife and named the baby Jesus. This is not the only time the Bible records Joseph’s obedience to God’s commands. Shortly after Jesus’ birth, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph again, telling him to escape to Egypt because King Herod wanted to kill baby Jesus (Mt 2:13–14). Joseph heeded this warning and immediately took Mary and baby Jesus to depart for Egypt in the middle of the night. Upon Herod’s death, the angel of the Lord appeared again, telling him that it was safe to return to the land of Israel (vv. 19–21). After his return to the land of Israel, they settled in a town called Nazareth in Galilee. It was there that he worked as a carpenter (Mt 13:55).

3. A Spiritual Father

Joseph himself was well versed in the laws of God and followed them faithfully. In turn, he made sure Jesus was brought up in spiritual matters. He had Jesus circumcised on the eighth day (Lk 2:21) and also “brought [Jesus] to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord [...] and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord” (vv. 22–24). Every year, Joseph brought Jesus to Jerusalem to keep the Passover.

4. A Caring and Responsible Father

Lastly, let us turn to Luke 2:41–51. While returning from one of these journeys to Jerusalem, Jesus Christ, who was twelve years old, stayed behind. Joseph and Mary were unaware that Jesus had not returned with them. When they realized that Jesus was missing, they returned to Jerusalem. After three days, they finally found Him in the temple listening to teachers and asking them questions. Let’s read Luke 2:48: “So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, ‘Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously.’”

Throughout this whole incident, the Bible does not record Joseph as saying anything, but from

the words of Mary, we can see that he must have been anxious to find Jesus. Just as any father would be worried to have lost their child, Joseph was worried about what had happened to Jesus. Even though Jesus was not Joseph's child by blood, God had given him the responsibility to be a father to Jesus Christ. And we can see that Joseph cared greatly for Jesus as his own.

B. Mary

1. Favored by the Lord

Let us turn to Luke 1:26–38. In verse 28, the angel said, “Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!” To be favored is to be blessed. Mary was favored by the Lord because she had been chosen to bring the Messiah, Jesus Christ, into this world. This was a blessing and duty for her to carry out.

2. A Humble Servant

Like Joseph, Mary also received a message concerning the birth of Jesus. She was initially troubled by the words of the angel, not knowing why an angel appeared to her. The angel of the Lord told her that she would give birth to a son. Mary's response is an illustration of her humility. She knew that to have a child out of wedlock would bring her shame. Despite this, she submitted and said, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord!” (v. 38). Her acceptance of God's will for her to carry such an unimaginable responsibility also illustrates her trust in God.

We can also see her humility by taking a closer look at her praises in Luke 1:46–55. She refers often to Psalms and other Old Testament scriptures, revealing that she was quite knowledgeable concerning the word of God. In her song, she repeatedly proclaimed God's almightiness and the many great things He has done. In comparison, she described her lowly status before Him. Though she could have exalted herself for being chosen to give birth to the Messiah, she instead proclaimed, “My soul magnifies the Lord” (v. 46). Her words demonstrate her self-awareness about her status before God. Though she was so lowly and God so great, He was still willing to use her to do His great works. This is the type of God she worshiped.

3. Kind-Hearted

After receiving the angel's message, Mary hurried to visit her relative Elizabeth. Out of her kindness and love, Mary then spent the next three months with Elizabeth during Elizabeth's last months of pregnancy (Lk 1:56). Another example of her kindness can be seen during the wedding at Cana (Jn 2:1–11). Seeing that the banquet was running out of wine, Mary went to Jesus, believing that He would be able to help the situation and save the banquet hosts from embarrassment. Mary believed so firmly in Jesus' power that she even said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it” (Jn 2:5). In the end, Jesus turned the water into wine, manifesting His glory; as a result, His disciples believed in Him (Jn 2:11).

4. Kept and Pondered Things in Her Heart

When Mary was first approached by Gabriel, her reaction to the angel's words was not laughter, disbelief, or even joy. She was “troubled,” and “considered what manner of greeting this was” (Lk 1:29). When a group of shepherds shared what they had witnessed regarding Jesus' birth, those who heard it “marveled,” but Mary “kept” and “pondered” these things in her heart (Lk 2:18–19). It is clear that Mary was not one to leap to conclusions, but a thoughtful person who spent time treasuring, questioning, and meditating upon things in her life. Later, when she and Joseph found Jesus in the temple, “they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them,” but “His mother kept all these things in her heart” (Lk 2:49–51). The Greek word for

“kept” can also be translated as *preserved*. In other words, she cherished and treasured the things that she witnessed – even the things that she didn’t understand.

5. A Loving Mother to the End

Though Mary was joyful for being chosen, we can see that she suffered as a result. In Luke 2:35, Simeon prophesied to her that “a sword will pierce through [her] own soul” concerning her Child. Even as Mary witnessed the horror and pain that Jesus had to endure on the cross, she refused to leave His side (Jn 19:25). For a parent, it is often more painful to see their child suffer than to endure their own suffering. No one would blame her if she decided to leave. But she put aside her own needs to remain by the cross and be there for Jesus. And Jesus, full of love, asked apostle John to take care of His mother before He gave up His last breath (Jn 19:26–27).

C. Their Roles in God’s salvation Plan

God changed the direction of Mary and Joseph’s lives in ways that they would never have thought. They could never have imagined that they would become the earthly parents of the Messiah. However, they were both chosen to play a part in God’s salvation plan. The Lord called them to raise the Child that would grow to be the Savior of the world. Through their humility and submission to His calling, they were able to experience the miracle of Jesus’ birth and the fulfillment of the prophecy of the coming Messiah as spoken in Isaiah 7:14. Jesus came into this world exactly as prophesied; He was born from a virgin.

Furthermore, we can see God’s heart in choosing Mary and Joseph. God could have placed Jesus Christ in a wealthy family or even in the household of a king, but He allowed Jesus to be born in the house of a carpenter from a small town. From this, we can see that God chooses based not on earthly standards, such as wealth, social status, or education, but on the heart and virtues of the person. Though Mary and Joseph came from humble backgrounds, they were lowly and submissive in heart. These characteristics allowed them to be used by the Lord to fulfill His wonderful will.

Since they had found favor with God, and God had chosen them and entrusted them with raising Jesus, He also protected them from harm that could have come their way, such as the threat from King Herod. It is through God’s protection that Joseph and Mary were able to raise Jesus Christ and to allow Him to grow in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Check for Understanding

1. Find Bible verses that show how Joseph was:

- An upright and just man (*Mt 1:19*)
- A man of faith (*Mt 1:24*)
- A spiritual father (*Lk 2:21–24*)
- A caring and responsible father (*Lk 2:41–49*)

2. Find Bible verses that show how Mary was:

- Favored by the Lord (*Lk 1:28*)
- A humble servant (*Lk 1:48*)
- Kind-hearted (*Lk 1:56*)
- One who kept and pondered things in her heart (*Lk 2:19, 51*)
- A loving mother to the end (*Jn 19:25*)

- 3. What blessings did Mary and Joseph receive because of God's choosing?** They experienced the miracle of Jesus' birth and the protection of God, and they also saw the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy concerning Jesus Christ.

Life Application

1. A Vessel Useful for the Lord

"Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work."

(2 Timothy 2:21)

Mary and Joseph had the unique opportunity to raise Jesus Christ, the Son of God. God could have chosen anyone, but He chose Mary and Joseph. They did not have great wealth, nor were they nobility, but God does not look upon these things. Instead, God saw their heart of faith and willingness to submit to His plan for them. Today, we have also been chosen to be His children. However, in order for God use us, we must first prepare ourselves both physically and mentally.

When we practice an instrument or learn a new language in school, we are preparing ourselves to serve the Lord. But in addition to building up our physical talents, we must also build up our hearts.

a. Cultivate a heart of obedience

Obedience is a characteristic that we have to cultivate. It does not come naturally but requires us to deny ourselves. God has told us that those who are obedient to His word are blessed (Lk 11:28). If we are able to be obedient in the small things, then we are able to grow in our heart of obedience.

Example: When we are told to clean the restroom, we do not complain about the task. Instead, we clean it with joy!

b. Be faithful in the small things

Similar to practicing obedience, when we complete what God has entrusted to us in faith, we are training ourselves in faithfulness. God will then give us more opportunities to serve. Luke 16:10 tells us: "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much."

Example: When we have been given the duty to be a hymn leader or a pianist, we make sure we arrive early to pray and prepare our hearts.

c. Ask God to help us overcome our struggles

When we serve God, we may find it difficult to serve faithfully when we are experiencing struggles. We do not have to be perfect in order to serve God, but it is important that we ask God to help us overcome the struggles that we are experiencing. Whether we are always tempted to lie, or face an addiction of some sort, the process of overcoming our struggles is not a one-day process. We must strive to overcome and put in a long-term effort to improve ourselves. What struggles do you face? How can you improve yourself?

Example: We can try to find one thing each week to work on, such as our speech or our actions. We can make the determination to say thank you to our parents, instead of complaining, or we can try to put away our phones or electronic devices during dinnertime.

When we prepare ourselves properly with the right heart, then God will be able to use us fully in the work that He has planned for us. This preparation begins today!

Discussion

- What is your motivation to serve the Lord? Do you do it because you want to or because you have been assigned?
- In what areas do you need to cultivate your obedience?
- In what areas do you need to be faithful in the small things?
- Upon what areas do you still need to improve so that you can serve God wholeheartedly?

2. Trusting in God's Plan

Oftentimes, God will place us in situations that are not part of our plans. Joseph and Mary could never have guessed that they would become the earthly parents of Jesus Christ. Joseph was given the responsibility of taking care of a Child that was not his own. Mary was given a Child that she would have to see suffer on the cross. However, God planned all these things.

Today, we will also encounter many situations in our lives that may not go according to our plans. Through the struggles and hardship in our lives, we must always remember to trust in God's plan for our life. Mary and Joseph had been given their roles to be part of God's salvation plan, and God protected them along the way.

God has a plan for us, and it is important that we come to trust in this greater plan for our lives. When we encounter a trial, it may be a reminder that God wants us to remember to be humble and rely on Him. When we become ill, it may be a reminder that God wants us to be grateful when we are healthy. The difficulties we experience can be the building blocks that strengthen and build up our faith.

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."

(Romans 8:28)

God has already called us. As we continue to love Him wholeheartedly, He will continue to work in our lives. The good or the bad that happens will become good, as long as we trust in His plan and hold on to Him.

Discussion

- Share a difficulty that God allowed in your life to help you grow.
- Share one thing you learned from experiencing that difficulty.
- If you had not experienced that difficulty, what do you imagine might be different today?

Memory Verse

"Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord." (Luke 1:45)

Context

Elizabeth spoke this blessing to Mary when Mary came to visit her.

Meaning

1. Her words were an encouragement that God's words are faithful and that those who trust in His words will be blessed.
2. Because Mary believed, all that the Lord told her would be fulfilled.
3. When we believe in God's promise, He will fulfill His will in our lives.

Conclusion

God chose Mary and Joseph to be part of His salvation plan. Though they came from humble origins, they were good and useful vessels because they possessed many spiritual virtues. God chose them to fulfill His great will because He looks not at the outward appearance, but at the heart (1 Sam 16:7). Today, let us continue to cultivate and prepare ourselves so that we can be useful vessels for the Lord.

Lesson 2 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What is the context for the memory verse? How do these words encourage us?
They are Elizabeth's words to Mary when she visited. They are an encouragement that God's words are faithful, and that those who trust in His words will be blessed. When we believe in God's promises, He will fulfill His will in our lives.
2. We learned four characteristics of Joseph today. Pick two and explain how he shows each.
See Section A.
3. We learned five characteristics of Mary today. Pick two and explain how she shows each.
See Section B.
4. What virtues allowed Joseph and Mary to be vessels for God's salvation plan?
They were both lowly, humble, and submissive in heart to God's will.
5. How can we become vessels useful for the Lord?
Cultivate a heart of obedience, be faithful in the small things, and ask God to help us overcome our struggles. We must also trust in God's greater plan for our lives.
6. What is one thing you can work on this week to help you serve God wholeheartedly?
Personal answers.

John the Baptist

Passages: Mt 3:2, 4; 11:3, 11; 14:1–12; Mk 1:4–6; Lk 1; 3:4–14; 5:33; Jn 3:27–29

Memory Verse

“He must increase, but I must decrease.” (John 3:30)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Work [Behavior]
John’s baptism and his messages were both a call to repentance and to bear fruit worthy of repentance.	God is a living God who fulfills His plans according to His will.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Truly repent by confessing our sins and bearing fruit.2. Stand firm in our beliefs and our faith in God.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. His Background
 1. Prophecy from an angel
 2. His birth
- B. His Life and Character
 1. A life of simplicity
 2. A life of boldness
 3. A life of humility
- C. His Role
 1. His work
 2. His baptism
- D. His Doubts
- E. His Beheading

Life Application

1. Repentance (Mt 3:2)
2. Bearing Fruits Worthy of Repentance (Lk 3:7–14)

Memory Verse

Conclusion: Be fearless in the face of persecution and death, as John the Baptist was. Be bold in saying, “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil 1:21). Stand firm in our faith to the end!

Introduction

Throughout history, God moved many prophets to speak prophecies concerning the Messiah. Let us take a look at a few passages and see how the Bible describes John the Baptist.

- “As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying: ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight. Every valley shall be filled. And every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight. And the rough ways smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God”’” (Lk 3:4–6).
- “He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Lk 1:17).
- “Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he” (Mt 11:11).

A. His Background (Lk 1:6)

Let’s first review what we have learned about John’s parents, Zacharias and Elizabeth. Both were of the family of Aaron, and Zacharias served the Lord as a priest during the reign of Herod in Judea. We learned in lesson one that “Zacharias” means, “the Lord remembers,” and Elizabeth, “the oath of God.” They had been born and raised in homes of priestly families who served the temple in Jerusalem.

1. Prophecy from an angel (Lk 1:8–17)

While Zacharias was performing his priestly service before God, the angel Gabriel suddenly appeared to him, “standing on the right side of the altar of incense” (v. 11). Though frightening, it must have been amazing to be in the presence of an angel. Gabriel told Zacharias not to be afraid, assuring him that his petition had been heard. His wife would bear him a son, and he would name him John. Not only that, he would have joy and gladness, and many would rejoice at the birth of John. Clearly, Zacharias’ child would not simply be any child. He would be the forerunner of the Messiah, as predicted by the prophet Malachi (Mal 3:1; 4:5–6).

2. His birth (Lk 1:57–79)

John the Baptist’s birth was unlike most. Zacharias had been mute for the duration of Elizabeth’s pregnancy. But on the day of John’s circumcision, at the moment of John’s naming, Zacharias’ tongue loosened and he spoke, fulfilling the prophecy spoken by the angel (Lk 1:20)! This miracle made Zacharias and the people clearly aware that the Lord’s hand was with the child. The name “John” means, “God is gracious.” The meaning of this God-given name and the loosening of Zacharias’ tongue during John’s naming sent a powerful message to everyone. Through these miraculous events, God was already preparing the people’s hearts for the gospel.

B. His Life and Character

The angel told Zacharias that John would be “great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb” (Lk 1:15). True to the angel’s words, John lived a life dedicated entirely to God’s purpose. The Bible adds that “the hand of the Lord was with him,” and that as he grew, he “became strong in spirit” (Lk 1:66, 80). The angel’s proclamation that John would “drink neither wine nor strong drink” was one of the Nazirite vows. Like Samson, John was an unusual case in that he was a Nazirite for his entire life. This meant that he had been separated to serve the Lord.

1. A Life of Simplicity

John the Baptist lived in Judea, between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea. He led a simple life, wearing clothing made from camel's hair and eating locusts and wild honey (Mt 3:4; Mk 1:4–6). *(Note: Locusts, or akrides, are large grasshoppers still eaten in the East, not to be confused with the fruit of the "locust tree.")*

John the Baptist also led an upright life. He often fasted (Lk 5:33), and tax collectors and soldiers would seek him for advice on how to act correctly before God. Let us turn to Luke 3:12–14. John taught them to do their jobs in a righteous manner. This teaching is also important and relevant for us today—we should not engage in dishonest actions or deal with others immorally.

2. A Life of Boldness

When the multitudes came to John to receive his baptism, he spoke boldly about their hypocrisy, calling them a "brood of vipers" (Lk 3:7). John the Baptist also spoke fearlessly with courage when he rebuked King Herod in Mark 6:18, saying, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." He knew that by rebuking the king and telling the truth, his life would be at stake, but he refused to waver in his righteousness. As Christian soldiers, we all need this boldness when speaking the truth.

3. A Life of Humility

When people came to John the Baptist to receive baptism, he acknowledged that a mightier One would come to baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire (Lk 3:15–16). He recognized that his role had been graciously given to him so that He could point people to Jesus. While John's ministry called people to repentance, Christ's ministry would sanctify and renew the life of believers. Therefore, Christ's ministry would be "mightier" than John's. Humility is really knowing who God is. The more we humble ourselves before God, the more we see how great and majestic His power and glory are.

C. His Role

John's mission was to declare God's message of repentance to prepare the hearts of the people for the coming of the Lord Jesus. Like Elijah, who turned the hearts of the Israelites back to God through his faithful perseverance and divine power, John also carried out a powerful ministry. He announced to the people the coming of the Savior who would deliver them from their sins.

1. His work

At that time, "the word of God came to John [and] he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (Lk 3:2–3). Filled with the Spirit, John clearly understood his work: To "go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Lk 1:17). Much later, when his own disciples complained about the numbers flocking to Jesus Christ, John chided them gently saying, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (Jn 3:30). He understood that he himself was of no importance, but told his disciples, "I have been sent before Him" (Jn 3:28).

2. His baptism

John's baptism of repentance led people to Christ and prepared them for His coming. When

Jesus Christ came, though, the people had to put their trust in Him in order to receive atonement through His blood. Therefore, after Jesus Christ died on the cross and resurrected, those who had previously accepted John's message were also required to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.

D. His Doubts

When John the Baptist was thrown into prison, he began to have doubts. He sent some of his disciples to ask Jesus, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" (Mt 11:3). Jesus replied, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me" (Mt 11:4–6).

Jesus plainly answered John's doubts by telling him of all the wonderful acts that were taking place, visual evidence proving that Jesus was indeed the prophesied Messiah and the only Savior. At times, when we doubt God or wonder whether or not we have truly been saved, we can read the promises recorded in the Bible and recall the grace of God in our lives. Don't shift your sight from Jesus, but rather, draw closer and fix your eyes on Him in the moments when you begin to doubt.

E. His Beheading

Let us study Matthew 14:1–12 to learn about the details surrounding John the Baptist's beheading.

To mark his birthday, Herod celebrated with a great feast in the palace. Herodias presented her daughter to dance before the guests. Her dance pleased Herod greatly, so he offered to grant any request that she asked him. At her mother's prompting, she asked for John the Baptist's head, which agitated King Herod. He did not want to put John to death for fear of the multitude (v. 5). Yet, he could not retract his oath nor deny the request. That night, John was beheaded in prison and his head brought on a platter for the young woman. Scripture does not record what happened to John's head, but his disciples came and buried the body. So, John the Baptist's life came to a tragic and abrupt ending.

We must understand in our hearts the reality that even someone as important as a forerunner for Jesus Christ was not guaranteed a smooth-sailing life. John the Baptist demonstrated great faith in his mission and in God, but in the end, he was imprisoned and beheaded by his thirties. Likewise, we have no guarantee of a long life or great accomplishments in the church ministry. However, we should continue to serve with joy if God is willing to use us to shine for Him and bring others to Christ.

Life Application

John lived a life of purpose: to introduce others to Jesus. Furthermore, he recognized the importance of repenting of one's sins in order to live for Christ.

1. Repentance (Mt 3:2)

John the Baptist preached a message of repentance: confess your sins, receive baptism, and bear fruit. He boldly proclaimed, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (Mt 3:2). He also recognized when people came to receive baptism but did not have a heart of repentance: "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, 'Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore, bear fruits worthy of repentance'" (Mt 3:7–8).

The Greek word for “repent” means “to change one’s mind.” The Jewish religious leaders believed that they were saved by their own righteousness, which came from their obedience to the law. When John told them to “bear fruits worthy of repentance,” he was telling them to change their minds and admit that they could not save themselves. Only a Savior could bring them salvation.

First, let us examine what it means to repent. Then, we will learn how we can restore our relationship with God when we have sinned.

a. Confess your sin

Nobody likes to admit when they are wrong. But the Bible tells us, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 Jn 1:8). Denying our sin does not help us. We may fool ourselves into thinking that we are pure and righteous, but we still stand guilty before God. Rather, we must come before Him, tell Him that we are sorry and determine not to return to sin. God’s love is so great that He will freely pardon us when we repent: “If we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn 1:9).

b. Let the truth be our guide

The Bible is our moral standard; it helps us see where we have gone wrong. Like a mirror, God’s word shows us our shortcomings so that we may correct ourselves (Jas 1:22–25). Like a double-edged sword, God’s word strengthens our faith but also exposes sins that we may not even be aware of (Heb 4:12). We need to examine ourselves constantly with the help of scriptural teachings. Then, we will not be led astray by sin’s deceitfulness.

c. Fast and pray

We can see from the Bible that sin and repentance often go hand in hand with fasting and prayer. When the people of Nineveh learned that God was going to destroy their great city in forty days, they immediately fasted and prayed. The king even issued a proclamation, “Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water” (Jon 3:7). For their complete repentance, the Bible tells us that “God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it” (Jon 3:10).

d. Walk in the light

True repentance involves not only confession, but also a change of heart and of actions (Isa 55:7). In our daily lives, we must shun evil and practice righteousness. “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 Jn 1:6–7) (*A New Life in Christ*, Week 9).¹

From these four steps, we can see that repentance is more than just regret. It requires a change in our lifestyle.

2. Bear Fruits Worthy of Repentance (Lk 3:7–14)

¹ TJC Department of Literary Ministry, “Week 9: Repentance”, *A New Life in Christ*, (Malaysia: True Jesus Church, 2018), <http://ia.tjc.org/elibrary/ContentDetail.aspx?ItemID=1034&langid=1>, “Walk in the Light”.

Genuine repentance will bring forth fruit worthy of repentance. Each “fruit” we bear is the outward expression of our deep inner conviction. Thus, if we do not bear fruit, then we have not truly repented. When we sincerely repent, or change our minds, we are willing to obey our Lord’s teachings.

Let us study Luke 3:7–14 to understand what it means to repent. Notice the three exhortations to the crowds, the tax collectors, and the soldiers. John the Baptist was teaching them about the fruits that grow on the tree of repentance.

- a. **First**, to the multitude, “He answered and said to them, ‘He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise’” (v. 11).
- b. **Second**, to the tax collectors, “Collect no more than what is appointed for you” (v. 13).
- c. **Third**, to the soldiers, “Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages” (v. 14).

In these three instances, John spoke in reference to their possessions and their money. Jesus said, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Lk 12:34). John asked the multitude to give of what they had. That means if we have clothing and food, we need to share them with those who lack them. John then instructed the tax collectors not to take more than their appointed share. Lastly, John taught the soldiers not to intimidate or bear false witness and to be content with what they had been given.

From these, we know that we bear fruit worthy of repentance when we:

- Give freely;
- Take only what is ours;
- Deal with others truthfully and peacefully; and
- Are content.

We need to trust that God will provide, and we must “be content with such things as [we] have. For [God] has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you’” (Heb 13:5).

Discussion Questions

- In which areas do you need to bear fruits worthy of repentance?
- Which of your possessions can you give to those in need?
- The Bible teaches us to be content with what we have. In what ways can we truly live a lifestyle that reflects contentment?

Check for Understanding

1. **What was John the Baptist’s family background?** His parents Zacharias and Elizabeth were descended from the family of Aaron and described as a god-fearing couple.
2. **What message did John the Baptist preach?** John’s mission was to declare God’s message of repentance to prepare the hearts of the people for the coming of the Lord Jesus. He said, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” (Mt 3:2).
3. **How do we know that John the Baptist was a humble worker?** He understood that he was only preparing the way for Jesus Christ, the mightier One (Mt 3:11). He also recognized that Jesus was the Christ and that he must decrease while Jesus must increase (Jn 3:28, 30).
4. **How did John the Baptist work boldly for God?** He courageously confronted the Pharisees about their sinful behavior (Mt 3:7–9). In addition, he boldly rebuked King Herod for his sins, even though this action could lead to death (Mt 14:1–4).

5. What does it mean to truly repent? We must “change our mind” and our lifestyle; simply regretting our past sins is not enough. When we truly repent, we will bear fruits worthy of repentance.

Memory Verse

“He must increase, but I must decrease.” (John 3:30)

Meaning

John the Baptist descended from a family of priests, the most respected order in Israel. The Scriptures tell us that he was filled with the Holy Spirit since birth, yet he referred to himself as only “the voice of one crying in the wilderness” (Jn 1:23). Can you see his humility? When John the Baptist preached repentance, multitudes came to the Jordan River to receive his baptism.

One day, John’s disciples came to tell him that Jesus was receiving much more attention than he was. But John replied, “You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ,’ but, ‘I have been sent before Him’” (Jn 3:28). Then, John the Baptist continued, saying, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (Jn 3:30). John the Baptist did not engage in a power struggle, nor did he bear ill will towards Jesus Christ. Rather, he demonstrated meekness and lowliness of heart. That was the greatness of John the Baptist.

We all need to have this mindset. Are we decreasing, while Christ is increasing? How much of God truly lives in us?

Conclusion

John lived his life entirely for God. Miraculously conceived, he was set apart for a purposeful life. His baptism of repentance taught the multitudes to repent of one’s sins in order to live a holy and godly life. Moreover, his life is an example of demonstrating humility within zealously for God’s work. John proclaimed Jesus as the coming Messiah fearlessly, his message bold, strong, and full of faith. He courageously confronted the Pharisees about their sinful behavior. And he died with conviction after correcting a king’s wrongdoing.

We are blessed to live in areas that exercise religious freedom; it is not often that we encounter persecution for our beliefs. Yet, John the Baptist’s death teaches us what it means to stand firm in our faith, regardless of the situation. As believers of Christ, our faith will be put to the test in some way, sooner or later. Will we be fearless in facing persecution and death like John the Baptist? Do we have the boldness to say, “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil 1:21)? Can we stand firm in our faith to the end?

Lesson 3 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What kind of mindset is the memory verse teaching us to have?
It is teaching us to have a humble mindset, where Christ increases in our hearts while we ourselves decrease, so that God can truly live in us.
2. What characteristics can we see in John the Baptist's life?
Simple and upright; bold; humble.
3. Pick one of the above characteristics and briefly explain how we can see it in John's life.
Simple and upright: he wore clothing of camel's hair and ate only locusts and honey. He also fasted often, and many came to him for advice on how to live their lives before God.

Bold: He spoke boldly of the Pharisee's hypocrisy when the multitudes came to him for baptism, calling them a "brood of vipers" (Lk 3:7). He also rebuked King Herod despite the threat to his life.

Humble: He did not seek to exalt himself. Rather, he knew that Jesus was the promised Messiah and understood that his role was to point people towards Jesus, not himself. So, he told others that a mightier One than he would come to baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.
4. What was the difference between John's baptism and the baptism Jesus' disciples performed?
John's baptism of repentance led people to Christ and prepared them for His coming. When Jesus Christ came, though, the people had to put their trust in Him in order to receive atonement through His blood. The baptism Jesus' disciples performed was for the remission of sins.
5. What are the steps to repentance? Briefly explain each.
 - a. *Confess your sin: We stand guilty before God regardless of our own feelings on the matter. We must come before Him and tell Him we are sorry and determine not to return to sin.*
 - b. *Let the truth be our guide: The Bible is our moral standard and helps us see where we have gone wrong. We need to examine ourselves constantly using its teachings so that we will not be led astray by sin's deceitfulness.*
 - c. *Fast and pray: Sin and repentance often go hand in hand with fasting and prayer, as seen in many biblical examples, such as with the people of Nineveh.*
 - d. *Walk in the light: True repentance is not simply confession, but also a change of heart and of actions. We must shun evil and practice righteousness in our daily lives.*
6. What action can you take this week to begin to bear fruit worthy of repentance?
Personal answers. (Try to encourage "actionable" responses, responses that can be checked off or measured, rather than vague replies.)

Peter

Passages: Mt 4:17–20; Mk 1:17–18; Lk 5:3–11; 22:56–62; Jn 1:40–42; 21:15–22

Memory Verse

“Then He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ They immediately left their nets and followed Him.” (Matthew 4:19–20)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Work [Behavior]
Peter transformed from a fisherman to a fisher of men.	God is loving and patient.	Pray to be transformed through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Jesus Calls Peter
- B. Peter Lacks Spiritual Maturity
- C. Peter Denies Jesus
- D. Jesus Restores Peter
- E. Peter Transforms into a Rock

Life Application: Transform Through Jesus’ Love and Power

Memory Verse

Conclusion: Through the power of His Holy Spirit, let us gain the strength to overcome our weaknesses and be transformed into a steadfast worker for the Lord.

Events and Spiritual Teachings

Introduction

When Jesus Christ called Peter, Peter was only a lowly fisherman from the village of Bethsaida. However, Jesus Christ could see Peter's potential to become a pillar and rock for the church. Though Peter's transformation took years, filled with many ups and downs, he eventually grew into a strong worker for the Lord. Today, we're going to look at some key events in Peter's life to gain a better understanding of his transformation and discipleship.

A. Jesus Calls Peter (Jn 1:40–42; Mt 4:17–20; Mk 1:16–18; Lk 5:3–11)

"[Andrew] first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, 'You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas' (which is translated, A Stone)."

(John 1:41–42)

Peter's brother Andrew brought him to Jesus; it is in this first meeting that Jesus Christ calls Peter *Cephas* (Aramaic), or *Peter* (Greek), meaning "stone." This change in Peter's name signifies a turning point in his life. Jesus Christ recognized Peter's potential, knowing that he would become a foundation and pillar for the apostolic church.

After their first meeting, Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee one day and called to Peter and Andrew, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Mt 4:19). Hearing Jesus' call, they immediately left their nets and followed Him, and became two of Jesus' first disciples. They responded to Jesus' calling immediately, for though they did not completely understand who Jesus was, they discerned that He was unlike any other man.

B. Peter Lacks Spiritual Maturity

Though Peter followed Jesus Christ, he was often impulsive in both speech and in action.

Let's look at some examples.

Passage	Event	Peter's Reaction
Mk 9:2–8	Jesus transfigured before Peter, James, and John on a high mountain	He was afraid and spoke without understanding, saying, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."
Mt 16:21–23	Jesus told His disciples that He was going to Jerusalem to suffer and be killed and then resurrected on the third day	He rebuked Jesus saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"
Mt 26:31–35	Jesus told His disciples that they would all stumble because of Him	He said to Jesus, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble. [...] Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!"
Jn 13:5–9	Jesus washed His disciples' feet	He said, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus replied, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."

		Then Peter replied, “Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!”
Jn 18:10–11	Jesus was arrested in the garden of Gethsemane	He drew a sword and cut off the right ear of the high priest’s servant.

From these examples, we can see Peter’s tendency to speak and act without understanding, due to his lack of spiritual maturity and wisdom. Instead of meditating on God’s words, he reacted according to his emotions. He didn’t take the time to consider why Jesus did and said these things. Most importantly, he didn’t have full understanding of God’s will: for Jesus Christ to suffer and die for the sins of mankind. Zealous and devoted, Peter believed that he would never deny Jesus because he was blind to the fear and doubt in his heart. Similarly, it can be easy for us to think that our faith is strong when our lives are peaceful. However, the true test of a person’s faith comes when we must act in the face of adversity.

C. Peter Denies Jesus

Just as Jesus predicted, He was captured in the garden of Gethsemane, prompting His disciples to scatter. However, Peter continued to follow Jesus from afar (Jn 18:15–16). As Jesus stood before the high priest to be questioned, Peter waited outside near the door.

Peter’s three denials (Lk 22:56–60; cf. Mt 26:68–74; Mk 14:66–71; Jn 18:17–27)

1	And a certain servant girl, seeing him as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him and said, “This man was also with Him.” But he denied Him, saying, “Woman, I do not know Him. ”
2	And after a little while another saw him and said, “You also are of them.” But Peter said, “Man, I am not! ”
3	Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, “Surely this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean.” But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are saying! ” Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed.

It is understandable why Peter denied Jesus. All of his peers had fled, and the teacher that he had followed for the past three years was arrested and facing trial. He was alone. Oftentimes, when we are around family and fellow church members, it can be easy to say that we are followers of Christ. But when we have to defend our beliefs in the midst of people who do not share our beliefs, it becomes difficult.

“And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ So Peter went out and wept bitterly.”

(Luke 22:61–62)

Peter’s heart broke when Jesus turned and looked at him. Though he had spoken so boldly before, he now saw that his words had been empty. The shame of this realization caused him to weep bitterly. Peter saw his weakness clearly for the first time and realized that he was not as strong as he thought.

However, Jesus already knew about Peter’s weakness and even prayed that Peter would be able to rise again after his failure (Lk 22:31–32).

D. Jesus Restores Peter

Let us turn to John 21:1–13.

Jesus Christ’s disciples were greatly disheartened after He was crucified on the cross. A few, including Peter, even returned to being fishermen because they were without direction. They fished all night long but caught no fish. In the morning, Jesus Christ stood on the shore, but the disciples didn’t know it was Him. He asked them, “Children, have you any food?” (v. 5). They answered, “No.” He then told them they would find some if they cast their nets on the right side of the boat. When they followed His command, they caught so many fish that they were unable to pull up the net.

Likewise, there may be times when we encounter failure in our walk of faith. Though we strive to do good, our bodies do not listen, so we feel defeated and discouraged. At that point, it may seem easier to revert to our old selves that lived in sin. However, we cannot allow our failures to remain failures. Rather, we must grasp them as opportunities for us to learn from our mistakes and, through God’s power, stand up once again.

When Peter heard one of the disciples say, “It is the Lord!”, Peter jumped into the water and swam to Jesus on the shore while the rest of the disciples followed close behind in the boat. Jesus saw their despondence and lack of direction without Him. As a result, He called upon Peter to stand up once more and guide His sheep.

Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him (Jn 21:15–17)

1	So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “ Feed My lambs. ”
2	He said to him again a second time, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “ Tend My sheep. ”
3	He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?” Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?” And he said to Him, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said to him, “ Feed My sheep. ”

Just as Peter denied Jesus three times, Jesus Christ asked Peter three times to feed and take care of His sheep. Why? To strengthen Peter and build up his faith after he had denied Jesus. Jesus’ first question to Peter was: “Do you love me?” The Greek word for “love” was *agapaō*, a sacrificial love. Peter replied, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” Here, Peter used a different Greek word for “love,” *phileō*, which referred to a brotherly kind of love. When Jesus repeated His question, Peter responded the same way.

Before Jesus’ crucifixion, Peter claimed to love Him, even to death. However, after Jesus died on the cross and resurrected, Peter realized his love for Jesus was not at that point yet. So, when Jesus asked

Peter if he loved Him sacrificially, Peter replied honestly. He indeed loved Jesus, but not sacrificially. From this, we can see that he had come to understand himself better after denying Him.

Then, Jesus asked the question, “Do you love Me?”, using *phileō* instead. Here we can see the Lord’s heart. Jesus Christ understood Peter’s limitations and was willing to meet him where he was. At the same time, Jesus gave him a mission to tend and feed His sheep. Jesus wanted Peter to know that to tend His sheep, his *phileō* must transform into *agapaō*.

After instructing Peter to tend and feed His sheep, Jesus Christ once again commanded Peter, “Follow Me” (Jn 21:19, 22). Jesus first said this phrase to Peter during his initial calling (Mt 4:19). Peter had followed Jesus for three years already. He witnessed many miracles and signs as Jesus worked to glorify God. He listened to Jesus as He taught God’s word. He saw Jesus’ transfiguration on a mountain. However, with his denials of Jesus Christ, Peter realized that he had not truly “followed” Jesus. Now, Jesus Christ was giving him a second chance to follow Him once again. This was the beginning of Peter’s transformation.

E. Peter Transforms into a Rock

After Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, it was time for the disciples to begin the work that had been entrusted to them. First, they had to wait in Jerusalem for the helper that Jesus Christ had promised to send them. On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended on around 120 people who were praying together in the upper room.

With the Holy Spirit abiding within, Peter was transformed. His bold words were no longer empty—his first sermon was full of wisdom and a clear understanding of the Scriptures. When he preached to the gathered Jews, his words cut through their hearts and around 3,000 people came to be baptized that day (Acts 2:41). The Holy Spirit also gave Peter the power to perform great miracles. He healed a lame beggar and boldly preached to the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:8). He cast out evil spirits, and the ill were healed just by touching his shadow (Acts 5:15). He willingly suffered persecution and imprisonment, and even rejoiced that he was “counted worthy to suffer shame for [Jesus Christ’s] name” (Acts 5:40–42). Most importantly, God used Peter to preach the gospel of salvation to the Gentiles (Acts 10).

Later in life, Peter wrote 1 and 2 Peter. His letters encouraged members who were facing persecution and warned them to fight against the false teachings that had entered the church. Jesus Christ once said: “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church” (Mt 16:18). Peter truly became a steadfast worker in the church of God who strengthened members (Gal 2:9). His letters also reveal his transformation from impulsiveness to humility. Peter encouraged members to clothe themselves with humility towards one another. The low points in Peter’s life opened his eyes and allowed him to understand the importance of submitting to the will of God. It is when we are humbled that God will be there to lift us up.

Despite his many weaknesses and failures, Jesus Christ restored and empowered Peter, allowing him to transform into the “rock” of the church. Jesus’ prayer for Peter’s faith and the power of the Holy Spirit worked together to turn Peter from a brash disciple to a great and powerful worker for the Lord. The once lowly fisherman had now become a great fisher of men for God.

Check for Understanding

1. Who brought Peter to Jesus Christ? Andrew, Peter’s brother.

2. **Why did Jesus change Peter's name from Simon to Peter?** To indicate Peter's role in the church after Jesus Christ ascended to heaven.
3. **What was Peter's weakness? Please give an example to support your answer.** Peter's lack of spiritual maturity caused him to act impulsively; Mk 9:2–8; Mt 16:21–23; 26:31–35; Jn 13:5–9; 18:10–11.
4. **When did Peter finally see his weakness clearly?** After he denied Jesus three times.
5. **Why did Jesus ask Peter "Do you love Me?" three times?** To restore Peter and also to demonstrate His forgiveness and love towards him.
6. **How was Peter transformed after he received the Holy Spirit?** He received power in preaching, in healing, and in enduring persecution.

Life Application

Transform Through Jesus' Love and Power

Though Peter started his journey as a lowly fisherman, Jesus Christ called him to do a greater work: to be a fisher of men. However, Peter had to experience a transformation before becoming the rock that Jesus knew he would one day become. It was through Jesus Christ's love and patience, and the abidance of the Holy Spirit, that Peter was finally able to live up to his name. Today, God also waits for us and desires to help us transform into a rock and pillar for His church.

1. Understand the depth of Jesus' love and patience

Peter made many mistakes over the course of his time with Jesus Christ. He even denied Jesus three times, and it was at this point that Peter thought he had failed. However, Jesus still loved him despite his failures. Jesus patiently encouraged and restored him once more. As a result, Peter was able to stand up once again and eventually grow into a strong worker for the Lord. Just like Peter, we will also encounter low points in our faith, or times when we make mistakes. These are opportunities for God to reveal to us our weaknesses and opportunities for us to stand up again through the power of His love for us.

- Share a time when you experienced God's love and patience. How did you know God was patiently waiting for you?

2. God wants us to return to Him and to strengthen our brethren

After Jesus asked Peter three times, "Do you love Me?", He called upon Peter to feed and take care of His sheep. Jesus used this opportunity to reaffirm that Peter would be instrumental in establishing the church. After we have encountered low points, God wants us to find courage and return back to Him. There is work that He wants us to accomplish for Him. God wants us to feed His sheep and tend His lambs. We have been called to serve Him by spreading the gospel and building up the church.

- What are some ways we can feed and tend the sheep of God to show our love for Him?
Examples:
 - Share the word of God with friends
 - Pray for members in need
 - Keep the church clean

3. God can grant us power to stand up and serve Him

Strengthened by the Holy Spirit, Peter gave a mighty sermon on the Day of Pentecost and became a

bold worker for Christ. The power of the Holy Spirit transformed him from a lowly fisherman to a great fisher of men. Today, we also can experience the same transformative power of the Holy Spirit in our lives! The Holy Spirit can give us the strength to overcome our weaknesses and the courage to share our faith boldly with those around us.

- How has the Holy Spirit transformed you or someone that you know?

Memory Verse

“Then He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ They immediately left their nets and followed Him.” (Matthew 4:19–20)

Meaning

1. No longer would they catch fish; now they would preach to “catch,” or save, men’s souls.
2. Peter and Andrew did not hesitate or question Jesus’ calling. They followed His calling immediately.
3. Peter and Andrew were willing to leave behind their lives as fisherman to become followers of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

From their first meeting, Jesus already saw the great works that Peter would accomplish for His kingdom. Peter’s journey of self-discovery and growth as a follower of Jesus was not without its failures; his impulsiveness could clearly be seen in several instances. However, Jesus Christ continued to love and have patience for Peter. In the end, Jesus Christ restored Peter and called upon him to do the great work of tending and feeding His sheep. And, with the power of the Holy Spirit, Peter eventually became one of the pillars of the early church.

Peter’s life story is tremendously encouraging to anyone who has failed but is still willing to be used by God. God wants to use us to strengthen others and to accomplish important work for His kingdom. Through the power of His Holy Spirit, let us gain the strength to overcome our weaknesses and be transformed into a steadfast worker for the Lord.

Lesson 4 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What can we learn from Peter and Andrew's reaction to Jesus' calling?
Neither Peter nor Andrew hesitated to follow Jesus; they followed His calling immediately, willingly leaving their lives behind to become followers of Christ and fishers of men.
2. What was Peter's weakness? Name two examples.
He lacked spiritual maturity, and he was often impulsive in both speech and actions. (For examples, see: Spiritual Teachings Section B. Peter Lacks Spiritual Maturity.)
3. Why did Jesus ask Peter three times if he loved Him?
Jesus wanted to strengthen Peter and build up his faith after he had denied Jesus.
4. What was the key difference in Peter and Jesus' word usage, and why?
Jesus used the word "agapaō," a sacrificial love, whereas Peter used "phileō," a brotherly love. After his failure, Peter understood that he was not capable of sacrificing himself for Jesus. The third time Jesus also used "phileō," but He wanted Peter to understand that to tend His sheep, this must transform into agapaō.
5. How did the Holy Spirit transform Peter? Name two examples.
His bold words were no longer empty. His words and actions became full of wisdom and demonstrated a clear understanding of the Scripture. He also spoke without fear of persecution and willingly suffered for Christ. Peter was no longer impulsive, but became spiritually mature, clothed in humility and wisdom of the Lord. (For examples, see: Spiritual Teachings Section E. Peter Transforms into a Rock.)
6. What is a weakness of yours that you think needs to be transformed? What are steps you can take to begin this transformation?
Personal answers.

Apostle John

Passages: Jn 1:39; 19:26–27; 20:8; 21:1–7; Mt 4:18–22; Mk 1:16–20; 3:17; Gal 2:9; 1–3 Jn

Memory Verse

“Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.” (2 Timothy 2:21)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Work [Behavior]
1. Jesus called John to serve. 2. John’s life reflected the glory of God.	1. God has called us to serve. 2. God has the power to change us.	1. Follow God’s calling. 2. Act out God’s word and transform ourselves so that others can see Jesus in our lives.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. The Calling of John
- B. Facts About the Apostle John
- C. John’s Early Years with Jesus
- D. John’s Transformation
- E. An Apostle of Love and Truth

Life Application

- 1. Becoming Fishers of Men
- 2. Acting Out the Word
- 3. Transforming into Better Christians

Memory Verse

Conclusion: Strive to fully understand God’s teachings and to be good workers for Him.

A. The Calling of John

Like Peter, John was a fisherman by profession. His parents were Zebedee and Salome. His mother, also a disciple, was one of the women who visited the empty tomb of Jesus. He first followed John the Baptist and came to know Jesus through him. John recorded the exact time he first met Jesus—about the tenth hour, or four in the afternoon—and he remained with Jesus the rest of the day (Jn 1:39). Later, he followed Jesus Christ with his brother James when Jesus called them (Mt 4:18–22; Mk 1:16–20). From then on, John would be more than just a disciple; he would become an apostle.

B. Facts About the Apostle John

1. He was the brother of James, another of the twelve disciples of Jesus.
2. He authored two New Testament books and three epistles: the Gospel of John, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and the Book of Revelation.
3. John was part of Jesus' "inner circle," along with Peter and James. They all joined Jesus when:
 - Jesus restored the daughter of the synagogue ruler to life. When Jesus went to the ruler's house, Jesus "permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James" (Mk 5:37). This illustrates the close relationship the three disciples shared with Jesus.
 - Jesus brought the three to the Mount of Transfiguration. Jesus was transformed before the eyes of Peter, John, and James. He intended for the transfiguration to remain a mystery, instructing the three to "tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead" (Mt 17:9). People share secrets with those whom they trust, and Jesus clearly trusted these three.
 - Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane. In Matthew 26:36–37, Jesus went to the garden of Gethsemane to pray with Peter, John, and James, sharing this moment of deep sorrow and fear with only these three disciples.
4. John was entrusted with the responsibility of taking care of Jesus' mother Mary. Even while suffering on the cross, Jesus remembered His mother and entrusted her into John's care. Why did Jesus choose John over His own brothers? His own brothers still did not fully understand His work and the salvation He was going to carry out (His brothers only believed after Jesus' resurrection). So, John took up the responsibility by taking Mary to his home that day (Jn 19:25–27). Being entrusted with the responsibility to take care of Jesus' mother was actually a great blessing.
5. John had a quick understanding. Upon seeing Jesus' empty tomb, John immediately understood what had happened (Jn 20:8). Later, when a person on the shore told them to cast their net on the right side of the boat, John was quick to recognize the person as the Lord they loved (Jn 21:1–7). This demonstrates John's awareness of his surroundings and of those around him.
6. Of Jesus Christ's disciples, John lived the longest.

C. John's Early Years with Jesus

John and his brother James were called by Jesus “Boanerges,” that is, “Sons of Thunder” (Mk 3:17). From this name, it appears John had a flashing temper. It is clear that John and his brother James had the zeal to follow Jesus. However, in his early days, John acted rashly and impulsively. Let us look at the following examples.

1. John and some other disciples stopped someone from casting out demons in Jesus’ name because he was not Jesus’ follower. Jesus gently rebuked them, saying, “Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me. For he who is not against us is on our side” (Mk 9:39).
2. Another instance can be seen through his mother’s request that he and his brother be seated on Jesus’ right and left, elevating them to a greater status above other disciples in the kingdom of God (Mt 20:20–21). This appeal reveals their ambition and lack of understanding in both the cup that Jesus had asked them to partake, and in the notion of servitude.
3. James and John wanted to call down fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritans who refused to welcome Jesus. Once again, Jesus rebuked them for their lack of love and tolerance for the lost, saying, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them” (Lk 9:55–56).

D. John’s Transformation

We can infer from John’s change in character that Jesus’ humility and His act of supreme love for mankind made a profound impact on John. He grew to understand the need for love and humility in following Jesus and serving Him. In his later life, John’s impulsive and rash personality transformed into one of compassion and humility.

1. In the Gospel of John, John refers to himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” five times (Jn 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20) instead of using “I” or “me.” He was described as the one leaning against Jesus’ chest at the last supper, but he also tried to show that Jesus did not show him favoritism, demonstrating his humility (Jn 21:22–23).
2. When Jesus was nailed on the cross, Jesus commissioned John to take care of His mother, a call that John took seriously. “And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home” (Jn 19:27). His presence at the cross during Jesus’ crucifixion showed his love for Jesus and conveyed the closeness and trust they shared.
3. After the Pentecost, John and other disciples of the Lord fervently preached the gospel of salvation. John often worked with Peter, performing miracles (Acts 3:1–10), and preaching boldly before the Jewish Sanhedrin (Acts 4:13) and in Samaria (Acts 8:14). Through the course of his life, John continued to grow in spirit and in works for the Lord. He helped to establish and act as a “pillar” in the Jerusalem church (Gal 2:9), and later served congregations in Ephesus and Asia Minor. When the Romans exiled him to the island of Patmos, he received teachings from God that became the Book of Revelation.
4. In his later life, John’s ambitious and rash personality was transformed into one of compassion and humility. When exiled on the island of Patmos by the Romans for preaching the gospel, John wrote: “I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev 1:9). John describes himself as a “brother” and one who shares

with them “the tribulation,” indicating that the church was undergoing intense persecution as he was writing the letter. Despite the fact that he was treated with cruelty and reproach while in exile, he nevertheless encouraged the faith of the members. As John’s experience of Jesus’ love was so strong and personal, he had learned to go beyond suffering for Christ and was able to love the church members deeply despite the persecution.

E. An Apostle of Love and Truth

John genuinely cared about the members’ faith and their daily lives, prompting him to write three letters—1, 2, and 3 John—to encourage the members. These letters are filled with teachings that help us understand God’s love on a deeper, yet practical level. In them, he exhorts the members to love one another, to stay away from worldly desires, and to live a life of holiness to overcome the temptation of heresies. He addresses believers as those “whom [he loves] in truth” and urges them to “love one another” by walking in obedience to Jesus’ commands (2 Jn 1:1, 5–6).

John also wrote much about the truth itself. His joy was to preach the truth, the word of God, to others and to watch them walk in it (3 Jn 1:4). He warned believers not to be deceived by false teachers, false prophets, and “antichrists” (1 Jn 2:16, 26; 3:7; 4:1–7), and desired that the believers have the wisdom and ability to discern truth from falsehood.

In contrast to his earlier days, John’s focus in these letters show a character of love and patience, one who is eager to seek out and teach the truth. That God chose John to write His words in the Book of Revelation also shows us how truly close the apostle was to God. His journey from fisherman, to apostle, to pillar of the church is truly a transformation possible only through Jesus’ love and Spirit.

Check for Understanding

- 1. What was John’s profession before he was called by Jesus?** He and his brother were fishermen.
- 2. How did John answer Jesus’ call?** He immediately followed Jesus, leaving behind his old life without any hesitation.
- 3. What was John like during his early years with Jesus?** He had a flashing temper, was quick to criticize, was ambitious, and lacked love and understanding.
- 4. Where does the Bible record John’s close relationship with Jesus?** (1) Jesus invited John into the house when He raised the synagogue ruler’s daughter. (2) John witnessed Jesus’ transfiguration on the mount. (3) John was with Jesus when He was praying in the garden of Gethsemane.
- 5. Which parts of the Bible did John write?** The Gospel of John, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and the Book of Revelation.
- 6. What was the focus of John’s epistles?** He focused greatly on love, exhorting the members to love one another, and also wrote much about the truth, warning believers not to be deceived by false teachers. His joy was to preach the truth and watch others walk in it.

Life Application

1. Becoming Fishers of Men

When they were called, John, James, Peter, and Andrew all immediately left their nets behind and followed (Mt 4:12–21). As promised by Jesus, these four disciples all became important workers in the apostolic church and brought many to believe in the Lord.

We, too, have been called to do God’s work. But are we willing to give up whatever we are doing in this world to follow Him? It is a difficult decision to make. We can enjoy many worldly comforts and

conveniences without even stepping out of the house. Yet, if we have the heart to work for God, then we need to heed God's calling.

When you think of God's calling, the first thing that may come to mind is becoming a preacher, but our church does not only need preachers. God calls many different workers, and He has given each of us a gift. For some, it is to be preachers; for others, it is not. The church is Jesus Christ's body and consists of many parts that work together to perform various functions smoothly. Have you ever noticed something that needs to be done, yet seen no one take the time to do it?

Remember, whenever we actively follow God's will, we contribute to the goal of the entire church—to bring people to salvation. We may not be directly involved with evangelism, but our work may indirectly help to bring people to believe. When every member is doing their work according to their gifts, the church will be "healthy." We must not hold the perspective that this job or that job is unimportant. No task is considered unimportant in church. To God, picking up a piece of trash from the floor is as important as speaking on the pulpit or leading hymns in front of the congregation. What kind of strengths do you have? How can you use them for God?

2. Acting Out the Word

John's emphasis on the word at the beginning of the Gospel of John reflects the importance of the word in building the foundation our faith. Claiming to have faith is not enough. Whenever we study the Bible or listen to sermons, we need to examine how the teachings can be applied to our lives. We need to act out what we believe (Jn 1; Jas 2:14–26). But how do we act out what we believe? No matter how many sermons we listen to, or how closely we study the Bible, it is impossible to find specific solutions to every single possible scenario we may encounter. Have we encountered a situation where we do not know how to apply the teachings of the Bible to our lives? For many, the answer is often yes, as many situations are not clear-cut and require us to think deeply.

The author of Ecclesiastes said: "There is nothing new under the sun" (Eccl 1:9). We cannot ever say that the Bible is not relevant because its events occurred in the past; many things that happened in the Bible still occur today in our church and society, simply in another form. The Holy Spirit helps us to recognize this and teaches us how a certain passage of the Bible may apply to our lives. If we are willing to seek wisdom on how to act out what we believe, God will show us a way (Mt 7:8).

For example, one time a brother was deciding which university to attend. He had been admitted to several equally prestigious universities, making it a difficult choice to make. So, he prayed to God to reveal His will to him. One day, as he read the Bible, one particular verse struck him immediately: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching" (Heb 10:25). Several of the universities he was considering were far away from any True Jesus Church location. Only one was a few minutes' walking distance from a local church, but the major he was accepted for did not appeal to him. Yet, he knew that this Bible verse was God's answer to his prayer—God wanted him to follow His word.

Have you had a similar experience and found answers to your difficulties within the Bible? God will let us know what is pleasing to Him if we truly put our hearts towards seeking Him. We need only meditate on His word and ask God for the wisdom to apply it to our lives. If God regards us as His chosen, He will reveal to us His immense wisdom and the mysteries of things to come (Gen 18:17).

3. Transforming into Better Christians

God wants us to be perfect, just as He is (Mt 5:48). But we each have our own shortcomings, making it impossible for us to change by our own strength (Rom 7:13–25). We need to rely on the power from above (Acts 1:8). And for these changes to happen, we must first recognize our flaws. This requires wisdom from God, for many people either deny or are unaware of their shortcomings. Sometimes, we must endure a series of trials before we can recognize them.

Once, a young, intelligent sister was admitted into a prestigious university. She believed she could handle her heavy course load by herself. However, prestigious universities are full of students as smart as we are, if not smarter. The difficulty of her studies caused her great frustration. Only then did she realize that she was not able to handle life's difficulties on her own, and that she needed strength from God. Once she humbled herself and prayed fervently, God gave her wisdom so that she was able to solve problems she had been unable to before. Her struggles helped her to see her own shortcomings.

Once aware of our flaws, we need to pray to God to help us change. This lifelong process requires determination on our part, too. We need to remember that our salvation requires us to adopt the image of Christ. But this is only possible with the power of prayer and the Holy Spirit.

Once, a ferocious gangster came to True Jesus Church. He committed many crimes and was on the most wanted list. No one expected him to be able to receive salvation. However, one time he stepped into the chapel and listened to the sermons. In those days, having tattoos meant one must be related to the darker side of society, so many members around him feared him when they saw the tattoos on his arms. But to their surprise, he received the Holy Spirit and was then baptized into True Jesus Church. After he received the Holy Spirit, his heart softened to the point where he dared not even to kill a chicken.

This testimony shows us how the power of the Holy Spirit can transform a person. To become a better Christian, we cannot rely on ourselves but must have faith in God's transforming power.

Memory Verse

"Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work." (2 Timothy 2:21)

Meaning

1. In verse 20, Paul explains the many types of vessels, such as gold, silver, wood, and clay. Some vessels were used for honor, while some for dishonor.
2. An unclean vessel has limited uses. However, clean, sanctified vessels are "useful for the Master." The Master refers to God. Those set apart as holy are "prepared for every good work." Therefore, if we are diligent in thoroughly cleansing ourselves of sin, we will be a vessel of honor (The phrase "good work" is also mentioned in 2 Timothy 3:17, referring to God's word completing and equipping the children of God so that they can serve Him.).

Conclusion

As younger members in church, we may consider ourselves unimportant in the church. However, we saw today that John, a mere fisherman, transformed into a loving and powerful worker and leader in the apostolic church. His profound spiritual knowledge came from his close relationship with Jesus, and his

love for the church came from witnessing Jesus' example and from experiencing the transformative power of the Holy Spirit. If, like John, God calls us today, are we ready to answer? Will we allow the Holy Spirit to transform us into powerful workers for Christ?

Lesson 5 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What does it mean to be a vessel for honor? How do we become one?
It means being a vessel that is sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. To become one, we must be diligent in thoroughly cleansing ourselves of sin.
2. How did John answer when Jesus first called him?
He immediately left his old life behind and followed Jesus with no hesitation.
3. What were John's characteristics when Jesus first called him? Provide biblical support.
He had a flashing temper (Mk 3:17), was quick to criticize (Mk 9:38-41), lacked love (Lk 9:51-56), and was ambitious (Mt 20:20-21). He did not understand the cup that Jesus was asking him to partake and did not understand the notion of servitude that Jesus exemplified.
4. How did John's personality change during his time with Jesus and after receiving the Holy Spirit?
He transformed from an impulsive and rash person into one who was compassionate and humble.
5. What is the importance of studying God's word in our lives? How can we better understand it?
God's word is an important foundation for our faith, and it contains the answers to our difficulties. To understand it, we need to study it closely and ask God for the wisdom to apply it to our lives.
6. We learned that to become better Christians, we must first understand our own shortcomings. What is one of your shortcomings? Aside from prayer, how can you work on changing this?
Personal answers.

Junior 1 Year 1 Book 3 Lesson 6

Judas Iscariot

Passages: Mt 26:14–25, 47–50; 27:1–10; Mk 14:1–2, 10–21, 43–46; Lk 22:1–6, 17–23, 45–48; Jn 13:1–4, 21–30; 18:1–9

Memory Verse

“Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.” (Proverbs 4:23)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Work [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Judas was called to serve but chose to follow his greed instead.2. Judas repaid good with evil, and love with hate.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God loves a repentant heart.2. God abhors dishonesty.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Constantly search our hearts and weed out any evil or malice.2. Truly repent of our old ways.3. Guard against dishonesty and greed.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Before His Betrayal
- B. After His Betrayal

Life Application

1. Search Our Hearts
2. Truly Repent
3. Be Honest

Memory Verse

Conclusion: Constantly search our hearts and weed out the evil and malice in us so that we are able to hear God’s calling for our repentance.

Introduction

Have you ever been betrayed by a friend? (*Allow students to answer.*) Describe how it felt to be wronged by someone close to you. If you've never experienced this, how might you react? (*Allow students to share and discuss answers.*)

Today we're going to learn more about Judas, a man whose name has become synonymous with betrayal because of the severity of his actions. The name "Judas" means "without help," and "Iscariot" means "of Kerioth." Kerioth was a town in South Judea. The other disciples were all from Galilee. The southern Jews often held a sense of superiority over those from the north.

Jesus once referred to him as "a devil" (Jn 6:70–71) and "the son of perdition" (Jn 17:12). *Perdition* also means "ruin" or "destruction," and is associated with the loss of eternal life. The apostles spoke of Judas as one who "by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place" (Acts 1:25). Judas repaid good with evil, and love with hate. So, the name "Judas Iscariot" is synonymous with wickedness, evil, and betrayal. His story warns us not to be guilty of the same sin, so that we don't follow his path and reach the same result.

A. Before His Betrayal

1. Judas was one of Jesus' twelve disciples

We understand from the Bible that Jesus spent the whole night praying prior to the selection of His disciples (Lk 6:12). Whatever reason Jesus picked Judas, we can be sure that Jesus did not make a mistake. But man has the free will to choose what they want to do. In this case, Judas was given the opportunity to lead the flock of Jesus and to take on the missionary work of Jesus. However, Judas, out of his own free will, chose to take the path of greed, deception, and evil.

2. Judas was a thief

The Lord Jesus had chosen Judas to be the keeper of the common purse. However, Judas proved himself to be unworthy of the trust because he took some of the money for himself (Jn 12:6). Judas broke the eighth commandment of God, yet the Lord Jesus was merciful to him and gave him time to repent of his wrongdoings. In John 12:5, Judas objected when Mary of Bethany anointed Jesus' feet with expensive perfume and suggested that the prized perfume would be better off sold and the money given to the poor. But his words were hypocritical and self-serving; he pretended to be concerned for the welfare of the poor, but in reality, wanted the money for himself.

Later, Judas was not approached by the chief priests to betray Jesus, but instead Judas, motivated by his greed, initiated the visit to the chief priests and put himself forward as a traitor. In Matthew 26:15, Judas blatantly asked the chief priests for his wages to bring Jesus in, clearly showing his greed and desire for money.

3. Judas was a traitor

If we look closely, we can see that whenever Judas' name is mentioned, the Bible refers to him as the betrayer. Betraying Jesus was a despicable crime, yet Judas allowed himself to be used as a tool of Satan to carry out this act. He sold himself to Satan and carried out this heinous crime for thirty pieces of silver, the equivalent of the price of a slave (Ex 21:32). During the last supper, Jesus extended His final gesture of love towards Judas, but the Bible states that Satan entered

Judas and Judas rejected the love of Jesus. So Jesus told Judas, “What you do, do quickly” (Jn 13:27), and He later referred to Judas as “the son of perdition” in His prayer (Jn 17:12).

Jesus, being a divine being, the Son of God, knew the strengths and weaknesses of His disciples. Jesus knew that Peter was of little faith when he started to sink while walking on water. Jesus also knew that Peter would deny Jesus despite his insistence to the contrary, so He took the opportunity to alert Peter to what would come in the future, so that Peter could stand against it. In the same way, Jesus foretold Judas’ betrayal on the night of the last supper, as He wanted to tell Judas that what he was about to do was a terrible sin. Jesus hoped that Judas would come to his senses and repent of his evil intentions. However, Judas was bent on doing evil and remained determined to carry out his plan. Despite having followed Jesus for three years of holy ministry, Judas chose to betray Jesus for the sake of his greed, thereby failing to repay Jesus’ love towards him.

We may ask, why did Judas need to betray Jesus? Couldn’t the chief priests just arrest Jesus? The public knew of Jesus’ good works and greatly admired Him, especially after He brought Lazarus back to life. In the height of Jesus’ popularity, the chief priests did not want too many people to be aware of Jesus’ arrest for fear of a rebellion. Judas’ offer of betrayal meant that he would give them an opportunity to arrest Him when there were no crowds to witness their actions. That opportunity presented itself in the garden of Gethsemane, where Judas kissed Jesus to indicate to the chief priests that this was the man they wanted. A kiss is usually a symbol of love and affection, but it is the nature of evil to twist what is lovely and good into its worst form. In this case, Judas adulterated the symbol and used it to betray Jesus into the hands of the chief priests and Pharisees.

B. After His Betrayal

1. Judas was remorseful

When Jesus was bound and carried away to the Romans to be condemned, only then did Judas realize the weight of his actions. He took the money back to the chief priests and elders and said, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood” (Mt 27:3–4). It was as if Judas’ conscience had suddenly returned. But they gave him a cold reply, saying “What is that to us? You see to it!” (v. 4).

This is how Satan, the deceiver, works among us. Satan clouds our minds and blinds our eyes so that we pursue acts of evil. But when Satan is over and done with us, we feel the sudden nakedness of shame, similar to what Adam and Eve felt (Gen 3:7). We can only imagine that at these points in time, Satan is gloating over the success of his evil deception, leaving us shrouded in shame. Judas felt this same shame, and he tried to return the thirty pieces of silver in a weak attempt to restore his conscience. Unfortunately, he realized that there was no more forgiveness for him; he threw the thirty pieces of silver in the temple and took his own life by hanging himself. Judas was given a chance to turn back, but he chose to be entangled in his sin (2 Pet 2:20).

The Bible records that the chief priests also knew that the thirty pieces of silver was blood money. Because of this, they did not put the money into the temple treasury but used it to buy the potter’s field where Judas hanged himself as a burial place for foreigners (Acts 1:18).

2. Judas was replaced

As a result of Judas' suicide, the number of disciples was reduced to eleven. In Acts 1:15–20, Peter quotes from the Scriptures, saying that Judas' place should be filled by another person (Ps 69:25; 109:8). Through prayer, the disciples selected Matthias to take his place. This occurrence reminds us that although we are God's workers, none of us are indispensable. If we do not uphold our responsibility, God will find someone else who is more suitable and willing to replace us. This means that each opportunity to serve Him is not a reason for us to be arrogant or to be proud of our skills or abilities. These are opportunities that God has given to us, so that we can repay the debt of love we owe to Him.

Check for Understanding

1. **Why did Judas criticize Mary of Bethany for anointing Jesus' feet with expensive perfume?** He pretended to be upset by saying that the perfume could be sold for a great amount of money, which could then be donated to the poor. But actually, he was a thief and wanted to use the potential money for his personal gain.
2. **How much did Judas receive for turning Jesus in to the chief priests?** Only thirty pieces of silver – the price of a slave.
3. **Why did the chief priests not arrest Jesus Christ themselves, instead resorting to accepting Judas' offer of betrayal?** In the height of Jesus' popularity among the public, the chief priests did not want too many people to be aware of Jesus' arrest for fear of a rebellion. Thus, they needed to know the exact time and location to discreetly arrest Him, the details of which only someone close to Him could provide.
4. **What did Judas try to do after Jesus was taken to the Romans?** Full of remorse, he tried to return the money out of guilt for his actions.
5. **Who was selected to replace Judas?** Matthias.

Life Application

1. Search Our Hearts

We should make it a habit to constantly search our hearts for any signs of evil or malice. When we pray and meditate on the word of God through prayer and Bible reading, we should examine our hearts thoroughly. The word of God is living and acts like a double-edged sword, and by studying it, we allow it to work within us. Bible verses we read may pierce our hearts, but we have to choose whether to brush it away or to repent and act on the matter to correct our ways.

In Psalm 139:23, King David teaches us to ask God to search our hearts, because it is only when we self-reflect and ask God to help us search our hearts that we are able to weed out our impurities. It is similar to when we dress and get ready for a big event by examining ourselves in the mirror; we should also always examine ourselves to ensure we are dressed in clean robes for the banquet of God. Had Judas taken the time and effort to examine himself, he would have seen the evil and greed festering in his heart. If Judas had searched his heart thoroughly, he could have been motivated by Jesus' love to run from sin and remain loyal to his beloved teacher.

There are many things in our daily lives that we could be dishonest about, such as when we believe cheating a little is not a big deal. For example, in certain countries where honesty is based on trust, it may be easy to abuse that trust by not paying for train or bus tickets. It may even seem exhilarating to get away with avoiding the ride fare. It is even easy for us to justify it to ourselves, such as, "Is it such a

big deal that I didn't give the company a couple of dollars?" Or, "Surely the transport authority is so rich that even if I don't pay my fare, it won't make a difference!"

We often look lightly on our sins and justify our actions at the expense of others. But even though our dishonesty or lie may only be "a small amount" in our eyes, Judas may have thought the same when he began stealing from the common purse the disciples entrusted him with. It was still an act of sheer dishonesty and greed, regardless of how much he took (Prov 1:19). James 1:14–15 says that our desires, if succumbed to, will eventually lead us to death. Do not look lightly on seemingly minor wrongdoings. Always strive to be perfect, just as Christ is perfect. We can only achieve this by constantly searching our hearts.

Discussion: Have you ever done anything that made you feel guilty? Share with the class. It can be anything from something simple to something more serious.

2. Truly Repent

We can only identify our weaknesses through self-reflection, and once identified, we should be remorseful and adopt a heart of true repentance. True repentance is not simply a matter of feeling sorry about our actions but actively seeking to change our ways to avoid sinning again. It is easy to say that we feel remorse, but repentance requires changing completely from our old ways. Psalm 51 is David's prayer of repentance after committing adultery with Bathsheba, and in it, he confesses his sins to the prophet Nathan and to God. Being able to admit your mistakes is a sign of humility and shows that you are not trying to hide your sins, especially from God.

God is merciful to a repentant person, but a person who truly repents must not commit the same mistakes again. A truly repentant person must never return to his old ways, for someone who does is a "fool [who] repeats his folly" (Prov 26:11). Hebrews 6:6 tells us that when someone repeats their mistakes after obtaining forgiveness from God, "they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame."

Testimony

There was a sister whose life was being taken over by pop music. She would listen to pop music while doing chores, studying and even sometimes secretly in church. She knew it was not good to indulge so much in worldly music, so in one of the prayer sessions during a spiritual convocation, she repented of her sins and resolved not to listen to pop music anymore. Months passed and she became weak again; she succumbed to listening to pop music all over again. One night, after saying her prayer before bedtime, she felt very cold and afraid. Instead of kneeling down to pray again, she put on her earphones. But what she heard on her earphones wasn't the pop music she was expecting; she heard the shrill sound of a woman shrieking. It was so frightful that this sister threw her earphones out the window and ran downstairs crying to her parents. Her parents prayed with her and this time, she was truly resolute in her decision to never again listen to pop music as she had determined during the spiritual convocation.

- Anonymous

God clearly takes our prayers and resolutions seriously, so we must be truly repentant of our sinful ways.

Discussion: Have you said sorry for doing something, then done it again later? What were your feelings when you repeated your action?

3. Be Honest

We have been taught from a young age in RE classes that telling lies is breaking the ninth of the Ten Commandments. However, it is easy to take this commandment lightly; we see so many people around us breaking it, so we assume God will excuse us if we break it too. Even little children tell lies. We may think, if everybody is breaking the law, maybe the law has to be amended. That is definitely not so with God's commandments! We are prone to repeating this sin, as it is one of the easiest commandments to break. But God put His commandments in place for us to obey. We must remind ourselves that lying is not acceptable and make a conscious effort to refrain from lying, for a small seed of sin, once fully grown, will bring forth death (Jas 1:14–15). Never underestimate the sin of lying because one lie always leads to more.

All lies are rooted in dishonesty, deception, and, very often, greed. When it comes to money, some people may think that outsmarting others with their dishonest tricks is just another business tactic. But Proverbs 11:1 tells us that God abhors dishonest scales, and a just weight is His delight. God wants us to be honest Christians, so even as business owners, we have to treat others fairly and honestly. The rest of the world may practice dishonest methods, but as Christians, we have been sanctified and set apart. We should always trust in the love of God and do what is right. To the world, it is impractical to be so righteous, but doing the right thing is what God wants of us. If we do the right thing, we can be assured that God will reward us accordingly for the good we choose to do.

Judas' dishonesty began with his greed over money. He did not control his weaknesses and allowed them to corrupt his entire spirit like an infectious disease. Without restraint, greed and dishonesty can easily spread like wildfire within us. So, no matter what justifications we may give for telling a lie, there is no excuse for it, for God abhors dishonesty, and Satan is the father of deception (Jn 8:44).

Discussion: Have you been dishonest to someone recently? What was the reason? (*Allow students to answer. Examples may be: to protect themselves, embarrassment, greed, anger, shame, etc.*) How can you adjust your thoughts or your lifestyle to curb similar reasons for dishonesty in the future?

Memory Verse

"Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life." (Proverbs 4:23)

Meanings

1. We must guard our heart above all things because our hearts motivate our every action and decision.
2. Guarding our heart means consciously keeping our intentions and emotions in check. We should make it our way of life to constantly search our hearts, which requires vigilance and diligence.
3. "For out of it spring the issues of life" – "it" means the heart. Our every move and action stems from the intentions and desires of our heart. It is the source of all that we do. If our heart isn't in the right place, our actions won't be either.

Conclusion

The lessons we draw from the life of Judas warn us of the consequences of sin. The main lesson we can learn from Judas is never to place our personal interests above Christ. In the face of Jesus' growing popularity, John the Baptist told his offended disciples, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (Jn

3:30). We cannot allow our personal interests to outweigh the interests of Christ. Unfortunately for Judas, he never came to that realization, and as a result, he sadly lost not only his life, but also his place in God's kingdom.

We always need to search our heart diligently for any signs of evil or dishonesty and guard it so that we can be a good and righteous person. In doing so, we can be confident that when our Lord Jesus comes again, we will be able to meet Him with a clean and pure conscience, ready to take our place in His kingdom.

Lesson 6 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. Explain the meaning of the memory verse. Why must we guard our hearts?
Guarding our hearts means consciously keeping our intentions and emotions in check. We must guard our hearts because our every move and action stems from the intentions and desires of our hearts. It is the source of all that we do. If our heart isn't in the right place, our actions won't be either.
2. How much did Judas receive for betraying Jesus?
Thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave.
3. What kind of desire led Judas to betray Jesus? How did this desire first show itself?
His greed and desire for money. It first manifested itself when he began taking money from the common box entrusted to him.
4. How do we search and guard our hearts?
By praying and meditating on the word of God, and by constantly examining our hearts with diligence and vigilance against any evil or malice. Do not look lightly on seemingly minor wrongdoings. Always strive to be perfect, just as Christ is perfect.
5. Explain how one of your own desires can eventually lead you into sin.
Personal answers.
6. How can you avoid the above situation?
Personal answers.

Matthew, Thomas, Philip, and Bartholomew

Passages: Lk 5:27–32; Jn 1:43–51; 20:24–29

Memory Verse

“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” (1 Peter 4:10)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Work [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God desires each of us to contribute to the growth of the church.2. God has called each of us to preach the gospel.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God chooses whom He wills to be His vessels.2. God loves us and desires for our faith to be strong.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Be courageous in evangelizing for God.2. Pursue a full understanding of the Scriptures.

Overview

Spiritual Teachings

- A. Matthew
 1. The Calling of Matthew
 2. Matthew’s Servitude and Characteristics
- B. Thomas
 1. The Calling of Thomas
 2. Thomas’ Servitude and Characteristics
- C. Philip
 1. The Calling of Philip
 2. Philip’s Servitude and Characteristics
- D. Bartholomew
 1. The Calling of Bartholomew
 2. Bartholomew’s Servitude and Characteristics

Life Application

1. Recognize our gifts and use them to serve God.
2. Take courage in preaching and letting others see Christ in us.

Memory Verse

Conclusion: We must learn from Matthew, Philip, Bartholomew, and Thomas to use our individual gifts and characteristics to serve God faithfully and have the same thirst for the truth.

A. Matthew

1. The Calling of Matthew

Matthew, also known as Levi, was sitting at the tax office when Jesus Christ saw him and said, “Follow Me.” Matthew immediately “left all, rose up, and followed Him” (Lk 5:27–28). As a tax collector, Matthew was despised by many, but his wealth, position, and social status did not stop him from following Jesus, nor did they stop Jesus from naming him a beloved apostle.

2. Matthew’s Servitude and Characteristics

He understood that he was a sinner

In Matthew’s record of his calling by Jesus, he does not hide the fact that he was a tax collector, a person whose work caused him to be despised by the people (Mt 9:9–11). At the time of his calling, he invited Jesus and his tax collector friends for a banquet at his house. Matthew records only that Jesus “sat at the table in the house” (Mt 9:10) – he does not mention that it was he who hosted Jesus in his home. But the Gospel of Luke records this meal as a “great feast in [Matthew’s] own house” (Lk 5:29). By choosing not to boast of his generosity, Matthew shows us that he was humble and had an understanding that he was a sinner.

When we decide to offer ourselves to the Lord and follow Him, we must keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. But to fix our eyes forward, we must first turn our gaze inward. It is important to acknowledge our status as sinners and repent of our sins before we can truly follow Jesus.

B. Thomas

1. The Calling of Thomas

The Bible does not record how Thomas first comes to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, but Jesus Christ names him as one of the twelve apostles (Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18; Lk 6:15). Together with the other eleven apostles, Thomas is given the commission to heal, cast out unclean spirits, and preach the coming of the kingdom of heaven (Mt 10:1, 5–8).

2. Thomas’ Servitude and Characteristics

a. Willing to follow Jesus to whatever end

When Jesus set out to resurrect Lazarus in Bethany, just two miles from Jerusalem, Thomas stated, “Let us also go, that we may die with Him” (Jn 11:16). Later, before His crucifixion, Jesus said to the disciples, “I go to prepare a place for you. [...] I will come again and receive you to Myself. [...] And where I go you know, and the way you know” (Jn 14:2–4). Thomas asked, “We do not know where you are going, so how is it possible that we know the way there?” Although Thomas could not discern Jesus’ words, he was clearly anxious to follow Him and wanted to understand how.

Like Thomas, we need to commit ourselves to following Jesus, both in our character and in the direction He guides our lives. But regardless of our determination, we must never neglect to pray for direction and study the Bible so that we can follow Him in spirit and in truth. As Jesus tells Thomas, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (Jn 14:6).

b. Went from doubt to affirmation

Thomas was not present when Jesus first appeared to His disciples and showed them His

hands and His side. When they later told him of Jesus' appearance, Thomas firmly stated, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe" (Jn 20:25). The disciples' words were not enough. He wanted to see and touch for himself what Jesus had shown them.

Jesus Christ's extraordinary resurrection would cause many to doubt. At the same time, Jesus Christ knew that Thomas needed to see in order to believe, as Thomas' faith was still maturing. So, He appeared once again before the disciples (Jn 20:26–29). Thomas' awestruck reply—"My Lord and my God!"—shows his increase in faith and his understanding of not only Jesus' resurrection but also His deity.

Today, we may have doubts like Thomas, but we must pray to the Lord that He will increase our faith (Lk 17:5). There is no shame in lacking faith, but we need to be aware of our lack and seek to overcome it with the help of the Lord. As long as we ask Him, Jesus Christ will come to us like He came to Thomas.

C. Philip

1. The Calling of Philip

When Jesus Christ was traveling to Galilee one day, "He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow Me'" (Jn 1:43). That day, Philip became a disciple of Jesus Christ.

2. Philip's Servitude and Characteristics

a. *Eager to preach for the Lord*

As soon as Philip became a disciple, he went to his friend Bartholomew and told him that he had found the Savior they had been waiting for (Jn 1:45). Bartholomew did not believe him, but instead of arguing, Philip simply said, "Come and see" (Jn 1:46).

Philip was courageous in his personal evangelism and actively sought to share his spiritual blessings with others. By sharing his experiences, Philip brought others to the Lord. Personal evangelism is a direct, effective way of preaching the gospel. We should ask the Lord to give us the courage to share the blessings that God has freely given us and bring others to believe in the Lord.

b. *Enthusiastic about pursuing the truth*

"Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us" (Jn 14:8). When Jesus Christ taught about the Father, Philip did not understand completely, so he asked for clarification. This simple question prompted Jesus to elaborate and impart an important teaching (Jn 14:9–11).

We must have the same thirst for truth as Philip had, and ask questions when we have them. God has placed many resources around us that can guide us, such as the Bible, our ministers, our parents, and our religious education teachers. But our best guide is God, so let us be like Philip and bring our questions to the Lord in our pursuit of truth so that we can come to understand Him better.

D. Bartholomew

1. The Calling of Bartholomew

Bartholomew, also known as Nathanael, came to follow Jesus Christ through his friend Philip.

When Philip told him that he had found the Savior, Bartholomew asked, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” (Jn 1:46). Despite this, he still went to see Jesus with Philip.

Bartholomew had barely approached Him when Jesus proclaimed, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!” (Jn 1:47). Jesus knew Bartholomew’s character even before meeting him. Jesus further told Bartholomew that He had seen him when he was under the fig tree, out of Jesus’ sight. Bartholomew was moved by Jesus’ omniscience and recognized Jesus as the Lord (Jn 1:49). From that day, Bartholomew followed Jesus Christ and became His faithful disciple.

2. Bartholomew’s Servitude and Characteristics

a. *Well versed in the Scriptures*

When Philip told Bartholomew about Jesus Christ, Philip described Jesus as the one “of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote” (Jn 1:45). It is unlikely that Philip would reference the Scriptures or the prophecies if Bartholomew was not already well versed in them. That Bartholomew recognized Jesus as the Savior was also likely because of his deep understanding of the Scriptures.

Today, we have the complete word of God, the Bible, to study as our source of guidance and power. We must be well versed in the Scriptures like Bartholomew and have the zeal to understand God deeply. Since we have been blessed with the Bible, we should grasp this opportunity to store the abundant word of God in our hearts (Col 3:16). Then, when we have a firm foundation in the truth, we will be able to discern the truth from false teachings.

b. *Had a heart with no deceit*

When Jesus saw Bartholomew, He said, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!” (Jn 1:47). Clearly, Bartholomew was known to Jesus for his sincerity, a characteristic highly valued by Jesus. So, we must remember that the Lord looks into our hearts and searches for sincerity and honesty.

These four men had vastly different strengths and weaknesses, but Jesus Christ chose each of them to be His disciples. Today, we can take courage knowing that God has chosen us in much the same way and has given each of us our own strengths and weaknesses. Whether we have a heart of humility like Matthew, a willingness to follow like Thomas, a courageous heart like Philip, or a sincere heart like Bartholomew, God has chosen each of us to be His own. Just as the apostles spread the gospel after Jesus’ ascension, we too must use the gifts He has given us to glorify God and shine the light of Christ through our actions.

Check for Understanding

1. **How did Matthew show that he recognized his status as a sinner?** He did not boast about the details of the dinner he had with his friends and Jesus.
2. **How did Thomas go from doubt to affirmation?** When the disciples told him that they had seen Jesus after He resurrected, Thomas did not believe. But when Jesus appeared to him, he touched Jesus’ wounds physically and believed.
3. **What did Philip do right after he chose to follow Jesus?** He immediately went to tell his friend Bartholomew that he had found the Messiah.
4. **Which characteristic of Bartholomew’s did Jesus greatly value?** Jesus valued his honesty, as He called Bartholomew “an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!”

Life Application

1. Recognize our gifts and use them to serve God.

Paul teaches us that there are many gifts, but they are given by the same Spirit, and each gift is given for the benefit of everyone (1 Cor 12:4, 7–11). He further states that, as a body has many parts that work together as one, the church has many members with gifts that must work together as one (1 Cor 12:20–26). Each part of the body is integral to the function of a person as a whole, so the contribution of each member of the body of Christ is crucial to a healthy church. Each one of us has been given a gift (Rom 12:6).

You may wonder, “What is my gift?” There may be times when we feel like we have no gift, but actually, no skill is too small to be considered a gift. There are many things we can do in the church, even something as simple as cleaning up. Identifying our gifts may be as simple as observing carefully and seeing where help is needed. Then, when we see the need, we can do our best to help where we can to serve the church and glorify God.

One time, in a remote mountain church, a blind sister was eager to play hymns for the Lord. However, she was not able to see the sheet music. Therefore, she prayed to the Lord about her wish and put great effort into memorizing the connections between the sound each key produced and its location on the keyboard. Eventually, she managed to memorize the music in the entire hymn book and was able to play piano for service.

Sometimes it is easy to recognize our gifts when we realize we have a natural talent for certain things, such as using computers or playing instruments. Other times, we may be eager to serve God in a certain way, but lack skill, in which case we should pray earnestly for that gift. But no matter what gifts we already have or what gifts we seek, we need to put effort into developing them for God’s purpose.

2. Take courage in preaching and letting others see Christ in us.

There are times when we are at school or in other social situations when we feel like we must hide our identity as children of Christ. Perhaps it is because we fear others may exclude us, mock us, spread rumors about us behind our backs, or simply because we feel uncomfortable being vulnerable in public. However, God does not want us to hide our identity as His chosen children. Rather, He wants us to boldly proclaim our honored status and tell others that they, too, can become children of God if they come to believe in Him.

One time, a young brother was so excited to show others his prayer after he had received the Holy Spirit. So, he prayed in the rice field while his classmates were nearby watching. However, one of his classmates made fun of him by kicking him from the back, causing the young brother to fall face down in the muddy water. The young brother felt frustrated by this incident, but a few days later, the classmate who had made fun of him suddenly passed away.

God will always have our back when we courageously share our faith with those around us. But more importantly, we have been given the most precious truth in the entire world, so why should we be ashamed of it? In 2 Timothy 2:12, Paul wrote, “If we deny Him, He also will deny us.” Knowing this, we must take courage in preaching to others and bringing others to Christ.

Memory Verse

“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” (1 Peter 4:10)

Meaning

1. All of God’s chosen children have been given a gift of some sort. Our gifts may be very different from those of our brothers and sisters, but God has given them to us so that we can use them to build ourselves and each other up in love.
2. A steward is someone who has been given the authority of the master in the master’s absence. In this case, we have been given authority over the gifts that are God’s grace to us. To be good stewards, we must manage our gifts wisely by first identifying them, then expanding them through practice, and finally utilizing them for the growth of the church, which is ultimately for God’s purpose.

Conclusion

Each of the four apostles brought different strengths to Jesus’ ministry. Matthew, once a despised tax collector, recognized his status as a sinner, accepted Jesus and followed Him faithfully. Philip preached and testified eagerly for Jesus. Bartholomew was well versed in the Scriptures, so he could recognize Jesus Christ when he met Him. Thomas wanted to be sure of his faith and did not want others to sway his beliefs. We must learn from Matthew, Philip, Bartholomew, and Thomas to use our individual gifts and characteristics to serve God faithfully in preaching and living out Christ. Further, we must learn from their pursuit to fully understand the Scriptures to have the same thirst for the gospel and its truths.

Lesson 7 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What is a steward? How do we become good stewards?
A steward is someone who has been given the authority of the master in the master's absence. To be a good steward, we must manage our gifts wisely by first identifying them, then expanding them through practice, and finally utilizing them for the growth of the church which is ultimately for God's purpose.
2. What were two of Matthew's characteristics, and how did he show them?
He was humble and understood his own status as a sinner by choosing not to boast of his generosity when hosting Jesus at his home with a "great feast" (Lk 5:29).
3. What important actions must we take in order to follow Christ as closely as Thomas did?
We need to commit ourselves to following Jesus, both in our character and in the direction He guides our lives. To do so, we must never neglect to pray for direction and study the Bible so that we can follow Him in spirit and in truth.
4. What were Philip and Bartholomew's characteristics?
Philip was eager to preach for the Lord, and he was enthusiastic about pursuing the truth. Bartholomew was well versed in the Scriptures, and he had a heart with no deceit.
5. What gifts do you have? How can you use it or them to serve God?
Personal answers.

Memory Verse

“Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Work [Behavior]
God desires for us to offer ourselves to His work and to pastor His sheep.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. God is a comforter who uses His workers to build others up. 2. God is a Spirit who guides and leads His workers to accomplish His work. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exhibit the qualities of a good person each day. 2. Seek the fullness of the Holy Spirit and remain convicted in our faith. 3. Encourage and comfort others through the word of God.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Barnabas
 1. Background
 2. A Good Man, Full of the Holy Spirit and of Faith (Acts 11:24)
- B. Mark
 1. Background
 2. A Good Helper

Life Application

1. Be a good person
2. Be filled with the Holy Spirit
3. Be full of faith
4. Learn to encourage and comfort others

Memory Verse

Conclusion: Strive to be a good person who encourages and comforts others in wisdom while doing God’s work.

Introduction

Barnabas and Mark, cousins (Col 4:10), were both important workers of God during the apostolic period, and each contributed to the work of the Lord in their own way. Barnabas' love for God manifested in his care and concern for the members. Mark wrote one of the four gospels, chronicling many important events in the life of Jesus Christ, and assisted Paul during his ministry.

First, let's begin by studying Barnabas.

A. Barnabas

1. Background

The Bible records that Barnabas was one of the apostles (Acts 14:14). He was descended from the tribe of Levi and born on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus. His original name was Joseph, but the apostles called him Barnabas (*Βαρνάβας*), meaning "son of consolation" or "son of encouragement" (Acts 4:36).

2. A Good Man, Full of the Holy Spirit and of Faith (Acts 11:24)

The Bible describes Barnabas as a man of sound morals, trustworthy and guided by the Holy Spirit. His actions showed his great faith and reliance on God, allowing God to use him mightily for many great works.

a. A Good Man

Barnabas was concerned for the welfare of the church (Acts 4:36–37)

As the church increased, so did the number of members in need. But miraculously, none lacked for anything, as Barnabas was one of many who decided to share his possessions. He sold his land and gave the proceeds of the sale to the apostles. Barnabas' generous gesture exemplified his great faith and love for the Lord. He wholeheartedly lived for God and sacrificed much to serve the church.

Barnabas showed care and concern (Acts 11:27–30)

When a prophet announced that there would be "a great famine throughout the world, [...] the disciples [...] determined to send relief" to the members in Judea (vv. 28–29). The disciples entrusted Barnabas and Saul with the important task of transporting the gathered donations to the elders. In undertaking this task, Barnabas showed that he understood the importance of unity and of helping one another in difficult times.

b. Full of the Holy Spirit

"Son of Encouragement" (Acts 11:19–26)

When Stephen was martyred, the believers scattered, bringing the gospel with them to Antioch. Many there came to believe, prompting the Jerusalem church to send Barnabas to pastor these new believers. When he arrived in Antioch, upon seeing evidence of the grace of God, he "was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord" (v. 23). True to his name, he used positive words to remind the congregation to stand firm and keep their faith in the Lord.

One Who Pastors (Acts 11:25–26)

Barnabas' encouragement of the Antioch members did not stop there. Likely under the

guidance of the Holy Spirit, Barnabas thought of Saul and asked for his help (vv. 25–26). Together, they spent a whole year teaching and training the people of the Antioch church in the doctrine and the truth.

A Prophet and a Teacher

“Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas [...] and Saul” (Acts 13:1). Barnabas held two important roles: a messenger of God and a teacher gifted in instructing others in God’s word. The Bible records how the Holy Spirit instructed the Antioch believers to separate Barnabas and Saul for His cause (Acts 13:2–3). Thus, the two, accompanied by Mark, were “sent out by the Holy Spirit” (Acts 13:4) on their first missionary journey.

c. Full of Faith

Barnabas and Saul

After Saul’s conversion, “he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple” (Acts 9:26). But Barnabas chose to have faith in God’s power; he saw Saul not as a persecutor, but as someone who had truly seen Jesus. He brought Saul to the apostles, allowing Saul to explain his conversion (Acts 9:27). Barnabas’ faith built a bridge between Saul and the disciples.

Barnabas and Mark

During their first missionary journey with Paul, Mark, “departing from them, returned to Jerusalem” (Acts 13:13). Barnabas later wanted to take Mark with them again on their second journey, but Paul was adamant against the idea. Instead of making an issue of the matter, Barnabas and Paul went their separate ways (Acts 15:36–40), and Barnabas took Mark with him to Cyprus. Barnabas did not give up on Mark but chose to encourage him and continue working with him. Barnabas’ faith in God allowed him to see past the faults of men and trust in God’s transformative power.

B. Mark

1. Background

The Bible records that Mark had two names: “John whose surname was Mark” (Acts 12:12). Mark was his Roman name, while John was his Jewish name. Mark lived in Jerusalem, in a house where many came together to pray.

2. A Good Helper

a. Preaching the gospel

Mark traveled with Barnabas and Paul on their first missionary journey to preach the gospel to other regions. However, when they came to Perga in Pamphylia, Mark left the group and returned to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13). Because of this, Paul refused to bring Mark along on their second journey to revisit their brethren in regions they had preached before. Due to this strong difference of opinion, Barnabas and Paul parted ways. Paul took Silas with him, while Barnabas brought Mark.

Through this experience and training, combined with Barnabas’ patience, Mark was strengthened. Despite their differences, Mark and Paul later reconciled, and Mark became a good helper to Paul during his imprisonment in Rome (Phm 1:24; 2 Tim 4:11; Col 4:10).

b. The Gospel of Mark

Peter called Mark a son (1 Pet 5:13), and Mark was edified greatly by the Lord's teachings given by Peter. It is clear that Mark closely followed the older workers and learned a great deal from them, enabling him to write down the life of Jesus and His teachings. We should learn from Mark's example and keep the teachings of Christ in our hearts in all wisdom (Col 3:16). Not only will we edify ourselves spiritually, but we will also be able to preach the gospel so that many will come to believe.

Barnabas and Mark labored in one mind for the work of the Lord. They fought a good battle for the truth, and their feet were "beautiful" as they "preach[ed] the gospel of peace" (Rom 10:15). Barnabas had a generous spirit for the Lord's work, and after his conversion, he dedicated his whole life to serving God. If not for Barnabas, Mark might have decided to give up and Paul might never have been accepted in the Jerusalem church. But both Mark and Paul were used greatly by God because of Barnabas.

Check for Understanding

1. How did Barnabas exhibit the qualities of a good man?

- a. He showed care and concern for others: When the churches in Judea needed provisions during the famine, he helped bring donations to them.
- b. He was genuinely concerned for the welfare of the church: When he converted to Christianity, he sold all his property and gave his money to the apostles for the development of the church.

2. Who did Barnabas encourage and how?

- a. Mark – When Paul refused to bring Mark on his second missionary trip after Barnabas recommended bringing him, Barnabas did not give up on Mark. Rather, he departed together with Mark on their own missionary trip.
- b. Saul – When Saul was a new convert to Christianity, many of the apostles were afraid of him and did not accept him as one of their own. So, Barnabas brought Saul before them and even vouched for him. Saul, later Paul, became a great worker for God.
- c. Members in Antioch – When new members joined the church in Antioch, Barnabas was sent there to pastor them. He encouraged them to remain steadfast in their faith to the Lord.

3. Why did Paul refuse to allow Mark to join him on his second missionary trip? Mark departed from Paul during the first missionary journey and returned to Jerusalem.

4. How did Mark work mightily for God?

- a. Joined Paul on his first missionary trip to preach the gospel (but departed before the trip ended)
- b. Joined Barnabas on a missionary trip to pastor the members
- c. Served Paul, including during his imprisonment in Rome
- d. Learned from more experienced members and wrote the Gospel of Mark

Life Application

"For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith." (Acts 11:24)

1. Be a good person

A man of sound morals, Barnabas demonstrated great character—not only was he generous, but he was also respectable. It may be difficult, but we should do our best to follow his example. The Bible reminds us that no matter how great the gifts bestowed us, without love, they profit us nothing. On

the other hand, if we have love in our hearts, we can work towards being a good person, just as Barnabas was.

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

(1 Corinthians 13:4–7)

As we can see, biblical love is comprehensive and perfect; we should all work towards this kind of love so that we can be a good person in God's eyes.

2. Be filled with the Holy Spirit

Barnabas led a Spirit-filled life. God filled him with the Spirit to strengthen and guide him as he served the church and witnessed for Jesus Christ. In order to be filled with the Holy Spirit, we must first empty ourselves and welcome Him into our hearts. By submitting our will to Him and obeying His guidance, we will act according to God's will and express the love of God within us. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we are filled with the truth (Jn 16:13). Thus, we will be able to preach the truth, just as Barnabas and the other apostles did.

3. Be full of faith

Because of his great faith, Barnabas fully relied on God and trusted in Him for all matters, so God was able to use him for His purpose. Faith does not develop overnight. It takes time to cultivate. Abraham, whom the Bible refers to as the father of faith, laughed in disbelief when the Lord told him that he would have a son in a year's time (Gen 17:15–17, 21). Even at his advanced age, Abraham's imperfect faith caused him to doubt God's promise. However, several years later, when the Lord asked Abraham to offer his only son as a sacrifice, he did not hesitate to do so, stopping only when an angel stayed his hand. Abraham was full of faith; he believed that even if Isaac died, God would be able to resurrect him (Heb 11:17–19).

It is normal for our faith to be like Abraham's; strong at one time, but unstable at another. Therefore, it is important that we ask God to help us so that we can become full of faith (Mk 9:24).

4. Learn to encourage and comfort others

We should learn to use God's word with wisdom in a manner that edifies others. Often, in response to members who express distress, others respond with, "You need to have faith!", "You must not have prayed enough!", or similar responses. These responses originate from the assumption that the member in distress is suffering due to his or her own sins or doubts. However, tribulations do not always occur due to a lack of faith, lack of prayer, or past sins.

Job, a righteous man whom even God was proud of (Job 1:8), endured excruciating tribulation, both physically and emotionally (Job 1:13–19; 2:7). Job's three friends wrongfully accused Job of bringing the suffering upon himself, saying that he must have committed some evil. In the end, God asked Job to pray for them because they had wrongly judged him (Job 42:7–8).

As children of God, we must learn to speak words of comfort to those who suffer and feel rejected. God has His will for each of us, but it is not our place to interpret His will for others. So, instead of judging, we should practice being good listeners and learn how to pray for those in need. If we do

not feel that our faith is stable enough to take up the role of encourager, we can ask those who are spiritually stronger, such as preachers, deacons or elders, for help in encouraging members in need.

Memory Verse

“Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Meaning

The original Greek word used for “edify” means “to build a house” or more specifically, “to build up from the foundation.” As members of the same body of Christ, we should comfort one another by speaking kind and caring words to those burdened with worries, trials, or pain. But more importantly, we need to build each other up in Christ so that we can help each other overcome these trials and draw closer to God. Ephesians 4:29 teaches us: “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.” When we see or know about others experiencing difficult times, we must take the initiative to comfort and help them build up their spirituality and faith in God.

Conclusion

Many times, we speak what is on our minds without considering how our words will affect others. Sometimes, our words of “encouragement” cause the other person to feel as if we are judging them. Thus, we need to learn from Barnabas to be skillful in encouraging other members so that everyone’s faith can grow together. Perhaps some of us have not encountered great persecution or suffering in our lifetime. However, in order to do God’s work, we must be prepared to face such difficulties. We need to build ourselves up so that we can become good people, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith, so that we will be able to endure the hardships that may arise in our lives. Then, God can use us mightily for His purpose.

Lesson 8 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What does it mean to edify others?
To edify others means to build each other up in Christ so that we can help each other overcome our trials and draw closer to God. When we see or know about others experiencing difficult times, we must take the initiative to comfort and help them build up their spirituality and faith in God.
2. How did Barnabas exhibit the qualities of a good man?
*He was concerned for the welfare of the church: He sold his land and gave the proceeds to the apostles for the church.
He showed care and concern: Barnabas was entrusted with the important task of transporting the gathered donations to the elders. In undertaking this task, Barnabas showed that he understood the importance of unity and of helping one another in difficult times.*
3. How did Barnabas encourage the members in Antioch?
Upon seeing evidence of God's grace, he "was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord" (Acts 11:23). He used positive words to remind the congregation to stand firm and keep their faith in the Lord.
4. How did Barnabas treat Saul differently from the other disciples?
Barnabas chose to have faith in God's power and saw Saul not as a persecutor, but as someone who had truly seen Jesus. He brought Saul to the apostles, allowing Saul to explain his conversion. Barnabas' faith built a bridge between Saul and the disciples.
5. How do we become like Barnabas—a good person, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith?
To be a good person, we need to have love in our hearts. To be filled with the Holy Spirit, we must first empty ourselves and welcome Him into our hearts. To be filled with faith, we need to devote time to cultivate it.
6. Is there anyone you know who is undergoing trials or tribulations? How can you comfort or encourage them?
Personal answers.

Paul

Passages: Acts 7:54–8:3; 9:1–31; 11:25–30; 13–28; Gal 1:1–2:14; Phil 3:4–11

Memory Verse

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Work [Behavior]
God seeks to make use of His people as vessels that are ready for every good work.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God called us to serve according to His will and His way.2. God knows our hearts and directs our paths.3. God seeks faithful workers to be His witnesses.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Serve God according to His time and His will.2. Be filled with the Holy Spirit in conduct and speech.3. Faithfully and diligently study the word of God.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Saul Before His Conversion: “Concerning the law, a Pharisee”
- B. Paul’s Conversion and Preparation: A Chosen Vessel, a Minister, a Witness
- C. Paul’s Ministry: “Poured out as a drink offering”
- D. Paul’s Character

Life Application

1. Serve God according to His time and His will
2. Be filled with the Holy Spirit in conduct and speech
3. Faithfully and diligently study the word of God

Memory Verse

Conclusion: God has His will and ministry for each of us. We must work hard and know His words to be an approved worker of God.

Events and Spiritual Teachings

A. Saul Before His Conversion: “Concerning the law, a Pharisee”

(Teachers: Figures 1 or 2 can be referenced as a visual timeline of events throughout lesson.)

Let’s begin by studying Paul’s background. Before his conversion, Paul went by his Jewish name, Saul.

Hometown: Tarsus, in Cilicia (Acts 21:39)

Tarsus was located on the northeastern tip of the Mediterranean Sea. Since he grew up here, he had a Greek name, could write in Greek, and held Roman citizenship (Acts 16:37–38).

Education: He was raised according to the laws of Moses and trained to be a Pharisee. Paul strictly observed the written and oral laws (Acts 22:3–5; Phil 3:5–6; Gal 1:14).

Did You Know?

During Paul’s time, there were two main schools of Judaism: the House of Hillel and the House of Shammai. Gamaliel was the grandson of Hillel; his teachings were not considered as strict as Shammai’s. This is reflected in Gamaliel’s advice to the Sanhedrin in Acts 5:34–38.

Why is Paul’s background important?

1. First, Paul did not persecute the church out of a wicked heart. From his background, we can see that Paul persecuted the church out of zeal for the God of Israel, as he thought the Jewish people were committing blasphemy. One of the teachings of the gospel that many Jewish leaders could not accept was the divinity of their Messiah. Let us read Acts 7:56–57 and Matthew 26:63–65.
2. Second, Paul’s background guides us on how we should read his writings. The name “Paul” is Greek, and he was a Roman citizen, but Paul was a Pharisee. He was raised on the law of Moses and taught to memorize the Scriptures. Therefore, to best understand Paul’s letters, we must read it from his perspective, without applying western thinking to explain his teachings.

B. Paul’s Conversion and Preparation: A Chosen Vessel, a Minister, a Witness

Let’s first read Acts 9:1–31 (cf. Acts 22:6–11; Gal 1:16–21).

When a great light shone around Paul, he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” (Acts 9:4). At that moment, Paul began to reconsider his actions, and asked two important questions:

1. “Who are You, Lord?”

When Paul asked this question, the Lord responded, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting” (Acts 9:5). Paul realized that his previous beliefs were wrong; the Jews were not committing blasphemy. Jesus of Nazareth had died, resurrected, and was in fact God.

2. “Lord, what do You want me to do?”

Paul knew that he must stop persecuting the Jewish people, so he asked God for guidance. God instructed him to go into the city, where He had prepared a disciple to help Paul. Once in Damascus, God used Ananias to lay hands on Paul that he may regain his sight, receive the Holy Spirit, and receive baptism (Acts 9:12, 17–18). More importantly, God revealed to Ananias exactly how He wanted to use Paul. Paul was going to be:

- “A chosen vessel of [God] to bear [His] name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15)
- A minister (Acts 26:16)
- A witness (Acts 26:16)
- Sent to the Gentiles (Acts 22:21; 26:17)

How was Paul prepared for his calling? As a trained Pharisee, he had extensive knowledge of the Scriptures. As a Roman citizen, his status allowed him to travel across the Roman Empire with ease. His education and citizenship meant that he had the best of both worlds; he could speak and write eloquently on the law of God, as well as articulate the same in the dominant language of the nations at that time—Greek.

God had great plans for Paul, but despite his training and education as a Pharisee and Roman citizen, he wasn’t ready to begin his ministry immediately. Paul wrote that he did not travel to Jerusalem with the apostles but went to Arabia before returning to Damascus. In fact, it was three years before Paul traveled to Jerusalem to see Peter (Gal 1:17–18). During these three years, Paul prepared for the ministry by meditating on God’s word and praying for understanding of the mysteries (Eph 3:1–3). In the end, it took Paul years before he embarked on his first missionary journey or wrote his first letter.

C. Paul’s Ministry: “Poured out as a drink offering”

(Teachers: Display Figure 3 for students to examine.)

When God first appeared to Paul, he had a special mission for him. From the moment of his birth, Paul had been set apart by God to go to the Gentiles and proclaim the gospel to all nations (Rom 15:15–16; Gal 1:15–16; Eph 3:1; Acts 13:2–3). Paul went on three, possibly four, missionary journeys, none of which had an appointed return date. Each time, Paul departed with his coworkers and taught the gospel of God wherever the Holy Spirit led them.

On these missionary journeys, Paul preached to those willing to listen, first to the Jewish in the synagogues, then to the wider population in the cities. He also performed miracles and wrote letters of encouragement to the brethren he met. So, his ministry was evangelical, pastoral, and literary.

Paul used Antioch as his “base of operations” (*mark on the map for students to see*); at the end of each journey, he would return here and report to the apostles.

1. First missionary journey
In Acts 13, Paul and Barnabas were sent out by the Holy Spirit. They began by traveling to familiar locations, such as Barnabas’ home region Cyprus. Many believe that Paul wrote his first epistle, to the Galatians, on this journey.
2. Second missionary journey
For this journey, Paul journeyed with a new coworker named Silas. Led by the Holy Spirit, they were sent even further out, preaching to the region of Macedonia and beyond. During this time, he spent eighteen months in Corinth, where he wrote 1 and 2 Thessalonians.
3. Third missionary journey
Paul spent three years in Ephesus. Over the course of this journey, he wrote 1 and 2 Corinthians,

and Romans as he continued to pastor and evangelize in the regions of Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia.

On these three missionary journeys, Paul labored next to many coworkers, among whom were Barnabas, Silas, Mark, Timothy, Titus, Priscilla, Aquila, and Epaphroditus.

After his third missionary journey, Paul returned to Jerusalem one more time, even though God revealed to him that the Jews sought to kill him. Once in Jerusalem, he was arrested and spent years imprisoned in northern Israel before making a journey to Rome, where he was placed under house arrest, continuing his imprisonment. While imprisoned, Paul wrote Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon, collectively known as the prison epistles.

Near the end of his life, Paul wrote three pastoral letters to workers he considered to be sons in the faith, Timothy and Titus. His final letter was 2 Timothy, where he used a phrase commonly quoted to describe his life of service. Let us turn to 2 Timothy 4:6–7 and Philippians 2:16–17. This “drink offering” symbolized Paul giving his all to God. The same zeal that had driven Paul to persecute the early church had been transformed into devotion towards Jesus’ calling to preach to the Gentiles.

Did You Know?

During Paul’s time, “Scripture” referred strictly to what we know as the Old Testament (2 Tim 3:16). However, the revelations of God that the Lord gave to Paul, and the mysteries that he articulated were so profound that even Peter commented on them (2 Pet 3:15–16).

D. Paul’s Character

How can we describe Paul after all this study?

1. He was incredibly zealous and devoted to the faith, as both a Pharisee (Acts 8:1–3) and an apostle (2 Cor 12:15; Phil 1:23–25; Gal 4:19; 1 Thess 2:11–12).
2. Paul was eloquent, sharp-minded, and bold in speaking the truth of the word of God (Acts 9:28–29; 14:12; 2 Cor 10:10; Gal 2:14). We can especially see this in the precision with which he explained the gospel in his writings.
3. Paul was faithful to the end of his ministry; he served until his life had finished its course (1 Cor 4:1–2; 2 Tim 2:1–2, 10, 14).

We can see through his life that God prepared Paul for this work—even before Paul knew what was in store! But once God called Paul, he faithfully followed and completed it with all his time, strength, and ability.

Check for Understanding

1. **Before Paul converted to Christianity, who was he and what was he doing?** He was a Pharisee, someone who studied and taught the law of God. He persecuted the church because he believed they were teaching heresies.
2. **What were the two questions that Paul asked God on the road to Damascus?** “Who are You, Lord?” “Lord, what do You want me to do?”
3. **What was God’s calling for Paul?** God called Paul to serve as a chosen vessel, to minister, and to witness to the Gentiles.

- 4. How did God prepare Paul for this work?** As a Pharisee, Paul studied the law of God meticulously. As a Roman citizen and native of Tarsus, Paul was able to move about the Roman Empire easily and preach to other nations in fluent Greek. After his calling, Paul prepared by withdrawing to Arabia and Damascus to receive wisdom and revelation from God.
- 5. Describe Paul's character in his service.** Devoted, zealous, sharp-minded, able to speak the word of God boldly, and faithful.

Life Application

1. Serve God according to His time and His will

As J1 students, what can we do for God? The church and our classes may give us simple tasks to help the church run smoothly. While these tasks may not seem to make a difference to us, we can learn the value of an obedient servant by following through with them (Phil 2:7–8; Lk 17:7–10).

2. Be filled with the Holy Spirit in conduct and speech

When Jesus ordered His disciples to wait in Jerusalem, He said that the disciples would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they would become His witnesses (Acts 1:8). Today, since we are the servants of God, the Holy Spirit will empower us in the same way. So, we must ensure that we walk in the Spirit, listen keenly to the word of God, and pray unceasingly so that God may work His great power in us and make us witnesses in our schools and in society.

3. Faithfully and diligently study the word of God

Though Paul already had extensive knowledge regarding the Scriptures, he still spent time after being called to study them more deeply. Today, God also seeks for us to be faithful workers. To do this, we cannot rely on our passion to be our sole motivation; after all, Paul was exceedingly zealous for God as a Pharisee. Rather, we must read the word of God carefully and often, to understand the sound doctrines passed down to us (Tit 1:9). Only in this way can we become qualified servants of God.

Testimony

In the name of Jesus, I bear testimony. When I entered junior high school, a few friends that I looked up to introduced me to rap music. By the time I was in year seven, I was listening to rap music almost exclusively. The music I listened to and the culture it embodied influenced me to be a young man that spoke very crudely, often swearing and generally acting in a way opposite to what I had learned. Throughout these years, I still prayed for the Holy Spirit each Sabbath, but it wasn't with a genuine desire for God to fill my life and lead me. When I was in year nine, I was moved by the Holy Spirit, and feeling God's presence inspired me to diligently pray and change my behavior. Praise God, He gave me His promised Holy Spirit, and I resolved to change the way I spoke and acted, and even the music I listened to. But I still found it challenging to read the Bible, finding other novels or computer games more interesting.

That year, I attended one of my first overnight spiritual convocations. I had a lot of problems weighing on my heart, so I remember saying to myself that I would wake up early and pray to God. That morning, I woke up at 6 am as the sun was rising at the crack of dawn. But to my surprise, when I woke up someone was already up, outside in the classroom. It was the pastor, sitting there reading the Bible by the window. And it was then that I learned the value of waking up early, setting aside a quiet time—before my brain was flooded with TV shows and other stimulation—to use this time to search God and read His words.

That spiritual convocation was one of the pivotal moments of finding my faith in my teenage years. I was able to feel the nearness of God in prayer, in Bible reading and in the lessons, and these foundational principles would guide my growth through high school. Hallelujah! All glory to God!

- Anonymous

Memory Verse

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15)

Context

Paul is passing on to Timothy the requirements for an approved worker of God.

Meaning

1. “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God”
Service is a privilege. Just because we are baptized into Christ does not automatically mean we can serve Him regardless of our own behavior and conduct. Rather, we must make every effort to put aside our sin, our weaknesses, and worldly distractions so that we can be a vessel ready for every good work (2 Tim 2:21).
2. “a worker who does not need to be ashamed”
We are stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor 4:1). As God’s stewards, one day we will stand before Him, held accountable for everything we have done in this world. Have we accomplished what God has called us to do? Are we responsible in every work entrusted to us?
3. “rightly dividing the word of truth”
We must carefully hold on to sound doctrine when we interpret the Bible and speak to others of its teachings. This starts by first having correct knowledge and a deep understanding and wisdom regarding the word of God. Unless we spend time studying the Bible, we cannot possibly hope to interpret the word of truth correctly.

Conclusion

Paul’s life serves as a reminder to us on three fronts.

- First – God is in control of all our lives. Whenever He places events in our lives, He does so to prepare us so that we can carry out the good work that He wills for us.
- Second – God will send us to do the work that He wills. We cannot pick and choose how we wish to serve God, for we are only unworthy servants. Instead, in everything entrusted to us, we should put in our best effort to glorify God.
- Third – We must keep God’s words in our hearts. Only when we hold fast to sound doctrine and have a firm grasp of the word of God can we faithfully follow Him until the very end.

Lesson 9 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. In your own words, explain the requirements for an approved worker of God.
We cannot ignore our behavior and conduct. Rather, we must put aside our sin, weaknesses, and worldly distractions to be a vessel ready for every good work. As stewards, we will be held accountable for everything we have done. Thus, we should act so that we will not be ashamed when we stand before God in judgment.
2. What did God tell Ananias He had in store for Paul? Provide biblical references.
 - a. *A chosen instrument of God's, before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel (Acts 9:15)*
 - b. *A servant (Acts 26:16)*
 - c. *A witness (Acts 26:16)*
 - d. *Sent to the Gentiles (Acts 26:17), repeated again 3 years later in Jerusalem (Acts 22:21)*
3. How did Paul prepare himself for the ministry? How can we prepare ourselves to serve God?
He waited three years before meeting other brethren, first receiving the revelation of God in Arabia. Study the Bible diligently and learn what we can from workers around us.
4. What were Paul's characteristics during his service to God?
*Zealous, passionate, devoted to faith.
Sharp-minded, eloquent, unafraid to speak the word of God to correct someone.
Faithful until the end, completing what God had willed for him.*
5. Choose one of the above aspects and explain: (a) Why you think this aspect is important, and (b) How can you improve in it.
Personal answers.
6. Why is serving God important to you? What can you do to ensure you remain as faithful as Paul?
Personal answers.

Figure 1

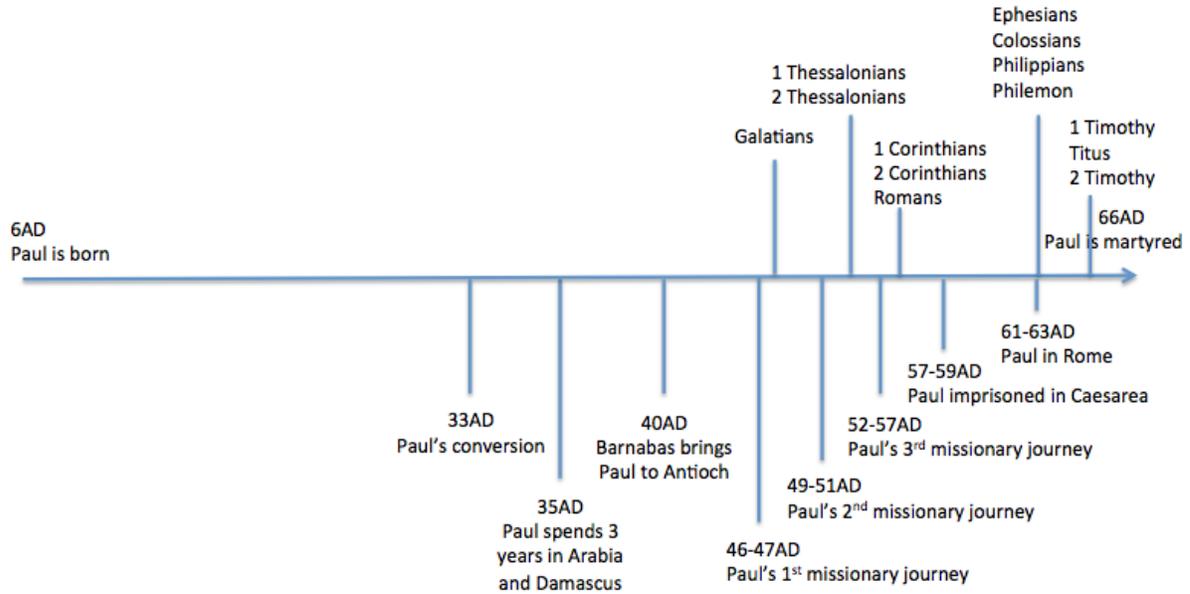
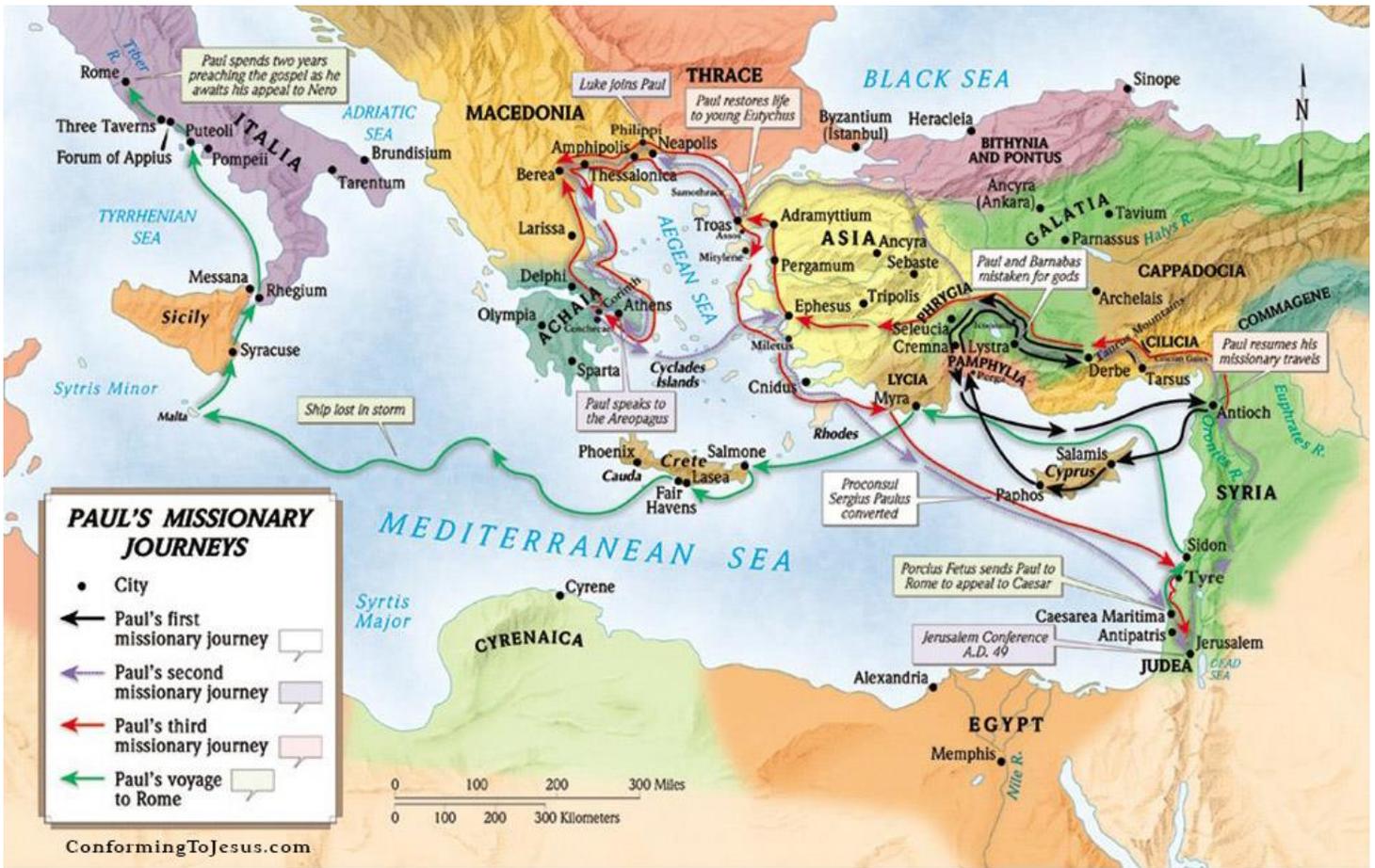


Figure 2: Timeline for Secondary Reference ¹

AD	34	37	46-47	48-49	50	51-53	53-54	54-57	57	57-59	59-60	60-62	62-66	66-67	
Conversion Damascus Arabia	Jerusalem Visit Tarsus, Syria, Cilicia	Antioch, Relief Visit Jerusalem	First Missionary Journey & Antioch	Jerusalem Council & Antioch	Second Missionary Journey	Antioch	Third Missionary Journey	Jerusalem Arrest	Caesarea Prisoner	Journey to Rome	Rome House Arrest	Fourth Missionary Journey	Arrest Rome	Martyred	
ACTS	9	11	13-14	15	16-18	19-21	22-23	24-26	27-28	28					
	3 Years Arabia		1 year Antioch		18 months Corinth			3 Years Ephesus		2 Years		2 Years			
LETTERS			Galatians		1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians			1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Romans		Ephesians Colossians Philemon Philippians			1 Timothy Titus 2 Timothy		
ROMAN EMPERORS	Tiberius---Caligula---Claudius				Nero										
ROMAN PROCURATORS	Tiberius Alexander			Venditidius Cumanus			Antonius Felix (wife, Drusilla)			Porcius Festus					
ROMAN PROCONSULS				Sergius Paulus Proconsul of Cyprus		Gallio Proconsul of Achaia									
MAJOR EVENTS	Herod Agrippa persecutes the church		Famine in Judea		Jews banished from Rome by Claudius			Claudius poisoned by his wife			Roman General Corbulo invades Armenia, captures Artaxata and Tigranocerta.			Nero burns Rome, persecutes Christians, and Jewish Revolt of 66 starts Jewish Wars	
	Caligula orders his image set up and worshiped at Jerusalem Temple, but dies preventing it.														

¹ Bob Conway, "Paul's Ministry Timeline," *Life of the Apostle Paul*, September 25, 2013 <http://lifeofapostlePaul.com/chronology-pauls-life/pauls-ministry-timeline/>

Figure 3: Map of Paul's Missionary Journeys²



² Conforming to Jesus Ministry, "Paul's Missionary Journeys Map," *Biblical Maps*, 2018, https://www.conformingtojesus.com/charts-maps/en/paul%27s_journeys_map.htm

Aquila and Priscilla

Passages: Acts 18

Memory Verse

“But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” (Joshua 24:15b)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Work [Behavior]
God desires for our families to be God-centered so that we can serve Him faithfully.	God is our heavenly Father.	Serve God together in unity.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Partners in Sharing the Gospel
- B. Partners in Showing Love

Life Application: Unity in the Family

Testimony

Memory Verse

Conclusion: Let us strive to emulate Aquila and Priscilla in our families, in the hopes that our household can be just like theirs—a place where God abides.

Introduction

In the Bible, Aquila and Priscilla are always mentioned together. We can see this in Acts 18 and in Paul's epistles (Rom 16:3–5; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19). Aquila and Priscilla demonstrate the importance of a God-centered family, and how wonderful it is when a husband and wife are able to serve the Lord together as one because of their unified faith. Today, we will be learning from Aquila and Priscilla's servitude, and how they were able to work together to further the work of the kingdom of God.

A. Partners in Sharing the Gospel

1. Had the same focus in life

After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers.

(Acts 18:1–3)

Although Aquila and Priscilla had been forced out of Rome, their circumstances gave them an opportunity to work alongside Paul in the city of Corinth. As tentmakers, the pair had work to do every day, but they never failed to prioritize God. They were able to balance the different aspects of their lives so that apart from successfully fulfilling their daily responsibilities, they also remained faithful workers for the Lord. Despite their difficult situation, they found a way to make a living while also serving God.

Putting God first does not mean neglecting other responsibilities, but rather managing our time well. We have to find a balance between the different aspects of our lives so that we spend an appropriate amount of time worshiping God, while still spending time on our education and our family. Whether it is school, family, or our spiritual life, we have many responsibilities, so we need to learn how to prioritize. This can be difficult, especially when many responsibilities overlap in date or time. However, we must understand that our first priority should be to cultivate our relationship with God.

*So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, **and Priscilla and Aquila were with him**. He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow. And he came to Ephesus, **and left them there**; but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.*

(Acts 18:18–19)

Aquila and Priscilla were on the same page in terms of their servitude. They both understood the importance of serving God, proven in their willingness to uproot their lives a second time to travel with Paul to Syria and continue working for the Lord. They had a beautiful partnership and dedicated their lives to further the gospel. When they came to Ephesus, they remained there to preach the gospel while Paul sailed onwards to Caesarea.

Let's now read Acts 18:24–28.

2. Knowledgeable in the truth

So [Apollos] began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

(Acts 18:26)

Apollos hailed from Alexandria, a cultural and educational center at the time, and was described as an “eloquent man,” “mighty in the Scriptures,” and “fervent in spirit” (Acts 18:24–25). But Aquila and Priscilla were not intimidated by his knowledge, boldness, or eloquence. Instead, they demonstrated their own knowledge of the truth: first, in realizing that Apollos’ knowledge was incomplete, and second, in helping him gain a more accurate understanding of the gospel. As a result of the couple’s actions, Apollos went on to serve the Lord better, “vigorously [refuting] the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ” (Acts 18:28).

This incident shows us that Aquila and Priscilla viewed preaching the complete word of God as highly important. Moreover, they were able to discern Apollos’ mistake and correct him only because they were well versed in the word of God. As Apollos was an educated Jew well versed in the Scriptures, we can infer from his acceptance that Aquila and Priscilla were able to convey the truth accurately.

Today, it is important that we properly prepare ourselves to explain the truth. Not only must we know the truth, but we must also know when someone is not preaching the complete truth. This requires that we have a deep understanding of the truth, and a strong conviction in our beliefs. Having both of these together gives us strength from above so that we will not be easily swayed. Through this, God can use us as vessels to mentor and help others, and we will be able to save ourselves and those who hear us (1 Tim 4:16).

Their shared faith and knowledge made Aquila and Priscilla partners in sharing the gospel. But their partnerships did not end there; they planted and watered the seed of the gospel with faithful coworkers such as Paul, while God gave the increase (1 Cor 3:7–8). In the same way, we are not alone in our service to God, so we must not think that we are. God’s intention is for people to work together in unity as the body of Christ. There are many opportunities for us to serve together and help one another, whether with our family or with brothers and sisters. In all these different areas of pastoring or evangelizing, God has given us the opportunity to work for Him together as one body of Christ.

B. Partners in Showing Love

1. Showed love towards the workers of God

Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

(Romans 16:3–4)

Aquila and Priscilla showed great love towards the workers of God. Not only were they willing to risk their lives for Paul, but more importantly, they were united in this decision. There was a possibility that they could be hurt or even killed, but they were both still willing to make the sacrifice. John 15:13 records, “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.” For Aquila and Priscilla, their willingness to sacrifice their lives to save Paul is proof of their love for him and for God.

Consider this: would we be willing to lay down our lives for any of our friends? Aquila and

Priscilla were able to have that heart of sacrifice because they truly loved God and, in turn, His workers. This is the love that we should have for our brothers and sisters. Today, as we serve together in the church of God, we need to think about what we can do for others instead of thinking only of our own benefit. When we are able to feel that kind of love for our brothers and sisters, we will be able to see the work of God truly flourish and grow.

2. Had a church in their house

The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

(1 Corinthians 16:19)

Aquila and Priscilla displayed the kind of unity that could only come from a life of faith. It is this unity that allowed them to have a church in their house. What did it mean that they had a church in their house? On the surface, it likely meant that members gathered to worship at their house. However, on a deeper level, their house was a place where God resided. Just as a church is dedicated to the Lord, a house can likewise be given to God and become a place of peace and harmony. It can become a place where God's spirit dwells.

A God-centered household is one that is unified in faith and serves the Lord together (Josh 24:15). In Acts 16, salvation was brought not only to Lydia and the Philippian jailer, but also their families, who were all baptized after receiving the gospel. Cornelius, after being instructed by God to send for Peter, gathered not only his relatives, but also his close friends to listen to the gospel (Acts 10:24). As a result, all of them received the Holy Spirit and were baptized. These examples, along with Aquila and Priscilla, show us the importance not only of sharing our faith with family members, but also of keeping the faith together. By maintaining a family altar, we too can have a church in our house.

Aquila and Priscilla were able to be true partners in God's ministry because they shared the same faith. As a result, they were mentioned by Paul many times. Their unity in their worship and servitude towards God allowed them to become great workers for the Lord and a wonderful example for us today. From their partnership, we can see that sharing the same faith and beliefs is vital in any relationship, whether it is with our friends, our family, or our future spouse. Though it will be some time before our marriage, it is important to remember to look for someone who shares the same beliefs and faith as ours. Aquila and Priscilla's shared beliefs was the key to being able to serve God together faithfully.

Check for Understanding

1. **What was the focus of Aquila and Priscilla's life?** Their focus in life was to preach the gospel.
2. **How were Aquila and Priscilla partners in the sharing of the gospel?** They were unified in their worship of God, their knowledge of the gospel, and their preaching of the gospel. They served together with Paul.
3. **How do we know that Aquila and Priscilla were knowledgeable in the truth?** They were able to realize what truth Apollos was missing and then explain it thoroughly to him.
4. **How did they show love to a worker of God?** They were willing to risk their lives for Paul.
5. **What does it mean to have a church in your house?** When you have a church in your house, God's presence abides in it, and your house is a place of harmony and peace.

Life Application

Unity in the Family

Apart from Aquila and Priscilla, the Bible provides many examples of different kinds of families. Let us look at three examples to see the importance of having a God-centered family who serves together.

1. Sapphira and Ananias (Acts 5:1–11) – United in deception

Sapphira and Ananias were united, but in the wrong way. They were united in their deception to God, not their worship of God. They kept a portion of the money that they had received from selling their possessions but told Peter that they had given everything. They cared more about how they appeared to others rather than about being honest regarding their offering to the Lord. When they lied to Peter, they actually lied to God. As punishment, the Lord struck both of them with death.

2. Elimelech and Naomi (Ruth 1:1–5) – United in their lack of faith

When he encountered a famine in the land of Israel, Elimelech took his family and departed for a Gentile land. His wife Naomi accompanied him even though this decision was drawing them away from God's promised land. As a family, they lacked faith in God, seeing only the severe famine and not the great power that God had over nature. They resorted to solving this problem using human means. Consequently, Naomi became a widow, and her two sons died as well.

3. Joseph and Mary (Matthew 1:18–25) – United in faithfulness to God's law

Joseph was an upright man, and Mary was the one that God had chosen to be the mother of the Son of God. Together, they made sure to follow the laws that God had set for them. Though they were not wealthy or of high social status, God looked at their obedient hearts and made the decision to use them as the vessels to raise Jesus. They understood the responsibility that had been given to them and the two of them worked together to raise Jesus Christ so that He grew in favor with God and man.

From these examples, we can see how families are not always united in the correct decisions. It is important for us to be unified for the right reasons within our own families. Our unity needs to stem from our shared faith in God and from placing God, not our selfish desires, at the center of our family. When we are able to maintain a family altar and have a God-centered family, He will guide us through times of peace and through times of difficulty. This is the blessing that comes upon a family that is unified in their servitude and love towards God.

Discussion

- In what ways is your family united?
- Is your family God-centered? Why or why not?
- What are ways your family can improve and establish a church in your house?

Testimony

Today, I would like to testify of God's great mercy. It is one of the greatest mercies I have received in my life: His work in changing my family's relationships and helping us to grow by building a family altar.

Many of you may not have established a family altar. Perhaps you think it's not something under your control because your parents haven't started one. However, our family altar began with my younger sister. It's not that my parents didn't want to develop one. Over the years, we randomly came together for Bible studies or prayers here and there. However, we were not able to maintain

them regularly. A big part of its lack of success was because my sister and I were not proactive and always had to be called to attend.

When we were in high school, my sister came to talk to me one day, saying that she felt that God didn't just want us to experience heaven in heaven, but that we should be able to experience heaven in our family. I had never thought of families this way before she said that.

In my family, my dad and I understood each other better, while my sister and my mom got along better. I never really thought too much about it – I thought it a matter of course. My sister never understood my dad's jokes, while my mom and I fought more—I did not take her nagging well. I always felt she was harder on me and I could never do enough to get her approval. It wasn't as seriously bad as other families, but I couldn't imagine it any differently.

My sister was prompted into action because something bothered her. When my dad came home, he would come to say hi to me in my room, then go to his room without greeting my sister. I didn't think that it was something he did purposely, and tried to explain, saying that maybe he grouped the two of us together. However, I had no good explanation to give her. She asked me to pray together with her for our family and I agreed. We started to pray together daily for our family, not really knowing or imagining how things could change.

Then that summer, originally we were going to go on a family trip to Taiwan, but it turned out that my sister had to stay back because of SAT classes and my dad because of business. So it would only be my mom and I going to Taiwan. I remember the day when this was decided, my sister and I excitedly talked to each other and said, "Wow, maybe our months of prayer worked and this was it." God was providing the opportunity for our family to come to a better understanding.

The day came for our trip. When we landed, we were shopping on the streets in Taiwan and I bravely brought up the subject and poured out my heart to my mom. I told her I always felt like I never felt that I was good enough. And I remember her response at the end of all that was, "Let's go into this store." I was crushed and disappointed. That night, I remember tearfully telling my uncle how disappointed I was. He comforted me, telling me that though my mom didn't say anything, she was thinking about it. The entire trip we didn't speak of it again, but during our flight back I brought it up once again. This time she responded and told me what was in her heart. She admitted that as parents, you don't always know the best way to teach your child. She then told me the purpose behind her nagging—her desire for what was best for me. We finally came to understand each other.

Meanwhile, my sister and my dad did not have any heart-to-heart talks. However, my dad tried his best to cook for her and it warmed my sister's heart that he would try to make different dishes for her. Moreover, he always came home at 5 pm every day to eat with her.

This was the turning point for both of our relationships with our parents. God can change a relationship that has been this way for almost twenty years. All the baggage that can come with family can be removed with God's help.

My mom had tried to do family altar on and off since we were kids. But it always died off. This time, we decided to do something different. We would take turns leading the family altar and the format could be much more flexible. It didn't always have to be Bible reading. Instead, we could ask one question to our dad, or simply sing hymns. We learned about our dad's past and his experiences with

God, and we would always end with a family prayer. We maintained our family altar for two years, and this time our hearts drew closer.

Today, do you believe that your family can be like heaven? If you don't, it will stay the same. I can't imagine what my family would have been like if my sister had never had that belief!

- Anonymous

Memory Verse

“But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” (Joshua 24:15b)

Meaning

1. After Joshua brought the Israelites to the land of Canaan, he asked the Israelites to choose whom they were going to serve: Were they going to serve the Lord? Or false gods?
2. Joshua had already made the convicted decision that not only would he serve the Lord, but his family was also going to serve the one true God. This shows us that although our own relationship with God is important, the faith of our house is of equal value to Him, and it must be nurtured.

Conclusion

Aquila and Priscilla’s amazing servitude came not only from their faithfulness in preaching the gospel, but also from their unity. Let us strive to emulate Aquila and Priscilla in our families, in the hopes that our household can be just like theirs—a place where God abides.

Lesson 10 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What is the context of the memory verse? What does this tell us about the importance of the faith of our house?
Joshua told the Israelites to choose whom they were going to serve: God or idols. This tells us that although our personal relationship with God is important, the faith of our house is of equal value and needs to be nurtured.
2. How were Aquila and Priscilla faithful workers for the Lord?
Although they had work to do every day, they never failed to prioritize God.
3. What does it mean to prioritize God in our lives? How do we do this?
It does not mean neglecting our responsibilities, but rather balancing the different aspects of our lives and putting God first. It means managing our time well.
4. How do we know that Aquila and Priscilla were knowledgeable in the truth?
They were able to realize what truth Apollos was missing and then explain it thoroughly to him.
5. What does it mean to have a church in your house?
When you have a church in your house, your house is a place where God resides, dedicated to God to be a place where God's spirit dwells. Your family is also a God-centered household, one that is unified in faith and serves the Lord together by both sharing and keeping the same faith.
6. Is your family united in faith? What steps can you take to improve your unity so that you can establish a church in your home?
Personal answers.

Titus and Timothy

Passages: 2 Cor 7; 8; 12; 1 Cor 4:17; Acts 16:2; 17:11; 19:22; 20:4; 1 Thess 3:2; Phil 2:19; 1 Tim 4; 2 Tim 2; Titus

Memory Verse

“Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” (1 Timothy 4:12)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Work [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Those who desire to serve God must be an example in word, conduct, love, spirit, faith, and purity.2. An admirable Christian defends the truth like a soldier, is obedient to God like an athlete, and hardworking like a farmer.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God is faithful.2. God is true.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Exhibit love and self-control, important attributes that define a Christian.2. Discern between truth and love.3. Aspire to be a faithful worker for the Lord.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Titus and Timothy: Good Workers for the Lord
- B. A Young Worker for the Lord
- C. An Admirable Christian
- D. Love with Self-Control

Life Application

- 1. Aspire to Be a Faithful Worker
- 2. Godly, Christian Living
- 3. Discern Between Truth and Love

Memory Verse

Conclusion: Aspire to clothe oneself with God’s word and knowledge in order to be a useful vessel of God.

A. Titus and Timothy: Good Workers for the Lord

1. Titus

We do not know much about Titus' personal life, other than that he was a Greek converted to Christianity by Paul (Gal 2:1–3). Aside from this, we know only of some of his work with the apostle Paul.

a. Titus Is a Good Worker for the Lord

Paul said Titus had a heart of “earnest care” for the members (2 Cor 8:16). Paul also described Titus as “diligent,” as Titus went to the members of his own accord (2 Cor 8:17). Titus also went to work with the church at Corinth at Paul's request to ease tensions and also collect money for the poor (2 Cor 7:6, 13–14; 8:6, 16, 23). Paul had absolute confidence in Titus' integrity and faithfulness (2 Cor 12:17–18). His confidence was well placed, as Titus served the church without taking advantage of it.

b. Paul's Faithful Partner

Titus continued to travel with Paul on missionary journeys, helping the Lord's work in preaching the gospel. When Paul was in Ephesus for three years, Titus served alongside him. Paul considered Titus not only to be a faithful partner in the ministry, but also his spiritual son, as Paul had led Titus to come to know Jesus.

c. Titus Is a Comforter

In 2 Corinthians 7:6–7, Paul recorded a beautiful description of Titus' character: “Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more.” Titus refreshed the members' spirits, and all that Paul had boasted about Titus was found true (2 Cor 7:13–14). Not only that, Titus held great affection for the members (2 Cor 7:15–16).

d. Titus Is a Good Shepherd

After Paul's release from his first imprisonment in Rome, he took Titus with him to Crete where they spread the gospel. Soon, believers established churches, and Paul entrusted Titus with the pastoral work while he himself went to visit the church in Corinth (Tit 1:5). Paul instructed Titus to continue teaching the new believers and to appoint church elders.

Paul knew that Titus would need reminders about what is required to grow spiritually. So, Paul wrote a letter to Titus, known today as the Epistle to Titus.

2. Timothy

a. Timothy's Faith

We can learn a bit of Timothy's background by reading 2 Timothy 1:1–5. He was the son of a Greek father and a Jewish mother. Timothy's mother was Eunice, and his grandmother was Lois—through her, the family's faith was established. Both Eunice and Lois prepared him from childhood to know the Scriptures (2 Tim 3:15). The truths Timothy learned from childhood made him “wise for salvation.” Timothy had a “genuine faith” (2 Tim 1:5), a faith that had been passed down from his grandmother and mother. This helped him become a valuable worker as he did the work of the Lord (1 Cor 16:10).

b. Paul's Trusted Partner

Timothy was a teenager when he first met Paul, and he served as Paul's trusted partner when pastoring several churches (Acts 16:1–3). He also accompanied Paul to Asia (Acts 20:4) and was sent by Paul to strengthen the churches (1 Thess 3:2; Acts 19:22; 1 Cor 4:17; Phil 2:19).

Timothy carried money collected by the Philippian church to care for Paul's needs in Corinth. When Paul was in Ephesus teaching the people about God's truth, Timothy was with him for three years. Around thirty years old by then, Timothy had served the Lord for at least ten years. It is with good reason that Paul referred to Timothy as his "true son in the faith" in his first letter (1 Tim 1:2).

Though young, Timothy was a model to follow for preaching the gospel (2 Tim 4:2). Hebrews 13:23 talks about Timothy being "set free," possibly referring to imprisonment for preaching the gospel. Yet Timothy remained true to his pastoral calling and duties, and gave himself wholeheartedly to the Lord's work.

c. Timothy Sets an Example

In Philippians 2:20–21, Paul described the heart of Timothy, saying that he had "no one like-minded, who [would] sincerely care" for the members. Paul's comment about Timothy reminded the members of his faithfulness.

Timothy pastored the church in Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3), and Paul constantly wrote letters of encouragement to Timothy to mentor him. He was around forty years old and still relatively young when Paul wrote 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy. The members in Ephesus church may not have thought much of Timothy because of his young age. However, Paul encouraged him not to let anyone despise him because of his age, but to set an example for the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, and in purity (1 Tim 4:12).

B. A Young Worker for the Lord

All of us begin as young Christians. As students, we can start by learning from Timothy that age does not restrict our faithfulness to God.

Sometimes, we may feel that we are too young to undertake duties in church, often leaving them to more senior members. We often, and too humbly, say that we are inexperienced because of our young age. But the church cannot grow if no one is willing to receive the baton. We may not be a strong spiritual worker yet, but the work we do today will shape us into strong workers in the future. Youths are the pillars of the church. Therefore, we must not allow our age to become a stumbling block in our service to the Lord.

What are some ways a youth can be a good leader? Timothy set an example through the following:

- 1. Speech:** A good Christian youth should shun godless chatter and gossip. A godly, Christian youth should speak the truth and let his speech be enriched with love and humility. Let us remember that although our friends outside of church may swear and curse, our mouths—which we use to praise God—should not be used to curse man (Jas 3:10). "Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man" (Mt 15:11).

2. **Life:** Our lives are living testimonies and proof that we can become leaders of the church. Our life is defined by what we do and say; therefore, we have to be vigilant in leading a godly life by cultivating our hearts, speech, and actions according to God's expectations.
3. **Love:** A person with love is selfless, patient, and kind. He does not boast, is not proud, and does not envy (1 Cor 13). We have to emulate Jesus and clothe ourselves with all the traits of love. We should always be willing to sacrifice for others, as it is when people feel our true love that we win over more souls for Christ.
4. **Faith:** Remain steadfast in the faith and truth that we have. Remember that our faith in our Lord Jesus should not be shaken by anything, whether it is family, friends, health, or wealth. It is easy to lose our faith in times of adversity, but when we overcome these hurdles, our faith, now tested, will be stronger than ever. Others may ridicule us for our beliefs, but we should never compromise our faith for acceptance or popularity in school.
5. **Purity:** Purity is the greatest challenge for youths in church today. Satan is indeed like a roaring lion waiting to pounce (1 Pet 5:8), and lust is a major tactic he uses to lure youths into sin. Today, it is important for us to understand that we must uphold and safeguard our purity until the day we marry. We need to abstain from sexual interactions that would taint our holiness as followers of Christ.

C. An Admirable Christian

In 2 Timothy 2:1–7, Paul uses three analogies to describe to Timothy how to be an admirable Christian who is strong in Christ.

1. **Soldier:** A soldier's main desire is to please his commanding officer by fulfilling the duty assigned to him. As soldiers of Christ, we must strive to please God, our commanding officer. Yet, we often seek to please men more than God. We prefer to fit in and be liked, but to be liked we may say things against the truth or God's will. While it is always easier to agree than to disagree, for the sake of Christ and the truth, a good soldier will stand up for what is right and defend God's teachings and commandments.
2. **Athlete:** An athlete does not receive his victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules. To be "crowned" as a Christian, we have to "compete" according to God's rules. That is, we must live our life in obedience to God. Our life was created by God, and unless we abide by God's commandments, we will be "disqualified" in the end. Sometimes, we feel that it is unfair that our friends seem to go unpunished for breaking the rules. But as His children, God holds us to a higher standard. When He chastises us, we know that He loves us.
3. **Farmer:** We must be hardworking like the farmer, who must be first to receive his share of crops. But if a farmer does not work, then there will be no crops to receive. The Bible teaches us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil 2:12). Although Jesus Christ has given us the chance of eternal life by dying on the cross for us, it is still up to us to work out our salvation. It is important to be hardworking, not spiritless, when working for God.

We will surely become admirable Christians if we can keep Paul's three metaphors in our hearts: defend like a soldier, be obedient like an athlete, and be hardworking like a farmer. All of these are ingredients for an admirable Christian, worthy of God's love and salvation.

D. Love with Self-Control

Paul's letter to Titus encouraged the members in Crete to exercise self-control. In Titus 1:8–9, Paul said an elder must be “a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, [and] **self-controlled**, holding fast to the faithful word as he has been taught.” Self-control is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22–23) and is difficult to exercise at any age. Self-control is meant to sway our hearts away from our sinful nature and towards pleasing God (Rom 8:5–8).

In today's world, many who preach about love speak of accepting all people despite their sins. In other words, the meaning of “love” as defined by the world is that we must accept sinners who continue to sin, even though they proclaim that they have embraced Christ. Therefore, we see that sinners no longer feel the need to exercise self-control to get rid of their sinful desires because of the “love” they are shown. However, the Bible tells us that those who believe in Jesus need to truly repent of their sins and change their ways to become a new man (Eph 4:20–24).

In 1 Corinthians 13, we are told that true love “does not rejoice in iniquity.” Self-control is a rare trait today because people like to follow their desires. It is clear that Satan uses love as a tool to attack Christians. People around the world have forsaken the truth and the word of God in order to please men, all in the name of love. The people in the world today are like those in the times of Judges who did as they wished. Therefore, we should not confuse love with the permission to continue in sin. A Christian who truly loves Christ has the self-control to restrain himself from sin, as he would rather please God than man.

Check for Understanding

- 1. In what ways was Titus a good worker for the Lord?** He had a heart of earnest care and was diligent. Paul also showed complete confidence in his integrity and faithfulness.
- 2. How did Paul encourage Timothy to be a good worker for God despite his youth?** He encouraged Timothy to set a good example to the believers in word, conduct, love, spirit, faith, and purity.
- 3. What three analogies did Paul use to describe an admirable Christian? What were the attributes that we should emulate?** A soldier defends God's truth and commandments, an athlete is disciplined and obedient, and a farmer is hardworking.
- 4. Why is it important for us to have self-control?** Self-control will sway our hearts away from our sinful nature and towards pleasing God.

Life Application

1. Aspire to Be a Faithful Worker

As youths, we should not be afraid to take on more responsibilities in church. It is not wrong to aspire to be a great worker for the church. Of course, it is always wise to examine our hearts to ensure that we are driven to lead the church because we want to serve God, not because of our pride. Here is a testimony of how a young boy in church had a goal and achieved it.

A 13-year-old brother loved spending time with children and baby-sitting the kids in church. Naturally, he desired to become an RE teacher when he grew older. However, he felt saddened that he could not serve as a teacher at his young age; he also did not have the Holy Spirit—his greatest obstacle. He started praying earnestly, and two years later at a church event, he received the precious Holy Spirit. Today, this brother is happily teaching RE students and is indeed a spirit-filled worker of the Lord.

From this testimony, we see how a boy aspired to take up a role in church and worked towards it. He knew what was required for him to do the job, and he pursued it. We often see youths pursuing their dreams in the secular world, where they study intensely to become a doctor or lawyer. But we do not often see youths equipping themselves with knowledge to serve God or aspiring to take up a leading role in church. If there is a need in church such as, for example, Mandarin or Spanish translators, we can take language lessons to improve ourselves, and God will help us if our goal is to serve Him in church. Be aware of the needs of the church and ask yourself if you can be the one to offer your skills and talent to the church.

2. Godly, Christian Living

Many in the world today claim to be Christians, but how many are truly godly Christians? To be godly Christians, we must imitate Jesus Christ in our lives. In everything that we do, we must ask ourselves, *Would Jesus approve? Would Jesus react the way I did?* In 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul tells us to follow his example, just as he followed Christ's. A godly Christian endeavors to do well in all aspects of his life, not just in church. But in order to be a godly Christian, we must manifest the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Self-control is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes, we may lose our patience and snap at another person. However, if we practice daily spiritual cultivation, then the Holy Spirit will help us exercise self-control. Daily spiritual cultivation calls for prayer and reading the Bible so that we can store the word of God in our hearts. It is only through the help of the Holy Spirit that we can live a godly, Christian life.

3. Discern Between Truth and Love

In our world today, the media often advocates extending love to everyone, including homosexuals. It portrays those who are against freedom of marriage as conservative and narrow-minded, and in many western countries, same-sex marriage has been legalized. It is all too easy for us to be taken in by the name of love, extending acceptance and granting equality to everyone. However, we must discern between love and the truth. When showing love, the truth of God should never be compromised; the Bible clearly tells us in 1 Corinthians 6:9 that homosexuals will not inherit the kingdom of God.

We live in a corrupt generation. Therefore, we should remain steadfast in the truth and stay firm in our beliefs. True love means adhering to the words of God and fearing God. True love does not mean doing as we wish and giving in to lustful desires. True love means having the self-control to rein in our fleshly desires and having the strength to do what is right and just.

Memory Verse

"Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity." (1 Timothy 4:12)

Context

Paul was exhorting Timothy to be courageous in taking up the leadership of the church despite his young age.

Meaning

1. "Youth" means young age.
2. To despise means to regard someone with contempt. In this verse, Paul is telling Timothy that he should not allow the members of the church to look down on him because of his age.

3. In order to win the favor, trust, and respect of the members, Timothy should be an example to them in word, conduct, love, spirit, faith, and purity. Paul meant that Timothy should strive to emulate Christ in his daily life.

Conclusion

We should aspire to be great workers for God even at our young age. To do so, we need to be examples to others by living godly, Christian lives worthy of praise and emulation. How? By emulating our Lord Jesus Christ, who is perfect in all ways, and practicing daily spiritual cultivation. Only then will we be able to clothe ourselves with the self-control and wisdom that makes us able to discern right and wrong in the complicated world that we live in today.

Do you pray and read the Bible daily? Do you examine your heart, ensuring that there is no malice and evil in all that you do? Do you aspire to be a servant or worker in the church? How have you prepared yourself along the way?

Lesson 11 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. Paul instructed Timothy to set an example in speech, conduct, love, spirit, faith, and purity. Pick two. How can you manifest Christ in these areas in your life?
Personal answers.
2. Name three important traits of Titus. Why was he such a good worker for the Lord?
 - *Paul said Titus had a heart of “earnest care” for the members (2 Cor 8:16).*
 - *Paul also described Titus as “diligent,” as he went to the members of his own accord (2 Cor 8:17), and also went to work with the church at Corinth at Paul’s request, to ease tensions and to collect money for the poor (2 Cor 7:6, 13–14; 8:6, 16, 23).*
 - *Paul had absolute confidence in Titus’ integrity and faithfulness (2 Cor 12:17–18).*
3. Why do you think Timothy grew up to be such a good worker for God?
Timothy had a good religious upbringing by his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois. Religious education is crucial in molding a child to be a godly youth.
4. What are the three analogies that Paul used to describe an admirable Christian?
A soldier defends God’s truth and commandments, an athlete is disciplined and obedient, and a farmer is hardworking.
5. How does love defined by the Bible differ from love defined by the world?
The world says that to show love is to accept sinners, even if they do not strive to change themselves, and that it is okay to be guided by your desires. The Bible tells us that love does not rejoice in iniquity, but one who has true love for Jesus will instead exert self-control to restrain himself from sin and become a new man in God.
6. A description of love can be found in 1 Corinthians 13:4–8. Pick one characteristic that you think you can improve upon and explain how you plan on improving.
Personal answers.

Philemon and Onesimus

Passages: Phm; Jas 2:26; Mt 25:37–40; 18:21–22; Rom 5:8; Eph 4:32; 1 Tim 1:15; Phil 4:13; 2 Tim 2:21

Memory Verse

“That the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.” (Philemon 1:6)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Work [Behavior]
1. God desires for us to share our faith through loving others. 2. God seeks sanctified vessels that can be useful for Him.	1. God is love. 2. God is our strength.	1. Recognize the least in church and learn to care for them. 2. Confront our wrongs by first repenting and then changing ourselves.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

A. Philemon: A Loving Master

1. Love the least of these
Life Application: Do you love the least of your brothers and sisters?
2. Do it for Christ
Life Application: Why do we serve and love Christ?
3. The power of forgiveness
Life Application: Forgiveness is a fruit of our effective faith

B. Onesimus: A Returning Servant

1. Confront our mistakes and be transformed
Life Application: Change requires the strength of our Lord

Memory Verse

Conclusion: Willingly be transformed by the truth to have an effective faith and let the knowledge that we do it all for Christ be our motivation and strength.

Spiritual Teachings and Life Application

The New Testament contains thirteen letters written by Paul. While the majority of letters are apologetics against heretical teachings, discussions of church matters, or explanations of the gospel of truth, the Epistle to Philemon is a personal letter written to a friend.

Apostle Paul wrote the letter to Philemon around A.D. 64 while he was in prison (Phm 1:10). Its contents revolve around Paul's request to Philemon for forgiveness and acceptance on the behalf of Onesimus. Through our study of Philemon, Onesimus, and their master-servant relationship, we can reexamine our responsibilities as a Christian regarding our love for others.

A. Philemon: A Loving Master

From the letter, we know that Philemon was a fellow worker in Christ, a wealthy resident of Colosse who came to believe in the gospel under Paul's guidance (Phm 1:19). Though the Bible does not specify Apphia and Archippus' relation to Philemon, some historians believe Apphia to be his wife and Archippus to be his son (v. 2). All three were believers and zealous workers for Christ.

It is evident from the letter that Paul felt joy and comfort in Philemon's faith and love (Phm 1:7). Paul mentioned that Philemon even offered his house for church services (v. 2), often receiving other members with love and helping those in need (v. 7).

In verse 6, Paul encourages Philemon "that the sharing of [his] faith may become effective." What does "effective" mean? The original Greek word means to be active and powerful. Simply knowing our Lord Jesus Christ does not make our faith effective or fruitful. "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas 2:26). Unless we constantly work, grow, and mature in our faith, our faith can easily fall flat and become ineffective.

So how can our faith become effective? "By the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus" (Phm 1:6). What does this mean? It means that our faith can become effective when others see the good that we do for the sake of Christ Jesus. Let us examine the wonderful attributes that Philemon exhibited that allowed his faith to become effective.

1. Love the least of these

Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, "Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?" And the King will answer and say to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me."

(Matthew 25:37–40)

In the parable of the sheep and the goats recorded in Matthew, chapter 25, Jesus Christ reminds us that we show love to the Lord when we show love to those around us who are in need. Our expression of love to God is not only limited to doing holy work at church; we must also show care and acceptance to our brothers and sisters in Christ. Paul's desire was for Philemon to "receive [Onesimus] forever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave—a beloved brother" (Phm 1:15–16). Showing love is not only loving the lovable, but also the "unprofitable," which means loving those who can provide nothing in return. We need to learn to receive the unprofitable, for they may seem insignificant, but in truth they are our brethren in Christ.

In Philemon's eyes, Onesimus was nothing more than a runaway slave. However, after his conversion in Christ, Onesimus was no longer an unprofitable slave, but a dear brother in Christ. Desiring to mend the relationship, Paul encouraged Onesimus to deliver the letter himself and asked Philemon to exercise his love by caring for the needs and weaknesses of others.

Life Application: Do you love the least of your brothers and sisters?

Do we know who are "the least of these" among our brothers and sisters at church? Those in need may be brothers and sisters whom you may not know well, or who may be much older or younger than you. Often, they are unable to repay your love, but we should not expect repayment for our care. We should show love to them because we see that there is a need, and because we see room to practice the love of Christ.

Oftentimes, it does not take much to show love. A pat on the shoulder, asking about someone's week, an offering of prayer for someone in stress, or even a shared plate of food can be enough to show our love for each other at church. This is servitude that we are all capable of. Do you act when you see the needs of others?

2. Do it for Christ

"Therefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to command you what is fitting, yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you [...] that your good deed might not be by compulsion, as it were, but voluntary."

(Philemon 1:8–9, 14)

In his letter to Philemon, Paul encouraged Philemon to do the right thing not out of duty or by force, but willingly out of his love for Christ. Just as Paul imitated Christ and encouraged Philemon to follow him, we too should do the same. While Jesus Christ was on the earth, He told His followers that everything He did, He did for God. In John 17:4, in the prayer before His crucifixion, Jesus Christ said, "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do." Our actions should be for the sake of God's purpose, willingly and out of our love for Him.

When we do all things for Christ, we and others will witness fruitful results. "For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother" (Phm 1:7). Paul assured Philemon of the joy and consolation they received through his love. Likewise, through the outward expression of our love, our brethren will receive comfort and joy because they will feel the sincerity of our love, born from our true faith in Christ.

Life Application: Why do we serve and love Christ?

Have you ever been assigned holy work that you view as a chore or a time killer, instead of as a way to serve God with joy? Why? Is it because you are not capable? Is it because you do not want to do it? The reality is simple: we find no joy in this holy work because we are not doing the work willingly. So, what is the difference between doing a work willingly and unwillingly? The difference is a matter of the heart.

Why do we serve and love Christ? Because we have all been created by God and made for a purpose. The purpose, as Jesus Christ prayed, is to glorify the Father. Today, all our gifts and possessions have been given to us through God's love; therefore, we should use our skills to

glorify Him in return. But how do we glorify Him? We glorify God when others witness the power of God's love working through us. However, in order to achieve that, we must first work on our interpersonal relationships.

3. The power of forgiveness

"The Peter came to Him and said, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.'"

(Matthew 18:21–22)

Why was it important for Paul to encourage Philemon to forgive Onesimus? Why do we also need to forgive? The central message of the cross is the teaching of forgiveness. It is the greatest manifestation of Christ's love for us. Paul wrote, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8), and, "be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph 4:32). To forgive others, we must first humble ourselves, understand the love that Christ has shown us, and reflect upon our relationship with Christ. When we find ourselves unable to forgive, we need to reexamine our faith in these three aspects.

Jesus Christ clearly taught that we must forgive others because God first forgave us. However, this is easier said than done. When others have hurt us, intentionally or not, we feel pain. Many times, it is far easier to ignore the person than to forgive them. What does it mean to forgive? In the Bible, the original Greek word for forgiveness literally means "to let go" (e.g., when a person does not demand payment for a debt). Thus, we forgive others when we not only renounce any claim for compensation for the hurt or loss we have suffered, but also let go of any resentment towards them.

Life Application: Forgiveness is a fruit of our effective faith

Forgiveness not only brings peace, but also joy. If we live in resentment and anger every day, how can we live happily? Once, there was a sister that had difficulty forgiving another sister. Over time, the resentment inside her grew. She did not think it to be anything serious in the beginning, but eventually she realized that she needed to forgive because the resentment had formed a wall in her prayers. Each time she knelt down to pray, spiritually she could feel that her prayers were not reaching God due to the immense wall standing between her and God. Not only that, no matter what she did, she was unhappy and easily angered by the little things (e.g., someone cutting in line).

One day, in her prayer, she asked God to help her forgive the person. The burden had become too heavy to bear, and she was unable to forgive solely by her own strength. In that prayer, the sister felt as if God had lifted something heavy from her heart and thrown it into a lake in front of her. After the prayer, the sister felt a lightness in her heart, and as she tried to recall what the other sister had done to her, she could no longer remember. The anger inside her had been replaced with joy.

Love is powerful, and through forgiveness, we allow others to see the strength of Christ's teaching—the strength to overcome pain, to forego resentment, and to accept differences.

Though this love seems difficult to achieve, we can definitely learn to love this way through receiving strength from above, as an effective faith will bear the fruit of forgiveness.

B. Onesimus: A Returning Servant

The name Onesimus means “profitable, useful.” A resident of Colosse (Col 4:9), he served as a slave of Philemon’s (Phm 1:16). After incurring some losses for Philemon, he ran away to Rome, where he met Paul and was converted.

In Roman times, slaves were seen as property, and their masters could buy and sell them as they pleased. According to Roman law, the master had the right to punish a runaway slave severely; imprisonment, whipping, or even execution was a common solution.

Under Paul’s encouragement, Onesimus returned to Philemon, along with a letter written by Paul to Philemon. In it, Paul beseeched Philemon to receive Onesimus, his slave, as a “faithful and beloved brother” (Col 4:9). Paul even offered to pay Philemon any debt that Onesimus had incurred, and to bear the wrong Onesimus had done him (Phm 1:18).

Who can claim to have never made any mistakes in the past? Who can claim to have never wronged anyone? Like Onesimus, we may have left others with a bad impression of us due to mistakes we made. Over time, this bad impression unknowingly becomes a hindrance, preventing others from befriending us, or preventing us from serving in church. However, Paul assured Philemon that Onesimus, who had once been unprofitable, was now profitable to both Philemon and him (Phm 1:11). What caused this transformation? How can we learn from Onesimus to overcome our past and transform from a slave into a beloved brother in Christ?

1. Confront our mistakes and be transformed

Onesimus was once a slave, a sinner who ran away from his responsibilities and caused his master to suffer loss. However, since he came to know Christ, the gospel of Christ transformed him entirely. Now, he faced his difficulties instead of fleeing from them, and he also stayed next to Paul willingly for the sake of the gospel. He became a close coworker of Paul, who viewed him as a son and a caring family member in Christ.

Before becoming a great worker for God, Paul went through a similar experience. In 1 Timothy 1:15, Paul proclaimed, “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” Also an “unprofitable” man once upon a time, Paul referred to himself as the chief of sinners. Yet through the grace of Jesus Christ and the renewal of the truth, he transformed from persecutor into a greatly profitable vessel of God.

To be a profitable man in Christ, we must forego our sinful ways and habits. The first step is acknowledgment. We must first recognize and admit our sins. Do you know what is keeping you from being a profitable worker? Is it your procrastination? Pride? Addiction? Timidity? A bad attitude or a temper? Just as when we are ill, in order to recover we must first recognize that we are sick and in need of a doctor.

After witnessing Onesimus’ transformation in Christ, Paul encouraged him to return to Philemon and confront his past faults. However, Onesimus still felt fear due to his inability to repay his debts. In order to strengthen him, Paul wrote a letter as a guarantee and to reassure Philemon

of Onesimus' transformation. Confronting and repenting of our sins are the initial steps. However, while God can search our hearts, man cannot. Therefore, we must take action to prove to others and to ourselves that we truly have transformed.

Life Application

Owning up to our mistakes requires a great deal of courage. Changing our old ways requires a strong determination. But just a strong determination is not enough. Just as Paul's letter strengthened Onesimus' decision to return, so is the promise of our Lord our strength. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13). God will strengthen us in our fear and weakness. As long as we are willing to repent, we will be a vessel useful for the Lord. "Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work" (2 Tim 2:21).

Check for Understanding

- 1. Who was Philemon?** Philemon was a wealthy Colossian. Paul's beloved friend and fellow worker, he often showed love toward church members and even offered his home for church services.
- 2. What is an effective faith?** An effective faith is one that allows others to see the good that we can do for the sake of Christ Jesus.
- 3. Who was Onesimus? What is the meaning of his name?** Onesimus used to be Philemon's household slave, but he caused his master to suffer loss, so he fled to Rome. In Rome, he met Paul and converted to Christ, becoming a faithful worker. The name Onesimus means "profitable, useful."
- 4. What was the purpose of Paul's letter to Philemon?** After Onesimus' conversion, Paul encouraged him to return to Philemon to ask for forgiveness. Knowing Onesimus' fear and worries, Paul wrote the letter for Onesimus to bring, the contents of which asked Philemon for acceptance and forgiveness.
- 5. How did Onesimus transform from being unprofitable to profitable?** Through the grace of God, he accepted the gospel and became a faithful worker. He showed Paul that he was a brother in Christ who was worthy of God's grace, not an irresponsible runaway slave. Seeing his transformation, Paul reassured Philemon that Onesimus was no longer an unprofitable slave but a profitable, useful brother in Christ.

Memory Verse

"That the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus." (Philemon 1:6)

Meaning

After receiving the gospel, Philemon experienced wonderful changes and witnessed the love of God in his life. Thus, Paul prayed for Philemon, desiring that his faith could be shared effectively by acknowledging the good that he could do for Christ. Through Philemon, others could see that all good deeds were done for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ. In doing good for the sake of Jesus Christ, the faith that he shared was effective, fruitful, and living.

Conclusion

Just as love is the key message of the cross, it is also the mark of a Christian. We have all experienced the love and forgiveness of our Lord Jesus Christ, but for our faith to grow, we cannot simply remain on the receiving end—we must learn to give as well. As we share our faith, which is the love we have

received from our Lord Jesus Christ, we can improve a relationship, restore what is broken, and renew what appears to be dead. This is the power of the gospel that we believe and preach.

Not only will the love of Christ bring change in others, but it will also transform us into profitable workers for the kingdom of God. "Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say" (Phm 1:21). May we all be able to carry out the love of Christ, so that we may foster beautiful relationships with our brethren and transform into faithful and effective vessels for God.

Lesson 12 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. When will our faith become effective, according to the memory verse?
When others can see the good deeds that we do for the sake of our Lord. In doing good for the sake of Jesus Christ, our faith can become effective, fruitful, and living.
2. What does it mean to do God's work willingly?
It means that all of our actions should be for the sake of God's purpose out of our love for Him, not out of a sense of duty or responsibility, or by force.
3. What three things are necessary to learn how to forgive others?
First, we must humble ourselves, second, understand the love that Christ has shown us, and third, reflect upon our relationship with Christ.
4. In what way was Onesimus transformed?
He was once a slave, a sinner who ran away from his responsibilities and caused his master to suffer loss. Once he came to know Christ, he transformed into someone who faced his difficulties instead of fleeing from them, and he also became a close coworker of Paul, viewed by him as a son and brother in Christ.
5. Read James 2:26. Is your faith "without works"? What habits can you change to make your faith effective and profitable?
Personal answers.
6. Have you shown love to your brothers and sisters today? If so, describe how, and if not, describe how you plan to after this lesson.
Personal answers.

Junior 1 Year 1 Book 3 Review

Memory Verses

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

heart	approved	cry	comfort
sharing	conduct	righteous	life
grace	cleanses	prepared	increase
serve	youth	gift	followed
fulfillment	edify	decrease	truth
believed	fishers	effective	me

2 Timothy 2:21	Philemon 1:6	1 Thessalonians 5:11	Luke 1:45
1 Timothy 4:12	Psalms 34:15	Joshua 24:15b	2 Timothy 2:15
Proverbs 4:23	1 Peter 4:10	John 3:30	Matthew 4:19–20

1. "But as for _____ and my house, we will _____ the Lord."
(_____)
2. "Keep your _____ with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of _____." (_____)
3. "Blessed is she who _____, for there will be a _____ of those things which were told her from the Lord." (_____)
4. "That the sharing of your _____ may become _____ by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus." (_____)
5. "He must _____, but I must _____." (_____)
6. "Therefore if anyone _____ himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, _____ for every good work."
(_____)

7. "Let no one despise your _____, but be an example to the believers in word, in _____, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity." (_____)
8. "Therefore _____ each other and _____ one another, just as you also are doing." (_____)
9. "The eyes of the Lord are on the _____, and His ears are open to their _____." (_____)
10. "Then He said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you _____ of men.' They immediately left their nets and _____ Him." (_____)
11. "Be diligent to present yourself _____ to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of _____." (_____)
12. "As each one has received a _____, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold _____ of God." (_____)

Multiple Choice

1. ____ : What analogy did Paul use to describe an admirable Christian?
 - a. A soldier defends God's truth and commandments.
 - b. An athlete is disciplined and obedient to God's instruction.
 - c. A farmer is hardworking.
 - d. All of the above.

2. ____ : What was the purpose of Paul's letter to Philemon?
 - a. To ask Philemon to forgive and accept as a brother his runaway slave Onesimus
 - b. To ask Philemon to send supplies and food to him
 - c. To inform Philemon of his situation
 - d. To ask Philemon how he and the brethren were doing

3. ____ : Which of the apostles did not accept Jesus Christ as risen when first hearing about it?
 - a. Matthias
 - b. Philip
 - c. Thomas
 - d. None of the above.

4. ____ : What did Judas do after Jesus Christ was arrested and taken to the Romans?
 - a. He found Peter and told him what he had done.
 - b. He tried to return the money, and then hung himself.
 - c. He used the silver coins to buy a plot of land.
 - d. He went to a temple and prayed for forgiveness.

5. ____ : Which family did John the Baptist descend from?
 - a. Moses
 - b. Aaron
 - c. Miriam
 - d. None of the above.

6. ____ : Which of the following describes Joseph, the father of Jesus Christ?
 - a. An upright man
 - b. A man of faith
 - c. A spiritual father
 - d. All of the above.

7. ____ : What was God's calling for Paul?
 - a. To serve as a chosen vessel, to minister, and to witness to the Gentiles
 - b. To serve as a chosen vessel, to pastor, and to witness to the Gentiles
 - c. To serve as a deacon, to minister, and to witness to the Jews
 - d. To serve as a chosen vessel, to minister, and to witness to the Jews

Holy Workers of God

Instructions: Write down which of God's workers match the description.

Zacharias	Matthew	Thomas	Peter
Philip	Barnabas	Bartholomew	John
Mark	Paul	Aquila and Priscilla	Philemon
John the Baptist	Titus	Timothy	Onesimus

Description	Worker of God
1. Sold his land and gave the earnings to the apostles	
2. Immediately went to tell his friend that he had found Jesus Christ after following Him	
3. Became a brother in Christ after meeting Paul and sought forgiveness for past wrongs	
4. Jumped into the water and swam to Jesus on shore	
5. Became mute after not believing the words of an angel	
6. Stated that One mightier than he would come and baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire	
7. Stated that he was "poured out as a drink offering"	
8. Entrusted by Jesus Christ to take care of His mother	
9. Invited Jesus Christ and tax collectors to a feast at his house	
10. Others found "great joy and consolation" in his love	
11. Had a heart of "earnest care" for the members	

12. Went from doubt to affirmation upon seeing Jesus Christ	
13. Taught Apollos a more accurate understanding of the gospel	
14. Was told by Jesus Christ that he was an Israelite, in whom was “no deceit”	
15. Departed from Paul at Perga in Pamphylia during a missionary journey	
16. Had a strong faith, established by his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois	

Paul's Conversion

Instructions: Number the events of Paul's conversion in chronological order.

- ___ "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads."
- ___ Ananias lay hands on him.
- ___ He fell to the ground.
- ___ He arose and was baptized.
- ___ "Who are You, Lord?"
- ___ After rising from the ground, he opened his eyes but saw no one.
- ___ "Lord, what do You want me to do?"
- ___ From his eyes fell something like scales, and he received his sight.
- ___ On the way to Damascus, a light suddenly shone around him from heaven.
- ___ "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."
- ___ He was led by his companions to Damascus.
- ___ "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"
- ___ After some days with the disciples in Damascus, he preached Christ in the synagogues.

Short Answers

1. What kind of stigma did Zacharias and Elizabeth have to live with? How did they deal with it?

2. How was John the Baptist simple and upright, bold, and humble?

3. What was the difference between John's baptism and the baptism Jesus' disciples performed?

4. What kind of desire led Judas to betray Jesus? How did this desire first show itself?

5. When does the sharing of our faith become effective?

6. What does it mean to do God's work willingly?

7. What does it mean to have a church in your house?

Junior 1 Year 1 Book 3 Review Answer Key

Memory Verses

1. "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (*Joshua 24:15b*)
2. "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life." (*Proverbs 4:23*)
3. "Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord." (*Luke 1:45*)
4. "That the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus." (*Philemon 1:6*)
5. "He must increase, but I must decrease." (*John 3:30*)
6. "Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work." (*2 Timothy 2:21*)
7. "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity." (*1 Timothy 4:12*)
8. "Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing." (*1 Thessalonians 5:11*)
9. "The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry." (*Psalms 34:15*)
10. "Then He said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.' They immediately left their nets and followed Him." (*Matthew 4:19–20*)
11. "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (*2 Timothy 2:15*)
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3. Became a brother in Christ after meeting Paul and sought forgiveness for past wrongs	<i>Onesimus</i>
4. Jumped into the water and swam to Jesus on shore	<i>Peter</i>
5. Became mute after not believing the words of an angel	<i>Zacharias</i>
6. Stated that One mightier than he would come and baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire	<i>John the Baptism</i>
7. Stated that he was “poured out as a drink offering”	<i>Paul</i>
8. Entrusted by Jesus Christ to take care of His mother	<i>John</i>
9. Invited Jesus Christ and tax collectors to a feast at his house	<i>Matthew</i>
10. Others found “great joy and consolation” in his love	<i>Philemon</i>
11. Had a heart of “earnest care” for the members	<i>Titus</i>
12. Went from doubt to affirmation upon seeing Jesus Christ	<i>Thomas</i>
13. Taught Apollos a more accurate understanding of the gospel	<i>Priscilla and Aquila</i>
14. Was told by Jesus Christ that he was an Israelite, in whom was “no deceit”	<i>Bartholomew</i>
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- 9 He was led by his companions to Damascus.
- 3 "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"
- 13 After some days with the disciples in Damascus, he preached Christ in the synagogues.

Short Answer

1. **(Lesson 1) What kind of stigma did Zacharias and Elizabeth have to live with? How did they deal with it?**

They had no children, and being childless was considered shameful at the time. They dealt with it by drawing closer to God and serving Him obediently so that they could be regarded as blameless in His eyes.

2. **(Lesson 3) How was John the Baptist simple and upright, bold, and humble?**

He wore clothing of camel's hair and ate only locusts and honey. He also fasted often, and many came to him for advice on how to live their lives before God. He spoke boldly of the multitudes' hypocrisy when they came to him for baptism, calling them a "brood of vipers" (Lk 3:7). He also rebuked King Herod despite the threat to his life. He did not seek to exalt himself. Rather, he knew that Jesus was the promised Messiah and understood that his role was to point people towards Jesus, not himself. So, he told others that a mightier One than he would come to baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.

3. **(Lesson 3) What was the difference between John's baptism and the baptism Jesus' disciples performed?**

John's baptism of repentance led people to Christ and prepared them for His coming. When Jesus Christ came, though, the people had to put their trust in Him in order to receive atonement through His blood. The baptism Jesus' disciples performed was for the remission of sins.

4. **(Lesson 6) What kind of desire led Judas to betray Jesus? How did this desire first show itself?**

His greed and desire for money. It first manifested itself when he began taking money from the common box entrusted to him. Also, he was pretended to be upset that Mary of Bethany anointed Jesus Christ's feet with expensive perfume instead of selling it and giving the money to the poor. In reality, he wanted to take some of the money for himself.

5. **(Lesson 12) When does the sharing of our faith become effective?**

When others can see the good deeds that we do for the sake of our Lord. In doing good for the sake of Jesus Christ, our faith can become effective, fruitful, and living.

6. (Lesson 12) What does it mean to do God's work willingly?

It means that all of our actions should be for the sake of God's purpose out of our love for Him, not out of a sense of duty or responsibility, or by force.

7. (Lesson 10) What does it mean to have a church in your house?

When you have a church in your house, your house is a place where God resides, dedicated to God to be a place where God's spirit dwells. Your family is also a God-centered household, one that is unified in faith and serves the Lord together by both sharing and keeping the same faith.