



TEN COMMANDMENTS 1

PRACTICE MINISTRIES BIBLE STUDY CURRICULUM

TEN COMMANDMENTS 1 & EXPLORING THE BIBLE ANSWERS

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Practice Ministries Bible Study Curriculum and Exploring The Bible
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BIBLE LESSON SUMMARIES

TEN COMMANDMENTS 1

Ten Commandments 1

Lesson # 1: In God We Trust

This is the first of three lessons to help the kids understand why God gave Moses the Ten Commandments and what the Ten Commandments are. Today's Bible story focuses on God's promise to Abram (Abraham), to make him a great nation.

Exploring the Bible helps them to understand God's promise to us, of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Lesson # 2: Moses & The Miracles

This is the second of three lessons to help the kids understand why God gave Moses the Ten Commandments and what the Ten Commandments are. The Bible story focuses on God's call to Moses to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt.

Exploring the Bible helps them to understand what faith is & the assurance of God's promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Lesson # 3: The Big Trip!

This is the third of three lessons to help the kids understand why God gave Moses the Ten Commandments and what the Ten Commandments are. The Bible story focuses on Moses leading the people of Israel out of Egypt and receiving the Ten Commandments.

Exploring the Bible encourages them to practice loving God and others.

Lesson # 4: To Pray Or Not To Pray

The first commandment says, "**You shall have no other gods before me**" (**Exodus 20:3**). The Bible story is about Daniel and the lion's den, and stresses the importance of being obedient to God.

Exploring the Bible helps the kids to practice being obedient.

Lesson # 5: Honor Your Mom & Dad

The 5th commandment says, "**Honor your father and your mother...**" (**Exodus 20:12**). The Bible story today is about a son who honored his father: Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. The lesson today talks about the importance of the children honoring their father and mother, but also of the responsibility that dad has in teaching his children God's word.

Exploring the Bible helps the kids review reasons to honor and obey their mom and dad.

Lesson # 6: A Good Neighbor

The third commandment says, "**You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God**" (**Exodus 20:7**). Today's Bible lesson is the Parable of the Good Samaritan, and teaches the kids the importance of being an ambassador for God.

Exploring the Bible encourages them to be kind.

Lesson # 7: Time Out (Part 1)!

The fourth commandment says, "**Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy**" (**Exodus 20:8**). As a sign of their love for God, the people of Israel were commanded to follow God's laws about work & rest time. We can demonstrate our love to God by our attitude toward work & rest. Today's lesson focuses on what our attitude should be toward work and activities.

Exploring the Bible encourages the kids to have a good attitude about doing their work.

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Lesson # 8: Time Out (Part 2)!

The fourth commandment says, “**Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy**” (Exodus 20:8). As a sign of their love for God, the people of Israel were commanded to follow God’s laws about work & rest time. We can demonstrate our love to God by our attitude toward work & rest. Today’s lesson focuses on rest.

Exploring the Bible encourages the kids to practice keeping a day of rest.

Lesson # 9: More! More! More!

The tenth commandment says, “**You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor**” (Exodus 20:17). This is Part I in a series of three lessons on coveting (desiring wrongly). We’ll talk about how we can have the right attitude toward our possessions.

Exploring the Bible encourages the kids to practice giving.

Lesson # 10: Seek Ye First

The tenth commandment says, “**You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor**” (Exodus 20:17). This is Part II in a series of three lessons on coveting (desiring wrongly). We’ll talk about how to keep from acting on our desires for things that have been placed off-limits to us.

Exploring the Bible encourages the kids to think about making good decisions.

Lesson # 11: The Grass Is Always Greener

The tenth commandment says, “**You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor**” (Exodus 20:17). This is Part III in a series of three lessons on coveting (desiring wrongly). We’ll talk about being content with what we have.

Exploring the Bible encourages the kids to be thankful for the many blessings that are theirs.

Lesson # 12: Handle With Care

The eighth commandment says, “**You shall not steal**” (Exodus 20:15). There are three ways people can steal: from others, from God, and from ourselves. Today in part 1 of this series of four lessons we’ll talk about why God says, “Respect the property of others.”

Exploring the Bible encourages the kids to be responsible with others’ property and respectful of others’ time.

Lesson # 13: Well Done!

The eighth commandment says, “**You shall not steal**” (Exodus 20:15). There are three ways people can steal: from others, from God, and from ourselves. Today, in part 2 of this series of four lessons, we’ll talk about being responsible with what God gives us.

Exploring the Bible encourages the kids to be responsible and to do a good job with what has been entrusted to them.

Lesson # 14: Remember The Lord Your God

The eighth commandment says, “**You shall not steal**” (Exodus 20:15). There are three ways people can steal: from others, from God, and from ourselves. Today in part 3 of this series of four lessons, we’ll talk about how we can give God the honor and glory that is His.

Exploring the Bible encourages the kids to be responsible and remember to give God credit for the abilities He has given them.

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Lesson # 15: It's More Blessed To Give Than Receive

The eighth commandment says, **"You shall not steal" (Exodus 20:15)**. There are three ways people can steal: from others, from God, and from ourselves. Today in part 4 of this series of four lessons, we'll talk about giving of our time, our abilities and of our money.

Exploring the Bible encourages the kids to give generously of their time, talents & money.

Lesson # 16: My God's Bigger Than Your god

The first commandment says, **"You shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3)**. The people of Israel had started worshipping another "god." The prophet Elijah comes to them and says: **"How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him." (1 Kings 18:21)**. Elijah then challenges the people of Israel to a contest to prove that the God of Israel is the only God. Today we'll talk about why it's important to spend time with God.

Exploring the Bible encourages the kids to keep God as the most important person in their life, and to remember His commands.

Lesson # 17: Statue Of Limitations

"...But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). Joshua warned the people of Israel to not forget about God, who brought them out of slavery in Egypt, and begin worshipping the gods of the neighboring countries in the land where they were now living. In today's lesson, we'll look at the second commandment: **"You shall not make for yourself an idol." (Exodus 20:4)** & why it's important to worship the Creator, not the created.

Exploring the Bible encourages the kids to put their trust in God alone.

Lesson # 18: It's Cool In The Furnace

The second commandment says: **"You shall not make for yourself an idol...You shall not bow down to them or worship them..." (Exodus 20:4-5)**. Today's lesson is about three young men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who would not bow down or worship any other god - at the risk of losing their lives! We'll talk about why it's important to be loyal to God.

Exploring the Bible encourages the kids to worship only God and God alone!

Lesson # 19: Good As Gold

The 5th commandment says, **"Honor your father and your mother..." (Exodus 20:12)**. Respect for God is the beginning of wisdom. Today's lesson focuses on the importance of parent(s) and their children spending time together.

Exploring the Bible encourages the kids to respect God and their parents.

Lesson # 20: Welcome Home! (Part 1)

The 5th commandment says, **"Honor your father and your mother..." (Exodus 20:12)**. Today's lesson is the story of the Prodigal Son, and teaches us the value of responsibility and honoring our father and mother.

Exploring the Bible encourages the kids to be responsible.

Lesson # 21: Welcome Home! (Part 2)

The 5th commandment says, **"Honor your father and your mother..." (Exodus 20:12)**. Today's lesson continues with the Prodigal Son. We'll see the father set an example for his son to be able to teach him important lessons about responsibility.

Exploring the Bible encourages the kids to be dependable in their responsibilities.

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Lesson # 22: Sticks and Stones

The 6th commandment says, **“You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13)**. In today’s lesson we’ll talk about how our thoughts and attitudes lead to our actions, and how our words can either hurt or encourage others.

Exploring the Bible encourages the kids to practice being encouraging.

Lesson # 23: It’s Good To Hear From You

The 6th commandment says, **“You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13)**. In today’s lesson we’ll talk about how we can encourage people by our words, our prayers, and our actions.

Exploring the Bible helps the kids to practice being encouraging.

Lesson # 24: What’s In A Name?

The 3rd commandment says, **“Do not misuse the name of the Lord your God” (Exodus 20:7)**. Today’s lesson focuses on representing Jesus Christ as His ambassador.

Exploring the Bible helps the kids to practice being Christ’s ambassador.

Lesson # 25: Honesty Is The Best Policy

The 9th commandment says, **“Do not lie” (Exodus 20: 16)**. In today’s lesson, we’ll talk about why God loves truthfulness and why honesty really is the best policy.

Exploring the Bible helps the kids practice living truthfully.

Lesson # 26: Ten Ways To Be Totally Cool

Today is a wrap up of all 10 commandments, and why God gave them to us.

Exploring the Bible helps the kids practice living by the Ten Commandments.

Special Thanksgiving Lesson

“Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name, make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts” (Psalm 105:1-2). Today we’re going to count our blessings – and then do something with them – give!

Exploring the Bible helps the kids think of ways to give in a new way!

Special Christmas Lesson

“You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus” (Luke 1:31). Today we’re going to talk about the Christmas story, but with a little different beginning and ending than what we’re used to hearing.

Exploring the Bible helps the kids remember the true meaning of Christmas.

Special Easter Lesson

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). This lesson is a description of what happened to Jesus - God’s only Son - on the days leading up to His arrest & ultimately His crucifixion to provide salvation for you and for me.

Exploring the Bible helps the kids understand the significance of Jesus’ sacrifice.

Special Prayer Lesson

“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14). Instead of studying today, we’re going to be

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doing. We're going to spend our lesson time praying to the God who created us and sustains us for the people of our country.

Exploring the Bible invites the kids to write a prayer for the people of our country.

Story Time

One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" (John 9:25). The thought of "telling your story" – how Jesus Christ came into your life, can be a little uncomfortable. Perhaps you're afraid of failing or that you won't know what to say. But if Jesus Christ is in your life, you do have a story to tell, and learning how to tell your story may be just what it takes to bring the good news of Jesus Christ into someone's life.

A special **Exploring the Bible** gives you ideas, suggestions and an outline to help you put your story together.

Practice Makes Perfect!

Over the past 9 years we've helped organize hundreds of bible studies. And we've come up with a pretty good recipe that will help your families get the most out of your bible study.

Here's a suggested outline for how to make your first bible study go smoothly:

- Invite Jesus to attend your bible study. Ask for His power and presence to work in and through each person gathered.
- If it's a morning study, have some donuts (donuts are key) and juice on hand. If it's an evening study, have some light snacks for the boys and dads before study begins.
- Start fairly promptly as some may have time constraints.
- We find that your study works best when the kids sit with their dads.
- Introduce yourself and then have the kids introduce themselves especially if there are some who do not know each other.
- Begin the bible study with an opening prayer. Ask if one of the kids or dads will pray - but don't push too hard, since it may be uncomfortable or intimidating at first - even among the dads. One idea is to assign the opening and closing prayer to one of the dads and their child, so that they have time to get ready.
- As the group gets more comfortable with each other, we find that rotating the prayer around from week to week is a good way to get the kids and dads involved.
- Give a short description about the day's lesson
- Lead-off with the discussion question & discuss it for a bit. Encourage your dads to participate in the discussion. We find that often dads will not say anything because it's "a study for the kids." But their participation is important.
- Go through the lesson at a comfortable pace for the group. If you don't finish - it's ok.
- End the study lesson promptly at the time mentioned. Twenty minutes of study is plenty. You may find that at times, less is better.
- Encourage the dads and kids to do the corresponding **Exploring the Bible Worksheet** each week, and leave time in your study for each child to give their answers.
- Encourage the kids to practice the quality or character trait emphasized in the day's lesson during the week. Challenge them to share with the group at the next study about any situations where they had an opportunity to put into practice what they learned.
- Here's a wonderful way to end each lesson: have each dad get with his child (or boy or girl he brings with him whose father is not there) and ask them to pray with each other. We have found that this is a wonderful way for a dad and child to learn to pray for each other. You may suggest that they ask each other what they would like prayer for that day.

Try the above recipe the first few times, and then if you need to, adjust it to meet your group's needs.

Sample Bible Study Agenda

7:10 - 7:20 a.m.	Fellowship over donuts and juice
7:20 - 7:40 a.m.	Bible study lesson
7:40 - 7:50 a.m.	Exploring the Bible review
7:50 - 7:55 a.m.	Prayer between each dad and his child
7:55 -	Practice what you've learned!

BIBLE LESSONS

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LESSON # 1: IN GOD WE TRUST

Today's Lesson verse

“Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation” (Genesis 12:1-2).

Character quality

Trust

Warm-up Question

Suppose one evening at the dinner table, you get this news: “We’re moving! We’ll be leaving our house, and our neighborhood, and going to another state!” Have you ever had to move before? How did you feel about moving? How would you feel about moving?

Laura Ingalls Wilder was born in 1867 in Wisconsin. In 1868, Pa and Ma (as Laura would later call her parents) took baby Laura and her sister Mary from the Big Woods to Missouri.

The family did not stay in Missouri long. Pa took his family to the prairies of Kansas. The Ingalls family was forced to leave in the fall of 1870, just after the birth of their third daughter, and Pa took his family to their old home in the Big Woods. In 1874, the Ingalls journeyed west, trading for a small farm near Walnut Grove, Minnesota. The family lived in a dugout in the creek bank until Pa could build a new house made of sawed boards.

In November of 1875, a son was born to the Ingalls family, Charles Frederic. The following summer, the family traveled to a farm in eastern Minnesota, where Pa helped with the harvesting. While there, baby Freddy became ill and died in August, 1876. Saddened at the loss of their son, the family moved to Burr Oak, Iowa, then back to Walnut Grove in 1877, and finally to South Dakota in 1879.

It was through these experiences, especially those in the “Big Woods” in Minnesota that later on led Laura to write the book, Little House on the Prairie.

Despite all that moving around, at least the Ingalls family knew where they were going. Our Bible story for today is about a man named Abraham who went on a trip with absolutely no idea of where he was going or what was in store for him. But God did.

In God We Trust

(Text: From Acts 7:2-16)

Thousands of years ago, in a country that today is called Iran & Iraq, God appeared to a man named Abram (his name was later changed to Abraham) and said, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you and I will make you into a great nation.” That day God made a promise to Abraham and said that He would be the God of his descendants and they would be His people.

Question: Do you know why God’s promise of children and descendants to Abram was so wonderful? [Even though Abram was 99 years old, God made a promise to him that he would have children and many descendants!]

The Bible says, ¹ **“When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty walk before me and be blameless. ² I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers” (Genesis 17:1-2).**

So Abraham and his family went, as God told him to and many years later he became the father of Isaac, and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob (whose name was later changed to

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Israel) became the father of 12 sons (and one daughter named Dinah). One of Jacob's sons was Joseph, and all of his brothers became jealous of him so they sold him as a slave into Egypt. But God had a plan for Joseph and enabled him to gain the trust of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. And Pharaoh made Joseph ruler over all of Egypt.

Then a famine struck all Egypt and the land where Jacob and his sons were living and there was no food. But God had warned Joseph in a dream that the famine would be coming, and being very wise, Joseph stored up extra food before the famine occurred and held it in reserve until it was needed.

When Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent his sons on their first visit to get some so that they could make bread. Joseph's brothers did not recognize him, but Joseph knew who they were. On their second visit Joseph told his brothers who he was and then told Pharaoh all about his family. After this Joseph sent for Israel, and he and his sons and all of their families - 75 in all - moved to Egypt. The time was drawing nearer for God to fulfill his promise to Abraham.

The story of Abraham is a lesson about trusting in God to keep His promises.

Question: What was the promise God made to Abram? The Bible says,

"⁵ He [God] took him [Abraham] outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars-if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be" (Genesis 15:5).

Question: What did Abram have to do in order to receive God's promise? [Abram had to trust or believe what God told him].

The Bible says, "**Abram believed the Lord...**" (Genesis 15:6). Abraham trusted enough in God to believe the promise God made to him.

Just like God made a promise to Abram, and Abram trusted God to keep it, you can trust God to keep a promise that He has made to you.

Question: What promise has God made to you? The Bible says, **"⁹That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).**

God promises that if you believe in your heart that Jesus is the Son of God and believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, then He will forgive you for all of your wrong thoughts and attitudes both past and present and you will live forever with Him in His heaven.

Our next lesson is called Moses & The Miracles. It continues the story about God's promise to the people of Israel.

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LESSON # 2: MOSES & THE MIRACLES!

Review

Last week's homework questions & memory verse

Today's Lesson verse

"I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation" (Exodus 3:15).

Character quality

Faith

Warm-up Question

Have you ever been asked to do something big – really big? How did you feel when you first thought about doing it?

There's a story that a man named Bruce Wilkinson tells. He was speaking to some college students, and challenged them to go out and accomplish something big - really big in the area of telling people about Jesus Christ.

A week later Bruce received a letter from two students from the college where he spoke. These two guys had prayed that they would have a chance to talk to the governor of California about Jesus and decided to do it immediately – in fact the very same week that Mr. Wilkinson spoke! They got into their car, drove 400 miles to the capital and pounded on the governor's door. Here's what happened: along the way, they also talked with 2 gas station attendants, 4 security guards, the governor's secretary, and - the governor about Jesus Christ!

But there's more. Two students put together a team of 126 students and teachers, rented an airplane, and flew to the island of Trinidad to put on vacation Bible school, for thousands of people on that island!

I'll bet none of these students had a clue that they could do so much for God. In fact, just thinking about doing something that big probably scared them to death. But as long as we make ourselves available to God, He can use us to do big - really big things for Him.

Our Bible story for today is about a man that God had big plans for. But, probably like those college students, he had no idea that he could do what lay ahead. But as we'll see today, God helped Moses do something big - really big!

Moses And The Miracles

(Text: Acts 7:17-36 & various passages from Exodus)

About 400 years had passed since Israel (Jacob) and his family moved to Egypt and the number of the people of Israel living in Egypt grew and grew and grew. Then another king, who knew nothing about Joseph, became ruler of Egypt. Pharaoh was very mean to the people of Israel and made them work very hard as slaves. He even forced the Israel people to throw their newborn baby boys into the Nile River so that they would die.

At that time Moses, an Israelite was born, but he was not an ordinary child. Moses' mom and dad hid him from the Egyptians so he wouldn't be killed. When his parents could hide him no longer, they placed him in the river in a basket, where Pharaoh's daughter found him. Pharaoh's daughter brought him up as her own son and Moses went to the best schools in Egypt.

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One day when Moses was a man, he decided to visit his fellow Israelites. He saw an Israelite being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he killed the Egyptian. But some people found out about it and Moses, fearful that he might be killed ran far away to another country to live there.

After 40 years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai.

Question: Do you remember what was unusual about the burning bush? The Bible says, **“Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up.” (Exodus 3:2).**

As Moses went over to the bush to look more closely, he heard God’s voice and God introduced Himself to Moses saying: “I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” Then God told him that there was something He wanted Moses to do. God said, “I have seen the oppression of my people in Egypt and have come down to set them free. Now come, I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people out of Egypt.”

Question: Do you remember how Moses felt at first about doing what God asked him to do? [At first he said no]. He asked God to please send someone else (Exodus 4:13). But eventually Moses agreed take on the job that God had chosen him for.

So Moses went back to Egypt and he and his brother Aaron went before Pharaoh and said, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel says: ‘Let my people go.’ But Pharaoh did not let the people go. So God did miraculous wonders among the Egyptians.

Question: Do you remember some of the wonders that God did among the Egyptians? [He turned the Nile River into blood. He sent plagues of frogs, gnats, and flies. He sent disease upon the animals and people of Egypt. He sent hail that burned with fire. He sent locusts that ate all the grass and leaves and fruit on the trees. He sent darkness that spread over all of Egypt for 3 days so that no one could see a thing].

Moses and Aaron performed all these wonders before Pharaoh but Pharaoh would not let the people of Israel go. Then the Lord said to Moses, “I will bring one more plague upon Pharaoh and Egypt. After that he will let you go. About midnight I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn son - of both men and animals - and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt.”

Question: Why do you think that God chose those particular wonders He brought against Egypt? [The people of Egypt thought that there were many gods. They worshipped the river and the sun and all kinds of animals. In fact, the very plagues that God sent upon Egypt were sent to defeat the gods that the Egyptians worshipped]. God showed the Egyptians that the gods they worshipped weren’t gods at all and that only He is the One True God.

Moses was sent by God to be Israel’s deliverer and he led them out of Egypt by doing wonders and miraculous signs. God was fulfilling the promise He made to Abraham, to bring the people of Israel to the land He promised to give them.

Just like Abraham, Moses had faith that God would keep his promises, and God proved it by doing mighty miracles.

Question: How can you trust God to keep His promises to you? [Because the Bible is true, you can believe what God says].

Our next lesson is called: The Big Trip! Moses leads the people of Israel out of Egypt and receives the Ten Commandments from God!

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LESSON # 3: THE BIG TRIP!

Review

Last week's homework questions & memory verse

Today's Lesson verse

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself' " (Matthew 22:37-39).

Character quality

Trust

Discussion Question

If you were going on a camping trip with your family or friends, and were in charge, what rules would you make up so that everybody gets along and is safe? How would you know if your rules were good or not?

Our Bible story today is about a camping trip that Moses and the people of Israel took when they left Egypt. It's on this camping trip that Moses received the Ten Commandments.

The Big Trip

(Text: Exodus 20:3-17 & Selected verses from Exodus)

Moses was sent by God to be Israel's deliverer and he led all the families of Israel out of Egypt by doing wonders and miraculous signs in Egypt and at the Red Sea. There were about 2 million people in the Exodus (meaning "exit" or "departure") and Moses took them on a long, long journey through the wilderness.

Question: Why do you think that the people of Israel should have trusted Moses to lead them through the wilderness? [God was helping Moses lead his people].

Question: Remember the wonders God did through Moses against Egypt? How after Moses and the Israelites left Egypt, God parted the Red Sea so that they could escape from the Egyptian army that followed them? Why was God doing all that? [God was helping the people to trust in Moses to lead them].

Three months after leaving Egypt, Moses and the Israelites came from the wilderness to the desert and camped in front of a big mountain called Mt. Sinai. God called to Moses from the mountain and said, "I want to give you some instructions that you must take to the people," and God gave Moses the Ten Commandments:

Note: Have the group read the commandments one at a time, and after reading each commandment ask the group what it means. (The Ten Commandments are found in Exodus 20:3-17).

1. **You shall have no other gods before me.**
To worship God alone. God wants to be #1 in your life.
2. **You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them.**
Worship God only in the ways He has told us to.
3. **You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.**
Honor God's name by the way you act or talk.
4. **Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work...For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea,**

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and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day.

Take a day of rest as a gift from God and use it responsibly.

5. **Honor your father and your mother.**
Listen and respect your parents.
6. **You shall not murder.**
Respect the lives of others.
7. **You shall not commit adultery.**
Honor God with your bodies; keep your thoughts, words and actions pure.
8. **You shall not steal.**
Respect the property of others.
9. **You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor (Do not lie).**
God wants you to love truth and live truthfully.
10. **You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.**
Be content with what you have.

Question: Why did God give Moses and Israel the Ten Commandments? [God gave Moses the Ten Commandments to teach Israel how to love God and each other].

Question: How can we love God? [We can love God by showing that He is first in our lives].
We show that by doing what God says.

Even though the Ten Commandments were given to Moses a long time ago, they're still important for us to follow today.

In all the following lessons, we'll learn about each commandment. We'll talk about what it means and how living by God's commandments can help give you the best life you can have.

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LESSON # 4: TO PRAY OR NOT TO PRAY

You Shall Have No Other Gods Before Me (Worship God Alone)

Review

Last week's homework questions & memory verse

Today's Lesson verse

"Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God just as he had done before" (Daniel 6:10).

Character quality

Trustworthy / Commitment

Discussion Question

When was a time you stuck to what you knew was right even if others disagreed?

Introduction

Corrie Ten Boom was born in Holland in late the 1890's into a Christian family. Now just being born into a Christian family doesn't mean that you are automatically a Christian, but Corrie loved Jesus. Her family's faith was put to the test when Germany invaded Holland in 1940.

The Germans despised the Jewish people. They took their property and Jewish families were split up with men, women and children being shipped to work camps and concentration camps. Throughout Europe over five million Jews were murdered, all of this within the lifetime of many people alive today!

Corrie's family provided a hiding place in their home for Jews who were being persecuted (badly treated) during World War II. Her family was eventually betrayed, and in return for their kindness, at age 59 along with her family, Corrie was put into a concentration camp. Her father and sister had died in those camps.

On December 28, 1944, after ten months of being in a Nazi Germany concentration camp, Corrie Ten Boom was released. Corrie made a promise to God that if she were allowed to live, she would tell as many people about the love and forgiveness of Jesus as she could. Then God made her a promise: that she would reach far more people than she could imagine with the gospel message. For the next 30 years following her release she traveled to more than 60 countries, telling people about God's love and faithfulness through her experiences while in prison. Among the 9 books she wrote, the most well known is The Hiding Place, an account of her arrest and time spent in prison.

Sometimes, it's hard to stand up for what is right. Our Bible story today is about a man named Daniel, a Jewish man who lived in a country called Persia (which is now Iran or Iraq). In this story, Daniel had a big decision to make.

To Pray Or Not To Pray

(Text: Daniel 6:1-23)

¹ "It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, ² with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. ³ Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. ⁴ At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find

grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so.

Question: Why do you think the other governors tried to find things wrong with Daniel?
[Because they were jealous].

They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. ⁵ Finally these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God."

Question: What are two qualities that Daniel had that made him so good at his work?
[Daniel was honest & careful].

⁶ So the administrators and the satraps went as a group to the king and said: "O King Darius, live forever! ⁷ The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or man during the next thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into the lions' den. ⁸ Now, O king, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered-in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed." ⁹ So King Darius put the decree in writing.

¹⁰ Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. ¹¹ Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. ¹² So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: "Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or man except to you, O king, would be thrown into the lions' den?"

Question: What was Daniel's custom each day? [He prayed to God].

Question: Why do you think Daniel continued to pray, even though he could get into trouble by doing it? [He made a commitment to pray to God only, and it was more important for Daniel to please God rather than please other people].

The king answered, "The decree stands-in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed."

¹³ Then they said to the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day." ¹⁴ When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him.

¹⁵ Then the men went as a group to the king and said to him, "Remember, O king, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed."

¹⁶ So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!"

Question: How did the king know that Daniel served God continually? [By the way Daniel lived - by his actions and his commitment to God by praying - the king could see it!].

¹⁷ A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed. ¹⁸ Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.

¹⁹ At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. ²⁰ When he came

near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?"

²¹ Daniel answered, "O king, live forever! ²² My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king."

²³ The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God."

Question: What choice was Daniel faced with after the law against praying to God had been passed? [Keep God as the most important person in his life, or disobey God's law and make someone or something else more important than God].

The first commandment that God gave to Moses says, "**You shall have no other gods before me**" (Exodus 20:3). That means that God wants to be the most important person in your life. Daniel lived in a way that showed others that it was more important to obey God rather than to please others.

Question: How can you make God the most important person in your life today?

LESSON # 5: JESUS IN GETHSEMANE

Honor Your Father And Your Mother
(Honor & Respect Your Parents)

Review

Last week's homework questions & memory verse

Today's Lesson verse

"Father if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42).

Character quality

Obedience

Introduction

This lesson has two parts:

1. Why children should honor & obey their mom & dad
2. A responsibility parents have toward their children

Question: What does it mean to honor someone? [To honor means to bring attention to or give respect to. So if we honor our mom or dad, we give our respect to them].

Question: What is a good way to honor your father and your mother? [One good way to respect your mom or dad is to listen to them].

Discussion Question

There are three good reasons given in the Bible why we should honor our dad and our mom. Can you think of what they are? [God says so, it pleases God, it's right]. Let's talk about these.

Gethsemane
(Text: Luke 22:41-44)

Background

Every year, many Jewish people celebrate Passover, remembering the night before Moses led the nation of Israel out of slavery from Egypt. The night before Jesus was crucified, he and his disciples were in the city of Jerusalem, eating the Passover meal. After the meal, he and his disciples went to a place called Gethsemane, on a mountain called the Mount of Olives. Jesus knew that he was about to be arrested, beaten up & die on a cross. But that wasn't the worst thing that was going to happen. For Jesus, something far worse was about to take place. The Bible tells us:

⁴¹He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, ⁴²"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." ⁴³An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. ⁴⁴And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground."

Question: Have you ever been lost from your parents and were left alone all by yourself?
How did you feel?

Jesus had never been separated from his daddy - God. But that is what was going to happen to Jesus on the cross, and Jesus knew that it was going to be the most horrible thing that could happen to him.

Question: Why was Jesus going to be separated from God when he was on the cross?
[Jesus was about to sacrifice his life for you and for me to pay the penalty for our sins. He took all the sin of everyone on the earth upon his body. The Bible says that sin cannot be in the

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presence of God, and since Jesus took sin upon himself, he had to be separated from God for a short time].

Question: What did Jesus mean when he said “take this cup from me”? [Jesus meant his crucifixion and separation from God].

Knowing he was about to be separated from God soon, Jesus needed strengthening to do what God His Father wanted him to do. In fact, the thought of being separated from God put Jesus in physical pain. He did not want to go through with this, yet he said, “Not my will, but yours (his father’s will - God’s will) be done.” In other words, he said, “I don’t like this, but I’ll do what you want me to willingly.”

There are some things that are easy for you to see why your mom or dad want you to do something, like, “take out the trash before things start growing in the waste basket.” Other things are not so easy to understand, like, “everyone else is doing it, why can’t I?” Your parents probably have perfectly good reasons for their decision, even though you may not even understand them.

Question: There is a responsibility that your parents have toward you so that you can & will want to honor or respect them. What do you think that responsibility may be? [God wants your parents to teach you His Word - His commands - for your own good].

The Bible says, “...bring them [your children] up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

Sometimes, God has good reasons in mind why He wants us to do (or not do) certain things, because He knows it’s best that we follow His directions, in order for our bodies, our families, our schools, our businesses, our country to work the right way. And, God set up the family, in order for parents to pass down God’s instructions to you, so you in turn, will teach them to your children.

Jesus’ example of saying, Dad, I don’t want to do this, but I will because you want me to, is the perfect example of how a son or daughter can honor his or her parent!

Here’s what the Bible says about how your parents should teach you:

“These commandments I give to you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

Your parent’s responsibility is to teach you all the time so you will learn how God wants you to live your life.

Question: What do you think is one of your jobs as a son or daughter? [To honor your mother and father with your respect and obedience, because it’s right and it pleases God].

Question: What ways do your parents help teach you God’s Word? Can you think of some other ways your parents could help teach you?

Question: What is one way that you can honor your father and your mother this week?

LESSON # 6: A GOOD NEIGHBOR

You Shall Not Misuse The Name Of The Lord Your God
(Honor God's Name By The Way You Act Or Talk)

Review

Last week's homework questions & memory verse

Today's Lesson verse

"But a Samaritan as he traveled came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him" (Luke 10:33).

Character quality

Kindness

Discussion Question

When is a time that you did a "good deed" for someone?

When is a time someone did a "good deed" for you?

Agnes Bojaxhiu was born in 1910 in Yugoslavia and in 1928 decided to become a nun. After spending a short time in Ireland she was sent to join a convent in the city of Darjeeling in Northeast India. When she was twenty-one she took the name Teresa.

At first she taught geography at a girls school in Calcutta. But there were other needs in the city. There were many homeless people and beggars. Lepers lived on the streets as did orphans. In 1946 Teresa gave up the job as a teacher to care for the needy in the slums of Calcutta. In 1948 she became an Indian citizen. In 1950 she founded the Missionaries of Charity order of nuns.

Her initial work was amongst children teaching them to care for themselves and to learn basic reading and writing skills. She had her first recruit in 1949 and many others joined her over the next few years. In 1952 she founded the Kailash Home for the Dying. She established a leper colony to help leprosy sufferers. By the year 2000 over 3,000 nuns belonged to the Missionaries of Charity, running centers in over one hundred countries.

Mother Teresa died in 1997. She lived among the people she helped. She cared for people because they needed it and expected nothing from them in return. She literally laid down her life to love and show compassion for all.

Today we're going to look at a story in the Bible that shows us what it is like to act in a way that honors God. It's the story of the Good Samaritan.

The Good Samaritan

(Text: Luke 10:25-37)

²⁵"On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

²⁶"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

²⁷He answered: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' "

²⁸"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

²⁹But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

³⁰In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³²So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴He went to him and bandaged his

wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

³⁶"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

³⁷The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Question: What does the word neighbor mean? [In the Bible, when the word neighbor is used, it can mean either a person who lives next door or a person who lives far away]. It really means, then, anyone who's involved in your life.

So when the expert in the law stood up to test Jesus and asked 'who is my neighbor?' what he was really saying was, "Do I have to love everyone? - Because there's a few people that I just don't like or even want to try and love.

Samaritans were people who lived in Samaria, a country near Israel. Jewish people despised Samaritans because they had different religious beliefs. The people of Israel did not even associate with them.

Question: Why then did the Samaritan stop to help the hurt man who was Jewish?

[It was more important for the Samaritan to ignore those differences and be kind to the Jewish man that was hurt - to love his neighbor].

In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, two people, a priest and a Levite passed by the hurt man. When this Bible story was written, priests were ministers and Levites were their assistants.

Question: Why was it so bad that the priest & the Levite did not help the hurt man? [It was their job to be God's special servants].

But they did not act like God's special servants did they? In fact, they did just the opposite. They did not represent God in the way that He wanted them to. That's why God says, "If you're going to say you represent me, then do the things I have commanded you to do.

Question: How can you honor God today by the way you act?

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LESSON # 7: TIME OUT! (Part 1)

Remember The Sabbath Day By Keeping It Holy

(Take A Special Day Of Rest As A Gift From God And Use It Responsibly)

Review

Last week's homework questions & memory verse

Today's Lesson verse

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men" (Colossians 3:23).

Character quality

Cheerful Attitude

Discussion Question

Do you have chores or responsibilities at home? How do you feel about doing them?

Introduction

Ever heard of S. Truett Cathy? How about the cows and the "eat mor chickin" billboards? Chick-fil-A is one of the most successful restaurant chains in the country. Want to know the reason for their success?

Mr. Truett opened his first store in shopping mall store in 1967. He wanted to honor God by resting on Sunday, so he made the decision to close on the first day of every week. Statistically speaking, Sunday is the third-busiest day for restaurants, but Chick-fil-A remains closed. Despite this policy (or because of it?), in most malls they generally make in six days what the other restaurants make in seven.

Periodically, the Chick-fil-A board re-evaluates their closed-Sunday policy and each time they come to the conclusion that it remains honoring to God. All the store operators agree to abide by the corporate purpose: *"To glorify God by being a faithful steward of all that is entrusted to us and to have a positive influence on all who come in contact with Chick-fil-A."*

The fourth commandment says to: ⁸ **"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. ¹¹ For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy"** (Exodus 20:8-11).

Although the fourth commandment is primarily concerned about rest, it does talk about work also. Besides, we have to rest from doing something. So today, we're going to talk about how this commandment helps us in our work and activities.

As a sign of their love for God, the people of Israel were commanded to follow God's laws about work & rest.

Time Out! (Part 1)

(Text: Genesis 1:31 - 2:3)

Genesis 1:³¹"God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning-the sixth day. 2:¹ Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. ² By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³ And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

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In the creation story, God worked and called it good. After Adam was created God gave him work to do. The Bible says, **“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it” (Genesis 2:15).**

Question: God gave Adam the job of taking care of the Garden, where he lived and worked. Today, God wants us to take care of the “garden” that He has given to us. How can we take care of where we live? [Keep our homes clean, pick up litter, recycle paper, glass & cans, put out campfires].

Question: How can taking care of the earth show our attitude about God? [It shows that we respect God and are thankful for what He has given to us].

The way that we work can also show our attitude toward God.

Question: How can you honor God with your work or in your activities? [By doing the best that you can with a cheerful attitude].

Question: The Bible tells us two things about how to do whatever work we’re given to do. Do you know what they are?

1. **“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men” (Colossians 3:23). God says that we can honor Him by doing the best we can in our work and activities.**
2. **“Do everything without complaining or arguing...” (Philippians 2:14). God says that it’s important to have a good attitude toward our work and activities.**

Question: How can you honor God with a job you’ve been given to do this week?

In our next lesson, we’ll look at the Sabbath day and what it means to keep it holy.

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LESSON # 8: TIME OUT! (Part 2)

Remember The Sabbath Day By Keeping It Holy

(Take A Special Day Of Rest As A Gift From God And Use It Responsibly)

Review

Last week's homework questions & memory verse

Today's Lesson verse

“Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you” (Deuteronomy 5:12).

Character quality

Obedience

Review of last week's lesson

As a sign of their love for God, the people of Israel were commanded to follow God's laws about work & rest. We can demonstrate our love to God by our attitude toward work & rest.

Discussion Question

What are some of your favorite pastimes or hobbies?

Introduction

In 1924, England's best hope ever to win a gold medal in the 100-meter race at the Olympic Games in Paris, France refused to run. The first heats of the 100-meter were scheduled on Sunday, and Eric said, "I don't run on Sundays. Sunday is for worshiping God, not sports. At least for me."

The British officials tried to get the schedule changed, but without success. Some called him stupid. Some called him a traitor. But Eric stuck to a promise he made to honor Sunday as the Lord's Day, to rest from work and sports. As the first heats of the 100-meter were being run, Eric was speaking at a Scottish church about his commitment to Jesus Christ.

Though not his best event, Eric did qualify for the 400-meter race and made it to the semi-finals. Just before the final race, a trainer handed him a note that said, **“He that honors me I will honor” (1 Samuel 2:20)**. Eric won the 400-meter race – not his best event – in world record time! In 1981, Eric Liddell's story of honoring God by taking a special day of rest was told in the movie Chariots of Fire. (Adapted from Hero Tales, by Dave & Neta Jackson, Bethany House, 1997, pp. 81-88).

Time Out! (Part 2)

(Text: Deuteronomy 10:12-13)

12 “And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to observe the Lord's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?”

During the last lesson we talked primarily about our attitude toward work, but the fourth commandment is primarily concerned with our attitude toward the Sabbath, a “day of rest” and how we keep it holy.

Question: What does “holy” mean (not like your socks kind of holy)? [Holy means to be set apart for God's use].

The Beginning of the Sabbath

Actually, God gave the people of Israel a day of rest before He gave them the Ten Commandments.

Question: Think back to our lesson that talked about the people of Israel camping in the desert (#3). Do you remember how long they were in the desert? [40 years].

Question: Do you remember how God fed them during those 40 years? [God gave manna to the people of Israel to eat in the desert].

⁴ “Then the Lord said to Moses, “I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. ⁵ On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days” (Exodus 16:4-5).

Moses also told them **“²⁹ Bear in mind that the Lord has given you the Sabbath; that is why on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days. Everyone is to stay where he is on the seventh day; no one is to go out.” ³⁰ So the people rested on the seventh day” (Exodus 16:29-30).**

Later, after the people of Israel had somewhat settled down and become farmers, the Lord told the people, **“Six days you shall labor, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during the plowing season and harvest you must rest” (Exodus 34:21).**

And even after many years had passed and the people of Israel no longer did only farming, God applied the same rule to the different jobs they did; work six days and rest on the seventh.

Question: So why did God give us the Sabbath? [According to the fourth commandment, the Sabbath is based on creation. God created everything in six days and on the seventh day He rested. He was refreshed and took time to reflect on what he had done].

We work because God worked. We rest because God rested. God set the example for us.

Question: How can we honor God by resting? [There are 3 good reasons why God commands us to rest]:

1) Because He cares about us.

Question: How does resting show that we care about ourselves? [If we keep going & going we get tired and eventually we'll run down. And then we can't be good at what we're doing].

2) It shows that we trust God.

Question: How does resting show that we trust God? [God wants us to take a day off to remember all the blessings He has given us, and that we can trust that He will provide for our needs even if we take a day off].

3) It shows that we love God and keep his commands.

Question: How does resting show that we love God? [By keeping His commands].

The Bible says: **“And now O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all of his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the Lord's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?” (Deuteronomy 10:12-13).**

Question: What are some ways that we can observe a day of rest? [Plan family activities at home, take naps, read a book].

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Some of the material in this lesson was learned from The Ten Commandments (Playing by the Rules) [by Stuart Briscoe].

LESSON # 9: MORE! MORE! MORE!

You Shall Not Covet Anything That Belongs To Your Neighbor
(Be Content With What You Have)

Review

Last week's homework questions & memory verse

Today's Lesson verse

"...store up for yourselves treasure in heaven" (Matthew 6:20).

Character quality

Contentment

Introduction

In 1998, American Heritage Magazine compiled a list of the 40 richest Americans in history, based on 1998 dollars. There were 39 men and one woman on the list. The richest American woman who ever lived was Hetty Green, whose fortune when she died in 1916 was estimated at more than \$100 million (over \$17 billion in today's dollars). But...Hetty Green was famous not as much for her great wealth as for her great stinginess.

What do you think about this? On her 21st birthday Hetty refused to light the candles on her birthday cake so as not to waste them. The next day she wiped the cake off the candles and returned them to the store for a refund.

After her husband died in 1902, she moved from his hometown of Bellows Falls, Vermont to Hoboken, New Jersey to be closer to her money that was in New York City. She didn't own a home, but lived in a series of grungy leased rooms, spending as little as \$5 a week for living expenses. She wore the same dress day after day until it was in tatters. Lunch would be a serving of oatmeal warmed on an office radiator. I think we're safe in assuming that donations to charity were out!

Hetty Green was the worst of coveters. It all had to do with her attitude. The first nine commandments have to deal with actions - things that we should or should not do or think. But coveting has to do with our attitude. Coveting means to desire the wrong way.

Question: What types of things do you like to collect? [Baseball cards, autographs, coins, rocks, stuffed animals]. You wouldn't desire something that wasn't neat, or cool, or unattractive to us. You have a desire to acquire and accumulate things that we like & that are attractive to us.

Question: What types of things would you like to be good at doing? [Sports, drawing, a friend, singing]. You have a desire to succeed. You probably like to play sports that you're good at doing. You like to succeed in your schoolwork and receive good grades. God made us so that we would want to achieve things and do well with them.

Question: What types of things do you like to make or build? [Models, a tree-house, paintings, cookies]. You have a desire to make or create things because God instills in us the desire & ability to create.

Question: Is there anything named in the Bible that would be desirable for you to have? [Love, joy, peace, goodness, wisdom].

Listen to this one: **"The laws of the Lord are true and right. They are more precious than gold; they are sweeter than honey" (Psalm 19:9-10).** God says that you can find a way of living that is right in the Bible that is very desirable.

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The word “covet” comes from the same word that means “delight” or “desire.” There is nothing wrong with desiring certain things. Just like what we’ve been talking about, God has given us desires and many things for us to enjoy. But, along with the desires and the many good things that God has given us, are some things He has said are off-limits.

Let’s look at a Bible story that shows us how one person desired the wrong way, and then we’ll talk about the correct way to desire.

The Rich Young Man (Text: Luke 18:18-23)

¹⁸“A certain ruler asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”
¹⁹“Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good--except God alone. ²⁰You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.’ ” ²¹“All these I have kept since I was a boy,” he said. ²²When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” ²³When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of great wealth.”

Question: What did Jesus say that the young man needed to do? [Jesus didn’t tell the man he needed another possession to have eternal life - Jesus told him he needed to do something: Not to have more things, but to give].

Question: Why was the young man sad when Jesus asked him to sell all he possessed? [He made his wealth the most important thing in his life - even more important than God. Jesus could have met all of the man’s needs, but the rich man didn’t want to believe that. He loved his wealth too much].

Listen to what the Gospel of Luke tells us: **“Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (Luke 12:15).** The rich man did not look at his wealth properly & his desiring the wrong way resulted in greed.

Question: Does wealth always mean money? Can you be greedy in things other than money? [Attention, praise, position, abilities, knowledge, possessions].

Let’s find out how we can desire the right way, and not become greedy:

“Share with God’s people who are in need” (Romans 12:13). Share when the opportunity arises.

“...give without sparing” (Proverbs 21:26). Give as you are able.

“Freely you have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8). Give because you have received. Everything we have comes from God, and He expects us to use what He has given us to help others in need.

Question: Is it wrong to have wealth? [No].

Question: Is it wrong not to share some of it with people in need? [Yes].

Jesus said, **“...store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...” (Matthew 6:20).** You can have treasure in heaven by giving on earth.

TEN COMMANDMENTS 1

LESSON # 10: SEEK YE FIRST

You Shall Not Covet Anything That Belongs To Your Neighbor
(Be Content With What You Have)

Review

Last week's homework questions & memory verse

Today's Lesson verse

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness..." (Matthew 6:33).

Character quality

Contentment

Discussion Question

Have you ever wanted something that your mom or dad said that you couldn't have? (i.e.: Cookies before dinner, a certain video game, staying up an hour later).

Review

In our last Bible study lesson we talked about how being greedy takes away from you the joy of giving to others. Sharing or giving some of what you have to others, helps you develop the right attitude about toys, money, and other important stuff that are yours.

Introduction

Today, you're going to hear a Bible story that shows us how some people desired things that God said were off-limits. Then we'll talk about making good choices about things that have been labeled "off limits" to you and me.

Seek Ye First

(Text: Genesis 2:4-9, 15-18, 3:1-7)

4 "This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

When the Lord God made the earth and the heavens-⁵ and no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no man to work the ground,⁶ but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground-⁷ the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

⁸ Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. ⁹ And the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground-trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁵ "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. ¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

¹⁸ The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

¹ "Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"

² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' "

⁴ "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ "For God knows that when you

eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."
⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves."

Our God, the very same God who breathed life into Adam, the very same God who planted the garden for Adam & Eve, loves you.

Question: What is one way that we know that God loves you? [One reason we know that God loves you is because He does not make you love Him]. He gives you a choice of whether to love him or not. If God were to force you to love Him, it would not be love.

Question: What is one way that you can show God that you love Him? [One way that you can show God that you love Him is to obey him].

Let me say something about that word "obey." If you look up the word "obey" in the dictionary it says something like, "do as you are told." But another meaning is to "conform." To conform to something or someone is to become like that thing or that someone.

Gatorade spent a whole bunch of money on its "Be Like Mike commercial, hoping that you want to be like Michael Jordan. If you want to be just like Mike, just go out and drink Gatorade.

God didn't say, "Be Like Mike," but He does say, "Be Like Christ."

Question: How do you get to be like someone? [You hang out with that person]. Ever notice that when you hang out with someone, you start talking like and acting like that person?

Question: How do you get to "Be like Jesus?" [Hang out with Him]. When you spend time with Jesus, you get to know Him. And just like hanging around anyone else, when you hang around Jesus, you start to become like Him. You start to conform to Him. So when you obey God, you are becoming more like Him.

Question: Why does God give us commands in the first place? [For our own good].

The Bible says,
"¹² **And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul,** ¹³ **and to observe the Lord's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?"**

God says to us, "I made you a certain way and you work best when you follow my instructions, but it's your choice whether you obey or not. Remember though, with your choices come consequences (results of your decisions)."

You're free to make decisions, but you're not free to choose the consequences of those decisions.

Question: What did God say about the fruit from the tree in the Garden? [God told Adam & Eve not to eat the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden; in fact, to not even touch it].

Even though the fruit looked good, and was very desirable, for whatever reason He had, God placed it off-limits to Adam & Eve. But Adam & Eve disregarded what God had told them and directly disobeyed Him. And there were consequences to their disobedience.

Question: Do you know what happened because of Adam & Eve's disobedience? [The biggest consequence is that sin entered into the world].

The Bible says, **"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man [Adam], and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned."** (Romans 5:12).

Question: Why do you think your mom or dad or your teacher place certain very desirable things off-limits to you? [Again for your own good: for your protection, for your well being, instill character & values that are important].

More than likely your mom or dad have good reasons and probably have your best interest in mind when they place certain things off-limits.

God says it is wrong to desire things that are off-limits. He knows that many times if we act on our wrong desires, our actions might lead to trouble.

Question: How can you keep from desiring things that are off-limits? [Here are some ideas]: **"Seek first what is good and right and all these things [that you need] will be given to you"** (Matthew 6:33). Think of what the right thing to do is before you act.

"But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night" (Psalm 1:2). Read the Bible and get to know what the Scriptures have to say about what is wrong and what is right.

"Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread..." (Proverbs 30:8-9). Be content with what you have.

"And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). Remember that God will supply all that you need.

Sometimes you & I desire things that are off-limits. That's because sin entered the world through Adam's disobedience to God, and as a result of his choice, you & I sin.

The good news is that Jesus gives you the power to make good choices about things that are off-limits. Ask Jesus to help you be content with what you have and remember that God will supply all that you need.

LESSON # 11: THE GRASS IS ALWAYS GREENER

You Shall Not Covet Anything That Belongs To Your Neighbor
(Be Content With What You Have)

Review

Last week's homework questions & memory verse

Today's Lesson verse

"Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes?" (2 Samuel 12:9).

Character quality

Contentment

Discussion Question

Do you have a friend who recently got something real neat for his birthday or for Christmas that you would also like to have? What was it? Would you still like to have it?

Review

In our last Bible study lesson we talked about how Adam & Eve desired things that God said were off-limits & as a result of their disobedience, sin entered into the world. We then talked about being content with what we have because God will give us all that we need.

Introduction

The Greyhound had been in a north Atlantic storm for over a week. On the eleventh day of the storm, sailor John Newton was too exhausted to pump, so he was tied to the helm and tried to hold the ship to its course. From one o'clock until midnight he was at the helm.

With the storm raging fiercely, Newton had time to think. His life seemed as ruined and wrecked as the battered ship he was trying to steer through the storm. Since the age of eleven he had lived a life at sea. Sailors were not noted for the refinement of their manners, but Newton had a reputation for wild living which even shocked many sailors.

Newton had rejected his mother's teachings of the Bible and had led other sailors into unbelief. Certainly he was beyond hope and beyond saving, even if the Scriptures were true. Yet, Newton's thoughts began to turn to Jesus Christ.

That day at the helm, March 21, 1748, was a day Newton remembered from that moment on, for "On that day the Lord sent from on high and delivered me out of deep waters." Only God's amazing grace could and would take a rude, profane, slave-trading sailor and transform him into a child of God.

Though Newton continued in his profession of sailing and slave-trading for a time, his life was transformed. At the age of thirty-nine, John Newton began forty-three years of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

For his Sunday evening services, Newton often composed a hymn that led into the lessons and Scripture for the evening. The most famous hymn of all, we know today as "Amazing Grace." (Christian History Institute, Glimpses Article #28, www.gospelcom.net).

**Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now am found
Was blind but now I see**

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Once John Newton was lost, but now is found. He knew how bad he had become, and how God rescued him from evil. Today we're going to hear a Bible story about a person who terribly wrong things; and then how God rescued him, and how he responded to God after he had been rescued.

David & Bathsheba

(Text: 2 Samuel Chapter 11 - Chapter 12:1-10)

Background

One spring, David (the King of Israel) sent Joab (the general of the army) and the whole Israelite army out to war. But David stayed in Jerusalem.

² “One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, ³ and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, “Isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?” ⁴ Then David sent messengers to get her...”

David did something very wrong in this story. He wanted Bathsheba to be his wife even though he knew she was Uriah's wife. Then something else very wrong happened. David got a message from Bathsheba. The message said, “David, I became pregnant on the night that you brought me to your palace”

David knew that he had done something terribly wrong, and God was displeased with him.

Question: Why do you think that God was not pleased with David? [The king's job was to lead & protect God's people by doing what was right and obeying God. But David did something that hurt one of his people and disobeyed God's commands. His wrong desire led to stealing, lying & even murder!]

Listen to how God responded to David's disobedience:

¹ The Lord sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, “There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. ² The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, ³ but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.

⁴ “Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him.”

⁵ David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, “As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this deserves to die! ⁶ He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity.”

⁷ Then Nathan said to David, “You are the man! This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. ⁸ I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. ⁹ Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. ¹⁰ Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own” (2 Samuel 12:1-10).

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After Nathan spoke, **“Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord” (2 Samuel 12:13).** David admitted to God that what he did was wrong. And David was punished for what he did wrong.

Question: What do you think that David did after he admitted that he did what was wrong? [After David admitted what he had done wrong, he wrote a Psalm].

The Psalm says, **“Create in me a pure heart O God...”(Psalm 51:10).** David knew that he had allowed the temptation of wanting what didn’t belong to him to cause him to ignore God’s commandments and to think only of himself. He knew that he needed to confess his wrong thoughts and desires and ask for God’s forgiveness.

Question: Why do you think that God put “Be content with what you have” at the end of the Ten Commandments? [Because desiring the wrong way can lead to breaking all of the other nine commandments].

Question: How can we practice being content with what we have? [Here are some ideas]:

Be content with the many blessings that you have. The Bible says,

“...I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances...” (Philippians 4:11).

Think about if your thoughts and actions please God. The Bible says,

⁹ “How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. ¹⁰ I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. ¹¹ I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119:9-11).

Think about if your desires are helpful to other people. The Bible says, **“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Philippians 2:4).**

LESSON # 12: HANDLE WITH CARE (Part 1)

You Shall Not Steal
(Respect The Property Of Others)

Review

Last week's homework questions & memory verse

Today's Lesson verse

"...Love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no harm to its neighbor..." (Romans 13:9-10).

Character quality

Responsibility & Respect

Discussion Question

Have you or anyone in your family ever had anything stolen? How did it make you feel?

Introduction

Your actions are a direct result of what you are thinking. Therefore, it's important that you have the right thoughts in your mind.

Today we're going to talk about different ways that people steal from others and why God says, "Respect the property of others."

Handle With Care

(Text: Selected Verses)

Question: What reasons can you come up with as to why people steal? [People steal for many different reasons, none of which are right]:

- Our hearts are not clean. The Bible says, **"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure" (Jeremiah 17:9)**. Our natural character tells us to do wrong.
- Some people are not content with what they have & they want more - sometimes without wanting to wait for it or work for it.
- Some people have strayed from God's commands.
- Some people don't care about other people's feelings.
- Some people don't trust that God will provide what they need.

Question: What are three ways that people can steal from others?

- Taking property without permission
- Stealing respect or authority
- Stealing time or opportunities

Let's talk about some examples:

Question: What is an example of how students steal from their teachers? [By not listening in class]. Miss Smart spends a lot of time preparing lessons to teach your class. If Billy Bob is talking to his friends during class and interrupting the lesson, and Miss Smart has to stop and address his behavior, Billy Bob has just stolen her time.

Question: What is an example of how students steal from their classmates? [By disrupting class]. At the same time that Miss Smart is addressing Billy Bob's disrespectful behavior, his classmates' opportunity to learn has also been stolen.

Question: What is an example of how you might steal from your parents? [By disobeying]. Sugar Sweet's parents have told her to turn off the TV and do her homework. If Sugar refuses, her parents' authority has just been stolen, because she has disobeyed the God-given authority that is rightfully theirs [see honor your father and your mother].

Question: What is an example of how teammates can steal from each other? [By skipping practice]. If Samantha Grassfield skips soccer practice just because she feels like it, she has stolen her teammates' opportunity to develop their skills and develop as a team because Coach Midfield needs all of her players present to conduct a good practice.

Question: What are the dangers of stealing?

- Stealing another person's property can get you into trouble with the law.
- Stealing can ruin friendships
- Stealing can take away people's trust in you.
- Stealing can lead to telling lies in an attempt to cover up the stealing.
- Stealing can lead to more stealing.

Question: What Bible verses can help you to respect and do what is good for others? **"I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances"** (Philippians 4:11). Be content with the many blessings you have.

- **"How can a young person keep his way pure? By living according to your word"** (Psalm 119:9). Put God's words into your heart.
- **"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others"** (Philippians 2:4). Before you act, check to see if your desires are helpful to other people.
- **"...Hate what is evil..."** (Romans 12:9). Recognize stealing as something that is evil and hate it.

Question: How should you react if someone steals from you? [Be kind rather than take revenge]. The Bible says,

"Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always be try to be kind to each other and to everyone else" (1 Thessalonians 5:15). This does not mean to just sit back and say, "Oh well, too bad, so sad. There are plenty of ways to handle this situation." It does mean not to retaliate by taking something of theirs. Then you'd be doing something as bad as he or she did.

God hates stealing because it damages relationships. As Christians, we are told, **"...Love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no harm to its neighbor"** (Romans 13:9-10). With God's help, showing kindness, gentleness, and self-control, will help the other person to see that God's ways are best.

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LESSON # 13: WELL DONE!

You Shall Not Steal (Respect The Property Of Others)

Review

Last week's homework questions & memory verse

Today's Lesson verse

"...Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness" (Matthew 25:21).

Character quality

Responsibility

Discussion Question

Think of a recent assignment your teacher gave to you. Was your teacher pleased with your work?

In our Bible study lesson today we're going to take a look at two ways that people can steal from God:

By not being responsible with the abilities He has given to us.

By not being responsible with the things He has given to us.

Let's look at a Bible story that will help us understand how we can be responsible with what God gives us.

The Parable Of The Talents

(Text: Matthew 25:14-30)

"¹⁴Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. ¹⁵To one he gave five talents [one talent was probably worth more than a thousand dollars] of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. ¹⁶The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. ¹⁷So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. ¹⁸But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

¹⁹After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them.

²⁰The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.'

²¹His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

²²The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.'

²³His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

²⁴Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

26"His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? **27**Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

28" Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. **29**For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. **30**And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Question: Why were two of the servants rewarded? [Two of the servants did well with what they were given to do, and used their abilities well].

Question: Why was the master upset with the other servant? [The worthless servant was wicked and lazy]. He was stealing from God because he wasted the abilities that God gave to him and wasted the opportunity to do the work God trusted him to do.

God looked at what the lazy servant did as stealing because God was counting on that servant to do a good job for Him, and instead He got nothing in return.

Question: What is a real important lesson for you to learn from this story? [Everything belongs to God]. The Bible says, **"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it" (Psalm 24:1).**

Just like the servants in the Bible story, God gives you some of His property to take care of, and He gives each of you special abilities to be responsible in taking care of that property. A verse in the Bible says, **"We have different gifts, according to the grace given us [how God saw fit to give them to us]" (Romans 12:6).**

Let's look at how this works. Help think of some answers for these examples:

- A teacher has the ability to [help people learn].
- A doctor understands how the body works and has the ability to [help people get well].
- A coach can help his or her athletes understand how to [work together as a team].
- An architect knows how to [design a house].
- A home builder knows how to [build a house so it won't fall down].
- A counselor knows how to [listen to people and give them good advice].
- A minister has the knowledge to [help people learn what the Bible says].
- A farmer knows how to [grow the food we eat].

But no matter what we have been given to do, this is what God expects from everyone, **"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men..." (Colossians 3:23).**

So, when you do your homework, do it so that you'll develop the habits and work ethic that will help you use that knowledge and skills all through out your life.

A tutor was helping a high-school student with some math. The student said, "Why do I have to learn this stuff? I want to be a truck driver when I'm old enough." The tutor replied, "Well, when you're a truck driver, you're responsible for loading and unloading your truck. You have to know how much product your trailer will carry. That's volume. You have to know how much additional weight your load will add to your truck weight. That's addition. You have expenses to report. That's accounting. Now, let's work on our math shall we?"

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Question: What are some things that God wants you to do for Him? [One thing right now is to be responsible with what you are given to do, whether it's homework from your teacher or learning to obey your parents. Another thing is learning all about how God wants you to live].

Then, when God says to you, "Here's the job I have for you to do," you'll be ready. And when you're finished God will be able to say to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

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LESSON # 14: REMEMBER THE LORD YOUR GOD (Part 1)

You Shall Not Steal (Respect The Property Of Others)

Review

Last week's homework questions & memory verse

Today's Lesson Verse

"You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth..." (Deuteronomy 8:17-18).

Character quality

Honorable

Discussion Question

Have you ever written a thank you note? Who did you write it to and why did you write it?

Review

In our last Bible Study lesson we looked at one of the ways people steal from God: By not being responsible with what has been entrusted to them.

Introduction

Today we're going to talk about one way that people steal from God: by robbing God of the honor and glory that is rightfully His.

Background

The people of Israel are just about to enter the land promised to them by God after wandering in the desert for 40 years after leaving Egypt. Moses now warns the people not to forget how God provided for all of their needs during those 40 years.

Remember The Lord Your God

(Text: Deuteronomy Chapter 8)

"¹ Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land that the Lord promised on oath to your forefathers. ² Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. ³ He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. ⁴ Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. ⁵ Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the Lord your God disciplines you.

⁶ Observe the commands of the Lord your God, walking in his ways and revering him. ⁷ For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land—a land with streams and pools of water, with springs flowing in the valleys and hills; ⁸ a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey" (Deuteronomy 8:1-9)."

Question: What are some of the ways God took care of the people of Israel in the desert?

[God led them through the desert, fed them with manna, kept their clothes from wearing out, kept them from injury as they traveled a great distance].

Question: What was Moses concerned about when the people of Israel got to the Promised Land? [Moses was concerned that once the people of Israel got into the Promised Land, they

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would forget that God had taken care of them while they were in the desert]. They would forget to give God credit for all the blessings that they were about to receive.

Question: What were some of the blessings that God was going to give to the people when they reached the Promised Land? [Streams & pools of water, food, natural resources]. They would have everything that they needed to live.

Let's continue the story:

“¹⁰ When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. ¹¹ Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. ¹² Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, ¹³ and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, ¹⁴ then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery” (Deuteronomy 8:10-14).

Question: What important lesson can you learn from this Bible story? [When you forget to thank God for anything, you're stealing respect for God, since everything is His in the first place]. The Scriptures say: **“The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and all who live in it” (Psalm 24:1).**

God wants you to remember to thank Him for all things: the air that you breathe, the water that you drink; even your body, which enables you to enjoy the good gifts He gives you.

Question: There are 3 ways that we can steal from God. Can you think of what they might be? [With our abilities, with our money, with our words and actions].

Question: What is an example of how you can keep from stealing from God with the abilities He has given to you? [By giving Him thanks for your gifts, talents and abilities].

Just like the people of Israel, when you forget to thank God for giving you the ability to learn math or reading, or play sports, or play a musical instrument, that is stealing from God because it robs Him of the honor and recognition that He deserves for what He has given you.

Remember to thank God for your abilities. And then use them well.

Question: What is an example of how you can keep from stealing from God with your money? [By giving tithes and offerings]. God says, **“...you rob me. But you ask, ‘How do we rob you?’ [God says] “In tithes and offerings” (Malachi 3:8).**

God asks you to give back to Him a small part of what He has given to you. When you don't you rob God of an opportunity to help others in need with what He has given to you. It also keeps you from trusting in God with every part of your life. When you ignore God's commands in any part of your life, your life will not be as good as it could be.

Remember to give back to God a small part of the abundance He has given to you.

Question: What is an example of how you can keep from stealing from God with your words or actions? [Speaking in a way that honors God]. The Bible says: **“These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me” (Isaiah 29:13).**

When you say one thing that honors God, but then turn around and act in a way that doesn't honor God, you have stolen from God's reputation and His name; and God becomes less and less important to you and to others.

TEN COMMANDMENTS 1

Honor God with your words and your actions.

Question: What are some of the good things that God has given to you and to your family?
[A home, food, clothes, health, friends, church home, His Son Jesus].

Question: How can you thank Him for these things every day? [Write a thank you note with your life].

LESSON # 15: REMEMBER THE LORD YOUR GOD (Part 2)

You Shall Not Steal
(Respect The Property Of Others)

Homework Review

Questions & Memory Verse

Today's Lesson verse

"...if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously" (Romans 12:8).

Character Quality

Giving

Discussion Question

What types of things are you good at doing? How can you use what you are good at to help others?

Review

So far, we've looked at two ways people can steal: From others and from God.

Question: In what ways do people steal from others? [By taking other people's property without their permission, by stealing other people's dignity or authority].

Question: In what ways do people steal from God? [By not being responsible with the abilities He has given to us, by not being responsible with the things He has given to us, by robbing God of His honor & glory].

Introduction

Andrew Carnegie was born in Scotland in 1835. His family's poverty taught Carnegie a lesson. When the Carnegies came to America in 1848, Andrew determined to bring prosperity to his family.

Carnegie climbed from the slums of Pittsburgh to the mansions of New York. By 1868 Carnegie, was worth \$400,000 (nearly \$5 million today). For three decades, he dominated the steel industry. By 1900, Carnegie Steel produced more steel than the entire British steel industry. When he sold the company to J.P. Morgan in 1901, Carnegie personally earned \$250 million (approximately \$4.5 billion today).

Today he is most remembered for his generous gifts of music halls, educational grants, and nearly 3000 public libraries. By the time of his death in 1919, he had given away over \$350 million (more than \$3 billion in today's dollars).

In this lesson, we're going to talk about one other way that people can steal: From themselves.

Question: How can you steal from yourself? [By not giving generously]. God asks you to give back to Him a small part of what He has given to you. When you don't give, you steal from yourself the joy that comes from helping others by giving.

It Is More Blessed To Give

(Text: Mark 12:41-44)

"⁴¹Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. ⁴²But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. ⁴³Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has

put more into the treasury than all the others. ⁴⁴They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything--all she had to live on."

Very quietly with no fanfare, this poor widow put in everything she had to live on. By contrast, the teachers of the law, the leaders of Israel, liked to call attention to themselves; walking around in flowing robes, seen by everybody, having the most important seats in their church and places of honor at big banquets.

Question: What did Jesus say that made this widow's small gift the biggest one given? [She gave everything she had to live on]. What made her gift the largest was her attitude toward giving.

It is this attitude of giving generously that we're going to explore today.

Question: Has anyone given more generously than God? [No].

Question: How has God given to us?

Everything that we have comes from what God has given us. The Bible says, **"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it..."(Psalm 24:1).**

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). God gives us eternal life as a gift.

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9). God will give us more than we could ever imagine.

Question: Why do people give? [People give because God put in us a desire to give. It makes God happy when you give, because it helps other people].

Question: There are 3 good ways that you can give. What do you think they are? [Your time, your abilities, and your money].

Right now, we're going to look at why you should give, what you should give, how you should give, & when you should give.

Question: Why Should You Give? [Give because you have received much from others]. The Bible says:

- **"Freely you have received, freely give." (Matthew 10:8).**
- **"It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:25).**

It's always nice to get things or have things done for you, but God says when you give, it helps you and it helps others.

Question: How does it help you to give? [It fills that desire to give that God has instilled in you].

Question: How does it help others when you give? [Their needs are met].

Question: What should we give? [Give what you have because you want to].

The Bible says, **"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion [because you have to], for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:6-7).**

TEN COMMANDMENTS 1

The Bible also says,

“My son, give me your heart and let your eyes keep to my ways” (Proverbs 23:26). Give your attention to God so that you will live a life that is full and meaningful.

Question: How should we give? [Give as you are able]. The Bible tells us: **“...the righteous give without sparing” (Proverbs 21:26).** Remember, the widow did not have much to give, but gave as she was able.

Question: When Should We Give? [Share when the opportunity arises]. The Scriptures tells us, **“Share with God’s people who are in need” (Romans 12:13).**

The Scriptures also tell us,

“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints” (Ephesians 6:18). Pray when you are aware of a need.

Question: Who are people that have given to you and how have they given to you? [Parents who show you God’s love; teachers who help you learn in school; coaches who help you learn to play sports, people who serve in the armed forces to keep your country safe].

Question: Think about how good it feels when someone takes time to help you. How can you help others today by giving with your time or your abilities or your money?

LESSON # 16: MY GOD IS BIGGER THAN YOUR god

You Shall Have No Other Gods Before Me
(Worship God Only In The Ways He Has Told Us To)

Review

Last week's homework questions & memory verse

Today's Lesson verse

"How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him" (1 Kings 18:21).

Character quality

Responsibility

Discussion Question

Do you have a friend who has moved away? Do you ever call or write your friend a letter? If you don't stay in touch with him or her, what will probably happen?

Introduction

There was a holiday celebration in the Chinese village of Mei-hua, which included offerings to their gods. Watchman Nee was with a group of young preachers who tried to share the Gospel on the streets corners during the celebration. But the crowds would not listen. "We have our own god, Ta-wang (which means the Great King). His feast is two days away and for 286 years, Ta-wang has sent sunshine for his feast day without fail...Then I promise you," cried Li, (one of the preachers who was with Watchman Nee) "our god, who is the true God, will make it rain on Ta-wang's feast day."

...Immediately the villagers were interested..."Agreed!" they cried. "If it rains on Ta-wang's feast day, then your Jesus is indeed God. We will be ready to hear about Him."

On the day of the feast day of Ta-wang, it was sunny. Watchman was tempted to beg God to make it rain, but instead heard a small still voice that said, "Where is the God of Elijah?" As Watchman and the other men bowed to thank God for their breakfast, it began to rain. The rain became steady and then became a downpour.

Some of the villagers cried, "Jesus is God!" Ta-wang's worshipers, though, insisted on carrying their idol in the parade anyway. But the streets flooded, and the parade marchers stumbled and slipped; their idol smashed as it fell. The whole village was eager to listen to the Gospel (Adapted from Hero Tales, by Dave & Neta Jackson, Bethany House, 1997, pp 98-100).

In today's Bible lesson, God sends a man named Elijah to confront (stand up to) a man named Ahab who forgot about God and was doing some very wrong things. We'll hear from the "God of Elijah" as did Watchman Nee and the village of Mei-hau.

Background

Ahab was the king of Israel, and he was a very wicked king. The Bible says that Ahab did more to make God angry than any other king before him. Ahab had married a girl named Jezebel who was the daughter of a king in a neighboring country, and at her urging he began to serve their god Baal and began to worship him. Not only that, Ahab told all the people of Israel to worship Baal.

God was very angry with Ahab, and sent the prophet Elijah to give king Ahab this message: "It's not going to rain until I say so." (1 Kings 17:1). Then Elijah left and hid himself from Ahab at the Lord's command.

Question: Why was God so mad at Ahab? [Remember, the king's main job was to be an example to the people of Israel by following all of God's laws and commands. Now, Ahab was telling the people to worship another god! This was very wrong].

Three years later, God told Elijah to go back and meet with Ahab, and that He would send rain upon the land. So Elijah set out to see Ahab.

Question: Do you know what a famine is? [A famine occurs when a country has no food].

In our story today, there was a famine in Israel because it hadn't rained for three years, so there was not enough rain to water the crops so that they could grow - all because of king Ahab's wickedness. The famine was so severe in Samaria (the city where Ahab lived), that Ahab sent Obadiah, who was in charge of his palace to go out to look for food. Obadiah was a very strong believer in God. In fact, while Ahab's evil wife Jezebel was going all over Israel killing as many of the Lord's prophets as she could find, Obadiah secretly took 100 of the prophets and hid them in caves and took food and water to them. As Obadiah was walking, Elijah met him, and said, **"Go tell Ahab, 'Elijah is here' "** (I Kings 18:8).

My God Is Bigger Than Your god

(Text: I Kings 18:16-39)

16 "So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him, and Ahab went to meet Elijah. 17 When he saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?"

Question: Why did Ahab greet Elijah this way? [Remember, there was a famine in Israel because of Ahab's wickedness, and Elijah said that rain would come only when he gave the word. For three years, Ahab had someone in every nation and kingdom searching for Elijah. And Ahab blamed the drought on Elijah, instead of his wrong actions].

18 "I have not made trouble for Israel," Elijah replied. "But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the Lord's commands and have followed the Baals. 19 Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table." 20 So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. 21 Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him."

Question: What did Elijah want the people of Israel to do? [Elijah was telling the people of Israel to make up their minds and decide who they were going to worship - Either the God of Israel or Baal. Remember, the king of Israel was telling them to worship Baal].

But the people said nothing. 22 Then Elijah said to them, "I am the only one of the Lord's prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. 23 Get two bulls for us. Let them choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. 24 Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire-he is God." Then all the people said, "What you say is good."

Question: What do you think Elijah was trying to prove with this contest? [That the God of Israel is the only True God, and that Baal is not a god at all].

25 Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not light the fire." 26 So they took the bull given them and prepared it. Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. "O Baal, answer us!" they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made.

²⁷ At noon Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened." ²⁸ So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. ²⁹ Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention.

³⁰ Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come here to me." They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the Lord, which was in ruins. ³¹ Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, "Your name shall be Israel." ³² With the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord, and he dug a trench around it large enough to hold two seahs of seed. ³³ He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, "Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood."

³⁴ "Do it again," he said, and they did it again. "Do it a third time," he ordered, and they did it the third time. ³⁵ The water ran down around the altar and even filled the trench.

³⁶ At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. ³⁷ Answer me, O Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again." ³⁸ Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. ³⁹ When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The Lord -he is God! The Lord -he is God!"

Question: What did Elijah prove with his contest? [That the God of Israel, is the only God, and that Baal was not a god at all]. When the people saw what God did that day, they realized that they had forgotten about Him and they remembered that only the Lord is God].

Question: Do you remember our first discussion question - What happens if you don't stay in touch with someone? [It's easy to forget someone who you don't stay in touch with isn't it]?

Question: Did the people of Israel forget to stay in touch with God? [Yes].

Question: What might happen if you forget to stay in touch with God? [You might forget about God].

We need to remember to spend time with God. School, friends, activities and even Bible study are all important. God gave them to us so that we can enjoy them and give Him thanks for all that He has done for us. But God never wants them to become so important to us that we pay more attention to them than to Him.

Question: How can you spend time with God? [Talk to Him when you get up and when you go to bed. Talk to Him when you're doing stuff during the day. Ask Him to go to school with you, to help you to be a good friend, to go with you to your basketball game, to be a good son or daughter. God has lots of ideas of what you and He can do together. Just ask Him].

LESSON # 17: STATUE OF LIMITATIONS

You Shall Not Make Idols
(Worship God Only In The Ways He Has Told Us To)

Review

Last week's homework questions & memory verse

Today's Lesson verse

"...But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

Character quality

Worship

Discussion Question

What do you do with your allowance?

Stuart Briscoe is a pastor who has worked with youth, pastors and missionaries in more than 100 countries. He told this story, "On a visit with India, a pastor friend and I got into a car. I had to move a little sack in order to sit down. The things in the sack clanked and I asked my friend what was in the sack. He said, "Oh just some trash."

Well, I pulled out some of the trash, and it was some Indian copper work. I asked, "Why are you going to trash this?"

My friend replied, "It's a Hindu idol. The family it belonged to has just become Christians, and I'm taking their idols away. They've given them up and I'm going to destroy them."

So I said, "I'd like to take one of them home." It's a beautiful piece of artwork as far as I'm concerned. It would only become an idol if I bowed down and worshiped it." (Story found in The Ten Commandments, by Stuart Briscoe, pgs. 20-21).

Background

The people of Israel had been slaves to the Egyptians for more than 400 years, when God told Moses to lead the people out of Egypt. After they left Egypt, the people were disobedient to God, and because of their disobedience, God did not allow them to enter the land that He promised to give to them until 40 years later. When it was time, Joshua led the people into the land of Canaan, the "Promised Land," and God helped the people of Israel drive out the nations that were living in this land that He was now giving to Israel. As the nation of Israel settled into their new land, God told Joshua to give the people this warning:

You Shall Not Make Idols

(Text: Joshua 23:6-8)

⁶ "Be very strong; be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, without turning aside to the right or to the left. ⁷ Do not associate with these nations that remain among you; do not invoke [call upon] the names of their gods or swear by them. You must not serve them or bow down to them. ⁸ But you are to hold fast to the Lord your God, as you have until now."

The people living in the land that God gave to Israel worshipped many different 'gods.' God said to the people of Israel, "Don't even associate with these nations around you."

Question: The second commandment says, 'Do not make for yourselves idols.' What's an idol? [An idol is a figure that someone has carved out of wood or made out of stone that represents a god. Many people make an idol and then worship it as a god].

Question: Why does God say, ‘Do not make any idols or worship them?’ [Let’s find out].

Question: Can idols help you? [No]. Listen to what the Bible says about idols:

“⁴ But their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. ⁵ They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see; ⁶ they have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but they cannot smell; ⁷ they have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but they cannot walk; nor can they utter a sound with their throat” (Psalm 115:4-7).

So God says first of all, idols cannot help you. They’re made out of the same piece of wood that you use to build a fire (Isaiah 44:15). But idols are more than just helpless blocks of wood.

Question: Why are idols dangerous? [People begin to pay more attention to things rather than God].

Here’s an example: If you get \$1 a week for allowance, is your first thought to give 10 cents of it to God, or are you more concerned with what you’re going to buy with it? No matter how important something is to you, God wants to be more important to you.

Question: Why does God want to be more important to you than anyone or any thing else? [If God is not the most important person in our life, then you might pay attention to who or what you want and do what you want to do].

Question: What would happen at recess if everyone wanted to play soccer by his or her own rules? What kind of game would you have?

Question: What if your teacher said, “Today, you can treat anybody just the way you want to. If you want to butt in the cafeteria line or if you want to talk back to the principal - it’s OK! What kind of day would it be like in your school?”

You see, you need a benchmark or standard by which you can measure behavior, to know if it’s right or wrong. Jesus Christ is the standard that God has given to us so we may know how to live our lives in obedience to Him. Get to know Jesus so you can become more like Him [conform to Him], in order to know how God wants you to live your life.

In our previous lesson (lesson 16) we talked about that if you don’t spend time with God, it’s possible to forget about Him. If you remember, that’s what happened to Israel. A whole nation forgot about God and so did their children.

While the nations surrounding Israel worshipped many gods, Israel believed in the one true God and that made them distinct - they stood out from among all the other nations, just as God had intended. When Israel began to associate with these other nations, they stopped listening to God, and they became confused and forgot about God. They started following other gods.

Question: Why do your parents teach you about God? [If your parent doesn’t teach you about God, you may end up not knowing about God]. That’s why it’s so important for you to worship God the way that He instructs us to, so that you won’t forget about Him, and one day so your children don’t forget about Him.

Question: What kind of idols do people have today? [The Bible says things that you want so badly that you would do anything to get it are idols]. These things take your attention away from God.

Question: What are some things that people want so much that they make them more important than God? [The right clothes, drugs, alcohol, being good at a sport, wanting to be accepted by the right friends can be all become more important than God].

TEN COMMANDMENTS 1

Question: How can we keep even good things like sports and friends from becoming more important than God? [The Bible says to remember to thank God for all things, and do all things to bring attention to God instead of for your own glory – in other words, honor God over and above yourself].

Remember the words of Joshua, who said, “...**But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord**” (Joshua 24:15).

TEN COMMANDMENTS 1

LESSON # 18: IT'S COOL IN THE FURNACE

You Shall Not Make Idols

(Worship God Only In The Ways He Has Told Us To)

Review

Last week's homework questions & memory verse

Today's Lesson verse

"If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up" (Daniel 3:17-18).

Character quality

Trust & Loyalty

Discussion Question

If a friend of yours, who you know didn't believe in God, asked you if you believed in God, what would you say?

There's a story that in Germany during World War II, some families had gathered secretly in a home to pray and read the Bible. As the families were meeting, the door flew open and several German soldiers with guns burst into the room. They soldiers lined up each person in the room against the wall with their guns pointed at them.

Then, one of the soldiers said, "We know that you are meeting together to pray and study the Bible. Because of this we have orders to kill you. But anyone here who will say they are not a Christian may leave the room and go home."

Several people left, leaving only a few faithful alone in the room with the soldiers. After the last person had left, the soldiers put down their guns, and said, "We too are Christians, and want to worship with you. But we had to know that you really are Christians, and will follow Him, no matter the cost."

Background

In about 600 BC, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and attacked it. Nebuchadnezzar ordered his chief official to take some of the boys from the royal family and other important families in Israel back to Babylon. These young men were strong, handsome, very smart, and could learn quickly. For 3 years they were taught the Babylonian language and everything else they would need to know to serve king Nebuchadnezzar. They were even given new names!

Four of these young men were named Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and God helped them to learn and understand all that they were taught.

Through all this they remained faithful & loyal to the Lord God of Israel, but their trust in God and their loyalty to Him was about to be tested!

It's Cool In The Furnace

(Text: Daniel Chapter 3)

¹ "King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, ninety feet high and nine feet wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. ² He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up. ³ So the satraps, prefects,

governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it.

⁴ Then the herald loudly proclaimed, "This is what you are commanded to do, O peoples, nations and men of every language: ⁵ As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. ⁶ Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace."

⁷ Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

⁸ At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews. ⁹ They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! ¹⁰ You have issued a decree, O king, that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold, ¹¹ and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace. ¹² But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon-Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, O king. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up."

¹³ Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, ¹⁴ and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? ¹⁵ Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. ¹⁷ If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

¹⁹ Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual ²⁰ and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. ²¹ So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. ²² The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, ²³ and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.

²⁴ Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?" They replied, "Certainly, O king." ²⁵ He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods." ²⁶ Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!"

So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, ²⁷ and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not

harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

²⁸ Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. ²⁹ Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way." ³⁰ Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon."

Question: What is a definition for loyalty? [Loyalty is being devoted or faithful].

Question: Why do you think God saved Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego from the furnace? [Because they chose to remain loyal to God and not worship the idol that Nebuchadnezzar set up].

Question: Why do you think that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego chose to remain loyal to God, when they knew that they might be killed for their loyalty? [Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego understood that it was God who gave them good health, knowledge, understanding, and their abilities that enabled them to serve the king well].

They also understood how seriously God forbids idol worship. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego knew that they could never give their worship to another god, because worship is the exclusive right of God Himself. They wanted to remain loyal to God.

Question: What is one characteristic of a good friend? [One characteristic of a good friend is loyalty].

A loyal friend is someone who is your friend every day - even if you're not having a very good day.

You know, there's a friend you have that is a better friend to you than anyone. His name is Jesus. Jesus is completely loyal to you no matter how bad of a day you're having. He's always ready to spend time with you.

Question: What are some things that demand your attention? [Homework, sports or other activities, friends].

Question: How could these become more important to you than God? [When you start paying more attention to them than God].

Question: How can you keep something from becoming more important to you than God? [When something comes along that demands to be more important to you than God, remember God's loyalty to you].

Question: How has God been a loyal friend to you and to all people? [The Bible says, that Jesus laid down his life for you so that you can be with him in heaven one day. The remarkable thing is that Jesus loves us so much that He did this even though you or I don't deserve it].

Question: How can you be a loyal friend today? [Being loving, being kind, doing what is right].

TEN COMMANDMENTS 1

LESSON # 19: GOOD AS GOLD

Honor Your Father And Your Mother (Honor And Respect Our Parents)

Review

Last week's homework questions & memory verse

Today's Lesson verse

"Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold" (Proverbs 3:13-14).

Character quality

Respect

Discussion Question

What is the most valuable or the most important possession you have?

Good As Gold

(Text: Proverbs 3:13-15)

¹³ "Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding, ¹⁴ for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. ¹⁵ She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her."

Question: What is wisdom? [The dictionary defines wisdom as knowledge or an understanding of what is right and true]. But wisdom goes beyond what is commonly accepted as right or true. True wisdom is knowing what God says is right and then applying that knowledge to everyday decisions.

The Bible says that nothing you can desire is more valuable than wisdom; not a brand new bike or hitting a bases loaded homer in the championship game; not gold, silver or precious jewels - nothing is more valuable to you than learning wisdom.

Question: Why do you think that wisdom is so important? Let's talk about 3 good reasons why wisdom is important.

The Value Of Wisdom

Wisdom tells you what is right (truth) and what is wrong (false).

Question: Do you know the difference between a value and a virtue? [A value changes according to what's popular. A virtue is a god-given truth that remains the same forever].

Question: What is an example of a virtue that you know is right? [Honesty, kindness, love].

Question: What is an example of an attitude that you know is wrong? [Hate, selfishness].

Question: How can you learn which are the right attitudes to have? [Get to know Jesus by reading the Bible, asking God to help you know the right attitudes to have, from the example of parents who know & follow what God says in the Bible, Christian music].

Wisdom helps you to do what is right and fair.

Question: What is an example of being fair? [Everyone getting to play an equal amount in a game, giving back to God some of what He gives you].

Wisdom helps you make good decisions.

Question: What is an example of making a good decision? [Respecting & listening to your teacher, obeying your parents, following your coach's instructions, looking both ways before you cross the street].

How To Go About Getting Wisdom

Learn Respect For God

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.” (Proverbs 1:7). Another definition for “fear ” is respect. So the “fear of the Lord” is having respect for God.

Question: What are ways that you can show respect for someone? [One way is to listen to what a person says].

Learn Respect For Your Parents

“⁵ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (Deuteronomy 6:5-7).

The primary way that God has chosen to teach you His Word is by your parents. That is why it's important to respect and listen to your dad and to your mom. The Bible verse we just read tells us a lot about how God wants your parents to teach you:

When you sit at home

Question: What do you learn from your parents at home? [How to get along with each other, learning the Bible, responsibility, manners, help with homework, tithing].

When you walk along the road

Question: How do you and your parents spend time together? [Vacations, outings, reading, projects, dinner table, worshipping].

When you lie down

Question: What types of things do you usually do before bedtime? [Practice hygiene, go over the day's happenings, prayers].

When you get up

Question: What important lessons can be learned early in the day? [Planning for the day's activities & responsibilities, thanking God for His blessings].

What this Bible verse also implies or tells us without directly saying it, is that you should let your parents teach you by listening to their instructions and advice. Here are two Bible verses that teach you the importance of listening to your parents:

“Listen, my son to your father's instruction and do not forsake [ignore or neglect] your mother's teaching” (Proverbs 1:8). Remember, God has given the responsibility to your parents to teach you what is right and wrong. It is your responsibility to listen to them and learn from them.

“A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son grief to his mother” (Proverbs 10:1). The Bible says that a child who listens and learns right from wrong and does what is right will bring joy to his parents. The Bible also says that a child who knows right from wrong but chooses to do wrong is foolish, and will cause all kinds of trouble.

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The Bible clearly says that your parents, especially your fathers, have a responsibility to teach you children God's Word. The Scriptures also say that you have a responsibility to respect your parents and listen to them, so that you may understand what is right and what is wrong, and learn to do what is right.

Question: Boys (Girls), how can you spend time with your parent(s) today?

Question: Dads, how can you make time to spend with your son or daughter today?

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LESSON # 20: WELCOME HOME! (Part 1)

Honor Your Father And Your Mother (Honor And Respect Our Parents)

Review

Last week's homework questions & memory verse

Today's Lesson verse

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him" (Luke 15:20).

Character quality

Responsibility

Discussion Question

What is one responsibility that your parent(s) can trust you to do?

Question: What is responsibility? [Being dependable or reliable with what you've been given].

Question: What are some responsibilities that kids have or should have today? [Going to school, being obedient to parents, teachers, coaches, ministers, chores around the home].

Question: What are some responsibilities that parents have? [Providing food, clothing, shelter, and guidance, teaching their children God's Word].

Today's lesson is about responsibility. The Bible story we're going to hear is about a father and his two sons. Today, we're going to talk about the father and the younger son. Each of them has responsibilities. Let's see how they do with them.

Welcome Home! (Part 1)

(Text: Luke 15:11-24)

¹¹ "Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. ¹²The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

¹³"Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' ²⁰So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹"The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²²"But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate."

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First, let's review a couple of verses from the story and see if you can recognize when the younger son is being responsible with what he was given, and when he is being irresponsible (not responsible) with what he was given.

“Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living” (verse 13).

Question: Was the younger son being responsible with the property his dad gave to him? [No. The younger son wanted all of the allowance that he was ever going to get, and asked his father to give it to him all at once! His father agreed to this and gave his son all of it. Then the son went and squandered or wasted it all].

Question: Did the younger son honor his father by what he did? [In the days when the Bible was written, in that part of the world where this story took place, if a son asked for what this boy asked for, it was basically saying, 'Dad-as far as I'm concerned, you're dead. I am removing myself from any and all association with our family.' So, not only was the son foolish with his money, but he also embarrassed and ridiculed his whole family].

If you were to get an award for doing something well, doesn't your whole family rejoice with you? If on the other hand, you were to do something wrong, don't your actions reflect not just on you, but on your whole family?

Here's an example:

If you get a citizenship award at school for volunteering your time, your teacher may think, "What a great job his (her) parents are doing teaching him good values!" Let's say however, that you were caught butting in line in the school cafeteria. Your teacher may think, "What a rude little boy (girl). Don't his (her) parents teach him (her) any manners? His (her) whole family is probably rude!"

Question: Did the son honor the time that his father spent with him teaching him right from wrong? [It doesn't appear so at first]. Let's look at another verse:

“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my fathers’ hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.’ So he got up and went to his father” (Verses 17-20).

Question: What do you say now? Was the son being responsible for his actions and attitudes? [After awhile the son finally realized that he had done wrong. He decided to go back home to his father's house and ask for forgiveness].

Question: What does this tell you about the importance of a dad teaching his children right and wrong? [Teaching is like planting seeds. When seeds of truth and right are planted, they will take root and be remembered].

The Bible says, ¹⁰ **“As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, ¹¹ so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:10-11).** God's words always accomplish what He wants it to. While the dad's words and teachings seemed to fail at first, in the end, they did not.

Question: What does this tell you about your responsibility to listen to your parent(s) teachings? [Listening and obeying your parent's teaching is one of the biggest responsibilities

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that you as a son or daughter have. God's original intention of learning right and wrong is for parents to teach their children His Word - what is right and true].

Question: Why do your parent(s) teach you responsibility? [It takes a lot of practice being responsible. That's one reason why your parents may have you do chores around the house, and your teachers give you homework. They help you to learn responsibility].

God wants you to be responsible too. He expects you to do a good job with whatever you've been given to do. One of the ways that you can be responsible to God is by respecting and listening to your parents, because God says it is right to honor your father and mother, and also because it pleases Him!

LESSON # 21: WELCOME HOME! (Part 2)

Honor Your Father And Your Mother
(Honor And Respect Our Parents)

Review

Last week's homework questions & memory verse

Today's Lesson verse

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not selfish, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres" (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

Character quality

Responsibility

Discussion Question

What things can you think of that your parents try to teach you by how they do it, by their example? [Eating vegetables, telling the truth, good manners, tithing, etc.].

Welcome Home! (Part 2)

(Text: Luke 15:11-31)

(The Scripture is reprinted here for reference if needed)

¹¹ "Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. ¹²The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

¹³"Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.'²⁰So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹"The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'²²"But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate."

Review

In our last lesson, we learned about the story of the Prodigal (prodigal means wasteful) Son. In the story the younger son wanted all of his allowance he was ever going to get at one time. His father agreed to give it to him. The son took the money, left home, and then foolishly wasted all of the money his dad had given to him. When he realized his mistake, he came back to his father's home and asked his dad for forgiveness.

In today's lesson, let's see how the father teaches his sons responsibility by setting an example for them.

“⁴Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres” (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

By showing three examples of love to his son, the father has the opportunity to teach his son some important lessons about responsibility.

Love Is Patient

Question: Where in the story can you find an example of patience? [The Scripture says that the father saw his son while he was still a long way off, as if he stayed by the window looking toward the day when his son would return home (verse 20)].

There were some important lessons about responsibility that the father wanted to teach his son, so he waited patiently until there was an opportunity to teach his son.

Question: What are some responsibilities you have that your parents are patient in teaching you? [Taking care of property, doing homework, tithes and offerings, good manners]. Teaching takes patience. Learning responsibility takes time and practice. By being patient with you, your mom or dad is saying, “Being responsible with your property is an important value for you to learn and it’s important for me to spend time with you to teach you this.”

Love Is Not Proud

Question: Where in the story can you find an example of forgiveness? [The father was not so proud that he would never forgive his son for the wrong things his son did. In fact, the father was overjoyed when his son admitted his mistake and he welcomed his son back with a great celebration (verse 22-24)].

The father could have been very angry with his son, and not allowed him to come back home. If the dad had not forgiven his son, there may never have been an opportunity for him to be able to teach his son anything again.

Question: What virtues [God’s truths that remain forever] have your mom or dad taught you are right? [Telling the truth, not stealing, etc.]

Question: Would you respect your dad or mom if he or she forgave you after you made a mistake? In our Bible story, the dad helped his son learn how to be responsible by letting him learn from his experience. Your parents can help you learn from your experiences too.

Love Rejoices With The Truth

Question: Where in the story can you find an example of rejoicing? [His father rejoiced that his younger son recognized wrong and turned away from it (verse 21-24)].

The father helped his son learn what was right by setting a good example himself. The son also knew that his father was dependable - he could count on him to be there for him. His dad was there for him even when he didn’t want him to be.

Question: What is an example of a responsibility that you think your mom or dad does a good job with? [Providing food, clothing, shelter].

Question: Why is it important for your mom or dad to be dependable with their responsibilities? [To learn by their example; to do for you what you cannot do on your own].

Question: Why is it important for you to be dependable with your responsibilities? [So you can become ready for bigger and more responsibility as you become able, other people who depend on you to do a good job].

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In our Bible story today, the father showed by his example how you should honor your father and mother. As your parents love you, love them.

Question: How can you love your parents today? [Obey - the first time]!

As your parents are dependable with their responsibilities, be dependable with yours.

Question: What responsibility can you be depended on to do today? [Be prepared for your music lesson, getting homework done].

As your parents show respect to you, show respect to them.

Question: How can you show respect to your parents today? [By saying please and thank you, take good care of what they have given to you]. As they teach you by their example of what is right, honor their teaching by doing what is right.

Question: How can you practice doing what is right today? [Asking God to help you make good decisions, being kind].

LESSON # 22: STICKS AND STONES

You Shall Not Murder
(Respect The Lives Of Others)

Review

Last week's homework questions & memory verse

Today's Lesson verse

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs..." (Ephesians 4:29).

Character quality

Encouragement

Group warm-up

You'll need a tube of toothpaste and some newspaper. Squeeze all of the toothpaste out of the tube onto the paper. Now offer to give any of the kids \$10 if he or she can put all of the toothpaste back into the tube (your money is safe - it can't be done). The idea is that hurtful words once said, cannot be taken back.

Sticks & Stones

(Text: Matthew 5:21-22)

21"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' 22But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment."

Jesus made this statement to a great crowd of people that had gathered to hear him teach.

Question: What do you think Jesus meant when he said this? [Let's find out].

Imagine that you are living in Israel at the time that Jesus is passing through Jerusalem. One day a large crowd is gathered on a hill outside the city, so you amble on over to a place in the crowd where you can see what's going on. When you get there you find that Jesus is sitting on the hill teaching the crowd that is gathered around him!

During his teaching, Jesus says, "If you kill somebody, you'll wind up in front of a judge in a court of law." At that point, a person next to you whispers, "Well, he's not talking about me - I haven't killed anybody." Then Jesus continues, "But if you are angry with someone, if you hate them and insult them, it's worse than murdering someone!"

Question: Who do you think that Jesus is talking to now? Is Jesus talking to you & the person next to you? [Of course He is. At one point or another both you and I have been angry with someone].

Question: But why would Jesus say that it's so bad to be angry with someone? [Because Jesus knows that it's our thoughts and attitudes that lead to our actions. And Jesus knows that angry thoughts and angry attitudes can lead to actions that can hurt someone].

Have you ever heard, "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me?" I think that only half of that statement is true. Sticks and stones may break your bones, but some words really can hurt can't they?

Question: What kinds of words could hurt someone if they were said to that person? [Insults, making fun of someone, words said in anger].

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One of the quickest ways to make someone angry is by saying something that stirs up their emotions.

King Solomon of Israel, the wisest man who ever lived knew this. King Solomon wrote a book in the Bible called Proverbs. In one of the Proverbs, he wrote, “...a harsh word stirs up anger” (**Proverbs 15:1**).

Question: Can you remember a time when someone made you really mad? What was it that made you so mad? [A lot of times it was probably something that someone said to you that made you mad].

Question: What should you do if you start getting angry with someone? [In those situations, remember to ask God to help you not to become angry. It's not always easy to do, but it will help you live the kind of life that God wants you to live]. And on a practical note, it can save you a whole bunch of trouble.

When I was in 6th grade, I got in a fight with a 4th grader named Paul Philips. I was a crossing guard (honor guard, patrol boy), and Paul had no use for a crossing guard. One word led to another, so it was determined that we would fight it out. The next day, we met in my neighbor's front yard. The fight began, and before long a crowd had gathered (I didn't have enough sense to pick a place where my neighbors wouldn't see me). Sure enough, my neighbor came out – she was about 100 years old – and chased us off. So we went up to the schoolyard 2 blocks away. The crowd followed, and so did some of Paul's friends, who also joined in the fight – now it was 3 against me! Guess who won? Guess whose 100 year old neighbor showed up on my family's front porch and informed my parents about what went on just as I walked up to the house? Guess who found out that a 6th grader got beat by a 4th grader?

The Bible says that hating and insulting and putting down people is not the kind of attitude that God wants you to have. The reason that insulting and teasing words hurt so much is that once those words are put in your mind, they stay there and can be remembered. We should not hurt people with our words and actions.

Remember the toothpaste? Once those hurtful words have been said, you can't take them back. And again, they stick in your mind for a long time.

Question: Instead of hurting people with our words and actions, what should we do? [We should encourage people with our words and actions].

Encouragement means to help give someone hope or courage or confidence. The Bible says, “**Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs...**” (**Ephesians 4:29**).

Question: Who do you know that needs some encouragement? What can you say to encourage him or her?

LESSON # 23: IT'S GOOD TO HEAR FROM YOU

You Shall Not Murder
(Respect The Lives Of Others)

Review

Last week's homework questions & memory verse

Today's Lesson verse

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs..." (Ephesians 4:29).

Character quality

Encouragement

Discussion Question

What is something nice that someone has done for you recently? How did you feel afterwards?

(The following is a popular e-mail that has been circulating for some time. The website TruthorFiction.com verified its source and accuracy):

One afternoon Shaya and his father walked past a park where some boys Shaya knew were playing baseball.

Shaya asked, "Do you think they will let me play?"

Shaya's father knew that his son was not at all athletic and that most boys would not want him on their team. But Shaya's father understood that if his son was chosen to play it would give him a comfortable sense of belonging.

Shaya's father approached one of the boys in the field and asked if Shaya could play. The boy looked around for guidance from his teammates. Getting none, he took matters into his own hands and said, "We're losing by six runs and the game is in the eighth inning. I guess he can be on our team and we'll try to put him up to bat in the ninth inning."

Shaya's father was ecstatic as Shaya smiled broadly. Shaya was told to put on a glove and go out to play short center field.

In the bottom of the eighth inning, Shaya's team scored a few runs but was still behind by three. In the bottom of the ninth inning, Shaya's team scored again and now with two outs and the bases loaded with the potential winning run on base, Shaya was scheduled to be up. Would the team actually let Shaya bat at this juncture and give away their chance to win the game? Surprisingly, Shaya was given the bat.

Everyone knew that it was all but impossible because Shaya didn't even know how to hold the bat properly, let alone hit with it. However as Shaya stepped up to the plate, the pitcher moved a few steps to lob the ball in softly so Shaya should at least be able to make contact.

The first pitch came in and Shaya swung clumsily and missed. One of Shaya's teammates came up to Shaya and together they held the bat and faced the pitcher waiting for the next pitch. The pitcher again took a few steps forward to toss the ball softly toward Shaya. As the pitch came in, Shaya and his teammate swung at the bat and together they hit a slow ground ball to the pitcher.

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The pitcher picked up the soft grounder and could easily have thrown the ball to the first baseman. Shaya would have been out and that would have ended the game. Instead, the pitcher took the ball and threw it on a high arc to right field, far beyond reach of the first baseman.

Everyone started yelling, "Shaya, run to first. Run to first." Never in his life had Shaya run to first. He scampered down the baseline wide-eyed and startled. By the time he reached first base, the right fielder had the ball. He could have thrown the ball to the second baseman who would tag out Shaya, who was still running. But the right fielder understood what the pitcher's intentions were, so he threw the ball high and far over the third baseman's head. Everyone yelled, "Run to second, run to second." Shaya ran towards second base as the runners ahead of him deliriously circled the bases towards home. As Shaya reached second base, the opposing short stop ran to him, turned him in the direction of third base and shouted, "Run to third." As Shaya rounded third, the boys from both teams ran behind him screaming, "Shaya run home."

Shaya ran home, stepped on home plate and all 18 boys lifted him on their shoulders and made him the hero, as he had just hit a "grand slam" and won the game for his team.

It's Good To Hear From You

(Text: Acts 3:1-10)

¹One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer--at three in the afternoon. ²Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. ³When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. ⁴Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" ⁵So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. ⁶Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." ⁷Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. ⁸He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. ⁹When all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him."

Question: Do you remember what encouragement means? [Encouragement means to give someone hope, courage, or confidence].

This man who sat at the temple gate had been crippled for 40 years since his birth. He had never been able to run or jump or even walk. Every day, he sat at the entrance to the temple and begged people for money.

Let's say that your mom or dad had an accident and could no longer work. You had no other family to help you, and all your money is gone. So the only thing he can think of to do, is stand outside your church on Sunday morning, and ask people to give him some money or something to eat.

Question: What kinds of things do you think people would say to your family?

Question: Now imagine if a couple of people actually stopped to help your family. How would that make you feel?

Words and acts of encouragement are powerful. They can heal, they can lift people's spirits, and can bring about change in a person's life.

Question: There are 3 good ways to encourage someone. What do you think they are? [By words, prayers, and actions]. Let's talk about these 3 ways of encouraging.

Words Can Encourage

“An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up” (Proverbs 12:25). Sometimes all someone needs is a kind word to cheer him or her up.

Question: Who is someone you know that could use some cheering up today? [Someone who is sick at home, someone in the hospital, someone moving away].

Prayers Can Encourage

“About midnight Paul & Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.” (Acts 16:25). Paul & Silas’ were missionaries who were put in jail for telling people about Jesus. Yet at midnight, at a time when they could have been sleeping, instead they were singing and praying to God. Their prayers encouraged the other prisoners who were listening to them.

Question: Who is someone that you can pray for today? [Someone in your family, a friend, missionaries (like Paul & Silas), your pastor, the President].

Actions Encourage

“For the word of God is living and active” (Hebrews 4:12). Let’s see how the word of God can be living and active through your life to encourage others. Remember the story of the Good Samaritan?

³⁰...A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³²So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’” (Luke 10:30-35).

Question: What was one way that the good Samaritan encouraged the hurt man? [He was kind to him].

Question: How can your actions encourage today:

Someone new in school without any friends? [Share your friendship].

Someone whose family is poor? [Share your abundance].

Someone not included in the “in group”? [Invite them into your group].

Someone who is always picked last when teams are being made? [Share your support].

Someone with a learning disability? [Share your time to help them learn].

Your words and actions can encourage people. But remember, your words and actions can also discourage people.

The Bible says, **“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs...” (Ephesians 4:29).**

When you’re careful to encourage, you help make a person’s life better. Encourage someone today in your prayers, through your words and by your actions.

LESSON # 24: WHAT'S IN A NAME?

You Shall Not Misuse The Name Of The Lord Your God
(Honor God's Name By The Way You Act Or Talk)

Review

Last week's homework questions & memory verse

Today's Lesson verse

"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors..." (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Character quality

A Good Neighbor

Discussion Question

Do you know what your name means?

What's In A Name?
(Text: Exodus 34:5-7)

"⁵ Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the Lord. ⁶ And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation."

Question: What does God tell you about Himself in His Name? [God is compassionate, gracious (merciful), not easily angered, full of love & forgiveness, just (fair)].

In the days before and when the Bible was written, names were very important. Names told a great deal about people, and so names were chosen very carefully.

Remember Abram? His name means "exalted father." God later changed his name to Abraham, which means, "father of many." And Abraham became the father of the Jewish race, and his descendants became as numerous as the stars in the sky.

The name Moses means, "draw out." Pharaoh's daughter named him 'Moses' when she drew him out of the Nile River.

Question: Do you know what the name Jesus means? [In the Old Testament, Jesus is given the name Immanuel which means, "God with us." The name Jesus is the Greek name for Joshua, which means, "The Lord saves"].

So Jesus' name means: "God is with us and The Lord saves." You see, names can be very important.

Your name identifies who you are. In fact, you can probably look up your name in a book and it will tell you the meaning of it. (Click on: http://staging.parenthoodweb.com/parent_cfmfiles/babynames.cfm and you can look any name and the meaning up). But your name also tells others a lot about you.

Question: What kinds of things can your name tell others about you? [Where you live, who your parents are, where you go to school, who your friends are, what you like to do].

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God's name is important because it identifies who He is. When he told Moses His name, he identified just who He was. In other words, when God told Moses His name, He told Moses "what He was all about."

Question: Do you know what an ambassador is? [An ambassador is appointed (chosen) to represent another person].

As Christians, the person we represent is Jesus and what His name means to others. 2 Corinthians 5:20 says, "**We are therefore Christ's ambassadors...**"

If you are a Christian, God has appointed you to represent Jesus Christ by honoring him with the way you act, talk, and think. That is your job as His ambassador.

Question: Remember the story of the Good Samaritan? How was he God's ambassador? [He stopped to help the man who was hurt when others just passed by on the other side of the road].

Question: Are there people you know of who may get hurt because they get passed by on the other side of the hall at school? Perhaps:

- Someone who is of a different color or a different race?
- Someone who is not very attractive?
- Someone who doesn't seem as smart as others?
- Someone who doesn't wear the "right kind" of clothes?
- Someone who is new in town?
- Someone who has a physical defect?

Question: How can you be an ambassador for Jesus today at your school?

LESSON # 25: HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY

Do Not Lie
(Live Truthfully)

Review

Last week's homework questions & memory verse

Today's Lesson verse

"Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to its neighbor" (Romans 13:10).

Character quality

Honesty

Honesty Is The Best Policy

(Text: Romans 13:8-10)

"⁸Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. ⁹The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰Love does no harm to its neighbor..."

The ninth commandment says, **"You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor" (Exodus 20:16).** More simply put, "Live truthfully."

Question: Why do you think God included "do not lie" in the Ten Commandments? [The answer lies in the very nature of God – of who He is].

God Is Truth

At the very center of God's character is Truth. Jesus, who is, **"...the image of the invisible God..." (Colossians 1:15)** says: **"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life..." (John 14:6).**

God Is Light

In Scripture, light is always equated with truth. The Scriptures say, **"This is the message we have heard and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).** God is full of truth. There is no room in Him for anything other than truth.

God Created People To Be Like Him

"Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place" (Psalm 51:6). Since you have been created in God's image, God wants you to reflect his character in your life. God wants you to live truthfully.

Lying Is The Opposite Of Truth

"⁹Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator" (Colossians 3:8-10).

Question: Why does the Bible say to not lie? [Because lying hurts people]. Our opening Scripture verse says that love does what is right and that love does not hurt anyone. And intentionally making statements that are not true can and do hurt people.

Let's look at three examples of what lying does:

1) Lying Hurts A Person's Reputation

"The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful" (Proverbs 12:22).

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Remember the story of Daniel and the lion's den (Daniel Chapter 6)? Let's visit the beginning of that story:

"³ Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. ⁴ At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. ⁵ Finally these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God" (Daniel 6:3-5).

Question: Why were these officials unable to find any charges against Daniel? [Daniel was honest and could be completely trusted with anything he was given to do].

Question: How was Daniel rewarded for living truthfully? [He was made the highest administrator in the whole kingdom].

Question: Do you remember what happened to the officials who lied about Daniel to the king? [After Daniel was found to be innocent, the king tossed the bad guys into the lion's den]. Certainly in Daniel's case, honesty was the best policy.

2) A Lie Places A Heavy Weight Upon A Person

"The Lord abhors dishonest scales, but accurate weights are his delight" (Proverbs 11:1).

Remember Zacchaeus? Let's take a look at the burden Zacchaeus placed upon people by his dishonesty, and then how God's power changed Zacchaeus life.

"¹ Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. ² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. ³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

⁵ When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." ⁶ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. ⁷ All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.' "

⁸ But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham" (Luke 19:1-9).

Zacchaeus was a tax collector and tax collectors were notorious for collecting more than what was due, and withholding some of that money for themselves. Jewish people despised them, and it is easy to see why.

Question: How did Zacchaeus' dishonesty burden people? [The people had to pay more taxes than they really owed].

Question: How did Zacchaeus change? {By meeting Jesus}. The result of God's power working in Zacchaeus' life enabled him to live truthfully. For Zacchaeus, honesty became the best policy.

3) A Lie Hurts Peoples Feelings

"...a harsh word stirs up anger." (Proverbs 15:1).

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Remember a few lessons back (Lesson # 22) when we squeezed a whole tube of toothpaste out onto a piece of newspaper and then offered you \$10 if you could get it all back into the tube? You didn't get the \$10 did you?

Question: Do you remember what we tried to illustrate by doing that? [That once said, you can't take those hurtful words back].

Question: Why do insulting and teasing words and lies hurt so much? [Once those words are put in your mind, they stay there and are remembered for a long time].

Question: Instead of hurting people what should our words do? [Our words should encourage people].

Encouragement means to help give someone hope or courage or confidence. The Bible says, **“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs...” (Ephesians 4:29).**

Make sure that honesty is your policy.

So far, we've talked about three ways that lies or dishonesty can hurt a person:

- A lie can hurt a person's reputation
- A lie can place a heavy weight upon a person to carry
- A lie can hurt a person's feelings

Question: Can you think of some other reasons why God says, “Live truthfully?”

- A lie creates mistrust toward the person who lied to you. Once you have been lied to, it's hard to trust that person again.
- A lie leads to telling more lies to cover up the last lie.
- A lie can ruin friendships. It's hard to be friends with somebody who lies.

Question: What are some reasons why God gave to us the Ten Commandments? [To teach us how to love God, how to live and get along with each other, to protect us from making bad decisions and choices that would harm you or others].

God's word tells us:

“Love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no harm to its neighbor” (Romans 13:10).

When we lie, we only hurt others and hurt ourselves. When we live truthfully, we reflect God's character. This is why God says, “Live truthfully.” It's why honesty is the best policy.

LESSON # 26: TEN WAYS TO BE TOTALLY COOL

Today's Lesson verse

"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (John 13:13-15).

Character Quality

Respect for God & Others

Discussion Question

What would be on your top ten ways to be cool list?

Introduction to the Ten Commandments

Suppose you walked into your gym class one morning and there was no coach or teacher to be found. All you find is a yellow post-it note on the bleachers that reads, "Do what you want to do."

Question: What kind of gym class would you have? [A basketball game might be in the middle of a volleyball game. And some boys and girls might just sit down right in the middle of everything].

Question: In this situation, which activity would be the right one to do? [No one can really say. A standard - a guideline - would need to be established before anyone could answer that question].

Question: In this situation which person would have the right to say what game should be played? [No one yet. A person would need to be put in charge before anyone could say what the right game to play is].

Question: In this situation, what one thing is certain? [Each person would do as he or she pleased].

Question: Where can you find that kind of attitude today? [A place the Bible calls "the world"].

Question: What is this place that the Bible calls the world? [The world is anywhere people choose not to follow God]. The world teaches you to look to your own interests rather than look out for the interests of others.

The world has its own standards of what is right and what is wrong. The world's standards are in direct opposition to what God says is right.

The world has its own attitudes of how to live. The world's attitudes are in direct opposition to God's attitudes of how He wants us to be.

Question: Who determines the world's definition of what is right and what is true? [The world's definition of what is right and acceptable and appropriate is always changing]. It can change with a court decision, with what the news reports say, with what's popular.

Question: Can you think of some examples of what the world says may be right, appropriate or acceptable? [If you aren't caught lying or cheating, it's OK to do it. If somebody does something wrong to you, you have the right to do it back].

Question: How is God's definition of what's right different? [God's definition of what's right is always true and is always the same]. The Bible says, **"All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal."** (Psalm 119:160).

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The world can't figure out what's cool and how to be cool, but God can and has told us!

Question: How can you and I know God's definition of what's cool? [God has set down His top ten ways to be cool in writing]. They're called the Ten Commandments but we're going to call them:

The Top Ten Ways To Be Totally Cool!

(Text: Exodus 20:3-17)

Note: Have the group read the commandments one at a time, and after reading each commandment talk about what each one means. (The Ten Commandments are found in Exodus 20:3-17).

You shall have no other gods before me.

Choose to please God rather than others. God knows how to give you the best life possible.

You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them.

Get to know God by spending time with Him. Then you will know how He desires you to worship Him.

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

Be Jesus' personal representative in everything you do.

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

Time out for time with God.

Honor your father and your mother.

Be honoring so you can be honorable.

You shall not murder.

Encourage and help others.

You shall not commit adultery.

Remain pure in your body, thought, word and action.

You shall not steal.

Do what is good for others.

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor (Do not lie).

Live truthfully.

You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Be thankful.

Question: Why is it cool to live by God's ways? [Living God's ways can help you be more fun to be with. Living God's ways can help you become more successful in the classroom. Living God's ways can help you become a better athlete]. Living God's ways can help you with all these and more if you'll commit yourselves to living toward them.

Question: Do the Ten Commandments themselves help you to live God's ways? [The Ten Commandments are like a mirror. They can only show you how you're doing compared to the standard God has set for you to live by].

Question: How then can you live the way the Ten Commandments tell you? [Through the power of Jesus Christ in your life]. Only Jesus can give you the power to live differently than the world lives. The Bible says, **"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly..." (Colossians 3:16)**. When His thoughts become your thoughts, His actions will become your actions.

Jesus came to show you and me by His example how to be really cool. But He also came to give you the power to do it! Decide today to let Jesus help you to live your life and be totally cool!

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THANKSGIVING

A TIME FOR THANKS & FOR GIVING

“Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name, make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts” (Psalm 105:1-2).

Thanksgiving is all about being thankful for what we've been given. Let's think about what we've received for a moment. Read the following verse:

“The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it...”(Psalm 24:1).

Question: Where does everything you have come from? [Everything that we have comes from what God has given us].

Question: Has anyone given more generously than God?

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). God gives us eternal life as a gift.

“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9). God will give us more than we could ever imagine.

God does assure Christians (those who have invited Jesus Christ into their life as Savior and Lord) that one-day they will live forever with Him in His mansion in heaven! BUT...sometimes we forget about another fantastic promise God makes to us:

“...I have come that [you] may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10). Jesus says that not only does He offer to you citizenship in heaven, but also you can have the best life possible on this side of heaven! God offers to us the best of both worlds!

Question: Who are people that have given to you? [Parents who show you God's love; teachers who help you learn in school; coaches who help you learn to play sports, people who serve in the armed forces to keep our country safe]. Think about how good it feels when someone takes time to give to you.

We certainly have been given much, so we have plenty to be thankful for. Let's do a little warm-up before a fun game at the end of this lesson:

Question: September 11, 2001 – the day men flew airplanes into the World Trade Center buildings in New York - what was there to be thankful for? [That God allowed less destruction than there could have been, many people have put their faith and trust in Jesus as their Savior, an outpouring of patriotism and giving, renewed prayer life and church attendance].

Question: There's a severe illness in your family. What can you find to be thankful for? [Health that you enjoy, Christ' love in action as people help, hope for a better future].

Question: Your sports team is dead last in the league. What can you find to be thankful for? [Physical health just to be able to play, learning and growing in understanding of the game, learning good lessons that you can use outside of sports: self-control, patience, kindness].

Question: Look around your home. What can you find to be thankful for? [Family, that you have a home, clothes, food, etc.].

Question: Look around your church. What can you find to be thankful for? [Jesus Christ, your pastor, place to worship freely and openly].

Question: Let's say you meet a homeless person and he/she asks you, "What do I have to be thankful for?" [God meets your needs, people care and help - you are not forgotten, you have opportunities to get back on your feet].

We have lots to be thankful for. But the second part of ThanksGIVING, is the giving. So let's talk about giving.

Question: There are 3 good ways that you can give. What do you think they are?

1. We can give with our time
2. We can give through our abilities
3. We can give our money.

Question: Why Should You Give? The Bible says:

- **"Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8).** [Give because you have been given to].
- **"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion [because you have to], for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:6-7).** Give what you have because you want to.

Question: When Should We Give? [Share when the opportunity arises]. The Bible says, **"Share with God's people who are in need" (Romans 12:13).** Anytime is the right time!

Since Thanksgiving opens up the "Holiday Season," it's a time when we naturally look for ways to give.

Question: How can you practice using your abilities, your time, and your money to give?

I can use my abilities:

@ home by	Helping plan a family activity.
@ school by	Helping a classmate with a science project.
@ church by	Singing in the choir.
in the community by	Helping an elderly neighbor rake leaves.

I can use my time:

@ home by	Doing chores before t.v.
@ school by	Helping with a fund raising project.
@ church by	Helping in the nursery.
in the community by	Participating in a charity or community service project.

I can use my money:

@ home by	Buying a special gift for the whole family.
@ school by	Buying lunch for a friend.
@ church by	Giving 10% of your allowance to the church.
in the community by	Giving to a family who needs help.

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS LESSON

Today's Lesson verse

“You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus” (Luke 1:31).

Discussion Question

What are some of your favorite Christmas memories?

The Story of Christmas

(Text: Luke 2:1-7)

“In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria). And everyone went to his own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

The Christmas Story, It's A Wonderful Life, Miracle On 34th Street. It's easy to miss the true meaning of Christmas. If all you know about Christmas is what you see on TV, or in the stores, you might think that Christmas is all about buying and getting presents, having parties, and Santa Claus. But Christmas is much, much more.

Question: What is Christmas? [Christmas is the celebration of a historical event that took place nearly 2000 years ago].

Question: When did Christmas really begin? [The Christmas story actually begins in the heart of God before the planet earth was created].

In the beginning, God created the earth and said it was good. Then God created the first man, Adam, and the first woman, Eve. They were the jewels of His creation. In the beginning - they were perfect - just as God wanted them to be.

Question: God had a test for Adam & Eve's love. What was God's test? [God's test of people's love for Him was obedience]. But Adam did not choose to be, as God wanted him to be. He decided to disobey God and at that moment became less than perfect. Now Adam was always thinking the way he wanted to. He was not who God originally intended for him to be any longer.

Question: What happened because of Adam's disobedience? [Because of Adam's disobedience, you and I are separated from God].

The Bible says that, **“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man [Adam], and death [separation from God] came through sin, in this way death came to all people, because all people have sinned” (Romans 5:12).** Every person since Adam has inherited his nature to choose to be disobedient to God. Another name for disobedience to God is “sin.” And because our God is Holy – set apart from sin – a sinful person cannot stand in God's presence. Even the earth that God created lost its original beauty and goodness.

Question: What did God do? [He made a promise. The promise is this: “I will not leave you in this condition forever – without a way to be rescued from sin and separation from Me. I will provide a “Way” so the great chasm that separates you from Me will be bridged, and you can

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come to Me. The “Way” that I will provide will show you the love I have for you, and the love that I want you to have for Me and for each other”].

Ever since God made this first promise, there have been those who have believed it. These are people who have put their faith and trust in God’s Word.

About 2000 years ago, when the time was just right, there lived a young girl named Mary in the little village of Nazareth in Galilee. Mary was a virgin, not married, but engaged to a man named Joseph.

Mary believed in the promise God had made. She trusted God. One day as she prayed, an angel, a messenger from God came to her.

Question: What did this messenger tell her? [The angel told her not to be afraid - she would have a baby, created in her through the power of the Spirit of God. She was to give Him the name Jesus, which means Savior - or God saves].

This was God’s plan to provide the “Way” for our return to Him, as He had promised. The angel appeared to Joseph also. Mary and Joseph were filled with joy to be chosen as the parents of this baby Jesus - who would show us how much God loves us.

While Mary was waiting to give birth to this baby, the governor of the land told everyone to go to his or her hometown to be counted in a census. Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem, and just as they arrived, it became time for Mary to have her baby. Bethlehem was so crowded, that all the hotels and inns were full, but Mary and Joseph found shelter, and Mary delivered her baby and laid him in a manger.

Question: What is a manger? [A manger is an animal’s feeding trough].

Question: Who is this baby called Jesus? [This baby was God’s gift to the world - a real live human being, born to a woman, yet He was God’s Son. Jesus was 100% God, 100% person. As God directed, Joseph and Mary named Him Jesus (the popular name for Jesus today would be “Joshua,” meaning: God saves, and God is with us), for He was to be the Savior of the world].

At this time in the fields outside of Bethlehem, there were shepherds caring for their sheep. Suddenly, they saw a great light in the night sky and an angel appeared to them.

Question: What did the angel say to them? [The Scripture says, “**Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all people. Today, in the town of David [Bethlehem] a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign for you: You will find the baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger**” (Luke 2:10-12)].

Suddenly, a great number of angels appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “**Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace to men on whom His favor rests.**” The shepherds were among those who believed God’s promise, so they hurried to the manger and knelt and worshipped the baby Jesus.

Question: On the night that Jesus was born, why do you think that the angels appeared to shepherds instead of kings or government officials or the religious leaders? [You see, because of their dirty, nasty, stinky job, shepherds were outcasts from society. They were people no one wanted to associate with – perhaps much like the homeless of today. Jesus came to be with the poor - those who have the greatest needs. For Jesus, no person is too lowly to come to]. Can you imagine how joyful those shepherds were when the angels of heaven appeared to them first on that night when Christ was born?

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In another part of the world, then called Persia, now called Iran or Iraq, there were wise men, advisors to their king, who were studying the stars. To their great surprise, a bright, new star suddenly appeared. They had also heard the promise God had made. So they began their journey, following this star to see where it would lead. We don't know for sure how many wise men came to see Jesus, but we do know that they brought three gifts.

Question: What were the gifts that the wise men brought? [Gold, frankincense & myrrh].

Question: What do these gifts represent? [Each gift represents a part of Jesus' life and the mission that God sent Him to accomplish]. Gold is the gift for a king, for Jesus is our heavenly King. Frankincense is the incense used in the worship of God, for God revealed Himself in the Person of Jesus Christ. Myrrh is a fragrant spice used in the preparation of a dead body for burial, for the reason Jesus came was to die and through his death, pay the full price required for the forgiveness of our sins committed toward God.

What you have heard so far is the story as it is usually told at Christmas. But it would have little meaning without the part that follows.

Mary and Joseph returned with their child to Nazareth. Jesus was filled with the Spirit of God. He lived a perfect life. He was always obedient to God.

Question: What did Jesus call God? [Jesus called God "daddy"]. Jesus reminds us that what God wants is a real personal relationship with you, much like a loving father wants with his son or daughter. Jesus reminds us that God loves and accepts you just the way you are, and in the same manner, God desires that you to love each other.

Question: What did Jesus come to do? [Jesus came to give a new and different life to any who ask for it]. It is the best quality of life that anyone can imagine. This life that Jesus gives is also eternal - and it begins the moment you put your trust in Him.

At the age of 33, after He had taught and done many things, Jesus was put to death on a cross by men who would not accept Him for who He was. These were men who once again rejected God's love.

Question: For what did Jesus die? [Jesus did not die for any act of disobedience on His part - His life had been one of absolute perfection. Rather, He died as an act of obedience to God - His Daddy]. Jesus died so that He could make a way for any who choose to be rescued from sin and separation from God.

When we sin, we commit an offense against God. Because we're people, only a person could pay the penalty. But because the offense is against an infinite God, only God Himself could pay the penalty. That's why God sent His Son Jesus to us. Jesus, 100% human, lived a sinless - perfect life. Jesus, 100% God, has the capacity to take the sins of all and remove them from us. **"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God" (1 Corinthians 5:21).**

When Jesus died, he took upon himself all the wrongs that you and I have done or ever will do. These wrongs have kept you separated from God. But the moment you decide to ask Him into your life, you are no longer separated from God. Jesus is the "Way" back to God that was promised to you long, long ago.

Three days after He died and was buried, Jesus arose from the dead, and once more walked about earth as a living person. Jesus' resurrection is proof that God accepted Jesus' sacrifice for all people.

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There is so much more to the story. But perhaps now, during this Christmas season, especially as gifts are exchanged, you will remember the greatest gift ever given - one given by God to all of us - Jesus Christ. He is the reason we celebrate Christmas.

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EASTER: THE CRUCIFIXION

Today's Lesson verse

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

Introduction

To understand the reason why Christians celebrate Easter, you have to understand the meaning of Christmas. So let's review our earlier lesson about Christmas.

In the beginning, God created the earth. Then God created a man and a woman. In the beginning - they were perfect - just as God had wanted them to be. But Adam chose to disobey God and at that moment he became less than perfect. At that moment, sin came into the world.

The Bible says that, **“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man [Adam], and death [separation from God] came through sin, in this way death came to all people, because all people have sinned” (Romans 5:12).**

Every person since Adam has sinned, because we inherited sin from Adam. Because of that choice, you and I are separated from God, with no way on our own to get back to Him. We need to be rescued from our sins.

When the time was right, God sent the angel Gabriel to a girl named Mary. Gabriel announced that she would have a baby, created in her through the power of the Spirit of God. She was to call His name Jesus, which means Savior - or God saves. This was God's plan to provide the “Way” for our return to Him.

God always has a plan. And the plan for our salvation rests upon a sacrifice. And this is where Easter picks up from Christmas.

Setting The Stage For The Crucifixion

Question: What does it mean to be saved? [To be rescued].

Question: What do we need to be rescued from? [Sin].

Question: What is sin? [Sin is any disobedient act toward God].

Question: Why do we need to be rescued from sin? [When we sin, we commit an offense against God. Because we're people, only a person could pay the penalty. But because the offense is against an infinite God, only God Himself could pay the penalty. That's why God sent His Son Jesus to us. Jesus, 100% human, lived a sinless - perfect life. Jesus, 100% God, has the capacity to take the sins of all and remove them from us].

“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The Good News is that God says that you can be rescued from your sins if you believe that God raised (brought to life again) Jesus from death, & invite Jesus to come into your life.

Listen to the description of what happened to God's own Son, Jesus, so He could rescue you from sin and open the way back to God. On the night of the Last Supper, after Jesus broke bread and gave it to his disciples, and took the cup, gave thanks, and offered it to them, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

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The Crucifixion

(Text: Matthew 26:36-39 & Luke 22:43-44)

Gethsemane

“³⁶Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” ³⁷He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.” ³⁹Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

“⁴³An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. ⁴⁴And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground” (Luke 22:43-44).

Even before the crucifixion, Jesus was beginning to experience in Gethsemane the horror of what He was going to go through physically and spiritually to rescue us – to fulfill God’s plan of salvation for you and for me. Jesus was so emotionally strained that God had to send an angel to strengthen Him. Jesus prayed three times that He would not have to go through with the experience of the crucifixion - yet He prayed that not His will but His Father’s will be done.

Jesus’ Arrest

That night, one of Jesus’ disciples named Judas, turned against Him and led an angry crowd of men to Jesus. They arrested Jesus and took Him to Caiphas, the high priest and the members of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Supreme Court. There, they spit in His face and struck Him with their fists. (Matthew 26:67).

“The next day, early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people came to the decision to put Jesus to death. They bound Him, led Him away and handed him over to Pilate, the governor” (Matthew 27:1-2).

Pilate then ordered Jesus to be scourged and crucified. The instrument used in the punishment of scourging was called a flagra. It consisted of about 12 leather strips with sharp pieces of metal or bone tied to the ends. Jesus was tied to a pole and then lashed at least 39 times on the back with this.

“²⁷Then the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. ²⁸They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. “Hail, king of the Jews!” they said. ³⁰They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. ³¹After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him” (Matthew 27:27-31).

The Crucifixion

After this the Roman soldiers made Jesus, weakened from loss of blood and beatings, carry his own cross as they led him out to a place called Golgotha to crucify him. When he could go no farther, they seized a man named Simon, from Cyrene, and they forced him to carry Jesus’ cross (John 19:16-17, Mark 15:21).

When they finally reached Golgotha, they stretched Jesus, upon the cross beam and took a long metal spike and drove the spike into the lower part of the wrist. Then they took the other hand and pinned it to the cross. Every time the hammer pounded down, I can imagine Jesus saying, “Father, forgive them, forgive them. They don’t know what they’re doing.”

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Then the soldiers took and stretched out His feet and left His knees just slightly bent, because this is part of the Roman technique of crucifixion. Then they drove the spikes into his feet.

With Jesus pinned to the cross, they raised it straight up and then dropped it into a hole in the ground. The jar probably dislocated Jesus' shoulders. Immediately the horror and agony of crucifixion began.

You see, during the crucifixion, Jesus could breathe in, but it was physically impossible for Him to exhale - He couldn't get the air out of His lungs.

But the Romans knew what they were doing. That's why they left Jesus' knees slightly bent. When Jesus needed to take a breath, He could push Himself up just enough to let His breath out. Then He would fall back down. And He fought there for hours. Historians tell us that people being crucified said the most awful words to those around them. The Bible says,

"³⁸Two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁹Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!" ⁴¹In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. ⁴²"He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.' "⁴⁴In the same way the robbers who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him" (Matthew 27:38-44).

Question: What is a sacrifice? [A sacrifice is when something of value is given up for the benefit of others]. Jesus sacrificed His very life for us so that we could be rescued from sin.

Question: What do you think was the reason why Jesus was beaten, and spit upon and had insults hurled at Him? [This was Satan's (the devil's) final chance to defeat God's plan of salvation for all people including you and me]. Satan orchestrated the beatings, the spitting, the insults, the taunts, the jeering and the mocking. Just one angry thought, one angry word from Jesus, and salvation for you and me would be lost.

Question: If Jesus had sinned by becoming angry with the people who hit Him or spit upon Him or insulted Him, why would God's plan of salvation have been defeated? [You see, the one being sacrificed for all mankind - Jesus - had to be perfect - one without blemish - one without sin].

Time was running out on Satan, so he turned up the heat. The painful scourging, more insults, more taunting, cursing, the excruciating physical agony of the crucifixion, the crowd around him yelling out their insults. Surely Jesus would get angry just once. But instead, **"Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).**

But the horrible thing that Jesus feared wasn't the beatings, the insults, or even the crucifixion. It was what was about to happen. It is what Jesus asked His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane to not have Him go through.

Question: What do you think it was that Jesus feared so much? [The Bible tells us].

"⁴⁵From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land. ⁴⁶About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"--which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:45-46).

Jesus was now separated from His Father – from God. From before the beginning of time, Jesus had been in a perfect relationship with His Father. But remember that sin cannot stand in the

presence of the Holy God. Jesus, God's sacrifice, the perfect lamb of God, received the penalty of the sins of all mankind - the full measure of God's wrath - upon His body. And Jesus cried out in a loud voice **"It is finished!" (John 19:30).**

Question: Why is Jesus called "the Lamb of God?" [During Jesus' life, there was a daily sacrifice at the temple in Jerusalem. The sacrifice, usually a lamb, was slaughtered at 3:00 (the 9th hour) in the afternoon, including the day of the Passover]. At that time, the priest stood at the highest point of the temple and blew a shofar, or ram's horn as a signal that they were about to sacrifice the lamb.

As Jesus hung on the cross, He heard the piercing blast of the horn carry across the city. Jesus recognized that the time of His sacrifice had come. When the priest killed the Passover lamb, Jesus looked up into heaven and said, "It is finished!" At that moment, the Passover lamb and God's substitute - Jesus - our Passover Lamb - died at 3:00 p.m.

The Bible says that when Jesus yielded up His Spirit, the veil in the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom. Historians tell us that the veil of the temple was so finely woven and so thick, that if four horses were tied to the veil at the corners, they couldn't pull it apart. The veil in the Temple separated ordinary man from the inner sanctuary called the Holy of Holies, where God's presence would come into.

Question: Why do you think that the veil in temple was torn in two? [God tore it in two, to let everyone know that man would not have to be separated from Him any longer because of sin].

Jesus said, "It is finished!" And it is finished. There is nothing that you can add to God's salvation. It's God's gift to you. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away your sins and the sins of all people who believe that He is the Son of God and ask Him into their life as Savior.

Question: Have you asked God's Son to rescue you from your sin? Have you invited Jesus into your life as your Savior? If you haven't, and you want to, you can today, right now. If this is what you want to do, please pray this prayer, silently in your heart or in a quiet voice with me now:

Dear Jesus,
I acknowledge to you that I am a sinner. Please forgive me of all my sins. I want to accept you now as my personal Savior. Please come into my life and begin to make me the person you want me to be. Amen.

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SPECIAL PRAYER LESSON * For The National Day Of Prayer

“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

The United States Congress set aside a day called “The National Day of Prayer” in 1952. It is a day set apart where all Americans are asked to pray for our country: its leaders, and its people.

Today, we’re going to pray for people in 5 groups:

- Government
- Churches & Ministry Organizations
- Businesses & Industries
- Families
- Ourselves

Suggestions or examples of individuals in each group are given to help you think of people to pray for. Also, one or two Scripture verses accompany each group to help you think of what to pray about for them.

As you gather individually with your son or daughter, or as a group of families, let’s humble ourselves, turn away from wrong and toward good, and call upon Him, that He will hear from heaven and will forgive our sins and will heal our land.

“Give ear to my words, O Lord...” (Psalm 5:1).

Our Government

“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night” (Psalm 1:1-2).

Pray that our leaders will ask God to help them make good decisions, and stand by them, even they are unpopular

- Federal Leaders: President, US senators & representatives, appointed leaders
- Local Leaders: Governor, state senators & representatives, mayors, elected positions
- Judicial System: US supreme court, state supreme court justices,
- Armed Services: Air Force, Army, Navy, Marines, Reserves

“Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than men!” (Acts 5:29).

Churches & Ministry Organizations

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap [bring in] a harvest if we do not give up” (Galatians 6:9).

Our nation desperately needs to know that there is One God, and that He has set a standard of truth for all. Pray for:

- Your pastor, your church leaders and teachers, your congregation, your denomination; that the Word of God will be spoken boldly and unashamed and that the Church will be a pure and bright light in a dark world.
- Ministry organizations that you support or help your family, i.e.: Salvation Army, Focus on the Family, Christian Camps, Practice Ministries; that lives will be changed, for God’s words to be put into practice everyday.

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Those Imprisoned & Persecuted

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave or forsake you” (Deuteronomy 31:6).

- Many times, those people who are in prison because of wrong deeds need to have their hearts (their thoughts and attitudes) made pure so that they do not commit their crimes again. Only Jesus can change a person’s heart. Pray for their hearts to be changed.
- Some people are “made slaves” to illegal drugs, excessive alcohol use, wrong beliefs about God, and are they are “imprisoned or held hostage” to them. Only Jesus has the key to unlock the chains that hold these people to their captors. Pray for their release.
- Sometimes Christians are made fun of or looked down upon. In other parts of the world, Christians are sometimes put in prison, physically harmed, or have jobs, homes or even family members taken away from them. Pray for their safety and that God will be honored by their words and actions.

Our Society & Cultures

“Blessed are they who keep his laws and seek him with all their heart. They do nothing wrong; they walk in his ways. You have laid down rules to live by that are to be fully obeyed” (Psalm 119:2-4).

Everyday we are influenced by what we see, hear, read or are told; whether it is right or wrong, good or bad, Godly or ungodly. Pray for the influence of the wrong the bad and the ungodly to be stopped, and that what is right and good and Godly will be seen, heard, read and told.

Perhaps pick one or two groups from the following list and apply your prayers to people in these fields:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| • Business & Industry | Communications, financial, law, manufacturing. |
| • Community Services | Charitable organizations, police. |
| • Educational System | Coaches, students, teachers. |
| • Scientific Community | Research & Development. |
| • The Media | Television, radio, newspapers. |
| • The Entertainment Industry | Film, music, print, sports. |

The Family

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts and you shall teach them to your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road , when you lie down and when you get up” (Deuteronomy 6:5-7).

- God designed the family to be where His truths and ways are taught. Pray for parents, and especially fathers to lead their family by the example that God and heroes in the Bible set for us.
- Pray for your family members, your friends, your neighbors, your teammates, for broken families, for those who don’t have families.

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Personal Renewal & Moral Awakening

“Search me O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way that is everlasting [true and right]” (Psalm 139:23-24).

- Pray that God will show you parts of you that don't make Him smile, and allow Him to help fix those areas.
- Pray for all people in our country, that they will look for God, and turn around from thinking & doing wrong, and think & do what is right.

“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us” (1 John 5:14).

* This lesson is adapted from the Dallas Leadership Prayer Breakfast Guide, 1997.

STORY TIME

Today's Lesson verse

"One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" (John 9:25).

Introduction

In 2001, I helped develop a course called "Story Tellers" for a local church in Dallas, TX, to help people develop and learn how to share their story – how they came into a relationship with Jesus Christ. Story Time is an abbreviated form of this course, but the purpose is still the same – to help you testify to the transforming power of Jesus Christ in your life.

One of the most powerful and intimate moments that you and the kids in your Bible study will experience is when a dad or a son or a daughter simply tells their story.

Whenever you decide to do this as a group, it's time to put aside the Bibles, the workbook, and just listen. It's an awesome time to spend together. (See note on how to proceed with your group at the end of this lesson).

Story Time

(Text: John 9:1-25)

¹As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" ³"Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. ⁴As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. ⁷"Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

⁸His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" ⁹Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No, he only looks like him." But he himself insisted, "I am the man."

¹⁰"How then were your eyes opened?" they demanded. ¹¹He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see." ¹²"Where is this man?" they asked him. "I don't know," he said.

¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. ¹⁴Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. ¹⁵Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see."

¹⁶Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others asked, "How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?" So they were divided.

¹⁷Finally they turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened." The man replied, "He is a prophet." ¹⁸The Jews still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. ¹⁹"Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?"

²⁰"We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind. ²¹But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself." ²²His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for

already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ¹ would be put out of the synagogue. ²³That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." ²⁴A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God " they said. "We know this man is a sinner." ²⁵He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"

Telling Your Story

The thought of "telling your story" can be a little uncomfortable. Perhaps you're afraid of failing or that you won't know what to say. That's why I've put this section on "Story Time" together. Everyone has a story to tell, and learning how to tell your story may be just what it takes to bring the good news of Jesus Christ into someone's life.

So...What's Your Story?

"So...tell me your story." If you were asked that question, what would be your answer? "Well...I don't think I have much of a story to tell."..."I suppose I've got a story, but it's not very interesting." It's natural to feel that way, but it's far from the truth. We all have a special, unique and meaningful story to tell unlike that of anyone else. If you've met Jesus, you have a story to tell.

Perhaps you already know it well. Perhaps you still need to develop it. Either way, writing and sharing your story can be a powerful reminder of how God is at work in your life. It can provide a powerful witness to those who hear it – especially to your son or daughter!

That's the purpose of sharing your story - to tell of the transforming power of Christ in your life. When you share your story, you're telling the Gospel through your story, a Gospel made real and tangible in your life.

So, here we go...

If you've never thought much of how to tell someone your story, or had the wonderful experience of putting your story down on paper, here are some ideas and suggestions for putting your story together.

Conversion

If you remember a specific time, place or event when you accepted Jesus Christ into your life, then perhaps "conversion" fits best. If conversion fits best, try shaping your story around these questions:

- What was your life like before you invited Jesus into your life?
- What led (events, conversation, etc.) you to accept Jesus as your Savior?
- How and when did you receive Christ as Savior? As Lord?
- How has Jesus changed your life?

Journey

If your faith seems more like a journey, then perhaps "Spiritual Journey" fits best. Try these questions:

- What have been some key events in which God has worked in your life?
- What experiences, circumstances or people have helped to develop your faith in Christ?
- How would your life be different without Jesus? (i.e.: lifestyle, attitudes, priorities, relationships, etc.).

Sharing The Gospel Through Your Story

“In Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself” (2 Corinthians 5:19).

The Gospel is the story of Jesus. The story of Jesus is part of the larger story of scripture, spanning the Creation, through the Fall, to the Redemption (or rescue) that Jesus brings. That’s a big story, yet there is one theme that runs throughout that story: **Reconciliation!** One powerful way to share the good news of Jesus Christ is by weaving the Gospel into your own story.

Try fitting these questions in your story:

Creation

How do you understand God’s purpose in creation?

“...to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 1:5).

How do you understand your purpose in life?

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength...Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:27-29).

Fall

How have you experienced sin in your life?

“If you love me you will obey my commandments” (John 14:15).

What are (were) the consequences of that sin?

“But your iniquities have separated you from your God” (Isaiah 59:2).

Rescue

How did you come to put your faith in Jesus Christ (the solution)?

“For it is by grace (undeserved mercy) that you have been saved, through faith, and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

How have you been reconciled to God (what were the results)?

“...we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation” (Romans 5:11).

What role has the church or others played for you?

“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it” (1 Corinthians 12:27).

Putting Your Story Together

- What elements of your story might be interesting to someone else?
- What Bible verses might you include under each of the previous questions?
- What experiences in your life can form illustrations to help you tell your story?
- Write your story as if you were telling someone else
- Keep it between 3-5 minutes

Story Time In Your Bible Study

Some of the dads and kids in your group will be willing to share their testimony. Others may feel that they are not ready. That’s OK.

TEN COMMANDMENTS 1

Before you do this lesson, I suggest that you announce a week ahead of time that this is what the lesson will be. I also suggest telling the group that either you will volunteer to lead off, or have one or two dads who you feel would be willing to lead off agree to do so.

You may spend one session on this or several, as there won't be enough time to do more than one or two each week. I do encourage you to make enough time to let all who want to give their testimony to be able to do so.

A work sheet for this special lesson is found in the **Exploring the Bible** section of this Practice Ministries Leader's Guide.

EXPLORING THE BIBLE ANSWERS

STUDY LEADER'S GUIDE TO EXPLORING THE BIBLE

This study leader's guide to **Exploring the Bible** is designed for two reasons:

1. To give the answers to questions asked in the **Exploring the Bible** sheets with specific Scripture references.
2. To give suggested answers to some open ended questions.

The suggested answers given are by no means the answer to many of the questions, but ones that we hope will help you foster ideas and discussion as you lead your group through the **Exploring the Bible** section of the lesson.

Exploring the Bible can be a great way for kids and their dads to learn about the Bible together, and also bring the whole family to a deeper understanding of God's Word.

LESSON # 1: IN GOD WE TRUST

Read **Genesis 12:1-2**

Background

Thousands of years ago, in a land that today is called Iran & Iraq, God appeared to a man named Abram (His name was later changed to Abraham) and said, **“Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you and I will make you into a great nation...”**(Genesis 12:1-2). That day God made a promise to Abram and said that He would be the God of his descendants and they would be His people.

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) What was the promise that God made to Abram?

God would make Abram into a great nation and make his name great (Genesis 12:1-2).

2) What did Abram do in order to get what God promised to him?

So Abram left as the Lord told him...(Genesis 12:4).

Abram had to trust in God to receive God’s promise. Just like God made a promise to Abraham, God has made a promise to you too. What’s cool is that this promise also happens to be a gift. But just like Abraham had to trust God in order to receive his promise, you also need to trust God in order to receive His promise to you.

3) What is God’s promise & gift to you?

The gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6:23).

4) How do you get this gift?

“If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9).

Have you received this gift? If you haven’t, this would be a good time to talk to your Mom or Dad about it.

Good Words To Remember

“If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9).

TEN COMMANDMENTS 1

LESSON # 2: MOSES AND THE MIRACLES

Read **Exodus 3:6 & Matthew 22:32**

Background

The Lord said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you." By faith, Abraham obeyed and went even though he did not know where he was going. By faith, Moses believed that God would lead the people of Israel out of Egypt and into the land that God had promised to give to them.

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) What is faith?

Being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see (Hebrews 11:1)

2) Write the two words that describe faith:

Faith is sure and certain.

3) How do you get faith?

From hearing the message and the message is the word of Christ (Romans 10:17).

God promises you eternal life if you put your faith and trust in His son Jesus Christ.

4) Where do we find God's Word?

The Bible.

5) Fill in the blanks and circle them:

*"...have you not read what God said to you, **I am** the God Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob. He is not the God of the **dead** but of the **living**" (Matthew 22:31-32).*

You can be sure of God's promise of eternal life through his son Jesus Christ.

6) How can you practice having faith in God this week?

- *Reading the Bible and believing what it says*
- *Praying*

Good Words To Remember

"The Lord is faithful to all His promises" (Psalm 145:13)

LESSON # 3: THE BIG TRIP

Read **Deuteronomy 6:5 & Matthew 22:37-39**

Background

Moses who was sent to be Israel's deliverer and ruler by God Himself, led all the families of Israel out of Egypt by doing wonders and miraculous signs in Egypt and at the Red Sea. Two million people left Egypt on that day of the Exodus (meaning "exit" or "departure") and Moses took them on a journey through the wilderness.

Three months after leaving Egypt, Moses and the Israelites came from the wilderness to the desert and camped in front of a big mountain called Mt. Sinai. God called to Moses from the mountain and said, "I want to give you some instructions that you must take to the people," and God gave Moses the Ten Commandments:

God gave Moses the Ten Commandments to teach Israel how to love God and each other. We love God by showing that He is first in our lives and we show that by doing what He says.

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) What is a command?

An order or a says so. It is not a suggestion.

2) What are two things that Jesus says God wants you to do? (Matthew 22:37-39).

Love God with all of your heart, soul and mind.

Love others as yourself.

3) Where does God want us to put these commands?

In our hearts (Deuteronomy 6:6).

4) How can you practice loving God this week?

Pick one of His commands and sit down with your mom or dad and talk about how to practice it during the week. Ask God to help you do a good job of practicing.

5) How can you practice loving others this week?

Pick one person who you can be extra helpful to, kind to, or share with.

Good Words To Remember

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (Deuteronomy 6:5).

LESSON # 4: TO PRAY OR NOT TO PRAY

“God Wants To Be #1 In Your Life”

Read Daniel 6:1-23

Background

Daniel was a Jewish person who lived in a country called Persia. He had exceptional skills and was the king's best and favorite worker. But some of the king's other workers got jealous of Daniel and made some evil plans against him.

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) The other administrators did not like Daniel. Why?

He did a better job than them because of his good work habits and skills (Daniel 6:3).

2) Daniel had exceptional qualities that helped him do a good job. What one thing in particular did he do to help him do a good job?

He prayed and asked God to help him with his work (Daniel 6:11).

3) Daniel made a commitment to pray to God (Daniel 6:10). What does commitment mean?

Sticking with what you are doing.

4) What was the penalty for breaking the king's law?

Being thrown into a den of lions! (Daniel 6:7).

5) What did Daniel do after hearing about the penalty?

He prayed (in plain view) just as he committed to doing (Daniel 6:10).

Daniel was trustworthy (reliable) and neither corrupt (dishonest) or negligent (careless). He also made a commitment to God that he would have no other gods before him. Nothing - or no one - was more important than the God he prayed to and who helped him. Daniel committed to make God the most important person in his life and to worship Him alone - even if it meant being thrown into a den of lions!

6) Name one way this week you can practice being:

- Reliable *Do your chores on time, be ready to go on time*
- Honest *Being truthful*
- Careful *Follow instructions or safety procedures*

7) Who is someone who you can commit to pray for this week?

Family, a friend, a missionary, your pastor, someone you hear about who needs help

Good Words To Remember

“They could find no corruption in him because he was trustworthy” (Daniel 6:4 b)

LESSON # 5: JESUS IN GETHSEMANE

“Honor And Respect Our Parents”

Read **Luke 22:41-44**

Background

Jesus knew that he was about to be arrested, beaten up and killed on the cross. Jesus did not want to go through this. The night before this happened; Jesus and his disciples were at a place called Gethsemane, on a mountain called the Mount of Olives.

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) What did Jesus say to his Father?

“yet not my will but yours be done” (Luke 22:42).

2) What are 3 reasons to honor & obey your mom or dad?

- *You’ll be OK (Deuteronomy 5:16).*
- *It’s right (Ephesians 6:1).*
- *It pleases God (Colossians 3:20).*

3) What is one responsibility your dad (or mom) has toward you?

To teach and help you learn God’s Word (Ephesians 6:4).

4) What are 3 ways you can practice honoring your parent(s) this week?

- *Listening.*
- *Obedying what they tell you (the first time).*
- *Doing the best you can with school, activities, etc.*

5) Dad (or Mom), what is one way you can practice teaching your kids God’s Word this week?

Reading the Bible together, practice what you want them to learn.

Good Words To Remember

“Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord” (Colossians 3:20).

LESSON # 6: A GOOD NEIGHBOR

“Honor God’s Name By The Way You Act Or Talk”

Read **Luke 10:25-37**

Background

Jewish people “despised” Samaritans (Samaritans were people who lived in Samaria, a country near Israel) because they were a different people with different beliefs and the people of Israel did not associate with them.

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) How many people passed by the hurt man?

Two (Luke 10:31-32).

2) What kind of men were they?

A priest and a Levite – God’s representatives (Luke 10:31-32).

3) What is an ambassador?

Someone who represents an important person.

4) Were these men doing a good job as God’s ambassadors? Why?

No. They did not stop to help the hurt man.

5) Was the Samaritan God’s ambassador? Why?

Yes. He had pity on the hurt man and showed him kindness (Verse 33).

6) How can you be God’s ambassador today?

Be friends with a new person in school.

Pick the worst player first.

Good Words To Remember

“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors...”(2 Corinthians 5:20).

LESSON # 7: TIME OUT! (PART 1)

“Take A Day Of Rest As A Gift From God And Use It Responsibly”

Read **Genesis 1:1 - 2:3**

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) Match the things that God created with the day that He made them:

- a. Sun & moon & stars (Genesis 1:14-18)
- b. Creatures according to their kinds (Genesis 1:24)
- c. The sky (Genesis 1:8)
- d. Nothing (Genesis 2:2)
- e. Land & sea, trees & plants (Genesis 1:9-12)
- f. Light (Day) (Genesis 1:3)
- g. Creatures in the sea & birds in the air (Genesis 1:20)

<u>f</u> Light	1st day
<u>c</u> The sky	2nd day
<u>e</u> The land, sea, trees and plants	3rd day
<u>a</u> The sun, moon, and stars	4th day
<u>g</u> Creatures in the sea	5th day
<u>b</u> Creatures according to their kinds	6th day
<u>d</u> Nothing	7th day

2) What kind of work did God give to Adam?

To take care of the garden (Genesis 2:15).

3) What kind of attitude should you practice when you have work to do?

- *Work to please God (Colossians 3:23).*
- *Have a cheerful attitude in doing everything (Philippians 2:14).*

4) Do you have chores or jobs that you do? List one or two of them:

- *Make your bed.*
- *Empty the trash.*

5) How can you practice having a good attitude when you're asked to do them?

*Make a game out of it - see how fast you can do it.
Remember how much others do for you.*

Good Words To Remember

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men (Colossians 3:23).”

LESSON # 8: TIME OUT! (PART 2)

“Take A Day Of Rest As A Gift From God And Use It Responsibly”

Read Exodus 16:1-5 & Exodus 16:29-30

Background

All the people of Israel had just seen the great power of the Lord as he led them through the Red Sea on dry land with a wall of water on their right and on their left. Moses then led Israel from the Red Sea into the desert where after 3 days they came to a place called Elim where there was food & water.

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) On the 7th day of creation, what did God do?

Rest (Genesis 2:2-3).

2) On the 7th day, the Sabbath, what were the people of Israel supposed to do?

Rest (Exodus 16:30).

3) What about farmers during planting & harvesting season, what were they to do on the Sabbath?

Rest (Exodus 34:21).

4) Why does God command us to rest?

For our own good (Deuteronomy 10:13).

God created everything in six days and on the seventh day He rested. He was refreshed and took time to reflect on what he had done. There are 3 good reasons why God commands us to rest for our own good:

1. Because He cares about us. We'll wear down if we don't rest.
2. It shows that we trust God. God will provide for our needs.
3. It shows that we love God and keep his commands.

5) What are some ways you & your family can practice keeping a day of rest?

- *Keep your schedule clear for that day.*
- *Plan to make that day a family game day or read a book day.*
- *Do your chores on the other 6 days.*

Good Words To Remember

“Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy...” (Deuteronomy 5:12).

LESSON # 9: MORE! MORE! MORE!

“Be Content With What You Have”

Read **Luke 18:18-30**

Background

Coveting means to desire the wrong way. One way we sometimes covet is to desire things excessively, which can make us greedy.

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) What did the ruler in the story have?

Wealth or riches (Luke 18:23).

2) What did Jesus ask him to do? Why?

Sell everything he had and give it to the poor. It would show he loved God more than money (Luke 18:22).

3) How did the young man react to what Jesus asked him to do? Why?

He became very sad. He loved his money more than God (Luke 18:23)

4) Write down two things that you really like to have or collect:

Baseball cards, autographs, stuffed animals...

5) If you were asked to share or give some away, would you? _____ Yes _____ No.

If you answered “yes”, then you have a good attitude about your possessions. The young man in the parable could not share his wealth. His possessions were more important than anything else to him. He was greedy. Jesus says that is wrong.

6) Jesus says to watch out and be on guard against being greedy. The amount of stuff that you have is not the most important thing in your life. What is one way that you can avoid being greedy?

Share with God’s people who are in need (Romans 12:13).

7) We can share with our time, things we are good at doing, and our money. How can you practice sharing with someone this week?

- *Help a classmate with their homework.*
- *Send some of your allowance to a missionary.*

Good Words To Remember

“...store up for yourselves treasure in heaven” (Matthew 6:20).

TEN COMMANDMENTS 1

LESSON # 10: SEEK YE FIRST

“Be Content With What You Have”

Read Genesis Chapter 2 & Genesis 3:1-7

Background

Coveting means to desire the wrong way. One of the ways we sometimes covet is by wanting things that God has placed off-limits to us.

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) What did God tell Adam & Eve that they could do?

Eat from any tree of the garden (Genesis 2:16).

2) What did God tell Adam & Eve that they could not do?

Eat from the tree of good and evil (Genesis 2:17).

3) Which did Adam & Eve choose: ___ Obedience _X_ Disobedience? (Genesis 3:6)

God puts certain things off-limits to us for our own good. We are free to make decisions but with our decisions come consequences (things that happen because of our decisions).

4) What happened because of Adam & Eve’s decision to not obey God?

Sin (disobedience to God) and death (separation from God) began (Romans 5:12).

5) What are some things that are off-limits to you at your home?

Cookies before dinner, dad’s change jar...

The Bible says that you and I are just like Adam & Eve, and that we want things that we are told are off-limits. You have a choice to make, whether or not you choose to act on your desire.

6) Below are 4 ways that can help us from not wanting things that are off-limits. Match the answer with the Bible verse that goes best with the answer:

- 1) Think about the right thing to do before you act
- 2) Read the Bible and think about what it says
- 3) Be content with what you have
- 4) Remember that God will give you all that you need

 2 Psalm 1:2

 3 Proverb 30:8-9

 1 Matthew 6:33

 4 Philippians 4:19

Good Words To Remember

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness...” (Matthew 6:33)

LESSON # 11: THE GRASS IS ALWAYS GREENER

“Be Content With What You Have”

Read 2 Samuel Chapter 11

Background

Coveting means to desire the wrong way. One of the ways we sometimes covet is by wanting what belongs to other people. This happened to a man named David, the same David from the story of David & Goliath. David was now the King of Israel, and he wanted a woman named Bathsheba, to be his wife.

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) David saw Bathsheba and wanted to know who she was. What did he find out?

She was the wife of a man named Uriah (2 Samuel 11:3).

2) David wanted Bathsheba to be his wife, so what did he tell Joab (the army’s commander) to do to Uriah?

Put Uriah where there was lots of fighting and leave him there (2 Samuel 11:15).

3) What was God’s reaction to what David had done?

God was displeased with David (2 Samuel 11:27).

David wanted what didn’t belong to him and it led to lying and stealing and even murder. That’s why God placed “Do not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor” at the end of the Ten Commandments. Because not being content with what you have can lead to breaking all of the other nine commandments.

4) What is one way you can avoid wanting to take what belongs to other people?

Learn to be content with what you have or where you are (Philippians 4:11).

5) The Bible says that God will meet all of your needs (not all of your wants). How can you practice thanking God for the blessings you have now?

Write down things that you’re thankful for and thank God for each of them.

Good Words To Remember

“And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19).

LESSON # 12: HANDLE WITH CARE

“Respect The Property Of Others”

Read **Romans 12:9-21 & 13:8-10**

Background

People steal for many different reasons, none of which are right:

- Peoples' hearts are not clean.
- Some people are not content with what they have & they want more - sometimes without wanting to wait for it or work for it.
- Some people have strayed from God's commands.
- Some people don't care about others feelings.
- Some people don't trust that God will provide for them.

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) What are ways that you can avoid stealing from others?

Keep your mind pure. Live according to God's words (Psalm 119:9-11).

Recognize stealing as evil and hate it (Romans 12:9).

Be nice (Romans 12:18).

Consider other people's feelings before you act (Philippians 2:4).

Be content with what you have (Philippians 4:11).

Remember that God will meet your needs (Philippians 4:19).

2) How can you practice being responsible with other people's property?

Keep them in a safe place; treat it as very precious.

3) How can you practice being responsible with other people's time?

Be on time, commit to showing up

4) How can you practice being respectful toward your:

- *Family* *If you use something that isn't yours, bring it back*
- *Teacher* *Listen when he or she is talking*
- *Sunday School Teacher* *See above*
- *Friends* *Offer to do what they want to do first*

Good Words To Remember

“Love does no harm to its neighbor” (Romans 13:10).

LESSON # 13: WELL DONE!

“Respect The Property Of Others”

Read **Matthew 25:14-30**

Background

Many times Jesus uses stories to illustrate what He is teaching. The Parable (or story) of the Talents teaches us that God expects us to use the abilities He has given us so that we do a good job with whatever He asks us to do.

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) In the Parable, the master called his servants together. What did he do then?

He gave them his property to take care of (Matthew 25:14).

2) In the Parable, why is the master happy with two of his servants?

They used their abilities and increased his property (Matthew 25:21).

3) How does the master describe the third servant who does not use his abilities?

Wicked and lazy (Matthew 25:26).

4) The Bible says that you have certain abilities according to what God has given to you. What are some things that you can do well?

Reading, singing, listening, athletics, encouraging.

5) Take two or three abilities that you have and write down how you can practice using them responsibly:

- *At Home* *Help a younger brother or sister learn to read.*
- *At School* *Follow instructions.*
- *In Activities* *Encourage teammates.*
- *At Church* *Sing in the choir.*

God wants you to be responsible and use the abilities that He has given to you. He wants you to do the best job that you can with whatever you are given to do. If you are faithful with a few things, then you can be faithful with many things, and God will be able to say to you, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

Good Words To Remember

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men” (Colossians 3:23).

LESSON # 14: REMEMBER THE LORD YOUR GOD

“Respect The Property Of Others”

Read Deuteronomy Chapter 8

Background

The people of Israel are just about to enter the land promised to them by God after wandering in the desert for 40 years. Moses now warns the people not to forget how God fed, clothed and protected them for those 40 years.

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) Why did God test Israel in the desert?

God tested them to see if they would keep His commands (verse 2).

2) What was waiting for Israel in the Promised Land?

Water, springs, food, resources. Everything they needed (verses 7-9).

3) What did Moses tell the people of Israel to do in return for God’s goodness?

Praise God for the good things He had given to them (verse 10).

4) What was Moses concerned about when Israel got to the Promised Land?

The people would forget about God and fail to follow His commands (verse 11).

5) What is one way that you can keep from stealing honor that belongs to God?

Remember God is the one who has given you all the abilities you have to accomplish and achieve (verse 18).

6) How can you practice giving praise to God in your:

- *Family* *Thank God for your mom and dad who take care of you.*
- *Church* *Thank God for your Sunday school teachers who teach you.*
- *Classroom* *Thank God for your teachers who help you learn.*
- *Friendships* *Thank God for friends who play with you.*
- *Activities* *Thank God for your abilities to run or play instruments.*

Good Words To Remember

“Remember the Lord your God...” (Deuteronomy 8:18).

LESSON # 15 IT'S MORE BLESSED TO GIVE

“Respect The Property Of Others”

Read Mark 12:41-44

1) In the Parable, why was the widow’s offering pleasing to God?

She put into the treasury all she had to live on. It was a much bigger gift than those who gave out of their wealth.

Special Fun Activity

Three ways to give are with our: Time, Abilities, & Money. In the chart below, list any giving that you currently do, & then challenge yourself to use your time, abilities or money to give in a new area. For example: I can use my ability in math to help a classmate at school, or I can give some of my money to my Sunday School class mission project.

I can give with my abilities:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| • @ home by | <i>Helping with clean up after dinner.</i> |
| • @ school by | <i>Helping classmates with math.</i> |
| • @ church by | <i>Singing in the choir.</i> |
| • in the community by | <i>Helping an elderly neighbor with their garden</i> |

I can give with my time:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| • @ home by | <i>Doing my chores before t.v.</i> |
| • @ school by | <i>Helping our custodian keep the hallways clean.</i> |
| • @ church by | <i>Helping to make Christmas gifts for charities.</i> |
| • in the community by | <i>Keeping my neighborhood clean.</i> |

I can give with my money:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| • @ home by | <i>Helping to buy mom or dad a special present.</i> |
| • @ school by | <i>Giving to a special charity project.</i> |
| • @ church by | <i>Giving one dime out of my dollar allowance.</i> |
| • in the community by | <i>Contributing to a family who needs help.</i> |

Good Words To Remember

“It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:25).

LESSON # 16: MY GOD'S BIGGER THAN YOUR god

“God Wants To Be #1 In Your Life”

Read **1 Kings Chapter 18**

Background: Ahab was the king of Israel, and he was a very wicked king. Ahab did more to make God angry than any other king before him. Ahab married a girl named Jezebel, the daughter of a king in a neighboring country, and at her urging he began to worship her country's god: Baal. Not only that, Ahab told all the people of Israel to worship Baal. God was very angry with Ahab, and sent the prophet Elijah to talk with king Ahab.

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) Why was God so angry with king Ahab?

Ahab abandoned the Lord's commands and worshipped another god (1 Kings 18:18).

2) What did Elijah tell the people of Israel?

Make up your minds of whom that you will follow, God or Baal (1 Kings 18:21).

3) What did Elijah suggest to prove who was the true God?

Hold a contest between God and Baal to see who would answer by fire (1 Kings 18:22-24).

4) Who won the contest? How?

God burned up the sacrifice, the altar and all the water in the trench (1 Kings 18:38).

The first commandment is: **“You shall have no other gods before me.”** Elijah challenged king Ahab and the prophets of Baal to a contest, and the Lord God of Israel proved that only He is God, and that Baal was not a god at all. When the people saw what God did that day, they realized that they had forgotten about Him and they remembered that only the Lord is God.

Sometimes it's easy to forget about God. We get busy with school, homework, friends, and activities, and we forget that we need to spend time with God too. School and friends and activities are all important. But God never wants them to become so important to us that we forget to spend time with Him.

6) How can you practice spending time with God every day?

- *Prayer*
- *Reading the Bible*

Good Words To Remember

“Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only” (Matthew 4:10).

LESSON # 17: STATUE OF LIMITATIONS

“Worship God Only In The Ways He Has Told Us To”

Read Joshua Chapter 23:6-8 & Chapter 24:1-27

Background

The people of Israel had been slaves to the Egyptians for 400 years, when God told Moses to lead the people out of Egypt. After they left Egypt, the people were disobedient to God, and because of their disobedience, God did not allow them to enter the land that He promised to give to them until 40 years later. When it was time, Joshua led the people into the land of Canaan, the “Promised Land,” and God helped the people of Israel drive out the nations that were living in this land that He was now giving to Israel. As the nation of Israel settled into their new land, Joshua warned the people not to worship the gods of the nations around them, and to worship God only.

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) Joshua told the people of Israel to make a choice, to serve God or not. What choice did Joshua & his family make?

As for my family, we will worship the Lord (Joshua 24:14-15).

2) The Bible says that one thing that can take your attention away from God is greed. What other kinds of things (idols) can take your attention away from God?

Watching or listening to things that God doesn't approve of, arguing, drugs, culture.

3) Let's say that you got \$1 for your allowance. How can you honor God with that \$1? How can greed cause you not to honor God with that \$1?

- Give at least one dime to your church, or give to a family in need.
- Use all of that money for yourself and not to help others.

4) What can happen when people make things more important than God or even forget about God? (See if you can find an example in the newspaper).

People will only think of their own needs or wants and become very selfish. Some people will do wrong things. Some leaders of countries will do wrong things to other countries.

What if God was not important to your parents and they forgot about Him? Do you think God would be important to you? What about when you have children - do you think God will be important to them? You see if parents do not teach their children about God, it can affect many generations of that family. That's why God says, **“Do not make other things more important than me” (Exodus 20:5-6).**

5) How can you practice making God the most important person in your life?

- Remember and thank Him for all of the blessings you have.
- Talk about Him and learn about Him.

Good Words To Remember

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

LESSON # 18: IT'S COOL IN THE FURNACE

“Worship God Only In The Ways He Has Told Us To”

Read Daniel Chapter 3

Background

In about 600 BC, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and attacked it. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were three of many Jewish young men from the royal family and nobility that were captured and carried off to Babylon where they were trained to serve Nebuchadnezzar throughout his kingdom. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego served Nebuchadnezzar well, and were appointed as administrators over the province of Babylon.

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) What was the order that Nebuchadnezzar gave concerning the image he set up?

Everyone must worship the image (Daniel 3:6).

2) What was Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego’s response to the king’s order?

We will not worship the image even if you throw us into the furnace (Daniel 3:16-18).

3) What did Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego’s response show to Nebuchadnezzar?

They would rather lose their own life than not be loyal to God (Daniel 3:28).

Shadrach Meshach and Abednego showed their loyalty to God by not serving or worshipping the golden image that king Nebuchadnezzar had set up. They knew that worship is reserved for God alone.

A loyal friend is someone who is your friend every day - even if you’re not having a very good day. God is a loyal friend.

4) How is God a loyal friend to you and to all people?

Jesus died for you and for me even though we don’t deserve it (Romans 5:8).

5) How can you be loyal to God every day:

- *By Yourself* *Keep your thoughts pure.*
- *With Your Friends* *Honor God with your words and actions.*
- *In Your Church* *Pray for people in your church.*
- *In Your Activities* *Do your best.*

Good Words To Remember

“While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

LESSON # 19: GOOD AS GOLD

“Honor And Respect Our Parents”

Read Proverbs 3:13-15, Deuteronomy 6:5-7

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) Kids, list 3 of your most valuable possessions. How can you be wise with them?

- _____
- _____
- _____

2) Dads (Mom), list 3 of your most valuable possessions. How can you be wise with them?

- _____
- _____
- _____

3) Read Deuteronomy 6:5-7. Give an example of 4 ways that your dad or mom can teach you when you're together.

- *Pointing out what's right and wrong during a movie.*
- *Practicing a sport in the park.*
- *Praying together at bedtime.*
- *Doing a family devotional at breakfast.*

4) What is one reason to respect your dad and your mom?

Because they can help you learn and understand many things (Proverbs 1:8).

5) How can you practice honoring your dad or your mom today:

- _____
- _____

Good Words To Remember

“Listen, my son to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching” (Proverbs 1:8).

LESSON # 20: WELCOME HOME! (PART 1)

“Honor And Respect Our Parents”

Read **Luke 15:11-33**

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) What are examples of how the younger son behaved irresponsibly?

- *Asking for his inheritance at once (Vs 12).*
- *He wasted all of his money (Vs 13).*

2) What are examples of how the younger son behaved responsibly?

- *He realized his foolishness. (Vs 17).*
- *He went home. (Vs 20).*

3) Kids, what responsibilities do you have at home?

- _____
- _____
- _____

4) How can you be responsible with each one this week?

- _____
- _____
- _____

5) Dads (Mom), what are some responsibilities that you have at home?

- _____
- _____
- _____

6) How can you be responsible with each one this week?

- _____
- _____
- _____

Good Words To Remember

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart...” (Colossians 3:23).

LESSON # 21: WELCOME HOME! (PART 2)

“Honor And Respect Our Parents”

Read **Luke 15:11-33**

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) What responsibilities do you think that the father wanted his son to learn?

- *Be responsible with his money and property.*
- *Be content with what he had.*

2) What responsibilities do you think your parents want you to learn?

- *Be dependable with duties & privileges.*
- *Manners, politeness.*
- *Solve problems.*

3) Why is it important for your parents to be dependable with their responsibilities?

So that you are fed, clothed, housed, safe.

4) Why is it important for you to be dependable with your responsibilities?

To learn to do little things well in order to be ready for bigger ones later.

5) Dads, how can you be dependable with your responsibilities at:

- Home _____
- Work _____
- Church _____

6) Kids, how can you be dependable with your responsibilities at:

- Home _____
- School _____
- Church _____

Good Words To Remember

**“Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus...”
(Colossians 3:17).**

LESSON # 22: STICKS AND STONES

“Respect The Lives Of Others”

Read **Matthew 5:21-22**

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) What did Jesus say is worse than murder?

Being angry (Matthew 5:21-22).

2) Why do you think that Jesus would say it is bad to be angry with someone?

- *It stirs up trouble and leads to doing wrong (Proverbs 29:22).*
- *Being angry is not the attitude that God wants you to have (James 1:19).*

3) What’s one of the quickest ways to cause someone to become angry?

Say something to upset them (Proverbs 15:1).

4) What does the Bible say that our words should do?

Encourage and help others (Ephesians 4:29).

5) What does encouragement mean?

To give someone hope or courage or confidence.

6) Who is one person you know that needs to be encouraged this week?

7) What is one thing that you can do to encourage this person during the week?

Memory Verse

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs...” (Ephesians 4:29).

LESSON # 23: IT'S GOOD TO HEAR FROM YOU

“You shall not murder”

Read Acts 3:1-10

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) What do you think that the crippled man wanted from Peter and John?

Money - silver or gold coins, maybe food (Acts 3:2-5).

2) How did the man respond when he was healed?

Walked and jumped and praised God (Acts 3:8-9).

3) To encourage means to give hope, courage or confidence. What are three ways that you can encourage someone?

- *Words (Proverbs 12:25).*
- *Prayers (Acts 16:25).*
- *Actions (James 1:17).*

4) Who can you say a kind word to this week to encourage him or her?

5) Who can you pray for this week to encourage him or her?

6) What can you do for someone to encourage him or her this week?

Good Words To Remember

“But encourage one another daily...” (Hebrews 3:13).

LESSON # 24: WHAT'S IN A NAME

“Don’t misuse the name of the Lord your God”

Read 2 Corinthians 5:20

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) What does God tell you about Himself with His Name?

He is compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, loving, faithful, forgiving, just (Exodus 34:6-7).

2) What does the name Jesus mean?

- *God is with us (Matthew 1:23).*
- *God saves (Matthew 1:21).*

3) What can your name tell people about you?

Where you live, who your family is, your personality, what you like, what you don’t like, what you’re good at, music you like to listen to...

4) What does being an ambassador mean?

Representing another person.

5) Who does the Bible say that Christians are ambassadors for?

Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:20).

6) How can you practice being Jesus’ ambassador today:

At School	<i>Treating all people kindly.</i>
At Church	<i>Going to worship services & or Sunday school.</i>
At Home	<i>Honoring your dad and mom.</i>
At Activities	<i>Honoring God with how you act and speak.</i>

Good Words To Remember

“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors...” (2 Corinthians 5:20).

LESSON # 25: HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY

“Live truthfully”

Read **Zechariah 8:16**

Opportunities To Explore The Bible

1) What is important to God in the way that we live and treat each other?

Speak truthfully, judge honestly, do good (Zechariah 8:16).

2) Why is it important to God that you live truthfully?

- *Truth is at the center of God's character (John 14:6).*
- *There is no room in God for anything other than truth (1 John 1:5).*
- *God wants you to reflect his character (Psalm 51:6).*

3) Why does the Bible say not to lie?

Love does what is right and that love does not hurt anyone. Intentionally making statements that are not true hurt people (Romans 13:10).

4) Lying hurts a person's reputation. What characteristics helped Daniel live truthfully?

Honesty, trustworthy, careful in his work (Daniel 6:3-5).

5) Lying places a heavy burden upon people. How did God's power change Zacchaeus?

God's power enabled Zacchaeus to live honestly (Luke 19:1-9).

6) Why do insulting and teasing words and lies hurt so much?

Once those words are put in your mind, they are remembered for a long time.

7) Instead of hurting people what should our words do?

Our words should encourage people (Ephesians 4:29).

When we live truthfully, we reflect God's character. When we lie, we only hurt others and hurt ourselves. This is why God says to you, “Live truthfully.” It's the best policy.

Good Words To Remember

“...Love does no harm to its neighbor” (Romans 13:10).

TEN COMMANDMENTS 1

LESSON # 26: TEN WAYS TO BE TOTALLY COOL

Read **Exodus 20:3-17**

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) What are two competing standards of what is right, good and acceptable?

- *The World (2 Corinthians 10:2).*
- *God's Word (Psalm 119:160).*

2) How are they different?

The World does not accept God's Word as the standard for right and wrong.

3) Match these ten ways to be totally cool with their meaning:

<u> e </u>	You shall have no other gods before me.
<u> f </u>	You shall not make for yourselves idols
<u> j </u>	You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God
<u> d </u>	Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy
<u> b </u>	Honor your father and mother
<u> a </u>	You shall not murder
<u> i </u>	You shall not commit adultery
<u> h </u>	You shall not steal
<u> g </u>	Do not lie
<u> c </u>	You shall not covet anything that belongs to anyone

- Encourage and help others
- Honor others so you will be honored
- Be thankful
- Rest and think about what God has done for you
- Get to know God by spending time with Him
- Choose to please God rather than others
- Live truthfully
- Do what is good for others
- Remain pure in your body, thought, word, and action
- Be Jesus' personal representative in everything you do

4) Do the Ten Commandments themselves help you to live God's ways?

No, they are only guidelines, with no power of themselves

5) How then can you live the way the Ten Commandments tell you?

Allow Jesus Christ power to help you (Colossians 3:16).

Good Words To Remember

"Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly..." (Colossians 3:16).

THANKSGIVING

A TIME FOR THANKS & FOR GIVING

Read **Psalm 105:1-2**

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) Where does everything you have come from?

The Earth is the Lord's and everything in it (Psalm 24:1).

2) What has God given to us?

- *Eternal life as a gift (John 3:16)*
- *An abundant life (John 10:10)*
- *More than we can imagine in the life to come (1 Corinthians 2:9).*

3) How can you be thankful even in difficult circumstances?

God can always bring good out of bad (Genesis 50:20).

We have lots to be thankful for. But the second part of ThanksGIVING is the giving. The Bible says, **“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion [because you have to], for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:6-7).**

Since Thanksgiving opens up the “Holiday Season,” it’s a time when we naturally look for ways to give (Question 4 is an extension of Exploring The Bible Lesson 15).

4) How can you practice using your abilities, your time, and your money to give?

A brand new way I can use my abilities to help others

- In my community is: *read at a children’s hospital*
- Outside my community is: *go on a family short term mission trip*

A brand new way I can use my time

- In the community is: *organize a neighborhood clean-up*
- Outside my community is: *be a pen-pal*

A brand new way I can use my money

- In the community is: *contributing part of my allowance to a charity*
- Outside the community is: *help sponsor a missionary*

Good Words To Remember

“Make known among the nations what [the Lord] has done” (Psalm 105:2).

CHRISTMAS

Read **Luke 2:1-7**

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) When did Christmas begin?

In the beginning (Genesis 1:26).

2) God had a test for Adam & Eve. What was God's test?

Obedience (Genesis 2:15-17).

3) What happened because of Adam's disobedience?

Sin entered the world and all people are separated from God (Romans 5:12).

4) What has God done about this?

He provided a "Way" to rescue us from sin and separation from God (John 3:16).

Jesus called God "daddy." Jesus reminds us that what God wants is a real personal relationship with you, much like a loving father wants with his son or daughter.

When we sin, we commit an offense against God. Because we're human, only a person could pay the penalty. But the offense is infinite because the offense is against an infinite God, and only God Himself could pay the penalty. That's why God sent His Son Jesus to do just that. Jesus, 100% human, lived a sinless, perfect life. Jesus, 100% God, has the capacity to take the sins of all and remove them from us.

When Jesus died, he took upon himself all the wrongs that you and I have done or ever will do. These wrongs have kept you separated from God. But the moment you decide to ask Him into your life, you are no longer separated from God. Jesus is the "Way" back to God that was promised to you long, long ago.

There is so much more to the story. But perhaps now, during this Christmas season, especially as gifts are exchanged, you will remember the greatest gift ever given - one given by God to all of us - Jesus Christ. He is the reason we celebrate Christmas.

Merry Christmas from Practice Ministries!!

Good Words To Remember

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God" (1 Corinthians 5:21).

EASTER

Read **John 3:16**

Background

On the night of the Last Supper, after Jesus broke bread and gave it to his disciples, and took the cup, gave thanks, and offered it to them, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Opportunities to Explore the Bible

1) What did Jesus ask God to do three times in the Garden of Gethsemane?

To not go through the crucifixion and separation from God. (Matthew 26:39).

2) After Jesus was arrested, what did the Roman soldiers do to Jesus in the palace?

- *Stripped him.*
- *Put a crown of thorns on his head.*
- *Mocked him.*
- *Spit on him.*
- *Hit him (Matthew 27:27-31).*

3) As Jesus was being crucified, what types of things did people say to him?

- *Insults and curses.*
- *Save yourself if you're the Son of God.*
- *Come down from the cross and we'll believe in you.*
- *Let God rescue you if He wants you (Matthew 27:38-44.)*

4) What was Jesus' response?

Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing (Luke 23:34).

Traditionally, the daily sacrifice at the temple in Jerusalem happened at 3:00 in the afternoon, including the day of the Passover. At that time, the priest stood at the highest point of the temple and blew the shofar, or ram's horn as a signal that they were ready to sacrifice the lamb. As Jesus hung on the cross, He heard the piercing blast of the shofar carry across the city. Jesus recognized that the time of His sacrifice had come. As the priest killed the Passover lamb, Jesus looked up into heaven and said, "**It is finished!**" (**John 19:30**). At that moment, the Passover lamb and God's substitute - Jesus - our Passover Lamb - died at 3:00 p.m.

"It is finished!" And it is finished. There is nothing that you can add to God's salvation. It's God's gift to you. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away your sins and the sins of the world. Have you asked God's Son to forgive you for your wrong actions and attitudes? Have you accepted Jesus into your life as your Savior?

Good Words To Remember

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

STORY TIME

The thought of “telling your story” – how Jesus Christ came into your life, can be a little uncomfortable. Perhaps you’re afraid of failing or that you won’t know what to say. But if Jesus Christ is in your life, you do have a story to tell, and learning how to tell your story may be just what it takes to bring the good news of Jesus Christ into someone’s life.

So, here we go...if you’ve never thought much of how to tell someone your story, here are some ideas and suggestions for putting your story together.

Conversion

If you remember a specific time, place or event when you accepted Jesus Christ into your life, then perhaps “conversion” fits best. If conversion fits best, try shaping your story around these questions:

- What was your life like before you invited Jesus into your life?
- What led (events, conversation, etc.) you to accept Jesus as your Savior?
- How and when did you receive Christ as Savior? As Lord?
- How has Jesus changed your life?

Journey

If your faith seems more like a journey, then perhaps “Spiritual Journey” fits best. Try these questions:

- What have been some key events in which God has worked in your life?
- What experiences, circumstances or people helped develop your faith in Christ?
- How would your life be different without Jesus? (i.e.: lifestyle, attitudes, priorities, relationships, etc.).

Sharing The Gospel Through Your Story

Try fitting these questions in your story:

- How do you understand God’s purpose in creation? (Ephesians 1:5)
- How do you understand your purpose in life? (Matthew 22:27-29)
- How have you experienced sin in your life? (John 14:15)
- What are (were) the consequences of that sin? (Isaiah 59:2).
- How did you put your faith in Jesus Christ (the solution)? (Ephesians 2:8-9)
- How have you been reconciled to God (what were the results)? (Romans 5:11).
- What role has the church or others played for you? (1 Corinthians 12:27)

Putting Your Story Together

- What elements of your story might be interesting to someone else?
- What Bible verses might you include under each of the previous questions?
- What experiences in your life can form illustrations to help you tell your story?
- Write your story as if you were telling someone else
- Keep it between 3-5 minutes

On the following page, write out your testimony – your story - of how you invited Jesus Christ into your life as your Savior and Lord!

