



**CAMP NEHEMIAH:
REBUILDING THE WALLS**

PRACTICE MINISTRIES BIBLE STUDY CURRICULUM

CAMP NEHEMIAH: REBUILDING THE WALLS

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Camp Nehemiah: Rebuilding The Walls
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e-mail address: practiceministries@gmail.com
web-site address: www.practiceministries.org

LESSON SUMMARIES

Lesson 1: You & God – Page 5

“The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped” (Psalm 28:7).

There’s a problem between us and God – it’s impossible for us to be a part of God’s family without His help. Today a vacuum cleaner is going to help us learn how to become a part of God’s family.

Lesson 2: You & Your Parents – Page 9

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32).

Harboring bitterness deprives you of the sweetness of forgiving. Today ice cream, a sticker branch & a cotton ball are going to help us learn how to forgive.

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“Then Jesus got into the boat...” (Matthew 8:23).

This short, seemingly insignificant part of a verse tells us a lot about who God is and why Jesus came. Today, a classic exercise in trust is going to help us learn about being a “Good-For-You Friend.”

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“Is not my house right with God?” (2 Samuel 23:5).

Today, Legos are going to help us learn how to build our lives on the solid foundation of trusting God.

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“Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever” (Daniel 12:3)

Life isn’t all about us! It’s about bringing people’s attention to God. Today, a mirror is going to help us learn how to honor God with our lives.

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“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 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. 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 6:4-7).

If these lessons are presented at a camp facility, each area of camp can be used to teach a life lesson about God and His Word

CAMP NEHEMIAH: REBUILDING THE WALLS

Introduction To Camp Nehemiah: Rebuilding The Walls (Nehemiah 1:1 – 2:17)

“¹ The words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah: In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, ² Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem. ³ They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire." ⁴ When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. ⁵ Then I said:

"O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands, ⁶ let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against you. ⁷ We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

⁸ "Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, ⁹ but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.'

¹⁰ "They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand. ¹¹ O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man."

I was cupbearer to the king.

2:1 In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had not been sad in his presence before; ² so the king asked me, "Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart." I was very much afraid, ³ but I said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my fathers are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?"

⁴ The king said to me, "What is it you want?" Then I prayed to the God of heaven, ⁵ and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it." ⁶ Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, "How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?" It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time.

⁷ I also said to him, "If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide me safe-conduct until I arrive in Judah? ⁸ And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the king's forest, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?" And because the gracious hand of my God was upon me, the king granted my requests. ⁹ So I went to the governors of Trans-Euphrates and gave them the king's letters. The king had also sent army officers and cavalry with me.

10 When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about this, they were very much disturbed that someone had come to promote the welfare of the Israelites.

11 I went to Jerusalem, and after staying there three days **12** I set out during the night with a few men. I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem. There were no mounts with me except the one I was riding on.

13 By night I went out through the Valley Gate toward the Jackal Well and the Dung Gate, examining the walls of Jerusalem, which had been broken down, and its gates, which had been destroyed by fire. **14** Then I moved on toward the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool, but there was not enough room for my mount to get through; **15** so I went up the valley by night, examining the wall. Finally, I turned back and reentered through the Valley Gate. **16** The officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, because as yet I had said nothing to the Jews or the priests or nobles or officials or any others who would be doing the work.

17 Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace." **18** I also told them about the gracious hand of my God upon me and what the king had said to me. They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work."

The walls surrounding the city of Jerusalem protected it from attack. With the walls in place the residents felt safe and secure. When the walls were broken down, the people survived but they were in trouble and lived in disgrace. God called Nehemiah in 445 B.C. to travel to Jerusalem to lead the effort to repair and rebuild the walls. When the walls were rebuilt, the people began to rebuild their lives.

2050 years later, God has led you to help repair and rebuild the lives of kids at Camp Nehemiah. The protective walls around their lives have been torn down. And they are troubled – perhaps to the point of living in shame, fear and disgrace.

Through counsel and prayer, I have put together five lessons and a series of illustrations and stories that I hope will assist you in helping to rebuild these kid's lives – not by building walls to keep others out, but to let others in. These five lessons are designed to help the kids learn to build healthy relationships with: God, Parents (including Authority), Friends, and Themselves.

The first response of Nehemiah to the news concerning Jerusalem was to pray (1:4). It's my prayer that rebuilding these kids' lives at Camp Nehemiah begins with a prayer: **"Come, let us rebuild the walls so they will no longer be in disgrace."**

May the kids reply, **"Let us start rebuilding [and begin] this good work"** (Nehemiah 2:18).

Lesson 1: You & God

“The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped” (Psalm 28:7).

Building Blocks: The Vacuum Cleaner

“as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103:12).

Dump a bag of dirt on the floor, then haul out a vacuum cleaner and suck up all the dirt. Then take the bag out of the vacuum cleaner, walk over to a window, open it, and chunk the bag out the window.

What's The Point?

The dirt couldn't remove itself; the vacuum cleaner had to do it. You & I can't remove our sin ourselves; God removes our sins through Jesus' death on the cross.

Introduction To You & God

Barcelona, Spain, 1992. The Summer Olympics. The men's 400 meter semi-final race in track and field. England's Derek Redmond was a favorite to win a medal. In the middle of the race, Redmond was in good position to advance to the finals and a chance to run for the gold medal. Suddenly, he pulled up and fell to the track. Determined to finish the race, he got up and began to limp toward the finish line. But his injured leg couldn't bear his weight and he fell back down on the track.

When Redmond's father, Jim, saw Derek go down he ran down the stairs, jumped out of the stands and made his way toward the track. When security stopped him, Jim yelled, "That's my son!" He was allowed to pass, and he ran to Derek. As Derek tried to get up again, Jim grabbed his arm and said, "You don't have to do this."

"Yes I do," Derek responded.

"Then," Jim replied, "We will do it together."

Jim draped Derek's left arm around his own shoulders. He then placed his right arm around Derek's shoulders. Then he grabbed Derek's right arm, and began to lead him to the finish line. The race had been over for minutes, but together, slowly, father and son made it down the back stretch and reached the finish line, while the amazed crowd rose to their feet and roared with cheers.

The official results of the men's 400 meter semifinal race show Derek Redmond's performance as "race abandoned." This race was anything but abandoned!

Derek Redmond needed his dad's help. Today, we meet a man whose help an entire city needed. His name is Nehemiah.

You & God
(Nehemiah 1:1-2:4)

“In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, ² Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem.

³ They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire."

⁴ When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. ⁵ Then I said:

"O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands, ⁶ let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we

Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against you. ⁷ We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

⁸ "Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, ⁹ but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.'

¹⁰ "They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand. ¹¹ O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man."

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⁴ The king said to me, "What is it you want?" Then I prayed to the God of heaven, ⁵ and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it."

Derek Redmond needed his dad to help him with what he couldn't do by himself. The people of Jerusalem needed Nehemiah to help them begin to rebuild the city walls. You need God to do something for you that you cannot do by yourself.

Question: Who is God? [God is a Father - Mark 14:36]. Just like Jim Redmond, God is a Father. And He loves His kids. He will do anything to show how much He loves you. It's the kind of love that says, "I want the very best for you, and I will do what it takes to help you have it."

Question: If God is a Father, who are his children? [Anyone whom God adopts as his child].

The Bible says, "**His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave him great pleasure**" (Ephesians 1:5). God wants to make you a part of His family!

Question: Why would God decide to do something like that? [Because He loves you]. In fact, God loves you so much that He wants you to live with Him forever. The Bible says, "**There are many rooms in my Father's home, and I am going to prepare a place for you. If this were not so, I would tell you plainly. When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am**" (John 14:2-3).

In fact, God loved you before your mom & dad ever thought about bringing you into this world. The Bible says, "**You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.**" (Psalm 139:16).

However, there's a problem between us and God. We've done something that makes it impossible for us to be a part of God's family without His help. In Derek Redmond's story, his dad was watching the race from the top of

the stadium. To get to Derek, he first had to crawl over a concrete barrier set between the stands and the track. But, when Jim got to him, Derek pushed him away because he wanted to get up and run by himself.

At some point - you, me - everybody – have pushed God away. Just like Derek pushed his dad away from him. And pushing God away - wanting to do things our own way - is called sin. The Bible says we've all done it - **“For all have sinned; all fall short of God’s glorious standard” (Romans 3:23)**. You push God away when you lie; when you think of hurting someone or actually do it; when you take something that isn't yours; when you turn your back on someone who needs help.

Question: Think about what happens when you push someone away from you. It creates a space – a separation between you and the other person. So, what does pushing God away do? [It separates you from Him].

Sin is when you push God away from you, deliberately. It's called disobedience – and this disobedience creates a separation between you and God.

It gets worse. Deliberately pushing God away from you brings a penalty with it. The Bible says that, **“...the wages of sin is death...” (Romans 6:23)**. A wage is what you earn. And the Bible says that what you earn by deliberately pushing Him away is being separated from Him forever.

Question: So what can you do to become a part of God’s family? [You can't]. No matter how badly you want to be a part of God's family, there's no way to do it by yourself.

So not only are you separated from God, but God is separated from you. The worst thing for a loving father is to be separated from his kids. It hurts God to be separated from you. So because of how much God loves you, He made a way to get you back to Him.

This way, from our point of view, is a little hard to understand. Here's what God said, **“Even if you don't love me, I love you so much that I'm willing to give up what is most precious to Me just so you'll know how much I want you to be a part of my family (Romans 5:8)**.

And that's just what God did – He left heaven and became a man. His name is Jesus. Jesus felt happiness & sadness; being close & being lonely, he felt wanted & he felt abandonment just like you feel. But Jesus did something that no other person who has lived or will ever live. Jesus lived a perfect life. Then He did something amazing: He took the punishment that you earned because of your sin. He took the punishment for you because you owe a payment you can't pay by yourself.

Here's a story that tells you what God did. There was a boy named Sam who was found guilty of a crime, and was brought before the judge. The judge couldn't just let Sam off without some kind of penalty because the law required Sam to pay a penalty for his crime. So the judge ordered Sam to pay the largest penalty the law would allow – a fine of \$10,000. Sam didn't have that kind of money, and there was no way for him to find it. But Sam had to pay it!

Then the judge did something very unusual. He took off his judge's robe, stepped down from behind the bench and came around and stood in front of the bench. Then he pulled out his checkbook, wrote a check for \$10,000 and paid the penalty for Sam.

The penalty had to be paid, but the judge paid it for him. Why? Because Sam was the judge's son!

You see, God is a loving Father but He's also a Judge. As judge, God made a law that says the penalty for sin is death. But as a loving father, God paid your penalty Himself. That's what Jesus has already done for you! He paid the fine you owe for your sins by dying on the cross.

So, the Bible says that **“the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23)**.

CAMP NEHEMIAH: REBUILDING THE WALLS

Think back to Derek Redmond for a moment. Derek lay crumpled on the track, so injured that he couldn't walk on his own. There's no way he could make it to the finish line by himself. The distance was too great. He wasn't strong enough to do it on his own. But Derek's dad came down out of the stands to help him do something he couldn't do by himself. At first, Derek pushed his dad away, not wanting the help. But then Derek realized he did need his dad's help. Jim Redmond's gift to his son was to pick him up off the track and help him finish the race. And Derek had to trust and rely upon his dad to get him there. And Derek's dad didn't let him down.

Derek Redmond's story tells you story about yourself. Your life is a race. When you cross the finish line you want to be in heaven. It's where you want to be. But we're so injured by sin it's impossible for us to get to the finish line by ourselves. We need help. So Jesus came down out of heaven's stands. He did what it takes to enable you to cross the finish line into heaven. But you have a choice. You can continue to lay there on the track, hurt and hurting, and push God away forever. Or, you can say, "Jesus, I need you in my life. The stands have separated us long enough. I'm sorry that I've pushed You away from me. I want you to pick me up and help me walk with you all the way to the finish line."

The Bible says, "**I [God] have loved you with an everlasting love...**" (Jeremiah 31:3). Even the most loving people will let you down sometimes. Parents will let you down. Friends will let you down. Christians will let you down. You will let yourself down. But God will never let you down. The Bible says, "**Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame**" (Romans 10:11).

Wall-Building

"The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped" (Psalm 28:7).

Boys and girls, Nehemiah's story is for you this week. He found the walls around Jerusalem broken down. The protection of the city was gone. The people in the city weren't safe, and they were in disgrace and felt ashamed. They needed help rebuilding their lives. They needed someone to help them do what they couldn't do themselves.

One or both of your parents have been taken away from you – the walls of protection have been broken down. Perhaps you feel there's no one to protect you or give you the kind of love that says, "I'll make sure you're ok." Perhaps you're feeling ashamed one of your parents is in prison. Perhaps you want someone who will jump over walls to get to you, help you get up and stay on the right track until you're ok on your own; someone who will never abandon you.

If you have never let Jesus do for you what you cannot do for yourself, let Him do it today – right now! Tell Him that you need Him in your life, tell him you're sorry for pushing Him away, but now you want Him to help you walk with Him every day of your life, so that you can finish the race well.

Lesson 2: You & Your Parents (Authority)

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32).

Building Blocks: Ice Cream or I Scream?

You'll need: 2 pint sized zip-lock baggies, 2 gallon sized zip-lock baggies, sugar, rock salt, 1 pint of half & half, vanilla extract, a bag of ice.

Gather your kids around and tell them that you're going to make ice homemade cream. Make 1 batch of the bad ice cream, but don't tell the kids that you're making the bad batch.

Recipe for the GOOD batch:

In a pint size zip-lock baggie, put 2 Tablespoons of sugar, 1 cup of half & half, and ½ teaspoon of vanilla extract. Seal the baggie!

In the gallon size baggie, put ½ cup of rock salt, and enough ice to fill the baggie half way. Now place the pint size baggie in the gallon size baggie, seal, and shake for 5 minutes.

Recipe for the BAD batch:

Substitute salt for the sugar in the pint size baggie.

When it's finished, give everyone a taste. After noting the look of disapproval on everyone's face, ask them these questions:

- **How did it taste?** [Salty or bitter].
- **Did you like the taste?** [No].
- **Why didn't you want the taste to stay in your mouth?** [It was unpleasant].
- **Why did you want to get the taste out of your mouth?** [To get rid of the unpleasantness].

What's The Point?

Harboring bitterness is like keeping salty ice cream in your mouth. It deprives you of the sweet ice cream. It's unpleasant to harbor bitter feelings toward someone. It's sweet to forgive.

Now, have each of the kids make a batch according to the good recipe, and enjoy the ice cream during the lesson!

Building Blocks: Stickers & Cotton

You'll need something sharp or unpleasant to hold, i.e.: a branch from a sticker bush, and something soft; i.e.: a cotton ball.

Have the kids close their eyes. Place a sticker branch in his hand. When he drops it, place a cotton ball in his hand. Then ask these questions:

- **Why did you let go of the sticker branch?** [It hurt].
- **Which felt better to hold: the sticker branch or the cotton ball?** [The cotton ball].

What's The Point?

Holding onto the sticker branch hurts. So does holding onto bitterness toward someone who has done something wrong to you. You let go of the thorn branch because it hurts. It felt much better to drop the branch and pick up the cotton ball. Let go of the bitterness and forgive.

CAMP NEHEMIAH: REBUILDING THE WALLS

Introduction To You & Your Parents

Jim Ryun is the Olympic Silver Medalist in the 1500 Meter Race in the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, Mexico. Jim ran in 3 Olympics, held the World Record in the Mile, 1500, and 880; and was the World record holder in the High School Mile.

Jim Ryun set his first world record in July of 1966 when he ran the mile in 3:51.3. In 1967, he set another record for the mile at 3:51.1. That record stood unbroken for eight years. How important was running to Jim Ryun? Jim once said, "For 10 years, running had been my god. Joining my high school track team in 1962, I ran the mile in 5:38. The following spring, I ran a 4:07 mile. In 1964, I became the world's first high-schooler to run the mile in under four minutes and qualified to compete in the Tokyo Olympics.

Jim was America's hope for a gold medal in the 1500-meter race at the 1972 Olympics in Munich, Germany. But five hundred meters from the finish line in his qualifying race, he was pushed and he fell. A video of the race proved he had been fouled but the Olympic Committee refused to give him another chance. There would be no medal. Jim had focused all his training and energy for a full year on that one event.

So at the most important athletic event in the world, how did Jim Ryun handle the biggest crisis of his running career? We'll find out at the end of the lesson. Right now, we're going to meet a man whose son disappointed him, and how he handled it.

You & Your Parents

(Luke 15:11-24)

"A man had two sons. 12 The younger son told his father, 'I want my share of your estate now, instead of waiting until you die.' So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons. 13 A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and took a trip to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money on wild living. 14 About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. 15 He persuaded a local farmer to hire him to feed his pigs. 16 The boy became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything. 17 When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home even the hired men have food enough to spare, and here I am, dying of hunger! 18 I will go home to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, 19 and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired man." ' 20 So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long distance away, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. 21 His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.' 22 But his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger, and sandals for his feet. 23 And kill the calf we have been fattening in the pen. We must celebrate with a feast, 24 for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' " So the party began.

Even though the boy disappointed his father, his dad forgave him for the wrong things he had done and welcomed him back into the family. But what about when someone disappoints you or does something wrong to you? What if it's your mom or dad who disappoints you? How should you handle it?

Honor & Forgiveness

"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you" (Exodus 20:12).

God designed what a family should be like. A dad, a mom and some kids thrown in. And when God designed the family, He gave the parents and the children each a privilege and a responsibility. A parent's privilege and responsibility is to teach their children what God says is right by setting the example. And a child's privilege and responsibility is to respect and listen to her parents. Most of the time, parents have their children's best interests in mind and are trying to be a godly example to their kids. But sometimes your parents make mistakes. Perhaps they've done the wrong thing, and you're left embarrassed, disappointed, confused or angry. The Bible says to honor those in authority over you. That includes coaches, teachers, pastors – anyone who is in a position to

teach you and guide you. And not just some of the time, but all the time. That includes when they make mistakes. So how do you do that?

As a starting point, let's visit a place that Jesus refers to as "the world." During the last week of Jesus' life, He was arrested the night before He was crucified. And on that night Jesus prayed to His Father in heaven. Even though it happened over 2,000 years ago, His prayer was also for you and for me.

The World

(Text: John 17:14-18)

"I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world."

When Jesus says, "the world," it refers to any place where what God says is right and wrong is opposed or ignored. The world can be in your school, your neighborhood, your home, your heart. When you don't live according to God's standards of what is right, you live according to what people say is right, not what God says is right.

Question: What are some examples of the world's values? [I will lie or steal to get what I want rather than honestly work for it; it's ok to cheat if I don't get caught; I will judge a person's worth or popularity based on his or her appearance rather than how kind or loving that person is; I will fill my mind and body with what is impure rather than what is pure].

Question: What does Jesus mean when He says that you and I are "not of the world any more than I am of the world"? [Jesus means that you and I are not to learn our values from the world]. Jesus says that you are to get your values from Him and live by them as you take a test in school, as you play soccer or hang out with your friends.

Question: Why did Jesus ask God to protect us from the world? [Jesus knows that the world's views and ways are often times very attractive to us]. That's why you need to allow Him to help you live the way He says is right. Only Jesus can give you the power to live the way that you should - to live by His values and not the world's.

So, when your mom or dad, or coach or teacher chooses to live by the world's standards, should you honor them even if they're doing things that God says is wrong? The answer is yes.

The Bible says, "**Honor your father and your mother...**" – period. God's command to honor your father and mother still stands today. It's easy to honor your parents, teachers or coaches when they are being honorable – doing what's right and good. But God says to be respectful to them - period. Not just when they're nice, or taking care of you, or when you feel like it. According to God, that's not an option for you.

Question: So how can you honor what is not honorable? The Bible says, "**Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you**" (Ephesians 4:32).

It's all about forgiveness. It's what the dad did for his son when he came back home. Remember how I said that we'd find out how Jim Ryun handled the situation when someone did something wrong to him? Here's what happened:

For years Jim struggled with hurt and bitterness over what happened in the Olympics. One night, he knelt down and said, "Lord, forgive me for the bitterness in my heart." I knew the Lord had forgiven me, but I still felt unable to forgive those who had wronged me. I continued in prayer, pursuing complete forgiveness. Then one day, I became aware of an amazing thing: I was no longer bitter. God allowed me to be disqualified from the world's most prestigious athletic competition to show me how to be a real winner."

Question: Think back to the ice cream and the sticker branch. Do you remember what it means to forgive? [To forgive is to release and let go.] Here are some ways you can honor those who have disappointed you:

- You can show them God's love by forgiving. God loves us so much that He forgives us for the wrongs that we commit against Him. Forgiveness is a powerful example of God's love.
- You can honor what is honorable. Focus on what they have done right for you and thank them.
- You choose to live a Godly life. The Bible says that, **"You are the salt of the earth...you are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:13-14)**. You be the one to live by God's standards and help them see the truth about life and about God.
- You can pray for your parents and teachers that they will live to please God and not the world. The Bible says, **"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone - for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:1-4)**.

Your first responsibility is to love God and please Him. You can't honor God by keeping anger or bitterness toward someone inside you. But if you do like Jim Ryun did, and ask God to help you release the anger, He will help you do just that.

Wall-Building

"Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you" (Colossians 3:13).

If you have been wronged, you may still hear the words in your mind or feel the hurt in your stomach, but you also have the choice to release the bitterness. Remember the sticker branch and the salty ice cream. If someone has hurt you, ask God today to help you forgive – to release and let go of the bitterness. As Jim Ryun found out, it's the mark of a true champion in God's eyes.

Lesson 3: You & Your Friends

“Then Jesus got into the boat...” (Matthew 8:23).

Building Blocks: A Loyal Friend

Gather your campers in a circle. Ask for one “volunteer” to stand in the middle of the circle. Place a blindfold on your volunteer and have him fold his arms across his chest, and stand with his feet together. When your volunteer is blindfolded, have one person in the circle stand behind him (far enough away to let him fall, close enough to catch him before he hits the ground). When he’s in position, tell the volunteer to lean back and fall. It’s the job of the “loyal friend” to catch his friend. Have as many as are willing to be the “volunteer” and the “loyal friend.” (Perhaps you should back up the loyal friend!).

What’s The Point?

A friend is both trustworthy & loyal.

Introduction To You & Your Friends

Eric Liddell, of Scotland, won the gold medal in the 400-meter race in the 1924 Olympics in Paris, France. In the 1920s there were no starting blocks for runners in the sprint events. Instead, runners dug a hole in the dirt with their shoes to help them get a good push. But Eric always kept a small trowel handy to dig the holes. Instead of keeping this advantage to himself though, he would pass the trowel down the line to his rivals so they could dig holes as well.

One day, as Eric took his place on the inside lane on the track – the best position for the 400 meters, he noticed the competitor who had drawn the outside lane was not a strong runner. At that time, there was no staggering to make up for the curves, so the runner in the outside lane had to run farther. Eric went over to the runner and asked if he could change places with him.

A few weeks before the Olympics, Eric ran in a competition in Scotland. It was a cool day with a strong wind blowing. Eric noticed one of his competitors sitting beside the track in only a tank top and shorts. Eric took off his warm-up jacket and placed it around the other runner’s shoulders to help keep him warm.

In most athletic events, competitors do what they can do get a physical and psychological edge to increase their chances of winning. The Bible says to look out for others interests as well as your own. But for Olympic champion Eric Liddell, if he had to choose between helping another or win a gold medal, he would choose to help.

Florence Nightingale was born in England in 1820. She had every privilege available but was bored with her life and wanted to do something useful. As she became a young woman she felt most content when she was caring for the poor and sick near her home. At age 33 she became a nurse in a nearby hospital.

When England and France went to war against Russia, the British government asked Florence to lead a team of nurses to Crimea (now Turkey). There she spent the days and nights trying to improve the way sick and wounded soldiers were care for. Florence used her own money to buy clean clothes, food and medical supplies for the soldiers. All of her time was spent helping others.

A friend summed up her life: “To give less than every ounce of strength would not have been enough for Florence – would not be what God expected of her. For God was the only master she would acknowledge...the work she did was His work. In that thought was all the reward, all the pleasure she desired. Her only thought was, ‘Thy will be done.’ ”

How would you like to have a good friend like Eric Liddell or Florence Nightingale? How would you like to be as good a friend as Eric or Florence? You can have it both ways!

You & Your Friends
(Matthew 8:23-27)

“Then Jesus got into the boat and started across the lake with his disciples. 24 Suddenly, a terrible storm came up, with waves breaking into the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. 25 The disciples went to him and woke him up, shouting, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!” 26 And Jesus answered, “Why are you afraid? You have so little faith!” Then he stood up and rebuked the wind and waves, and suddenly all was calm. 27 The disciples just sat there in awe. “Who is this?” they asked themselves. “Even the wind and waves obey him!”

“Then he got into the boat...” This short, seemingly insignificant part of a verse tells us a lot about who God is. Jesus - Almighty God, Creator and Master of all creation - got into a boat with his disciples. Didn't the King of the universe have better things to do than hang around with a few fishermen? Nope. In fact, it explains why Jesus came. God wanted a relationship with each of them. God wants a relationship with each of you.

Now, if God wanted to hang out with a bunch of 'fraidy cat fishermen then there is no one not good enough for God to want to hang around him. However, you should choose wisely who you hang out with. Right now, we're going to talk about how to be a "Good-For-You-Friend."

Be A Good-For-You-Friend

“Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character” (1 Corinthians 15:33).

Ever notice how you begin to talk alike or pick up habits or mannerisms from your friends? Soon, you become friends with the friends of your friends. Besides your parents, your friends are the people you will have the biggest influence on, and who will have the biggest influence upon you. What you want is to be and to choose a "Good-For-You-Friend."

Fruity Friends

“when the Holy Spirit controls our lives, he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23).

The first thing you need to know about being a friend is that life is not all about you. It's about God and honoring Him by bringing people's attention to Him. You do that by being fruity. An apple tree's job is to make apples. That's what it's supposed to do. If the tree isn't making apples, what good is it? Likewise, God gives us the "inside stuff" we need to be a good friend. They're called "fruits of the Spirit." When you have Jesus in your life, you have all the fruits within you ready to help make you a good friend. They'll help you know how to be a friend in any situation. And if you're going to be fruity, then you want to hang out with other fruits!

Discussion Question: Which fruit will most help you be a good friend? Why?

Lie Down

“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

After September 11 (2001) Pat Tillman joined the Armed Forces. Tillman felt he needed to “pay something back” for the comfortable life he had. That’s not unusual. Lots of men and women join the Armed Forces to serve their country. But the list of names grows a little shorter when it comes to NFL players walking away from \$3.6 million dollar contracts in the prime of their careers.

The Bible says that, **“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).** Pat Tillman laid down his life. Serving with the 75th Ranger Regiment, Tillman was shot and killed during a special operations mission in Afghanistan leading the charge against Al Qaeda fighters

Pat Tillman was a star in the NFL. He could have stayed and played. Rather, he chose duty to his country over riches and the comforts of being a celebrity. There is another man, who laid down his life for his friends. He was also a star; A big star. In fact He created the stars! His name is Jesus. He left Heaven – left the comforts of His home to do something for others that they could not do for themselves.

God may never ask you to physically lay down your life for another person. But laying down your life also means giving up those parts of you that are not encouraging and not helpful to others.

Question: What are ways you can be encouraging or helpful to others? [Laying down your life may mean choosing the worst kick-ball player in your class first at recess, or inviting the most unpopular girl in your class to join in with your group].

Thanks – I Needed That!

“Wounds from a friend can be trusted...” (Proverbs 27:6a).

Ever been told something by a friend that you needed to hear for your own good? It’s called “watch-care.” Provide watch-care for your friends: challenge them to practice what you learned in Bible study today; talk to them if they begin to experiment with alcohol or drugs, caution them if they’re spreading gossip, especially if it’s mean-spirited or if what is said would hurt someone.

Discussion Question: Have you ever had to tell a friend something for their own good? Has a friend ever told you something for your own good?

Wall-Building

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen” (Ephesians 4:29).

Remember, Jesus got into the boat with his disciples. He got involved in their lives. Get involved in your friends lives. Today, choose one person and find out what he or she likes to do. Then think of one thing you can do to encourage that person. And remember to be fruity!

Lesson 4: You & You

“Is not my house right with God?” (2 Samuel 23:5).

Building Blocks: Legos

Pull out a large box of Legos. Have the kids make the most elaborate creation they can think of. After completing the "creation" process, take it apart and place the individual pieces in a clear bag so everyone can see them. Ask the children to shake the bag around and then dump them on the floor.

Then get really sad and say, "I wanted them to fall into place to re-create the same design we made before! Why didn't it work?" Try again over and over and keep expressing frustration that it doesn't work. The kids will consider you silly, which is precisely what you want!

Then ask the question, "How many times do you think it will take shaking and dumping before they become the designs again? (The obvious answer is: It will never happen.)

What's The Point?

Each person is made to order.

Introduction To You & You

Laura Wilkinson is the Olympic Gold Medalist in Women's Diving at the 2000 Games in Sydney, Australia. Here's what she says about a setback she had right before that Olympics:

"...Sometimes things happen that, at first thought, are pretty bad. It's at that time when you start to think "all hope is lost" or "why me?" or "that's not fair"... you know the phrases, you've said them... we all have. It's so easy to place blame on God or someone else and simply not accept what happened. It's so easy to run away from bad situations when you're too scared or angry to face it. It's so easy to give up..."

But it's in the midst of those difficult times that some of the most amazing things happen. In 1999, right before the U.S. Olympic Trials, I slammed my foot on a practice platform breaking three bones. I've been diving here for two and a half days now and doing pretty well in my mindset until today. I hit the platform during practice. I hit the same foot, doing the same action. It hurt my foot. It hurt my confidence. I was scared. But I'm glad it happened. I needed a reminder that in those scary situations I can hand it over to God."

In the midst of preparing for the 2000 Olympic Trials, Laura had a decision to make: Whether to quit diving or overcome her setback and continue. Today we're going to meet a man named Paul who also had some setbacks in his life and had to decide whether to continue his work.

Background

Paul was a Jewish man who lived in Israel around the time of Jesus. He became one of the religious leaders in Israel and his job was to hunt down and arrest Christians. But one day, he met Jesus in an unexpected & surprising way and his life was changed forever. He became a missionary for Jesus – traveling all over that part of the world telling other people about Him. But things weren't always easy for him!

You & You

(Text: 2 Corinthians 11:24-27)

“Five times I received from the Jews 40 lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. I have spent a night and a day in the depths of the sea. 26 On frequent journeys, I faced dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my own people, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the open country, dangers on the sea, and dangers among false brothers; 27 labor and hardship, many sleepless nights, hunger and thirst, often without food, cold, and lacking clothing.”

With God's help Laura Wilkinson continued diving and won the gold medal. With God's help Paul continued his missionary work. You've had some setbacks in your life. So today we're going to talk about pressing on through those setbacks by building your life upon a solid foundation of trusting God. In fact, we're going to build a house! But this very special house we're building is going to be your house – it's going to be you!

Question: What do you need to build a house? [There are 3 phases: Plans or Blueprints, Foundation, Building Materials].

The Plans (Blueprint)

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, ¹⁶ your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be” (Psalm 139:13-16).

Question: What do these verses tell you about yourself? [You are planned with a purpose in mind; you are created with that purpose in mind].

A homebuilder looks at the blueprint – the plan – for the house to know how he should build it. God created your frame - your physical body according to His blueprint for you. But He also created your inner being - your personality, emotions, interests & attitudes and wove them together to make you one unique and very important person.

Has anyone ever told you, “God has a plan and a purpose for your life?” Think about it. Think about your interests and abilities. You have them for a reason. Everything about you says, “I am created for a special purpose that no one can fulfill except for me.”

But that's only the beginning. You've got to build your house. And first in order of importance is laying a good foundation to build upon!

The Foundation

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash” (Matthew 7:24-27).

Question: What is important about the foundation of a house? [The foundation determines whether your house will stand or not]. It's important to build upon a solid foundation like rock that doesn't shift around a lot, like sand. If your foundation is not solid, eventually your house can literally fall apart. Let's say it another way: If you base your life on sand – on values that always change with what people say are important instead of what God says is important - your life will fall apart.

Question: What are some examples of sand that people base their lives on? [Basing their worth as a person solely on the importance of who they are according to other people – what someone thinks of them, solely on what they do, solely on their status - i.e.: being a good athlete or a student, having lots of stuff].

Question: What does this passage tell you about how to build your life? [Build your life on solid rock - by doing what God says is right]. The Bible says, “...**God is the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15).**

When you buy - let's say - an I-Pod - Apple gives you a piece of paper called a warranty. This warranty guarantees in writing that Apple will replace your I-Pod if it fails to do what it was made to do. But that guarantee is good only for a certain period of time that Apple sets – maybe 1 year or so.

Did you know that God gives a warranty on truth? God says:

- Truth is knowable (1 Timothy 2:3-4).
- Truth is forever (Psalm 119:160).
- Truth does not change (Malachi 3:6).

And God personally guarantees this in writing. God's guarantee of the Truth is forever. The Bible says, **"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Matthew 24:35)**. God's Word was true yesterday, it's true today, and will be true tomorrow & forever.

Build your life on God's words found in the Bible, and be confident that because what God says is true, you'll be ready for whatever comes along in your life. It might not be easy, but you'll be able to handle it.

The Building Materials

"...through understanding [your home] is established..." (Proverbs 24:3).

Establishing your home means how you go about building it. The kind of materials you use to make it strong and beautiful. So, while you're building your life upon God's truths found in the Bible, it's important to understand why you want to do that.

The Bible says, **"Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?" (1 Corinthians 6:19).**

According to the verse you just heard, your body is God's temple! God's first temple was built in 950 B.C. by King Solomon of Israel. It was where God Himself would come and dwell among His people, and where his people would worship Him. In Old Testament days (before God sent his Son Jesus to live upon the earth as a man) God's Spirit would not dwell within a person, but only rest upon a person for the time that God allowed. Now that Jesus has made a way for us to enjoy a relationship with God, God's Spirit dwells in those who have invited Him into their lives. Their body becomes God's temple!

God wants your body – His temple – your life - to be a place of worship where He is honored by and through what you say & do.

Question: The Bible says, "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Romans 11:33). According to this verse, what building materials should you use in building your house? [Wisdom and knowledge].

Remember, God has a purpose in mind for you. But while God designed the plans, it's up to you to build your house correctly. Choose wisdom (the knowledge of what is right and how to use that knowledge correctly) and the knowledge of God's Word as your building materials, and you will have a house where God will be pleased to dwell.

Wall-Building

"By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures" (Proverbs 24:3-4).

The Bible says that wisdom and knowledge are treasures (Colossians 2:3) that are more valuable than silver and gold, and are more precious than rare jewels (Proverbs 3:13-15).

CAMP NEHEMIAH: REBUILDING THE WALLS

There are 150 Psalms in the Bible. Read one Psalm in the Bible each day – you'll go through them twice in a year. There are 30 Proverbs in the Bible. Read one Proverb each day – you'll go through them 12 times in a year. These are your building materials to learn to live the way Jesus says is right (wisdom) and to use that knowledge correctly according to God's instructions. Build your life with these materials and the foundation to your life will be built upon rock-solid truth. And your life will be filled with rare and beautiful treasures of knowledge and wisdom.

Lesson 5: Your Life: It's Not About You

“Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever” (Daniel 12:3)

Special Note: Give each camper a cup of water. Have him or her hold it BUT DO NOT LET THEM DRINK...YET.

Building Blocks: The Mirror

You'll need a mirror and sunlight. Or, if it's nighttime, you'll need a flashlight. Outside, angle the mirror so it will reflect the sun light onto a shiny object – it could be tinfoil, a coin, a ring – the more glittery or shiny the better!

What's The Point?

The mirror is reflecting the sun's light and calling attention to the object upon which it is shining! Likewise, we are created to bring honor & attention to God. Life isn't all about us! It's about bringing people's attention to God.

Introduction To It's Not About You

Sheila Burrell came in 4th Place in the Heptathlon at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece. The Olympic Women's Heptathlon is 7 track & field events of running, jumping & throwing held over a 2 day period that crowns the winner with the title of “world's greatest woman athlete.” Sheila Burrell has been U.S. Outdoor Champion; World Championships Medalist; 2x Olympian.

Sheila has learned that training to win a race takes hard work, dedication and persistence. It also takes time. It's a continual process. It also means following her coach's instructions. Doing things less the way she wants to, and doing things more the way her coach wants her to. And she has to trust that her coach knows the best way to get her there.

Shelia also learned something about the way God wants her to live. God says, “If you're going to live for Me you can't remain the same. If you're going to the next level, you'll have to leave some things behind. Having more of Me means less of you.” Life isn't all about you. It's about God - doing things less the way you want and more the way God wants. Today we're going to meet a girl named Lydia to help show us how.

Background

Remember Paul from yesterday's lesson? On one of his missionary journeys, he came to an area called Macedonia (today it's called Northern Greece). He and Luke (the “Gospel according to Luke” Luke) were traveling from town to town visiting churches. One day they came a town called Philippi and there met a woman named Lydia.

It's Not About You

(Text: Acts 16:13-15)

“On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. ¹⁴ One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. ¹⁵ When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. “If you consider me a believer in the Lord,” she said, “come and stay at my house.” And she persuaded us.”

God's Rescue Mission

"...The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message" (Acts 16:14).

Lydia's story teaches us the greatest truth of the Bible: God loves you and desires above all else to have a relationship with you; like a dad who loves his child and is crazy about her. And because God loves you so much, He goes to great length to bring to you a gift more precious than anything you could imagine or hope for. A good example of the lengths that God will go to for you is found in the story of a boy named Reilly Walker:

In June of 2003, 14 year-old Reilly was hiking with his Boy Scout troop in Fort Stanton Cave near Ruidoso, New Mexico. The Scouts had obtained the proper permits to explore the cave and Reilly was wearing proper clothing for cave exploring, including a hard hat, knee-pads and gloves. While exploring Reilly fell about 15 feet off a ledge and badly hurt his leg. A fellow Scout stayed with him while others went for help.

Rescuers -- about 40 at one point -- wound their way down the narrow cave to reach Reilly later that day. Some came to relieve those who were tired because it was hard work. Rescuers had to crawl or stoop low through a 1,500-foot section of cave and crawl an additional 500 yards through another section as they pulled ropes attached to a gurney to bring Reilly out. A telephone line was strung in there to keep in touch with the rescue team. After 16 hours, Reilly was brought out of the cave, tired, but safe.

Reilly had done everything right. He had the proper equipment, wore the proper clothing, and even observed the buddy system. But he still fell, and there was no way for him to get himself out of the cave. Others went to great length to rescue him out of the cave into which he had fallen and bring him to safety. Without rescue, Reilly would have died.

From what we can tell from the Bible, Lydia worshiped God. She prayed to God. She was a good person. But like Reilly, she was trapped in a cave called sin, powerless to get out on her own. But Jesus did not want to leave Lydia in the cave -- so He went to go get her!

The Bible says that, **"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6-8).**

The effort to rescue Reilly Walker was great, but look at the extraordinary lengths Jesus goes to for Lydia:

- Paul and his companions were trying to go to Asia to preach but Jesus wouldn't let them go there (Acts 16:6).
- They then tried another destination, but Jesus wouldn't let them go there either (Acts 16:7).
- Then Jesus gave to Paul a vision of a man pleading with him to come to Macedonia (where Philippi was located). So Paul and his travelin' buddies re-routed their trip and went there (Acts 16: 9).
- Then, Jesus led them to a place outside of the city gates of Philippi to a group of women who gathered to pray, one of which was Lydia (Acts 16:13-14).
- As Lydia listened to Paul's message, God opened her heart to respond to Paul's message and she became the first Christian in Europe!

Lydia tried to get life right on her own, but she needed help. She had never before heard the message that Paul brought to her that day. But Jesus Christ opened her heart to respond. Lydia couldn't rescue herself, so Rescue came to Lydia!

Question: So what does Lydia's story mean to you today? [Lydia's story means that same God who rescued her wants to do the same for you. Because God has big plans for you!] If you're a person, Jesus has two words for you. The first word is "Come;" the second is "Go."

Come!

"...Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life" Revelation 22:17). Jesus wants you to come to Him and He wants you to be good and thirsty. Inviting Jesus

Christ into your life is like taking a drink of water. The water doesn't just jump into your mouth – you have to drink. If you want Jesus in your life, you have to drink - you have to invite Him in! So if you're thirsty, Jesus says, "Come."

IF YOU'RE THIRSTY, YOU CAN DRINK NOW!

Go!

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20). Once you have come to Jesus, he wants you to go. His command is for Christians to make disciples - people who will choose to follow Jesus' ways and teachings. So then, Jesus says, "Go."

Lydia was good and thirsty for Jesus. When she learned about Jesus she didn't hesitate to go to Him. Lydia now had a choice: to live her life just as she always had or choose to go!

Question: Do you think Jesus went to all the trouble of rerouting Paul's trip, to get to Lydia just to have her stay the same? [No is the correct answer].

Question: Do you think Jesus has gone to all the trouble of rescuing you just to have you sit and do nothing for Him? [Again, no would be the correct answer]. It would be like painting a masterpiece and hiding it in a closet, or cooking dinner and never serving it. Or entering a competition and never competing. Or being ill, being healed, and living like you're still sick. God rescued Lydia so she could serve Him. God rescued you so you can serve Him.

Question: What do you think Lydia did first? [She went home and immediately began telling her servants about what happened to her down by the river]. Her life became a testimony to them, and they too were rescued! It shows just how powerful her witness was.

Here's what Lydia did next. She went about her business as usual – only with a new attitude. She wasn't concerned about her reputation. Rather, she began to look for opportunities to help others. She had a big home, and she allowed her home to be headquarters for missionaries. Her home became the first church in Philippi, the most important city in the region! God had big plans for Lydia. She went and started the first church in that part of the world. He has big plans for you. But it all comes down to two words:

Question: Jesus says, "Come." Have you? If you haven't, will you?

Question: Jesus says, "Go." Have you? If you have, what will you do for Him?

Teaching Opportunities: Camp Facilities

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 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 6:4-7).

A unique opportunity you have at Camp Nehemiah is to use the camp facilities and grounds to teach your campers about God and His Word.

Amphitheater

“Praise the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. ² Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. ³ Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, ⁴ praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, ⁵ praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. ⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the Lord” (Psalm 150:1-6).

Praise means to give honor to or make known what someone has done. When can you praise God? Anytime. How can you praise God? With what you do and how you do it. Where can you praise God? Anywhere. When should you praise God? Right now! Take some time to thank God for what you're thankful for.

“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. ² Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. ³ There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. ⁴ Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world” (Psalm 19:1-4).

The stars at night are big and bright
Deep in the heart of ___ (yee-hah)

Have you ever just looked up at the sky and wondered about how all those stars got there? It'll keep you awake all night long if you think about it too much. Here is something to think about though:

- The universe is full of activity that is made up by a series of events. Planets revolve around stars, moons revolve around planets, a comet streaks through space in a pattern, stars are born, stars die.
- Each of these events has a cause or a beginning.
- Therefore the universe has a cause - a beginning.
- The beginning of the universe has a cause – a Creator - God.

“...since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - His eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse” (Romans 1:19-20).

Has anyone ever asked you how you know God exists? The Bible says you can just look around you - and there's no excuse for not believing that God exists. Think about the fact that the design of the earth itself makes life possible.

- The unique properties of water make life possible.
- The size of the earth allows us to have the atmosphere we have. If the earth were much smaller, an atmosphere would be impossible. If the earth were too big, the atmosphere would be incapable of sustaining life.
- Because of the earth's distance from the sun - we're not too warm or not too cold for life to be possible.

Let the time you spend outdoors at night in the amphitheater teach you about God's majesty and his creativity!

Annex With Classrooms

"That 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. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. ¹¹ As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." ¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile--the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³ for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

¹⁴ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (Romans 10:9-15).

You meet in a classroom to learn. You learn so you can go with what you've learned and put it to use. God has given you and me the job of building his kingdom. God's kingdom is wherever people obey God. We learn best by hearing stories.

"He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. ²⁷ Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. ²⁸ All by itself the soil produces grain--first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. ²⁹ As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come." ³⁰ Again he said, "What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? ³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest seed you plant in the ground. ³² Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds of the air can perch in its shade" (Mark 4:26-30).

Listen to the great stories in the Bible – they'll teach you about God and how to live the way He wants you to. Then teach them to others. God's Kingdom is built one person at a time!

Arts & Crafts

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10).

When you draw or paint or build something, you create it the way you want it to be (or at least you're trying to get it there). When God creates, He creates the way He wants His creation to be.

Did you know that God created you to do things for Him that no one else can? It's true. Before the world began, God had you in mind. If you need to find something to give your life meaning – look no further than your own hand in front of your face. You're important to God.

Cabins

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash" (Matthew 7:24-27).

The foundation of any building determines whether it will stand or not. It's important to build on a foundation that is solid like rock and does not shift around a lot like sand. If your foundation is not solid, eventually your house can literally fall apart.

Put another way, building your life upon solely on the importance of who you are according to other people, solely on what you do, solely on your status - i.e.: being a good athlete or a student is like building your house upon the sand. Eventually your life can fall apart.

Build your life on the foundation of the rock, Jesus Christ, and be confident that because His God, He is the right foundation to build upon.

Chapel

"The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" ²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴ while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. ²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it" (1 Corinthians 12:21-27).

The chapel is where we come together to give our attention to God and praise Him. Even though we're individuals, we all together make up one body of people. We come from different places, but we're all united here at camp. You're different people, but similar in that you have a common bond. God has brought you're here to encourage each other this week.

Dining Hall

"As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. ² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" (Psalm 42:1-2).

"Jesus answered, "It is written: `Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God' " (Matthew 4:4).

God is our Creator and also our Sustainer. The Bible says that we are more than just a body. We also have a spirit and a soul (Hebrews 4:12). When it's time to chow down, don't forget to feed your soul & your spirit as well!

Field Games

"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).

Time-out! Take a break. It's hot – you deserve a rest. What if you just kept on going and going and going and never rested? You'd probably wear out. God knows that about you. He made you to work best if you sit back regularly and rest, and while you rest, think about all the good things He's done for you.

If the 4th commandment were to be rewritten for us today, it might read as follows:

“Go to school, soccer practice, music lessons, do your homework 6 days out of the week. For out of 7 days in a week, I have given you 6 days to do all of these things. But on the seventh day, make sure that you set that day aside to spend time reflecting on what I have done for you.”

In our society, it's difficult to observe a day of rest. There are so many activities we involve ourselves in; there are so many choices to fill up our time. Many of these choices are available to you on Sundays or whatever day is your Sabbath. While it is difficult and at times inconvenient to set aside a day for God, it is not impossible. God's commandments have not changed. The command to set aside a day of worship and rest still stands.

Pavilion/Shelter

“He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield, in whom I take refuge...” (Psalm 144:2).

“I cry to you, O LORD; I say, “You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.” ⁶ Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need; rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me. ⁷ Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name. Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me” (Psalm 142:5-7).

Sometimes the weather can get rough or too hot. We need a place to protect us from the storms or the heat. Sometimes life can rough or too hot. We need to get out of the storms or the heat. Or you just need to be quiet and rest. Let God be your place of refuge – your hiding place.

Sports 101

“Praise the Lord” (Palm 150:1)

Athletics should be fun. Sports 101 helps you enjoy playing the sport you've chosen, and make it more enjoyable for your teammates and your coaches. We call it being a good “TEAMMATE!”

Thankful

“Praise the Lord!” (Psalm 150:1).

Can you run and jump and throw? Be thankful. Can see and hear and think? Be thankful. Ask your coach if you can lead a prayer before the practice or game, thanking God for the good gift of simply being able to play.

Encouraging

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

Never embarrass or put down your teammates in front of them or to anyone else (even privately). Cheer them on and encourage them if they make a mistake. Help a teammate improve her swing; help him learn a new play. Be the first to congratulate a teammate or opponent on a good play.

Approved

“For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends (2 Corinthians 10:18).

Do you have a teammate who is a ball hog? Does anyone on your team like to brag about how many points he scored or how great of a play she made? Remember how it makes you feel? When you make the awesome play, simply point up - let others know that it's God who has given you the ability to make that hi-light film play.

Masterful

“Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed” (Proverbs 16:3).

The best way to have fun in sports is to play - a lot. So, find ways to play more. Commit to doing what it takes to help your team. Make sure mom or dad gets you to practice and games on time. Learn how to play other

positions so you can play where there's a need. Make up a play and ask coach to let you teach it during practice - if it works, ask him if you can run it in the game.

Mindful

"Each of you should look not only to your own interests but also to the interests of others" (Philippians 2:4).

If your teammate passes to you when she could have shot, return the favor sometime. When your coach takes his time to be at practice or games, listen to him or her.

All Star

"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus..." (Colossians 3:17).

Want to be named to the "All-Star Team?" Here's how: Do a good job in everything you do. Come to all the practices and games, bring really good snacks when it's your turn, listen to your coach so he doesn't have to repeat himself over and over, participate cheerfully rather than complain, play hard until the very end. If you do this, you'll be a true all-star.

Trailblazer

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart..." (Colossians 3:23).

Be a leader. Find new ways to make games and practices fun. Make-up cheers for the team. Ask a pro-player to come to one of your practices (this really works - I've done it)!

Enthusiastic

"I have come so that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

Be enthusiastic. If you can't find anything to be enthusiastic about, pretend to be enthusiastic and pretty soon, you will be enthusiastic. Show up to the game even if you're sick or injured. Even if you're the least player on the last place team, your good attitude will make it a winning season. So, let the river flow!

Servant

"If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all" (Mark 9:35).

Remember how good it makes you feel when you pick out a special gift for your mom or dad for Christmas? No matter how much we like getting, it feels even better to give. Same thing goes for sports. Pick up equipment after a game. Volunteer to give up some of your playing time so everyone can play the same amount.

Swimming

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20).

Do you know the difference between Christianity and other religions?

- Religions are what people do - seeking and struggling to reach God by doing good things and living good lives. Christianity is what God does – finding you and reaching down to help you
- Every religious system is a set of swimming instructions. Christianity is a life preserver
- In religions, good deeds are an "in order to." In Christianity they are a "therefore"
- Religions are "do." Christianity is "done"

Christianity alone offers assurance of salvation. Jesus does something for us we cannot do for ourselves. He offers to us His power to live as we should; He forgives us of our sins; He cleanses us from our sins and gives us His own perfect nature - all as a gift.

In every "works" religion, it is impossible to ever have assurance of your salvation. When do you know that you have done enough good works to earn your salvation or reach your god's standards for salvation? You never know and you never can know.

Trust in Jesus Christ for your salvation. He alone is your life jacket.

Walking Trails (1)

"The LORD is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27).

Walking along a trail is fun & enjoyable. Often times beautiful. But just because something is fun, attractive, and seemingly enjoyable doesn't mean it's good for you. If someone asked you to run into a tornado – would you? It might be exciting for you, but perhaps not the best idea.

Sometimes it's hard to know if an activity is good one or bad to be involved with. There are four good ways to know if you're going down the right path:

1. Is what I'm doing helpful to me and to others? Will this help me become a better Christian, brother or sister, son or daughter?
2. Will this activity take control of my life? Will I be unable to stop doing this even if I want to?
3. Will what I'm doing cause someone else to make a bad decision?
4. Is what I'm doing going to honor God?

Make sure you're on the right trail!

Walking Trails (2)

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. ²In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴You know the way to the place where I am going."

⁵Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

⁶Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him" (John 14:1-7).

Some people say that there's only one road that leads you to God. Well, that's wrong. There are many, many roads that lead you to God. Because the Bible says one day **ALL** people will stand before God. If you want to enter heaven, though, there is only **ONE** way – through Jesus Christ.

Jesus claimed to be God. Either His claims are true or false. If His claims are true, then He is God; there is One standard for truth; the Bible is God's word and it is true – all of it, not just some parts; you have meaning and purpose for your life. Many roads to God, one-way to heaven.

Make sure you're on the right road.