

# WISE UP

*Wisdom In Proverbs*

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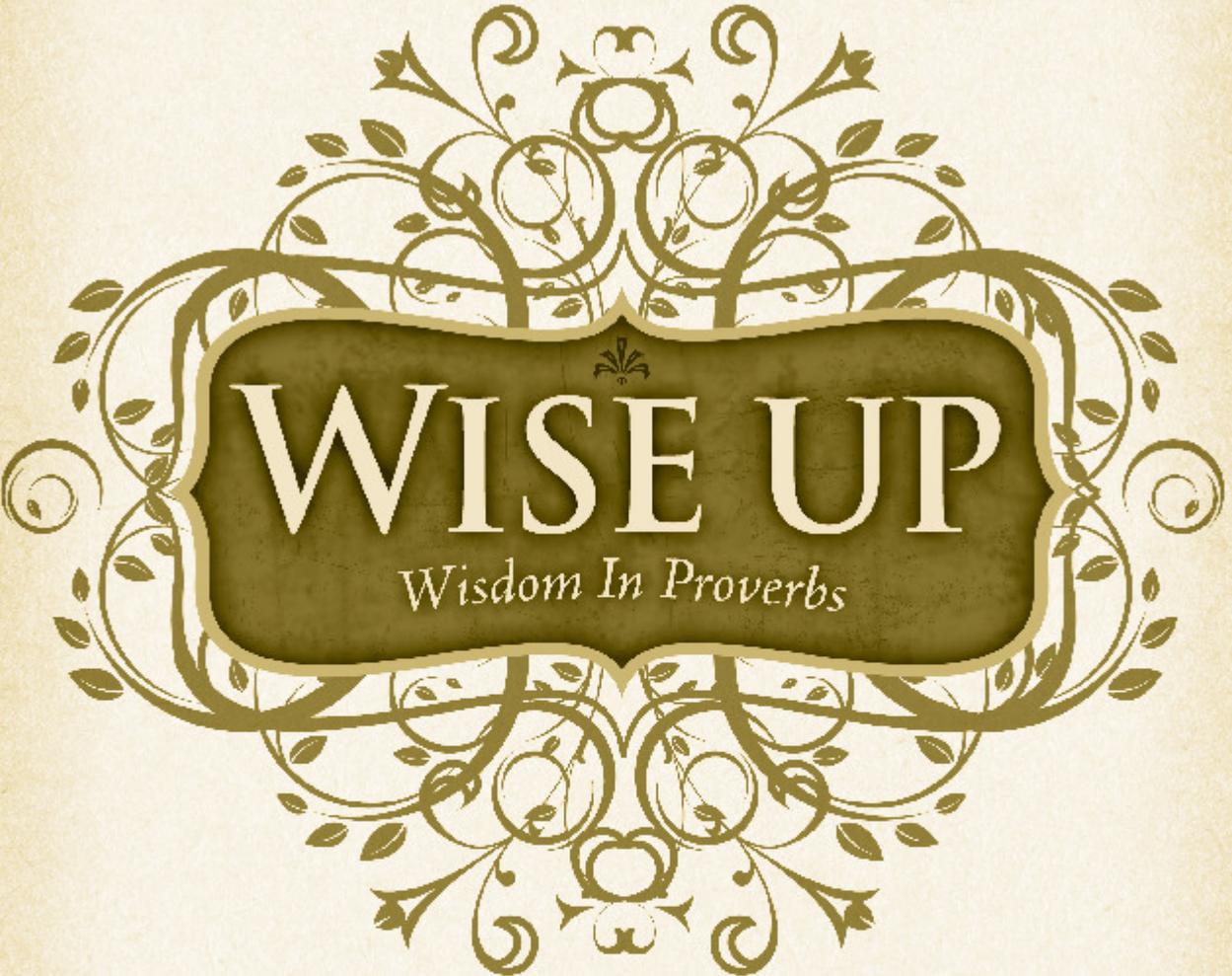
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Have a fantastic year!

For His glory,

The Positive Action Family



A large, ornate, symmetrical decorative frame in a light olive-green color. It features intricate scrollwork, leaves, and floral motifs, creating a classic, elegant border. The frame is centered on the page and contains the main title and subtitle.

# WISE UP

*Wisdom In Proverbs*

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## WISE UP: WISDOM IN PROVERBS

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Second Edition

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# WHAT IS WISDOM?

This year we are going to center our study on the key word of the book of Proverbs—“wisdom.” Your years in middle school are a very important time in your life. No longer are you a child, but neither are you an adult. You are entering a time of life when you must learn what it means to be a mature, responsible young man or woman. You will have many important choices to make, and your parents will have to trust that you can make wise choices as you journey through the next few years. In some situations, learning to be wise will mean the difference between success and failure. Learn to be wise, and you will have success.

According to Proverbs 3:13-15, what four things cannot compare to the value or importance of wisdom?

1.

2.

3.

4.

Many people would value these things above anything else. But why is wisdom more valuable than any of these things?

## WHAT WISDOM IS NOT

God’s Word is very specific about what wisdom is and what it is not. In the next few lessons we will study exactly what wisdom *is*. But first, let’s make sure we understand what it is *not*.

According to 1 Corinthians 2:4-8, there are two types of wisdom. What are the two types?

1.

2.

How is the wisdom that comes from God described in these verses?

Read Proverbs 21:30. Explain in your own words exactly where wisdom *is* found and where it is *not* found.

## MAN'S WAYS VS. THE WAYS OF GOD

Anything that denies or belittles God is not wisdom. Without God, there can be no true wisdom. What does Isaiah 55:8 teach us about God's thoughts and actions?

Therefore, atheism or godlessness in any form is not wisdom. One system of thought that teaches ideas opposed to God in today's society is humanism. Humanists say:

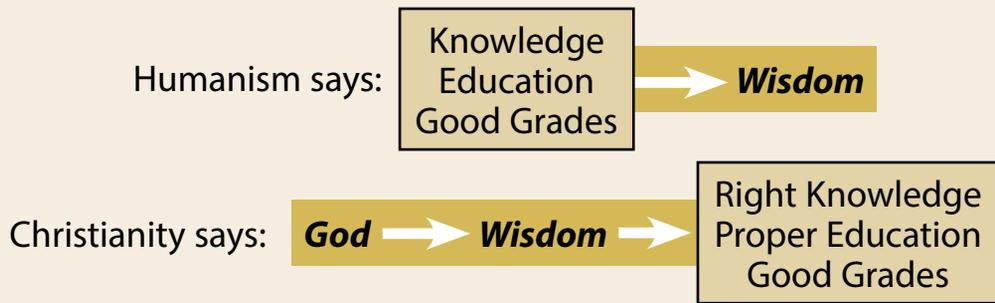
God is not the center of all things. In fact, there is no God, and there is no Creator. Instead, the world came into existence by itself. There is no God to tell us right from wrong. Man is the center of all things and in control of everything that happens. "Right" is anything that pleases man and adds to his pleasure. "Wrong" is anything that man dislikes. It is good and right for us to "do our own thing" or whatever will bring us pleasure and contentment.

Humanists say that *education* is the source of wisdom. Many people in the world have learned much of the knowledge of the world, but that does not mean they are wise.

Humanists say that good grades are the measure of wisdom. However, you may be the most intelligent person in your school and make all the honor rolls, but this does not necessarily mean that you are wise.

Make sure you understand the difference. Education and good grades do not make us wise. God alone makes us wise. A truly wise person will study hard and get the best grades possible because a wise person knows that God has given us the opportunity to understand the world He has created.

Knowledge is the accumulation of facts and ideas. Wisdom is knowing how to apply facts and ideas so that important choices can be made rightly.



Read 1 Corinthians 1:19-21 and 3:19-20 and answer the following questions.

- What will God destroy? (1:19)

- What is the world unable to use in order to know God? (1:21)

- What did it please God to use in saving those who believe? (1:21)

- What is the world's wisdom in God's sight? (3:19)

- In God's sight, what are the thoughts of those who are "wise" in the worldly sense? (3:20)

## THE FUTURE OF ALL HUMANISTIC THOUGHT

Go back to God's wisdom book, Proverbs, and see what God promises will happen to all those who do not listen to Him and follow Him. Read Proverbs 1:20-33 and describe what will happen to those who reject God and His wisdom.

## WISDOM IS A PERSON

Read Proverbs 8:22-31. Compare what is said there with what is said in the New Testament in John 1:1-3, 10-12.

- Both passages are describing Whom?

- Read Colossians 2:3. According to this verse, what is in Christ?

The Christ of Creation is the very wisdom and knowledge of God. If you know Jesus, you know God. And if you know and fear the Lord God, you will have wisdom.

## HOW WISDOM ACTS

We now understand that true wisdom comes only from God and only through knowing His Son, Jesus Christ. What then does wisdom have to do with salvation?

When we know Jesus Christ, we have the capability to act wisely. He can instruct us in wisdom and enable us to be wise. If you are trusting and obeying Christ as the Savior and Lord of your life, then He will change you to help you be more and more like Him (including in His wisdom) in all aspects of life! As we continue through our study of Proverbs this year, we will learn how wisdom applies to every aspect of our lives. Match the following verses to see just a few of the ways that having wisdom will affect your life:

|                                      |                   |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Wisdom prepares for the future.   | A. Prov. 22:3     |
| 2. Wisdom seeks salvation from hell. | B. Prov. 11:30    |
| 3. Wisdom is obedient.               | C. James 3:17     |
| 4. Wisdom wins souls.                | D. Prov. 30:24-26 |
| 5. Wisdom plans for the future.      | E. Prov. 28:7     |
| 6. Wisdom fears the Lord.            | F. Prov. 15:33    |
| 7. Wisdom is peaceable.              | G. Prov. 15:24    |

## HOW THE UNWISE ACT

Using the seven examples above that show how wisdom acts, describe how the *unwise* act. In your explanation, do not just write the exact opposite of what the verse says. Use different wording to explain your ideas. For example, for the first one, do not simply say that the unwise do not prepare for the future. Instead, you might say that the unwise are concerned only about what is happening right now. The unwise...

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

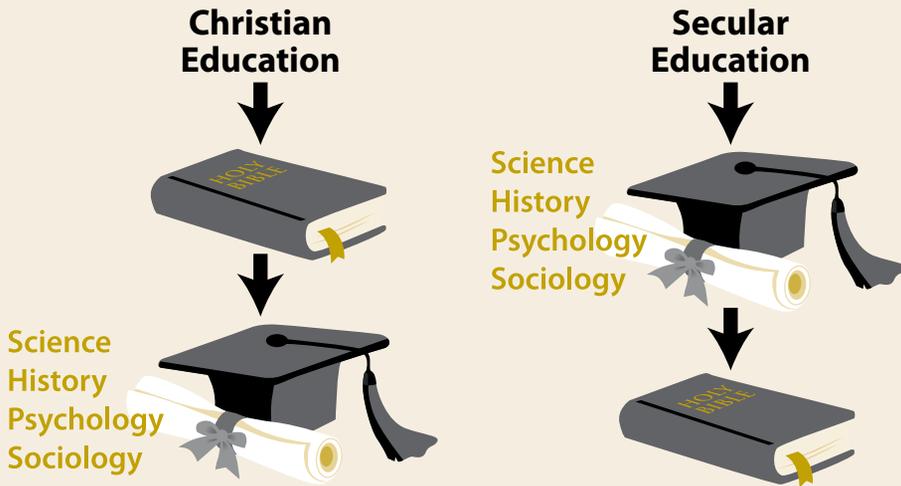
This year, as we study how wisdom works in our lives, we will be studying about our homes, our relationships with others, how we make decisions, what the future will be like, and many, many other ideas. To begin, look at the lists under “How Wisdom Acts” and “How the Unwise Act” and think through how wise you are in these seven areas. List

each idea in one of the boxes below. For example, take item #1. Do you prepare well for the future? If so, write this statement in the first row under the first column: “I prepare for the future.” If this is not true of you, write this statement in the first row under the second column: “I am concerned only about now.” From this, you will begin to see those areas in which you need to grow in wisdom, and you will be able to plan how to respond wisely in particular situations.

|    | Wise | Unwise |
|----|------|--------|
| 1. |      |        |
| 2. |      |        |
| 3. |      |        |
| 4. |      |        |
| 5. |      |        |
| 6. |      |        |
| 7. |      |        |

## TEACHER'S LESSON

Humanism is man's attempt to     
independently of .





## LESSON 2

# WISDOM AND FOOLISHNESS

Proverbs contains many comparisons between a wise man and a fool. Being a wise person often has nothing to do with age. Usually an older person does have knowledge and wisdom because of all the experiences of life. One basic reason we need to listen to older people is that they have already dealt with many of the same problems we are facing. But just because a person is old does not mean that he or she is truly wise because true wisdom comes only from God. Sometimes older people still act very foolishly, while young people have great wisdom because they know and follow God.

### WISE AND FOOLISH REACTIONS

Read the following verses in Proverbs, and record how a wise man and a fool react to the following types of situations. Be ready to use your notes to discuss each section.

| 1. Reaction to Rebuke, Reproof, or Correction |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| Wise Man's Reaction                           | Fool's Reaction |
| (9:8)   | (9:8)           |
| (15:31)                                       | (13:1)          |
| (17:10)                                       | (15:12)         |
|   | (17:10)         |

## 2. Reaction to Rules, Regulations, and Authority

| Wise Man's Reaction | Fool's Reaction                      |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (10:8)              | (10:8)<br><br>(10:23)<br><br>(17:11) |

## 3. Reaction to Advice, Instruction, Teaching, and Preaching

| Wise Man's Reaction | Fool's Reaction                     |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (12:1)              | (1:7)                               |
| (12:15)             | (1:22)                              |
| (15:14)             | (12:15)                             |
| (18:15)             | (15:5)<br><br>(17:16)<br><br>(23:9) |

## 4. Reaction to Arguing, Fighting, and Disagreements

| Wise Man's Reaction | Fool's Reaction       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| (11:12)             | (18:6)<br><br>(29:11) |

## 5. Reaction to Sin and Wrongdoing

| Wise Man's Reaction | Fool's Reaction |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| (14:16)             | (14:9)          |
| (22:3)              | (14:16)         |

### THE KEY TO WISDOM AND MATURITY

As you have seen from the last exercise, the major concern of the Scriptures is not whether people are rich or poor, athletic or musical, smart or slow to learn, well dressed or poorly dressed, outgoing or shy or friendly or lonely. In fact, foolish people judge others by some of these external standards, but maturity teaches us to view others as God views them. God judges us by whether we are wise or foolish. A fool rejects the one true God and does not recognize that the world was created and is held together by Him. A fool does not consider Who it is that provides everything we have. He does not even recognize Who gives him life. He is indeed a fool.

Read Psalm 14:1-3 and explain in your own words how King David described the fool.

According to Proverbs 15:33, what keeps a person from being a fool?

When the Bible talks about fearing the Lord (as in Prov. 15:33), it does not mean being afraid of God in the way that we fear danger or pain. In this verse and many others, fear means to have a deep respect for God and to give Him great honor. Compare the above verses and explain what you think really is the key to growing up into maturity.

## MORE ABOUT THE FOOL AND THE WISE MAN

Each of the following areas are very important aspects of our lives. Look up each verse in Proverbs and think about what the Bible says about the fool. Then, in your own words, write the *opposite* attitude or action that a *wise* person would have or show. If there are words in the verses that you do not understand, use a dictionary to look them up.

| 1. Attitudes |  |
|--------------|--|
| 12:15        |  |
| 14:3         |  |

| 2. Home Life |  |
|--------------|--|
| 10:1         |  |
| 15:5         |  |
| 15:20        |  |

| 3. What We Say |  |
|----------------|--|
| 15:2           |  |
| 15:7           |  |
| 29:11          |  |

#### 4. Attitude Toward Sin

13:19

14:9

14:16

#### 5. Getting Angry

10:19

12:16

14:17

#### 6. Setting Goals and Completing Tasks

10:14

15:14

21:20

Look over the verses in Proverbs that we have studied in this lesson. List some of the characteristics (both of the foolish man and the wise man) that you see existing in your life right now. A wise person evaluates himself and knows himself. As you evaluate yourself, God can help you weed out those foolish reactions and strengthen the areas in which you are showing wisdom in your life.

Foolish Characteristics in My Life

Wise Characteristics in My Life

# TEACHER'S LESSON

## *Definition of a Proverb*

A short  expressing in a  a  truth

## *The Main Purposes for Studying Proverbs:*

- To know
- To know the Word
- To know
- To learn how to  God's wisdom
- To give  to life

## *How to Understand Proverbs:*

- Recognize you have a
- 
- 
-



## LESSON 3

# THE EXAMPLE OF WISE MEN

We are going to spend most of this lesson seeing how two men pursued God’s wisdom. God had greatly blessed both of these men, King Solomon and Daniel. They both became famous and were able to influence the lives of many people with whom they came in contact. Not only were they wise, but they also enjoyed fame, fortune, and great success during their lifetimes. Look carefully at how and why God blessed them and think about how you could glorify God if He would bless you with wisdom and help you make right choices throughout your life.

## KING SOLOMON

One great reason to study the life of Solomon is that he is the primary author of our main “textbook” for this class this year—the book of Proverbs. God can use the life of this great king to teach us the difference between the wisdom of God and the perceived wisdom of the world.

King Solomon was the son of the great King David. He was fortunate to have had a father like David who loved the Lord God all the days of his life. David taught Solomon the value of trusting in God and having the wisdom of God above all else. If you read Solomon’s story, you will see once again the value of having the fear of God as your first priority. Our “priorities” are what we value as important in our lives. Read part of the story of Solomon (1 Kings 3:3-15), and answer each question below:

What did Solomon learn from his father? (vss. 3 and 6)

How did Solomon view himself? (vss. 7 and 8)

For what did Solomon ask? (vs. 9)

For what did Solomon *not* ask? (vs. 11)

List what God gave Solomon (in the order of their priorities). (vss. 12 and 13)

What did God require of Solomon? (vs. 14)

What reward did He promise him? (vs. 14)

Solomon was the king of Israel. He was rich and famous, and—humanly speaking—he had no need of anyone or anything. Yet Solomon saw the need to seek God and the wisdom of God first. What conclusion can you reach about priorities for your own life? Make a list of things that are important to you. You might include friends, school, music, sports, family, church, or anything else that is important to you.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Of the things you have listed, which three do you think ought to have the highest priority in your life?

1.

2.

3.

## DANIEL

During the reign of Jehoiakim, Daniel and three of his companions were taken captive to Babylon. Their superiors recognized them to be excellent young men. Because of their special qualifications, they were selected to be trained for the king's service.

Daniel 1:4 explains specifically what the Babylonians saw in Daniel and his friends that impressed them. List these things below:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

All of these are qualities that people might admire in you, also. Good looks and a noble heritage are nice to have, but notice the emphasis on the wisdom of these young men and on their aptitude to learn and to teach.

Daniel and his friends got their wisdom from God! Their wise responses helped them through three conflicts with the Babylonians.

Read Daniel 1:8-16. What was the first conflict?

How did the wisdom of God help Daniel resolve the conflict?

Read Daniel 2 to find out about the conflict between pagan magic and the wisdom of God. What was the conflict?

How did the wisdom of God help Daniel resolve the conflict?

Read Daniel 3 to find out about the conflict between heathen idolatry and loyalty to the true God. What was the conflict?

How did the wisdom of God help Daniel's friends resolve the conflict?

You will learn that you will have conflicts of many kinds in your life. Friends will try to tempt you to do wrong. Situations will arise in which you will have to make important decisions for yourself. As in Daniel's situation, your parents may not be able to help you make a decision. You will be responsible to make wise choices on your own.

Share a situation in which you had a conflict to resolve. What was the conflict?

How did the wisdom of God relate to the situation?

What choice did you make in the situation? Was it a wise choice?

## BLESSINGS FOR APPLYING THE WISDOM OF GOD

God blesses our lives in many different ways as we trust in His wisdom—just as Solomon and Daniel received great blessings. Read the verses from Proverbs listed on the next page and write out each blessing God promises for using the wisdom that comes from Him.

After seeing some of the rewards and results of true wisdom, it is obvious why God says that those who reject Him are truly foolish.

- 1:33

- 3:2

- 3:13

- 3:17

- 3:24

- 4:12

- 4:22

- 8:35

- 24:5

- 24:14

# TEACHER'S LESSON

## *Proverbs 30:24-28*





# OUR HOME LIFE

To help us mature physically, emotionally, and spiritually, God has provided us with a family. We all need people who will love us and help us become godly young people. God intends for a family to be a place where you are loved and valued and cared for and protected from the world. Your home should be the place where you learn how to be the right kind of person, love others, and serve them.

For the home and family to be effective in this mission, everyone must share responsibilities. Your attitude and willingness to be a part of the family are important.

God has given parents special responsibilities for the love and care of their children. Parents who choose to avoid their obligations to their children are choosing to disobey God.

## PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

We are going to talk about the parents' responsibilities first, and then we will see how your attitudes and actions affect the family. Read the verses below and explain the responsibilities indicated.

| Verse               | Parents' Responsibility |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Deuteronomy 6:6-7   |                         |
| Proverbs 22:6       |                         |
| 2 Corinthians 12:14 |                         |
| Ephesians 6:4       |                         |
| 1 Timothy 3:4       |                         |
| Titus 2:4           |                         |

## HOW YOUR ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS AFFECT YOUR FAMILY

Sometimes young people do not realize the importance of their attitudes and how they will affect their future. There is so much for young people to do once they are in middle school. School life, studies, sports, church, hobbies, and friends take up so much time and energy. All of these may have a rightful place. But sometimes these outside things become so important that we forget about the most important people in our lives—our parents.

As young people, you probably do not realize that your parents will still be important long after you no longer have to study or long after you go to college and acquire new friendships. For most of you, your parents will not leave you or forget about you. That is difficult to realize right now because so many other things take up your thoughts and time. But it is still true.

God knows that the most important lessons for all of your youth are those you learn at home. If you learn from your parents and honor them, you will be better prepared to be a wonderful parent yourself. Part of growing up to be a mature person is understanding how much your attitudes and actions at home affect your whole life, and how you live reflects a picture to others about Jesus Christ. When you dishonor your parents, you dishonor Him as well.

Read the verses listed below, and record the effects your wise or foolish actions have upon your parents.

### THE WISE YOUNG PERSON

| Proverb | Father |
|---------|--------|
| 10:1    |        |
| 15:20   |        |
| 23:24   |        |
| 27:11   |        |
| 29:3    |        |

## THE FOOLISH YOUNG PERSON

| Proverb | Father | Mother |
|---------|--------|--------|
| 10:1    |        |        |
| 15:20   |        |        |
| 17:21   |        |        |
| 17:25   |        |        |
| 19:13   |        |        |
| 19:26   |        |        |
| 28:7    |        |        |
| 30:11   |        |        |

Your attitude toward your parents affects them greatly because much of their happiness and success is affected by your attitudes and actions.

### PARENTS ARE HUMAN TOO

It is true that there will be times when your parents do things that make you angry. This can happen for many reasons. First, parents have bad days themselves and carry many concerns of which you are not aware. They have great responsibilities, one of which is to keep a good home for your family. Sometimes their hearts are heavy, and they don't seem to be hearing your problems. This is probably *not* because they do not care. They might be preoccupied with matters they have not mentioned to you. Secondly, sometimes your parents must say "no" to your wishes for reasons that you might not understand. When this happens, you should accept that they have wisdom *beyond* your understanding. They are concerned with your protection and welfare. It is always difficult to accept a "no"

from your parents, but when you realize that God works through your parents to bless you, it is easier to accept and submit to their final decisions as God's will for you. He gave you your parents, and He is giving them their wisdom.

Mothers and fathers have their own particular problems that God discusses in His Word. When your parents married, God says they became one flesh. But this does not mean that you are one flesh with your parents. You are separate from them and will one day leave their home and have your own home. This can be a problem for your mother because she has nurtured you and cared for you since you were born. She knows that you must leave one day, but it is hard for her to watch you grow up. She wants to keep you close to her.

Often, a dad's greatest struggle is in the area of discipline. Although he is commanded to discipline, a dad might be guilty of either under-disciplining or of over-disciplining. What does Ephesians 6:4 say about this second problem?

Although your dad may not always discipline you the way you think he should, remember that he loves you. The correction he gives is intended for your benefit. No one does everything perfectly at all times. You make mistakes, and so do your parents. When your parents mishandle a situation, you need to accept their mistake and forgive them. This is the same response you hope for from them if you make a mistake. You can trust that they will keep loving you anyway and not hold your past mistakes against you.

## GOD'S ATTITUDE TOWARD REBELLION

In the Old Testament, a rebellious and ungrateful young person received severe discipline. While this would not happen today, it shows us clearly how God feels about a young person who dishonors his parents. Read Deuteronomy 21:18-21 and answer the questions below.

What wrong attitudes did the parents find in their son?

What discipline was given because of these attitudes?

Other passages in the Old Testament show how seriously God takes the sin of dishonoring parents. Read Exodus 21:15; Leviticus 20:9; and Proverbs 30:17. Although you do not have to worry about this type of treatment today, what penalty was given for those who showed rebellion against their parents?

What do these stories prove to us about how God views our attitudes toward our parents?

## A ROOT OF BITTERNESS

God does not bless a young person who is rebellious (inwardly or outwardly) toward his parents. If we do not accept what our parents tell us, if we cause them heartache and worry instead, and if we are not at peace with them in our own hearts, what will spring up in our hearts? (See Heb. 12:15.)

Some bitterness begins in the home with a wrong attitude toward your parents or brothers and sisters. Since it begins as a root in your life, it soon grows like cancer deeper into your heart, until it gradually affects your relationship with your teachers, your pastor, and even your friends. A bitter, rebellious attitude will affect everyone in your life, whether you want it to or not. Hebrews 12:15 describes two effects of bitterness in our life. What are they?

1.

2.

Be honest! How do you feel about your father's instruction and advice?

How do you react to your parents' correction and punishment?

## AN IMPORTANT PROMISE

Read Exodus 20:12, Deuteronomy 5:16; and Ephesians 6:1-3; and explain God's promise to young people who honor and obey their parents.

It is also important to understand that if your parents were to allow you to have a wrong attitude. If they let you disobey or show disrespect without correcting you, they would not be helping you. In the long run, they would be keeping God's blessings from you, and that would not be loving. Part of their loving you is their correcting you.

## GRATEFULNESS OVERCOMES WRONG ATTITUDES

One way to handle those times when you do not agree with your parents is to remind yourself of the wonderful things they have done for you. Remind yourself that your parents have loved you and provided for you and have been planning for your future. Remember the things they have done for you, and be thankful. A thankful attitude cannot hold on to bitterness and anger. List below some of the things that your parents do to show they love you, care for your needs, and want the best for you.

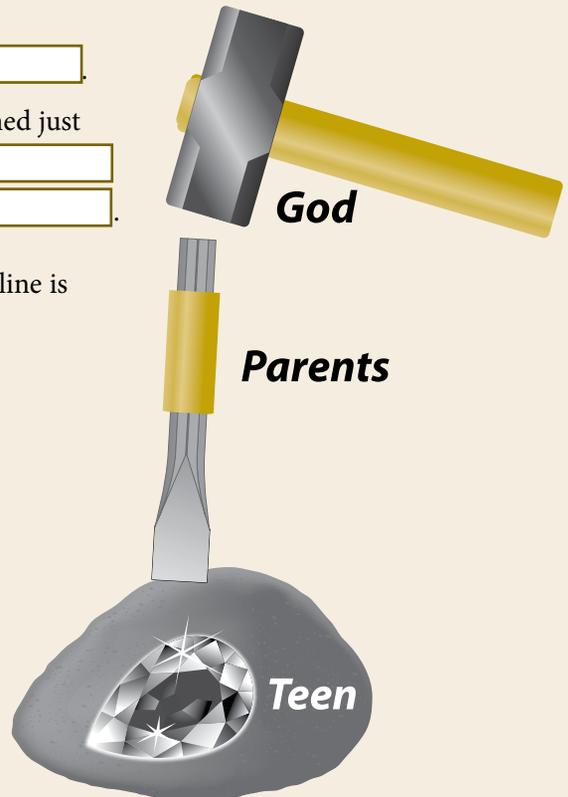
1.
2.
3.
4.
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7.
8.
9.
10.

## TEACHER'S LESSON

### *Five Facts About Discipline*

1. Discipline is  and .
  2. Discipline is  by God.
  3. Discipline is due to .
  4. Discipline produces .
- Rules and regulations are not designed just   
but are also .
5. The most important factor in discipline is .





# HONORING OUR PARENTS

When Jesus was on the cross, He gave us one of the most important lessons of His ministry on earth. Jesus had just been through a court trial full of lies and false accusations. He had been beaten, mocked, bruised, and nailed to a cross where He hung for six hours. We can only imagine from our studies of how Jesus died just how great the pain and humiliation were.

If you were Jesus, under those circumstances, it would be easy to dwell on the pain, shame, and horror of the crucifixion. And yet even then, Jesus did not think about Himself. Even at this time, Jesus was thinking of others. He asked God to forgive those who were trying to kill Him. He also took time to make sure His mother would be taken care of.

Read the story in John 19:25-27 and describe the scene.

What exactly did Jesus do to make sure His mother would be cared for?

That we understand the importance of honoring, respecting, and caring for our parents is always pleasing to God.

## WAYS WE DISHONOR PARENTS

There are many ways we might dishonor our parents. Sometimes we do it deliberately, and sometimes we dishonor them without even thinking. Read the following verses and write some of the ways we *fail* to honor and respect our parents.

| Verse          | How Might We Dishonor Parents? |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Proverbs 30:11 |                                |
| Micah 7:6      |                                |
| 2 Timothy 3:2  |                                |

After reading these verses, think of some specific things you have done that were dishonoring to your parents. Ask the Lord to help you remember some things you might have forgotten. He loves you and your parents, and He wants you to have a right relationship with both them and Him. He will convict you of the things that need to be changed, and He can teach you how to change them.

1.
2.
3.
4.

## THE STORY OF THE PRODIGAL SON

Sometimes young people find themselves in trouble because they have done wrong or have not handled themselves wisely in some way. There is a story that Jesus told about a young man who did not handle himself wisely.

This story shows us the downward steps a young person takes when he sets himself against his parents. Many times a young person forgets all the good that is in his home and thinks that what is outside is more important, more interesting, or more fun. When we let the things outside our homes become too important, we begin to slide downward as did the prodigal son. This story also shows that there is a way to overcome the problems we have caused.

Read the story in Luke 15:11-24. Beside each verse write what happened. Then select from the following list of descriptive words an attitude that is shown by the prodigal

son: self-will, selfishness, destitution, loneliness, humiliation, realization, repentance, admission of guilt, reconciliation, rejoicing.

| Verse(s) | What Actually Happened | Descriptive Word(s) |
|----------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 11-12    |                        |                     |
| 13       |                        |                     |
| 14       |                        |                     |
| 15       |                        |                     |
| 16       |                        |                     |
| 17       |                        |                     |
| 18       |                        |                     |
| 19       |                        |                     |
| 20-21    |                        |                     |
| 22-24    |                        |                     |

Think of a situation in which you caused a problem for your parents. What was the problem? How did your parents learn of the problem? What was done to correct the

problem and to correct you? What was your attitude at the beginning? At the end? What decision did you come to regarding the problem? Write a paragraph below explaining what happened and the steps you took.

How could your attitude have changed the situation at any one of the steps?

Did you ever admit you were wrong?    Yes    No

Did the consequences help your understanding of how to handle yourself in the future?    Yes    No

Remember, if your inner attitude does not change, you will only face problems and cause friction between you and your parents that will affect all those around you. It is often difficult to admit we are wrong, but it is always for the best.

## GOD ALSO CARES HOW PARENTS ACT

Remember that the Lord is also very concerned about those parents who do not discipline and care for their children. Read the following verses and see what displeased the Lord. To determine who the parent was, you will have to read the context of the verse (other verses in the same passage).

| Verse         | Parent | What Displeased the Lord? |
|---------------|--------|---------------------------|
| 1 Samuel 3:13 |        |                           |
| 1 Kings 1:6   |        |                           |
| Jeremiah 9:14 |        |                           |

These parents pleased the Lord. Why?

| Verse               | Parent | What Pleased the Lord? |
|---------------------|--------|------------------------|
| 2 Chronicles 17:3–4 |        |                        |
| 2 Chronicles 26:4   |        |                        |
| 2 Timothy 1:5       |        |                        |

Parents' feelings are often directly related to the behavior of their children. Using Proverbs 17:6, 21, and 25, explain how what you do affects your parents emotionally.

God has given your parents to you for your guidance and protection. When they discipline you, they are simply being obedient to God by acting out of love and concern for you. Maybe this scenario will clarify this concept: What would you do if you saw a baby crawling toward a fire?

Why would you do this?

What if the baby got mad and cried because you wouldn't let him get into the fire? Would you still say "no"?

What if the baby were somehow able to articulate his feelings? What if the baby argued, "What a cruel person you are! You are not letting me 'do my own thing.' You just don't understand me! You don't want me to have any fun! Don't you realize that babies *like* fire?"

Of course, you *do* realize all these things, but you *also* know something that the baby *doesn't* know. You know what fire will do to him, and you love him. Your love, understanding, and experience cause you to tell the baby “no” and possibly to discipline him if he fails to obey.

Now think about your parents. They understand you and your desires more than you think they do. They also love you more than you will realize until you have your own child someday. They have experience far beyond your years. Remember, they were once *teenagers*, but you have never been a *parent*! Part of becoming a mature young adult is recognizing the importance of these three things: love, understanding, and experience.

## REASONS TO HONOR OUR PARENTS

God has given many examples in the Bible of parents who showed great protection for their children. Read each passage. Explain who the parent and child were and why the parent should be honored.

| Verses                             | Parent and Child | Why Should the Parent Be Honored? |
|------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Exodus 2:1-10                      |                  |                                   |
| 1 Samuel 1:9-11,<br>24-28; 2:18-19 |                  |                                   |
| 2 Samuel 12:15-17                  |                  |                                   |
| Isaiah 49:13-15                    |                  |                                   |
| Mark 5:22-23                       |                  |                                   |
| Luke 15:20-24                      |                  |                                   |

## RECEIVING INSTRUCTION

In His Word, God is very clear about another aspect of your relationship with your parents that He wants you to understand: You will receive your greatest lessons in life from your parents. Their instruction is very important for your future. Read Proverbs 4:1-4 and 13:1 and explain what God has to say to you about receiving instruction.

The problem with receiving instruction is that sometimes we have too much pride to show we are interested in listening to instruction. We try to act disinterested or as if we do not really need more instruction. One of the most important lessons God wants you to learn as you go through your middle school and high school years is to learn to listen faithfully and attentively to your parents. When they instruct you or try to explain something to you, take the time to *hear* them—not just with your ears, but with your mind. A mature person listens to instruction.

Think of some of the things your mother and father have tried to teach you. If you cannot remember their instruction, ask God to help you so that you can list some of your parents' ideas below.

1.

2.

3.

4.

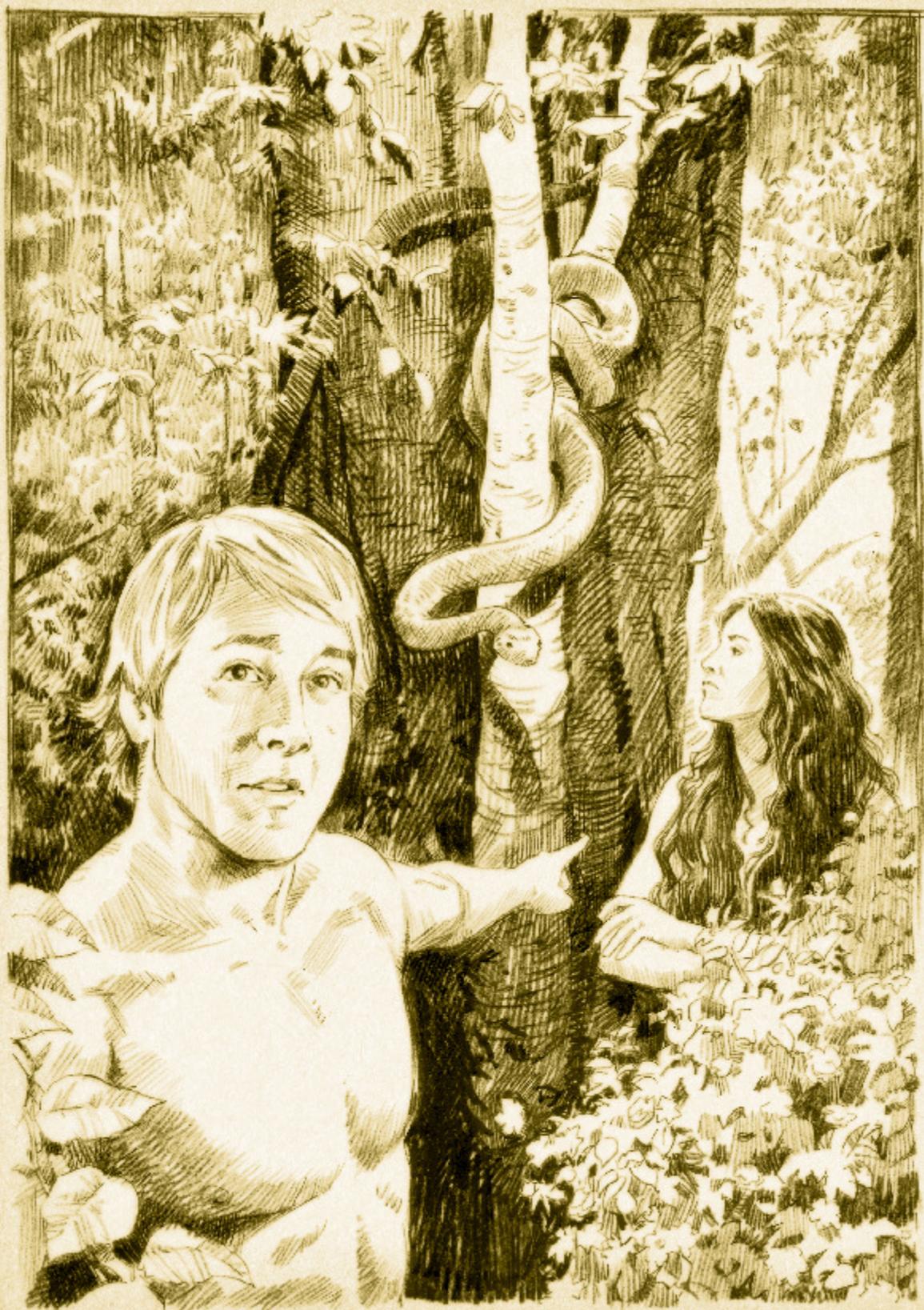
5.

Someday soon, there will be some very important things you will want to learn, and your parents will want to help you learn them. For example, learning to drive a car is very important to most teenagers. If your parents are going to trust you with something as important as driving, they will want to be sure that you are interested in and responsible with their instruction now. We will be talking more about freedom, trust, and responsibility in our next lesson.

## TEACHER'S LESSON

### *Three Main Categories of Influential Relationships in Your Life*

| Your relationships... |
|-----------------------|
| 1. With               |
| 2. With your          |
| 3. With               |





## LESSON 6

# FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

Proverbs 9:12 tells us about the importance of responsibility. Read this verse and explain what it says in your own words.

Two other verses support what this verse in Proverbs tells us. Explain the additional ideas given in Job 19:4 and Ezekiel 18:20.

Now apply these concepts to your own life as a young person. What is God trying to make you understand about responsibility?

## MAKING EXCUSES

It can be very difficult to accept responsibility for our actions when we have done wrong. Perhaps if we understand where this pattern of avoiding responsibility began, we can learn why we act the way we do.

You have probably studied the story of Adam and Eve many times. God had placed Adam and Eve in a perfect place. There was no sin in the Garden of Eden, and Adam and Eve

were very close to God. God would walk and talk with them in the garden. But God did give Adam and Eve a choice to make, just as you have many choices to make in your life. God told them specifically that if they ate of the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, then they would surely die (Gen. 2:17).

Notice the word “surely.” God had given Adam and Eve a choice, and He told them exactly what the consequences would be if they made the wrong choice. The problem with Adam and Eve was that they decided not to believe God. They chose to believe what they wanted to believe. You have similar choices to make. Your parents will teach you right from wrong, and they will describe to you the consequences of doing wrong. But you still have the responsibility to make a choice for yourself.

We all know that Adam and Eve listened to the wrong voice and made the wrong decision. In the garden, Satan talked through a serpent, and they chose to believe Satan. Satan tempts us in many ways. Always be aware of Satan’s devices. A serpent will probably not approach you and talk to you as he did to Adam and Eve. But can you think of some ways that Satan will try to tempt you to do wrong? Who or what might he use?

There were many consequences for Adam and Eve for making the wrong choice and disobeying God. These negative results still affect us today. Read Genesis 3:6-7, and you will see the first effect. We all know already how it feels to be guilty, but guilt was a new thing in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve had never felt this way before. They knew they had sinned, and they felt guilty. Our consciences (and, if we’re believers, the Holy Spirit within us) tell us when we are wrong.

The second result of sin is found in Genesis 3:8-10. Adam and Eve’s eyes had been opened, and they had realized they were naked. So they tried to hide themselves from God when He called them. They were ashamed. When God called out to Adam, why did Adam say he was hiding?

God knew that Adam and Eve were guilty and that they were ashamed and fearful because of what they had done. Each one of us has felt what Adam and Eve felt.

This story illustrates the negative consequences of sin. A middle school boy found a way to steal candy bars from the student store in his school. For a while, no one suspected him. Then he shared what he was doing with a friend, and the friend joined him in stealing the candy. Soon four boys were involved in the stealing. But finally one boy could not handle the guilt of what he had been doing. This boy told the truth. Now all of the boys felt guilt and fear. The one boy admitted what had been done. His punishment was to be suspended for a day and to pay back the money for the candy bars he had stolen. The other boys still would not admit what they had been doing. This temptation to deny the blame (instead of admitting wrongdoing) is the third result of sin.

Read Genesis 3:11-13. When God asked Adam if he had eaten the fruit, how did Adam respond?

Then, when God asked Eve why she had eaten the fruit, how did she respond?

Think through the responses of Adam and Eve and explain in your own words what the third basic result of sin is.

In the case of the candy bar theft, the three boys who would not admit what they had done began to blame one another, saying that they stole the candy because their friends had gotten them to do it. One of the boys even blamed a teacher for not locking up the candy well enough. What *should* the boys have said?

There were other consequences of sin as well, but these three are most important for us to focus on as we study wisdom. Watch for these three results of sin: (1) guilt, (2) fear, and (3) blaming others for our wrong choices.

## OTHER EXAMPLES OF BLAMING OTHERS

There are many examples of people in the Bible who made excuses for their choices. How did Aaron explain the making of the golden calf to Moses? (Exo. 32:22-24)

Doesn't it almost sound as though Aaron did not *deliberately* form the calf? He made it sound like an accident—as though it happened by itself without anyone's help. Sometimes we say, "I don't know how it got there" or "I don't know what happened—it just happened!" when, in fact, we *ourselves* did it.

King Saul tried to make excuses for the wrong he had done by blaming others. God sent Saul and his army to annihilate the Amalekites because of their wickedness. God told Saul not to save or take anything from the city. But when they destroyed the city, the Bible says they saved the Amalekite king and the best of the animals. They destroyed only those things *they* decided were not worth saving. When Samuel approached Saul about this deliberate disobedience, what was Saul's excuse? (1 Sam. 15:19-21)

Samuel was very specific in the way he responded to Saul. Read 1 Samuel 15:22-23 and explain Samuel's response in your own words.

Whether you are old or young, a king or a student, part of the consequences you have inherited from Adam's sin is a strong tendency to blame others for what you have done wrong. Blame-shifting will never really work. God knows the truth, and others usually find out. When you have done something wrong, you must learn to deal with your guilt, fear, and pride.

## BECOMING A MATURE YOUNG MAN OR WOMAN

Often, we think of becoming a mature man or woman as something having to do with age. Young people think that they become "men" and "women" when they can drive a

car or go on dates, when they go off to college or turn 21, or when they have jobs and houses and families of their own. But many older people have never become truly mature men and women because they have never learned to take responsibility for their own choices. When they make wrong choices, they are always trying to find a way to blame their mistakes on someone else. To be mature means we can admit when we are wrong. It means we know that we will fail sometimes, but when we do fail, we can admit our responsibility and change our ways so that mistake will not happen again. There are many adults who are still immature in their hearts, and yet there are many young people who are mature because they have learned this principle.

Jesus was only twelve when He went to the temple during the Passover. David was also about that age when God chose him to be the next king of Israel. God used both Jesus and David at this age because of their maturity and wisdom.

Read the passages listed below and write what they tell you about the character, attitudes, physical attributes, and family lives of these two young men. Be ready to discuss these things with your class.

| Jesus—Study Luke 2:49-52.                          |
|--|
|  |
|  |
|  |
| David—Study 1 Samuel 16:7-12, 21-23; 17:32; 18:14. |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |

## WISDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

Proverbs shows the wisdom of being honest about our actions. Look up the following verses and apply them to what we have been learning about responsibility in your own words.

| Proverb | How Will the Truth of This Verse Apply to Your Life? |
|---------|--|
| 3:24    |  |
| 12:14   |  |
| 12:19   |  |
| 20:11   |  |
| 20:17   |  |
| 28:13   |  |

## BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND TRUST

It is very important that you begin to understand the importance of accepting responsibility for your actions. Now that you are in middle school, you have been given a great deal more freedom than you had before. You probably have several teachers, rather than just one teacher in a single classroom. You may be allowed more freedom in attending activities at church and school. Life can be so much fun, and as you grow older, it can grow even more exciting. There are so many things to do as you grow older. Most of you are looking forward to the day you can learn to drive. When that day comes, you will have even greater freedom, since you will no longer need to have your parents take you everywhere you need to go.

But you need to realize a very important truth: The older you become, the more freedom you desire; and the more freedom you are granted, the more responsibility you will have

to accept. *Freedom* and *responsibility* are inseparable. The “glue” that holds freedom and responsibility together is trust. To put it simply, if your parents cannot trust you, they will not feel they can give you more freedom or responsibility when the time comes.

How do you show your parents that you can be trusted with more freedoms as you grow older? By accepting responsibility for your actions and choices *now!* Think now before you act. Make wise decisions now. Do not go places or do things just because your friends are pressuring you. Establish guidelines for yourself about how you will handle choices between right or wrong. Always seek to do right. When there are times that you do fail and make a wrong choice, be willing to admit it immediately. Don’t blame others for what you have done. Accept responsibility for what you have done. Then your parents will see you are growing in wisdom. They will begin to trust you as a mature young man or woman. They will have confidence in you.

The benefits to you personally from earning trust will be terrific. But it is extremely important for you to remember that the motivation for your maturity should not be limited to you getting what you want in this life. The gospel ought to direct our thoughts to what Christ has accomplished on our behalf. He has transformed the hearts of believers so that they want to show their gratitude and worship of Him by giving their lives to serve Him.

Consider again the four boys who were caught stealing candy. After the first boy started stealing and shared his secret with his friends, what should they have done?

What would this have prevented?

Even though all four boys had done wrong, which boy do you think was able to begin rebuilding some trust and confidence with his parents and teachers?

Why?

What *should* the other boys have done?

## PRINCIPLES TO LIVE BY

A principle is a guideline to live by. It is an idea or rule that is so important we should never forget to use it. There are several important principles to remember from your lesson this week. If you could talk to the four boys before they started stealing, what principles about maturity and life would you share with them?

1.

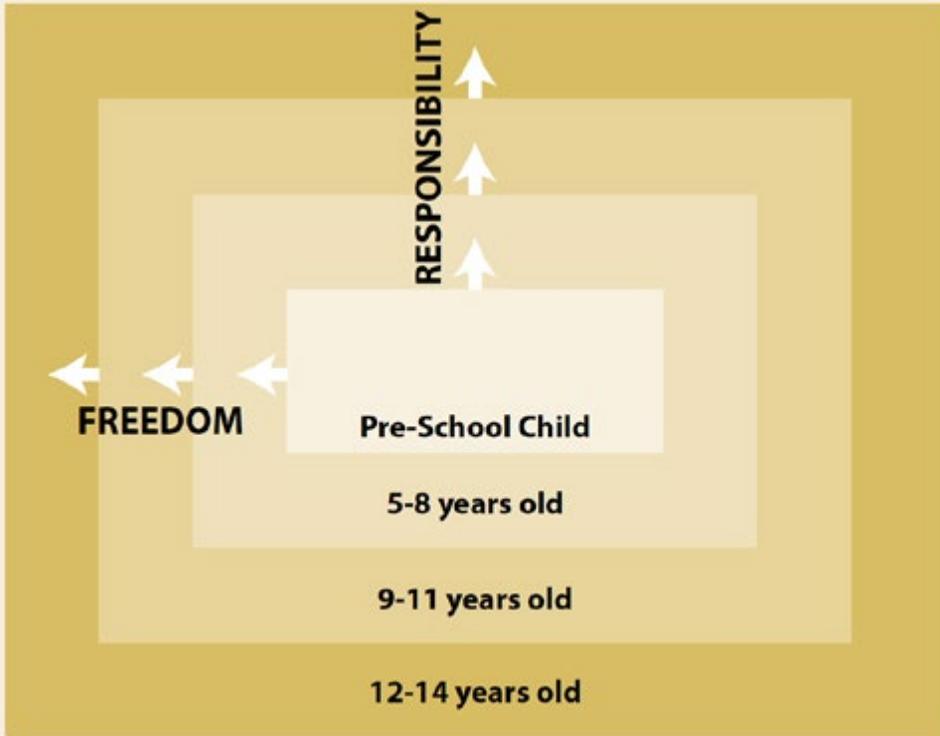
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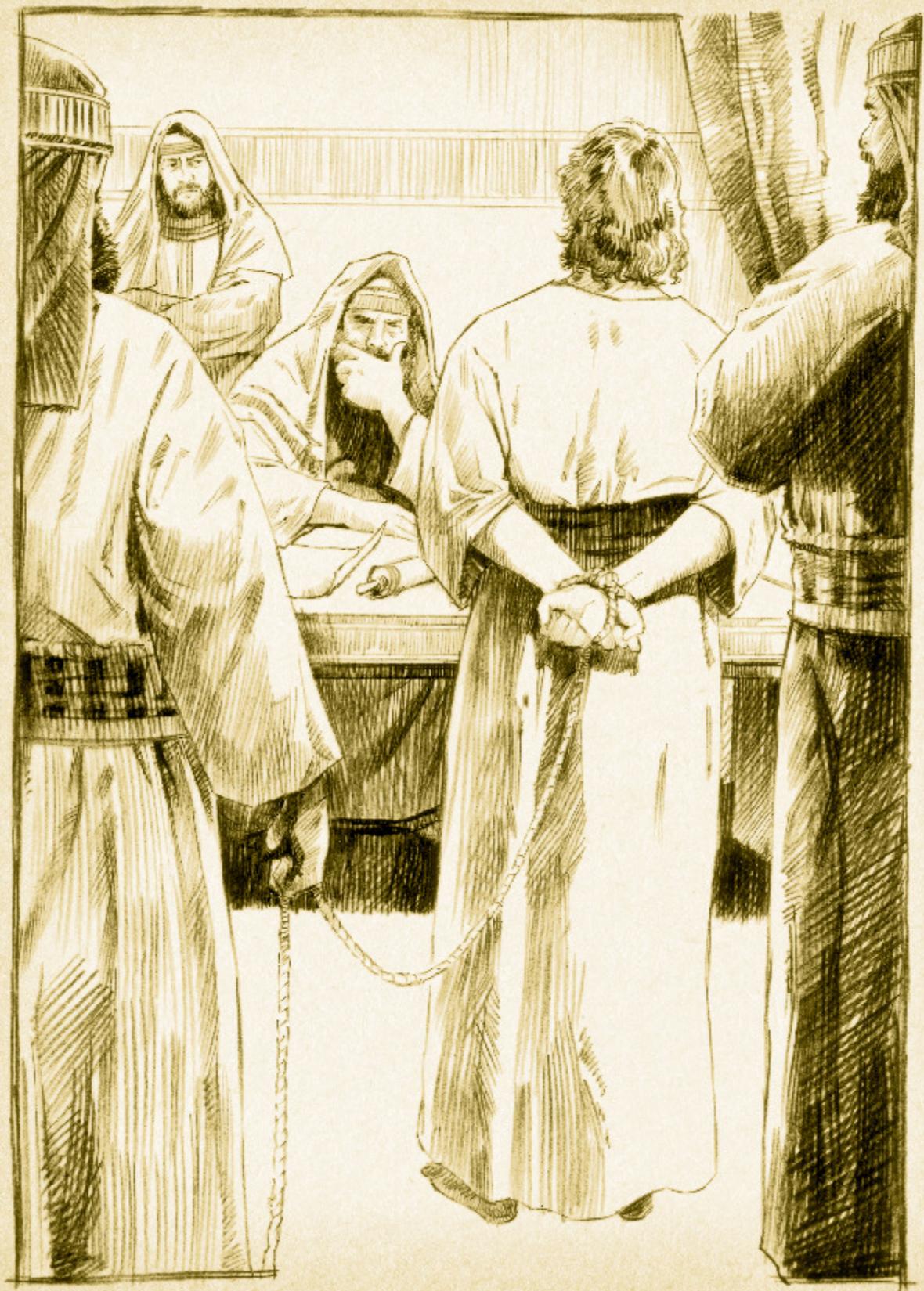
4.

5.

# TEACHER'S LESSON



$$\boxed{\phantom{\text{FREEDOM}}} = \boxed{\phantom{\text{RESPONSIBILITY}}} + \boxed{\phantom{\text{Age}}}$$



# HOW ATTITUDES AFFECT ACTIONS

Actions do not begin outwardly with how we treat others or how we handle situations in life. Actions begin in our minds. How we think—our inner attitude—affects what we do, how we act, and how we treat others. You will constantly meet situations in your life that you must learn to handle with wisdom. Not all of life is happy or fair and just. Circumstances will come up that will cause your true character to show through.

It is important to decide before difficult situations arise how you will act and what types of attitudes you need to avoid. In this lesson we will discuss four attitudes to watch out for because any of them could hurt us or keep us from success. These attitudes are anger, scorn, perversion, and vengeance. What does Proverbs 16:20 teach about the blessing God offers to those who handle matters well?

## FOUR WRONG ATTITUDES

A law of nature is that what is polluted does not become pure by itself. Both pollution and wrongdoing spread—they are “contagious” in a harmful way. If you have a cold and cough near someone, you can spread your germs and make him sick also. But a healthy person cannot spread health by being near you. Anger is similar in that it that can spread from one person to the next and never leave anyone better off. Following are some detailed descriptions of anger and other wrong attitudes. Under each description, look up the listed verses and write what each verse says about these attitudes.

### *Anger*

An angry person is provoked easily and easily loses control. He uses his quick temper and cutting words to hurt others. Anyone who knows an angry person wants to stay

away from him. It never helps to be angry because anger never solves any problem. Anger always makes things worse. Your anger shows everyone around you that you cannot control your attitude.

- Psalm 37:8
- Proverbs 14:17
- Proverbs 15:18
- Proverbs 16:32
- Proverbs 19:11
- Proverbs 22:24-25
- Ecclesiastes 7:9

### *Scorn*

A scorner (or “scoffer”) is one who mocks what is right. The scorner will put others down, mock their ideas, and make fun of sin and those who want to do right. He enjoys making fun of teachers, parents, and others who are trying to help us grow up to have the right attitudes and values for our lives. He will only hurt those who listen to him. In the end, a scorner’s attitude will backfire. He will find he has hurt himself most.

- Proverbs 3:34
- Proverbs 13:1
- Proverbs 14:6
- Proverbs 19:29

- Proverbs 22:10

- Proverbs 24:9

## *Perversion*

Sometimes words like “froward,” “devious,” or “crooked” are used to describe the attitude of perversion. A perverse person has the worst attitude of all. He does not merely lose control and get angry. He does not simply put down the good in others, as the scorner does. The froward person actually *enjoys* doing evil and wickedness. His heart attitude is actually to revel in sin and to delight in it. He takes pleasure in it. His actions are wrong because he has rejected the teachings of God. And worst of all, the perverse person wants to get others to follow in the way he is going.

- Proverbs 2:12-15

- Proverbs 3:32

- Proverbs 4:24

- Proverbs 8:13

## *Vengeance*

One of the hardest things for us to do is to let God handle our problems. We want to work things out for ourselves. If someone hurts our feelings or does something mean to us, we want to get even. We want to fight back or get revenge. Vengeance is that attitude that wants to pay someone back for the wrong he has done to us. The problem is that a vengeful attitude only makes matters worse, and it always comes back on the person who is vengeful. When God takes care of the situation, He always takes care of it justly and thoroughly. We do not have to worry.

- Proverbs 20:22

- Proverbs 24:29

- Romans 12:17

- 1 Peter 3:9

## THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

Jesus knew all of the events that were going to happen to Him before they occurred. He knew that Judas would betray Him. He knew that He would be taken prisoner. He knew that He would be beaten, cursed, and mocked. He knew that He would go through an unjust trial. He knew He would be crucified on a cross between two thieves. Was He angry? Was He scornful or vengeful? Was He perverse? In all of his hardships, Jesus fixed his heart on the greatest priorities. He knew that whatever happened to Him was part of God's perfect purpose for His life.

Remember, nothing ever happens to us that God has not allowed and even planned in order to accomplish a wonderful purpose in our lives. Jesus had a specific purpose to fulfill, and He was willing to do it in the right way. Jesus did not complain or scorn. He did not get angry. He did not become perverse. He did not try in any way to get revenge.

In fact, Jesus' attitude caused Him to act in a totally different way. Read about the following situations concerning the last days of Jesus and explain what His attitude was and how He responded.

| Verses                          | What Happened? | What Were Jesus' Attitudes and Actions? |
|---------------------------------|----------------|---|
| John 18:2-5                     |                |   |
| John 18:10-11;<br>Luke 22:50-51 |                |   |

|               |  |  |
|---------------|--|--|
| John 19:1-9   |  |  |
| John 19:15-18 |  |  |
| Luke 23:33-34 |  |  |
| John 19:25-27 |  |  |

In your own words, write a paragraph explaining Jesus' attitudes and actions during the terrible trials He endured throughout His arrest, trial, and crucifixion.

- Did Jesus ever seek revenge?    Yes    No
- Did He ever become angry?    Yes    No
- Did He ever scorn or scoff at those who were treating Him badly?    Yes    No
- Did He ever turn against God?    Yes    No

Jesus offers a perfect example for us, but He endured suffering and died not only to provide an example, but also to provide salvation for us. This salvation makes it possible for us to overcome sin as He did. In which of these areas do you tend to have the most problems when things do not go your way?

What can you do the next time a difficult situation comes into your life?

How does the salvation Jesus offers give us the hope of handling difficult situations wisely?

## COMMANDS AND PROMISES

God has promised blessings and good that will eventually come if our attitudes and actions are right. Remember that right actions begin with right attitudes. In the columns below, write God's commands and God's promises of blessing to show the pattern of how God works.

| Proverbs | Command | Promise |
|----------|---------|---------|
| 3:1-2    |         |         |
| 3:3-4    |         |         |
| 3:5-6    |         |         |
| 3:7-8    |         |         |
| 3:9-10   |         |         |
| 3:11-12  |         |         |

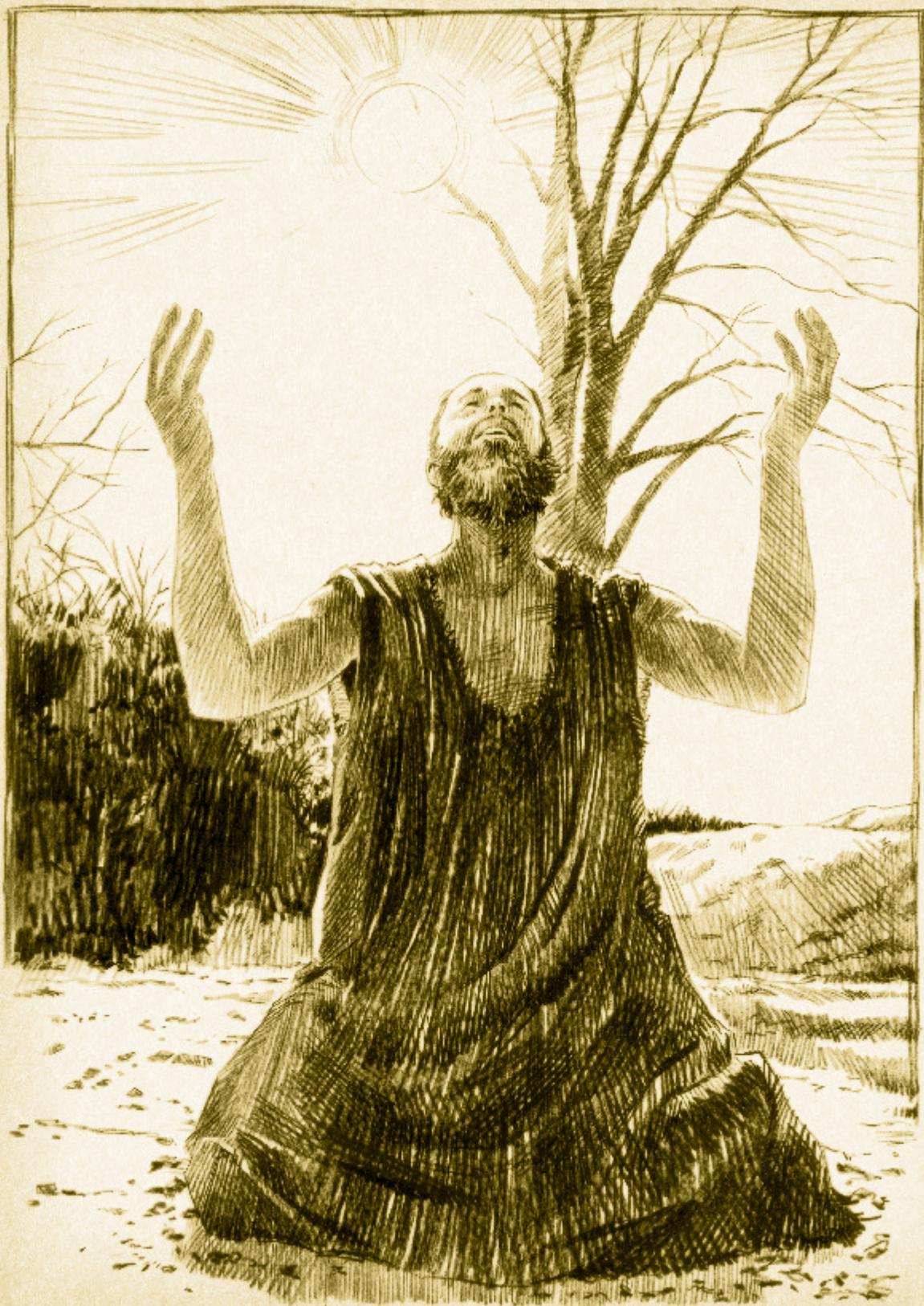
Jesus had the right attitude during His trial and crucifixion and was able to act correctly toward those around Him. If you have trusted Jesus as your Savior, the Holy Spirit lives within you, and He will help your attitude and your actions if you allow Him to work through you.

The Bible says Jesus kept His focus on the prospect of joy set before Him, so He endured the trials set before Him. Jesus knew that God would keep His promises to Him if He would keep trusting and obeying God’s will. Jesus’ perfect life, death on the cross, and resurrection all produce blessings for many people, not just Himself. What blessings came about because of what Jesus endured?

- 
- 
- 

## TEACHER’S LESSON

| The Bull-headed Fool    | The Pig-headed Fool |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Their Attitudes</b>  |                     |
| 12:15                   | 1:32                |
|                         | 14:16               |
|                         | 28:26               |
| <b>Their Mouths</b>     |                     |
| 19:3                    | 10:18               |
| 20:3                    | 14:33               |
|                         | 15:2,14             |
|                         | 18:6-7              |
|                         | 19:1                |
| <b>Their Sinfulness</b> |                     |
| 14:9                    | 10:23               |
|                         | 14:8                |



L E S S O N 8

# RIGHT ATTITUDES ABOUT MYSELF

In Lesson 7, we looked at Proverbs 3 and saw that with every command, God gave a promise of a special blessing. In this lesson we are going to look at another passage and focus on a similar concept. But instead of finding commands, we are going to look for attitudes that the Lord wants us to have and what the Bible says will happen as a result if we obey. Complete the chart below.

| Psalm  | Attitude | Promise |
|--------|----------|---------|
| 37:1-2 |          |         |
| 37:3   |          |         |
| 37:4   |          |         |
| 37:5   |          |         |
| 37:7   |          |         |
| 37:8-9 |          |         |

## THE STORY OF JOB

One reason God is very interested in our attitudes is that He intends for our lives to be blessed and successful. Sometimes to have success we must go through trials. But

throughout the trials, God is still in control and will see us through to a wonderful blessing. If we are not allowing God to control our lives, then we will allow attitudes such as anger, scorn, scoffing, and vengeance to become habits in our lives.

The story of Job most likely took place about the time of Abraham. The book of Job therefore fits chronologically during the time of the book of Genesis. Read the first chapter of the book of Job and answer the following questions with short answers.

Where did Job live?

How many sons did he have?

How many daughters?

What did he own?

What kind of man was Job?

What was Satan's accusation against Job?

To whom was the accusation made?

What did God allow Satan to do?

Which verse in Job 1 describes his response to all that was happening?

Read Job 2:1-10 and answer the following questions about Job:

What was Satan's new accusation against Job?

What did God allow Satan to do next?

According to Job 2:10, did Job believe that God had the right to allow bad things in his life as well as good things?    Yes    No

Through all that happened, do we ever read of Job having an angry, vengeful, or scornful attitude toward God?    Yes    No

There is a great deal more to the story of Job. We will be learning more about his story later. For right now, you need to see that what God has said is true. If our attitudes and actions are good and right, God's blessings will come. This does not mean that we will become rich in this life and have lots of children, but it does mean that God will bless us beyond our imaginations in eternity. This book is evidence that God has the power to bless His people. Turn to the last chapter of Job and see the blessings that came to him. Read Job 42:1-3 and 10-17 and answer the questions below.

How was Job praying to God now?

Did Job ever lose his faith in God?    Yes    No

List all the blessings that God gave to Job at the end of the book and compare these with what Job had at the beginning of his trials.

Describe the end of Job's life.

## MY ATTITUDE ABOUT MYSELF

How we act has a lot to do with how we think about ourselves. If we do not have right attitudes about ourselves, we will tend to do things that backfire: We will end up hurting ourselves and others.

Jesus knew He was the Son of God. He knew that His Father loved Him and would love Him always. God would do only those things that would be a great blessing to Him. Jesus was not worried about Judas, Pilate, Herod, the soldiers, or the Jewish priests. It did not matter what they said or did to Him. Jesus knew He had come to earth to obey His Father and to fulfill an important purpose on the earth. He knew that what mattered most was that He accomplish the work God had sent Him to do.

Job had a similar attitude. He had a wonderful life, great riches, a beautiful family, and many possessions. He had good health. But he lost all of these things. He lost his wealth, his family, his possessions, and even his health. Even then, however, his attitude did not change. Job knew God loved him. He knew how important it was for him to obey God even in the midst of difficult circumstances. He knew in spite of it all that God cared for him and would bless his trust and obedience. His attitude stayed right, and God blessed him.

Young people get caught up in many actions and attitudes that are very wrong. Usually this happens because they think their purpose in life is to follow their feelings and take what they want. They do not think that the way they live their lives really matters, so they try to find a way to make their lives feel like they matter. This is why young people often make unwise choices. What they do not realize is that these kinds of things distract them from what is most important—trusting and obeying God. They do not realize that by serving their feelings, they are exchanging the far greater blessings God offers for the cheap things they can enjoy right away. They are sacrificing their greatest joys for smaller pleasures that will last only an instant.

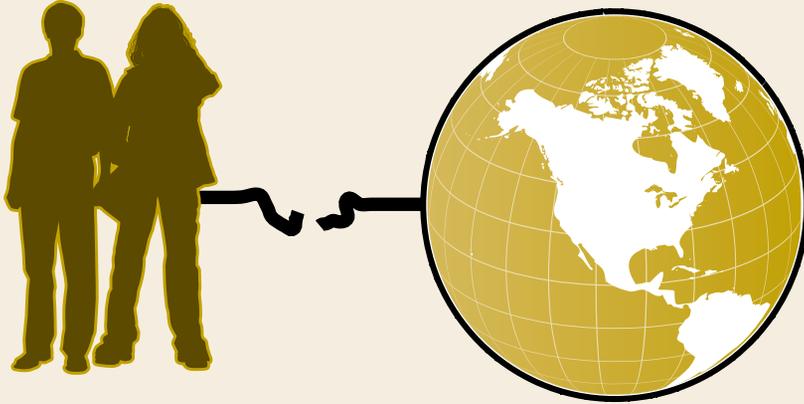
There is a saying that goes like this: “God don't make no junk.” When God made you, He made someone very important to His plan. Your life has a purpose in that plan, even if some days you don't feel worthwhile and important. You will never be able to win true

friends by damaging your body, abusing substances, or using foul language, because the kinds of people who are impressed by those things will never be true friends. Those who make unwise choices think wrongly about themselves and God. If they trusted God's promises to bless their obedience, they would act differently. God elevated you to a high position when you trusted Christ as your Savior. Read Revelation 1:5-6 and explain in your own words what God thinks of you.

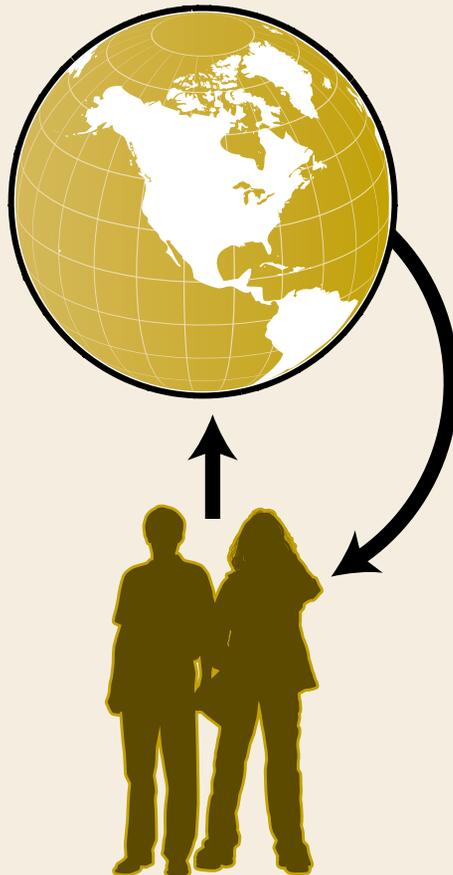
You need to make some very important decisions about the kind of person you want to be. Do you recognize that God created you for an important purpose? Do you trust God to keep His promises of blessing to you? Write a paragraph explaining your attitudes about who God is, who you are, and how you should respond with trust and obedience in difficult situations.

## TEACHER'S LESSON

- God has chosen us  the world to a better life.



- We are called to  the world to minister to people's needs.







# GOOD FRIENDS AND BAD FRIENDS

It is good to be polite and friendly to everyone we meet. We should always assume the best about others. We should desire to be kind and helpful to everyone. In this sense, everyone can be your friend.

But there are other deeper levels of friendship. When we begin to choose our closest companions, it is important to choose wisely who those companions will be. You probably desire to have a friend who is interested in you and in what you like to do. You want friends whom you can trust and who can trust you. You want to be able to confide in a friend without fear that your thoughts will be shared with anyone else. Having true friends is a wonderful gift in life.

Read each of these verses and explain in your own words what a true friend will be like.

| Proverb | How a True Friend Will Help Us |
|---------|--------------------------------|
| 13:20   |                                |
| 27:9    |                                |
| 27:17   |                                |

Read these verses and explain what the wrong kind of friends will do.

| Proverb  | What a Bad Friend Will Do |
|----------|---------------------------|
| 22:24-25 |                           |
| 25:19    |                           |

## HOW WRONG FRIENDS HURT US

Read Proverbs 1:10-19 carefully. Then go back and answer the questions below.

What command does God give us in verse 10 concerning the type of friends we are to have?

What does the word “entice” mean? Use your dictionary if you need it.

What do the following verses say that the wrong types of friends might entice you to do?

- Verses 11–12

- Verse 13

- Verse 14

These friends are not what they seem. What are they really like, and what will be their end? (See verses 16-19.)

## A PERSONAL EXAMPLE

At some time or another, everyone has been enticed to do wrong or to go along silently while wrong was being done. In the last few months, have you felt enticed to do wrong? If you can think of an example or two, explain what happened and how you handled it at the time. If you did not handle yourself wisely, explain what you might do differently if it were to happen again. Do not be afraid to explain what you did wrong if you did not handle it rightly, because sometimes it is through our failures that we learn how to do right the next time.

- An example:

- Another example:

## THE EXAMPLE OF JOASH

Our friends have a great influence on us. Everyone wants his friends to agree with him and be like him in the way he thinks and acts. Do you remember when we said that our attitudes affect our actions? If you rebel against God and choose friends who have wrong attitudes and actions, you will tend to become like them. On the other hand, if you are thinking in light of God’s wisdom and His good plans for your life, you will desire to seek friends who will help you live in a way that honors Him. You will choose friends who also want God’s will.

In the Bible, we can read about Joash, a young king who found out the hard way that his choice of friends would change the course of his life. Turn to 2 Chronicles 24 and read the chapter completely. You will find that the life of Joash could be divided into two parts. In a short paragraph below, explain what Joash’s character was like during the earlier and later portions of his life and what important events happened during each portion.

| Part One (24:1-16) |
|--------------------|
| •                  |
| •                  |
| •                  |
| •                  |
| •                  |

Part Two (24:17-27)

•

•

•

•

•

When did Joash begin to change his attitudes and actions?

Who encouraged this change in Joash?

What do you think about the change that took place in Joash?

How might 1 Corinthians 15:33 be applied to the story of Joash?

What lesson(s) can you learn from 1 Corinthians 15:33?

## TEACHER'S LESSON

Wrong  build wrong  for our lives.

- Do not  them (Prov. 1:15).
- Do not  to their  (Prov. 25:26).
  - By  their sin (Prov. 28:23)
  - By  them (Prov. 26:1)
- Do not become their  (Prov. 22:24).
- Do not become a  to them in their sin (Prov. 29:24).



# CHOOSING THE RIGHT FRIENDS

We have already studied the life of Job and learned about his tribulations. We learned a little about how he continued to trust the Lord and have the right responses during his trials.

During the time that Job was having so many problems, three of his friends came to help him.

## JOB'S FRIENDS

What did Eliphaz believe about God that led him to conclude that sin was the cause of all Job's problems? Read Job 4:7-8.

The problem with this attitude is that it is very judgmental of Job, and it is simply not what the Bible teaches. This friend was drawing conclusions about Job's problems and what God was doing in Job's life. We should be careful not to think that we understand all that is happening in other people's lives. The message of the first two chapters of Job is actually that very bad things sometimes happen to very godly people. God allows them into our lives for purposes that we do not always understand.

What did Bildad say was the cause of Job's problems? Read Job 8:13-15.

Bildad did not show true friendship because, like Eliphaz, he jumped to conclusions that were not true. In suggesting that Job was a hypocrite, Bildad was saying that Job was not telling the truth about himself. He said Job was pretending to be an honest and upright

man when he was obviously not so. This was a very cruel thing to say since Bildad did not truly know Job's heart. No one can know what is in another person's heart as God does. We need to learn to think the best of one another and not assume the worst.

In response to what Bildad and Eliphaz had told him, Job said that these things were not true. Job explained that if he had done wrong, God would judge him, and they did not have to judge him.

Then Job's third friend, Zophar, told him what he thought. Read Job 11:1-6 and explain what Zophar told Job.

We have seen what was wrong with Bildad and Eliphaz's attitudes toward Job. Now explain what was also wrong with Zophar's attitude.

After all these things had taken place, God showed Job's friends what He thought of their attitudes. Read Job 42:7-9. What did God say to Job's friends about the advice they had given Job, and what did He tell them to do about this?

Notice that God was angry with Job's friends because they had not spoken rightly about Him not because they said bad things about Job. We need to learn how the root of our sin is often that we present a false picture of what God is like. When we fail to trust Him or worship Him with our whole lives, we tell people around us that He is not worthy of our trust and worship.

Remember that these were Old Testament times. What is different about what God asked Job's friends to do and what He asks you to do today?

What was Job's attitude toward his friends through all of these events? Read Job 42:10.

What did Job's relatives and other friends do for him? See verse 11.

After reading about Job and his friends, what lessons can you learn and what conclusions might you reach about friendships?

- 

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Sometimes our friends do not act correctly, and they say things that they should not say. When this happens and our feelings are hurt, we need to forgive them. Often, our friends do not understand what they are doing, and it is helpful to talk over a problem with them. We are commanded to speak the truth in love. Remember that Job prayed for his friends and forgave them for what they had said. Also remember that it is important to be kind and understanding toward your friends. When they are in trouble or need help, be a good listener and tell them that you care about them.

## LEARNING TO LISTEN

One of the most important aspects of being a friend is listening attentively. Many times young people are so busy talking about their own problems, interests, and activities that they forget that their friends also have problems, interests, and activities.

Being a good listener means that there is a time to give your friend your full attention and concern. Sometimes a friend just needs to talk, and we need to listen. Perhaps they don't

even want advice or input—they just want to talk to someone they can trust. We will be the most encouraging kind of friends when we help them think great thoughts about God and lead them to trust Him. Often our friends will be most willing to hear us talk about God after we have heard about the burdens on their hearts.

How could Job’s friends have been more faithful to God and Job when Job was sharing his problems and feelings?

## COMPANIONS TO AVOID

In Lesson 9 we found that wrong companions or friends can lead you to unwise choices that displease God. They can pull you down and cause you to have many problems. In this lesson, you will find specific types of people that you should learn to avoid as close companions.

Read each verse below and write (1) the type of person to be avoided and (2) what the verse tells you concerning your involvement with them. The first one has been completed as an example for you.

| Proverb | Type of Person | How to Respond                     |
|---------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| 3:31    | oppressor      | Don't envy him or choose his ways. |
| 4:14    |                |                                    |
| 9:6     |                |                                    |
| 20:19   |                |                                    |

|          |  |  |
|----------|--|--|
| 22:10    |  |  |
| 22:24    |  |  |
| 23:20–21 |  |  |
| 24:21    |  |  |

If there are any words in the verses above that you are unfamiliar with, be sure to look them up in the dictionary and jot the meaning in the margins or the table above.

## EVALUATING MY FRIENDSHIPS

Look over what you have studied about friendships in Lessons 9 and 10. On the left side of the chart below, list the qualities that you personally think are important in a friend. On the right side of the chart, think of someone whom you consider to be a friend. You need not write his or her name, but list in the tables below some qualities that this friend has. Is he or she a good choice for a friend?

| Qualities I Want in a Friend | My Friend Has These Qualities |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                              |                               |
|                              |                               |
|                              |                               |
|                              |                               |
|                              |                               |
|                              |                               |
|                              |                               |
|                              |                               |

## TEACHER'S LESSON

### *How a Wrong Companion Acts*

- His Mouth
  - (Exo. 20:7)
  - 
  - (Eph. 5:4)
  - (Eph. 4:29)
  - 
  - (Prov. 6:16-19)
- His Eyes
  - (1 John 2:16)
  - (1 Sam. 18:7-9)
  - (Matt. 7:3-5)
  - (Prov. 30:17)
- His Feet: Go Place They Should Not Go (Prov. 6:18)





# HOW TO KEEP GOOD FRIENDS

Many young people do not make and keep good friendships because they do not understand how to be a good friend. By thinking about the different kinds of friendships we can have and by studying what Scripture teaches about friendships, we can grow in our ability to be and have good friends.

## LEVELS OF FRIENDSHIP

We can never have the same level of close friendships with everyone we know. Listen as your teacher discusses a helpful way to understand three levels of friendship. Then fill in the blanks in the chart below (1) to describe what each level of friendship is like and how it differs from the other levels, and (2) to explain what we need to do in order to be a friend to others on each level.

| Level             | Distinguishing Characteristics   | How to Be a Friend on This Level  |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Acquaintance      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little <input type="text"/> contact</li> <li>• Conversations are mostly about <input type="text"/> topics.</li> </ul>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <input type="text"/></li> <li>• Be <input type="text"/> and <input type="text"/></li> <li>• Demonstrate general <input type="text"/> in others</li> </ul>  |
| Casual Friendship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have common <input type="text"/> and <input type="text"/></li> <li>• Conversations are more <input type="text"/></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be <input type="text"/> and <input type="text"/></li> <li>• Talk <input type="text"/> about common interests</li> <li>• Be an <input type="text"/></li> <li>• <input type="text"/> for each other</li> </ul> |

|                            |  |   |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| Close, Personal Friendship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share personal [ ] , and [ ]</li> <li>Can give personal [ ] and make [ ]</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share personal [ ] and [ ]</li> <li>Be a good [ ]</li> <li>Seek [ ] and give [ ]</li> <li>Be an [ ]</li> <li>[ ] for each other</li> </ul> |
|----------------------------|--|---|

What attitudes should you display to everyone, no matter what levels of friendship you may have with them?

## TWO COMMON PROBLEMS TO AVOID

Read Proverbs 25:9-10. These verses discuss a temptation that is common to all of us. Too many of us can't seem to stop telling people about problems we are having with others. We give details of the problem or situation over and over again to as many as we can find who will listen. Naturally, others like to hear the details of such stories. Why do you think we enjoy hurting one another in this way?

Remember that a gossip, or talebearer, enjoys telling secrets. If he is willing to tell you a secret about someone else, it is likely he will also talk about you just as willingly behind your back.

A second problem is described in Proverbs 26:17. Read this verse, and you will see that Solomon is describing a nosy person. This is the other side of the talebearer's problem as discussed above. A nosy person wants to know all the details of other people's problems. Knowing details gives a nosy person a sense of superiority. He enjoys feeling that he "knows" all the details about everyone else. In Proverbs' terms, he is a "meddler" because he likes interfering in other people's affairs.

Do you see either of these tendencies in yourself or your friends?

What can you do about problems with meddling or gossip in your school? (Discuss ideas with your class.)

## THE EXAMPLE OF KING DAVID

According to Psalm 119:63, what kind of friends (companions) did King David want?

According to 1 Samuel 18:1-4, what friend did God give to David, and how do you know they were friends?

Jonathan's father, King Saul, grew jealous of David because he had become popular with the people after he had killed Goliath. An evil spirit came upon Saul, and he developed a great hatred for David. King Saul hated David so much that he wanted to see him killed. Read 1 Samuel 19:1-7 and answer the questions below to see how Jonathan showed his friendship for David.

What was the relationship between King Saul and David's friend Jonathan?

What did King Saul tell Jonathan?

How did Jonathan demonstrate his strong friendship to David?

What was the result?

King Saul decided not to harm David, but his change of heart did not last long. Over and over, the king would seek to kill David, and David would have to flee again for his life. Read 1 Samuel 20:1-4. How did Jonathan show his friendship again in this passage?

For several years, David continued running for his life. King Saul even took an army of men to hunt him down and kill him. Throughout all of these events, the Bible says that God was with David in all his ways. Finally, King Saul was killed during a battle, and eventually David was crowned king. Normally it would have been the king's son who would have become king when his father died. If this had been true, who would have become king?  But this was not God's plan. It was God's plan for David to be the next king. Even though Jonathan knew this, he was a true friend to David. How is Jonathan's friendship with David described in 1 Samuel 20:17?

## HOW TO GAIN FRIENDS

We have already studied the qualities of a good friend and what kinds of people we should avoid as close friends. Now we should look at the other side of friendship. If you want to have good friends, you need to be a good friend. Read the following verses and list some ways to be a good friend to others.

- Proverbs 10:12

- Proverbs 11:13

- Proverbs 17:17
- Proverbs 18:24
- Proverbs 22:9
- Proverbs 25:17
- Proverbs 27:5-6
- Proverbs 27:9
- Proverbs 27:10

Think about the friendship Jonathan had with David. Write down which qualities listed above were evident in Jonathan's life. Tell what Jonathan did that showed each quality.

- 
- 
- 
- 

Now look over the list of ideas that you have written from the verses in Proverbs. Using the chart below, evaluate your own friendliness. Put each idea in one of the two boxes to indicate how you are doing in being a friend to others.

| My Good Friendship Qualities | Things I Need to Work On |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
|                              |                          |
|                              |                          |
|                              |                          |
|                              |                          |

## TEACHER'S LESSON

### *Friendliness*

- Definition

- Showing an  in the  and  of others

- Antonyms

- 
- 

- Characteristics

A friendly person...

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
-





# LOVING ALL PEOPLE

You have been studying how to choose friends and how to be a good friend. But this topic of friendship extends far beyond what we have been discussing. It is one thing to think about whom God would want you to have as your best friends, but God also has much to say about your attitudes and love toward all people, everywhere.

## LOVING ONE ANOTHER

Read the following passages and write in your own words what God commands His people about loving one another.

- John 13:35

- 1 John 3:14

- 1 John 4:20

## HOW WE TREAT OTHERS

We see that God teaches us clearly about the importance of showing love to others. God also tells us how we are not to act toward others. Explain each of the verses below in your own words. The phrase “respector of persons” means someone who is cliquish or shows favoritism toward one type of person or toward a special group of people, as though those individuals or groups are better than others.

- 2 Chronicles 19:7

- Proverbs 28:21

- Acts 10:28

- Acts 10:34

- Romans 2:11

- Ephesians 6:9

## WRITING A PRINCIPLE BASED ON SCRIPTURE

Look over the verses from the above two sections and notice that God is very firm in what He says about our attitudes toward others. In your own words, take the first section on love and the second section on respecting others and combine them into one principle that you should remember and live by.

## PREJUDICE

When Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount, He told us to love our enemies. After all, anyone can love someone who loves in return. It is easy to love our friends. Many people of Jesus' day (including the Pharisees) did not accept what Jesus taught about love. They had many enemies.

Two groups that were bitter enemies during those times were the Jews and the Samaritans. The Samaritans were a people who lived north of Judea, and the hostility between these two groups stretched back almost eight hundred years. Read the explanation below about the Jews and the Samaritans to understand the reason the hostility began:

Great numbers of Jews were deported during the time of the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, but some of them were left in the land. Eventually, foreigners moved into the area and intermarried with the remaining Jews, so they had children of mixed nationality. Years later, when the exiled Jews were finally able to return to Palestine, they refused to accept the “impure” Samaritans. The Samaritans were treated badly, but they also added to the problem by agitating the Jews. By the time Jesus came, great prejudices had developed between the two groups of people.

The Samaritans and Jews are just one example of what happens when one group or class of people cannot stand another, merely because they are different. By the time Jesus began His ministry, the hostility between the two groups had grown very strong. Sometimes, Jews would actually attack Samaritan villages, and Samaritans were known to murder Jewish pilgrims traveling to a feast in Jerusalem. Because of that, Jews usually would not even travel through Samaria. Instead, they would take the time to journey all the way around Samaria, very far out of the way. They wanted nothing to do with the Samaritans and did all they could to avoid any kind of contact with them.

There are a few stories in the Bible that mention relationships between the Jews and the Samaritans. We will look at a couple of these especially to consider how wrong it is to value some people more and others less—simply because of who they are.

## THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

Read John 4:1-30 and be ready to explain the story in your own words. In the light of what we are studying about prejudice, what is the significance of the following verses?

- Verse 4:

- Verse 9:

- Verse 27:

Do you think that Jesus knew that He would meet a Samaritan woman at the well when He went there?    Yes    No

Why do you think Jesus sought her out to talk to her?

## THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Read Luke 10:25-37, in which Jesus tells a parable to teach a lesson to a lawyer. As a review of this parable, complete the chart below to show how each type of person responded to the wounded man.

| Luke 10      | Who Responded and How |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| Verse 31     |                       |
| Verse 32     |                       |
| Verses 33-35 |                       |

Why do you think Jesus chose to emphasize that the Samaritan was the compassionate character in this story?

Read the discussion between Jesus and the lawyer in verses 25 through 29 again. What lessons was Jesus teaching the lawyer?

Most of us would do well to study the same lesson Jesus was teaching the lawyer. In 1974, *Human Behavior* magazine conducted the following test: A group of students who were studying to become pastors were asked to prepare a short devotional on the same story you just reviewed, the story of the Good Samaritan. They were instructed to report to a building to deliver their devotions on the radio. An actor had been placed outside the radio station to pretend he was sick. More than half of the students walked past the “sick” man because they were in too much of a hurry to stop and help. We need to think through what our own attitudes are toward anyone who is different from us and ask ourselves if our attitudes are what Jesus would want them to be.

## HOW WE SHOW RESPECT OF PERSONS

Middle school students can be very rude and even cruel to one another for reasons far less important than the problems between the Jews and the Samaritans. Some young people desire popularity. They might choose only certain friends whom they think will help them become more popular. Some athletes may think they are more important than those who are not interested or as good at athletics. Those who want to make good grades might be tempted to ignore or despise those who struggle academically. Sometimes, some students even shun those who do not have the resources to buy clothes or fancy material possessions. Middle school students are often “respecters of persons.” Can you make your own list of situations where you have witnessed “respect of persons” among teens you know, or even situations when you might have been directly involved?

## ZACCHAEUS

In the days of Jesus, a “publican” was a tax collector, and he was someone hated by everyone. The Romans occupied the land of Palestine. They had a system of taxation in which franchises were sold to Romans who would collect the local toll taxes. Toll stations were placed on major roads, at seaports, and at the gates of cities. All who passed by the toll station had to pay a toll tax. The Romans hired men under them, who in turn would hire other men (usually Jews themselves) to do the actual collecting of taxes from the Jews.

Zacchaeus was one of these publicans. He was the chief tax collector at Jericho and controlled one territory. There was great room for dishonesty in this job. The tax collector had to pay the government a certain amount each year, but he could collect as much money as he wanted from the local people. The people who paid the taxes were greatly abused and taken advantage of, and they knew it. The Jews felt that anyone who became a tax collector had lowered himself and was betraying his own countrymen. With all of this in mind, read the story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-10, and answer the following questions.

For what reasons would the people have hated Zacchaeus?

Why do you think Jesus chose to spend time with Zacchaeus at his house?

Did Jesus heed the stereotypes or the people's reactions?    Yes    No

What was the result of Jesus' treatment of Zacchaeus?

Think about your own attitudes toward different people. Do not use anyone's name, but explain why you might be tempted to put a particular person down and treat him badly. How could you change and reach out to that person as Jesus reached out to those around Him?

| How Others Are Different from You | Whom Do You Reject? | What Can You Do to Change? |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Race, Skin Color                  |                     |                            |
| Personality                       |                     |                            |

|                      |  |  |
|----------------------|--|--|
| How They Look        |  |  |
| How They Act         |  |  |
| What They Like to Do |  |  |
| Other Example        |  |  |

## TEACHER'S LESSON

The basis of  is the character of  (John  ;  ; Rom.  ; 1 John  ).

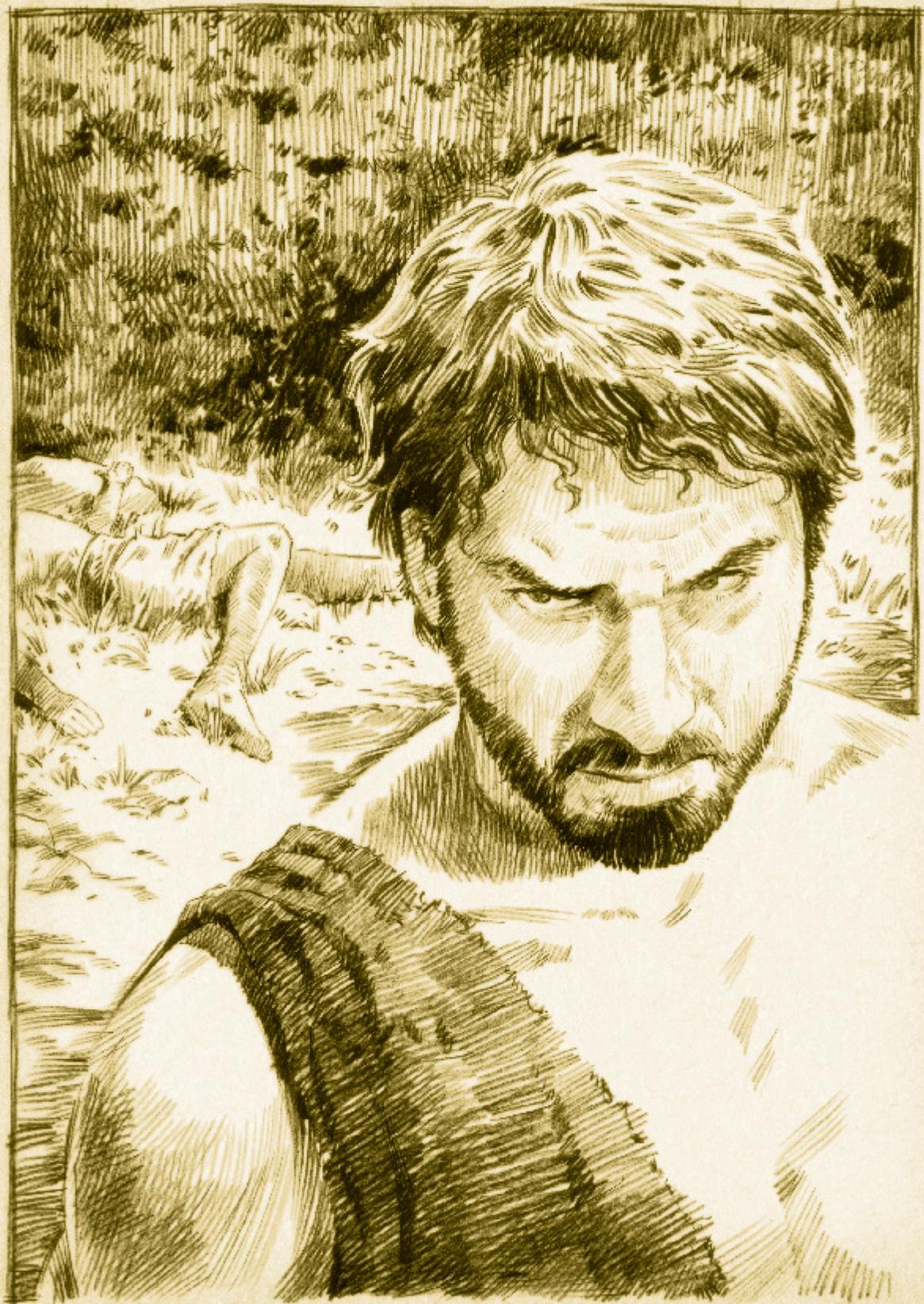
### *God's love...*

- Extends to
- Does not depend on
- Was expressed for us

Genuine love is .

### *Showing genuine love means we will...*

- Love , not just our
- Love those who  and  us
- our love to others, not just  about it



# DEALING WITH THE FLESH

A person who is not a Christian is someone who has never trusted Jesus Christ as his Savior. He has never turned from his life of sin to believe in Jesus' work on the cross to pay the penalty of his sin. Often, the unsaved person thinks his goodness and good works will persuade God to allow him into heaven when he dies. But we know this assumption is untrue because God says that unless you come through Christ, you cannot come to God. Unless the Savior's death on the cross has been applied to your name through faith as payment for your sin, you will die in your sins and cannot enter heaven.

But once a person has trusted Jesus as his Savior, he still may not always walk as a Christian should walk. Many times a Christian walks and talks just as though he were not saved. This is because he is acting carnally (or fleshly) and not spiritually.

When we are saved, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us. The Holy Spirit helps us to become more and more like Jesus. But we have to yield to the Holy Spirit to change us on the inside. The Holy Spirit is the one who will make us spiritually minded. When we refuse to yield to the Holy Spirit or to let Him work in our hearts, we are acting in the flesh. Then we feel guilty and fearful because we know that our lives are not right.

To understand this better, turn to Galatians 5:19-23. Look first at Galatians 5:22-23 where we see what the "fruit of the Spirit" is. List the characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit here:

This "fruit" is the way we will think, feel, and act if the Holy Spirit is controlling us. When our lives produce this kind of fruit, the Bible says we are walking in the Spirit and are spiritual. We will be discussing more about how to walk in the Spirit in another lesson.

## THE WORKS OF THE FLESH

In this lesson, we will look carefully at what God means when He warns against fulfilling the lust of sinful desires (the flesh) (Gal. 5:16). God lists the specific kinds of things that He considers to be of the flesh rather than of the Spirit. Begin with Galatians 5:19 and provide a definition of each characteristic of fleshly living. Some of the words used in your Bible may not be used even by adults today, so you will find a modern term for the sin below to help you remember it. You will have to use your dictionary for many of the words, but this is important to understand exactly what kinds of sins the Lord wants you to do away with because they are “works of the flesh” instead of “fruit of the Spirit.”

1. What is the difference between fornication and adultery?

2. Moral impurity:

3. Debauchery:

4. Idolatry:

5. Witchcraft:

6. Hatred:

7. Strife:

8. Jealousy:

9. Wrath:

10. Selfish ambitions:

11. Dissensions:

12. Factions:

13. Envy:

14. Murders:

15. Drunkenness:

16. Carousing:

In Paul's letters to the Romans and to the Corinthians, you can find other lists of attitudes and actions that are rebellious against God. Read Romans 1:29-31 and 2 Corinthians 12:20-21. Compare each of these passages with the above list from Galatians. Many Christian leaders and churches today do not discuss sin very much. Why do you think

these lists were so important that God wanted them included in His Word? Why do you think it might be very important for us to understand them and think about them?

## RESULTS OF LIVING CARNALLY

Throughout your life, you will have to deal with the desires of your fleshly nature. Many of those things that you just studied and defined could be problems for you even now. God does not expect you to be perfect in any way, but rather He wants to help you by the Holy Spirit to overcome your sin problems. It may take time to change, but God never wants you to accept your sinful habits as “okay.” Instead, He wants you to be free from them.

There are people, even Christians, who do not seem to care about getting rid of fleshly problems. In fact, some who claim to be Christians seem to enjoy their sins. God says that there are consequences guaranteed to those who think this way, and we need to be aware of His warnings. Look up the verses below and write what God says will happen to the person who continues walking according to the flesh instead of walking in the Spirit.

- Romans 8:6

- Romans 8:7

- Galatians 6:8

## CHARACTERISTICS OF A PAGAN

We need to understand accurately how serious the idea of carnality is to the Lord. Before we become Christians, God views us as pagans. A pagan is someone who has little or no religion and delights in seeking after sensual pleasures and material goods as the only or chief purpose of life. He is one who is interested primarily in satisfying his flesh. Most people eventually realize that simply satisfying the flesh is an empty goal. God has not just given you a fleshly body but also a spirit, and your spirit's needs must be met before you can ever be truly happy.

When we begin to walk in the Spirit and seek God's kingdom first, then God orders our lives to bless and satisfy us. It is not that God does not want us to be happy or enjoy life here on earth. He knows that we will only be truly satisfied by worshiping and obeying Him.

What does Psalm 37:4 say about God's willingness to give us good things we desire?

Now read 1 John 2:16-17, and you will find what a person who minds earthly things (a pagan or a Christian who is living carnally) desires most of all. Which phrase from these verses describes a person who looks at and covets things that gratify his desire for "more"—such as pornography, wrong movies, or a desire to own many things?

Which phrase describes a person who is always concerned about what others think of him—whether people respect and approve of him?

Which of the phrases describes the person who devotes himself to things in an attempt to satisfy his physical and emotional desires—things like obsessions with personal appearance, wrong friends, alcohol, drugs, and immoral relationships?

What will happen to our earthly ambitions and the things we gain when we follow them?

What will happen to those who walk in the Spirit and seek after the will of God?

## EXAMPLES OF PAGANISM

What characteristics of a pagan did Cain exhibit? (Read Gen. 4:3-9.)

What characteristics of a pagan did the people in the days of Noah exhibit? (Read Gen. 6:5, 11-12.)

What pagan characteristics do people exhibit in our day?

## TEACHER'S LESSON

### *The Works of the Flesh (Gal. 5:19-21)*

| Moral Sins | Sins of Attitude |
|------------|------------------|
| •          | •                |
| •          | •                |
| •          | •                |
| •          | •                |
| •          | •                |
| •          | •                |

| Sins of Wrong Values                                | Sins Against Society                                |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul> |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul> |



# RECOGNIZING THE SINS OF THE FLESH

We live in a very self-centered and materialistic world. Most people are primarily interested in having pleasure, fun, and money. They think success means being able to buy the things they believe are necessary to enjoy life. The problem is that there will always be something new to buy or some new way to get fun and excitement. Most people live by their feelings and their impulses. Sins such as drunkenness, immorality, drug abuse, and viewing pornography are the natural result of an uncurbed, unconflicted desire for excitement and pleasure that feeds our flesh.

The sins of the flesh that we studied in our last lesson are common to the human race. Why do human beings tend to be this way? Part of it is simply because of the sin nature we inherited from Adam. Adam's sinfulness passed down to his descendants from generation to generation, and we have to face this natural tendency to give in to temptations to do wrong.

Because of our sinful inclination toward pride, for example, we are tempted to compare ourselves with others. We become jealous of what others have and want to have the same things. We want the approval of people, so we go along with wrongdoing in order to be accepted. We might be afraid to stand against wrongdoing if doing so will risk popularity.

## WHAT PROVERBS SAYS ABOUT SOME SINS OF THE FLESH

Some of the sins of the flesh that Proverbs discusses are listed in the following section. For each of them, Proverbs explains the problem and then gives a warning about the consequences of each sin if it should become a part of your life.

- Drunkenness

According to Proverbs 20:1, what are three results of being controlled by alcohol?

What are six effects of drunkenness, according to Proverbs 23:29-32?

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |

- Immorality

What must we always remember about “secret” sins such as immorality, according to Proverbs 5:21-22?

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

What does Proverbs 6:32 say about someone who acts immorally?

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

- Strife

What does God say will be the result for those who stir up strife, according to Proverbs 17:19 and 25:8?

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

- Lying

What is God’s attitude toward liars according to Proverbs 12:22 and 19:5?

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

- Living for Our Own Satisfaction

According to Proverbs 1:24-28, what three things will God do to those who live for their own satisfaction?

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

## THE SONS OF ELI

We cannot depend on the merits of our own parents to help us obtain favor with God. Parents ought to live godly and spiritual lives, but you will not have God's blessing on your life just because of the way your parents have lived. By grace, through faith, we must choose to live godly lives ourselves in order to please God.

Eli was a godly priest in the temple of God, but his sons were not godly. Read 1 Samuel 2:12-17 and 22-36. Answer the following questions about Eli and his sons:

According to verses 12 and 17, how did the sons of Eli live?

According to verses 23-25, what did Eli ask his sons?

What warning did he give them?

How did they respond to their father and to the Lord?

According to verse 34, what did God tell Eli would happen to his sons?

According to verses 30-31, what promise was God carrying out because the sons had not honored Him?

## GOD REWARDS WORKS OF THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH

According to Luke 12:42-48, the wise servant received a reward for his faithfulness, and the unwise servant received a “reward” for how he had lived according to the flesh.

| Servant | How Did He Live? | What Was His Reward? |
|---------|------------------|----------------------|
| Wise    |                  |                      |
| Unwise  |                  |                      |

### LET’S REVIEW AND EXAMINE OURSELVES

Look carefully over the lists of the works of the flesh that you made in Lesson 13. Every one of us has particular problems with the flesh. Which problems are the biggest for you? List the main problems that you think you should deal with first and explain specifically why they are problems for you. How do these problems usually come to the surface in your life? This study will help you to recognize them when they appear in your life the next time.

| Problem | How It Shows Itself in My Life |
|---------|--------------------------------|
|         |                                |
|         |                                |
|         |                                |

In our next lesson, we will begin to study how we can overcome our problems by walking in the Spirit so that we produce the fruit of the Spirit. But for now, we need to begin to recognize them for what they are and understand how very important these concerns are to God. He wants our lives to be satisfied and blessed, but we will not be blessed if we are walking in the sinfulness of the flesh.

## TEACHER'S LESSON

| Type of Sin       | Effect on My Life |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Drunkenness       |                   |
| Immorality        |                   |
| Strife            |                   |
| Lying             |                   |
| Self-centeredness |                   |



# WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

## THE CHARACTER OF GOD

God has many qualities that show He is the one true God. God is holy, righteous, just, and merciful. God is perfect love and goodness. There is no sin in God. God's love is so strong and so pure that it has overflowed on earth through Jesus Christ to those who repent and believe in Him. God's work in His people demonstrates His love by living in us, helping us overcome sin, and transforming us into the image of Christ. We have already learned about the works of the flesh, and now we need to see what God's true character is. The characteristics of God (the fruit of His Spirit) are described below. Complete the lists below to learn what God is truly like and what He wants us to be like as we learn more about Him.

## THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

You read Galatians 5:22-23 during your study of Lesson 13. List once again the aspects of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Write a short definition for each aspect of the fruit. Use a dictionary if necessary.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

Now turn to 2 Peter 1:3-9 and read it carefully. Beginning in verse 5, God gives another list that teaches us about His character. Add these evidences of God's character to your list if they are not already on the above list. Again, write a definition for each word you list.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Now look at 2 Peter 1:8. What does God promise if you let Him build these attributes into your life?

Based on verse 9, what is true of someone who does not practice these things by God's power?

## CONFORMED TO HIS IMAGE

Now that we have studied the differences between the works of the flesh and the works of the Spirit you should be able to see quite clearly the difference between the two. Please remember that if you give in to those things that are of the flesh, you are acting as if you were pagan and not even a Christian at all.

If you are responding rightly to the Holy Spirit's work in you, you will develop the fruit of the Spirit, and you will become spiritual.

Read Romans 8:28-29 and answer the following questions.

What are two characteristics of the kind of people for whom all things work together for good?

1.

2.

Into whose image or likeness does God the Father plan to change us?

What do you think it means to be changed into His image?

These verses explain very clearly what God's plan for us is. His plan is to change us into the image of His Son. In other words, God wants to help us have the inner character of Jesus. By image, God does not mean that we are to look like Jesus did outwardly while

He was here. Instead, we are to become like Jesus on the inside—in our character. God wants to replace our anger and pride with love and joy. He wants to replace our laziness with diligence. He wants to replace our rebellion with responsibility. He wants us to bring honor to Him as we live through Jesus’ strength, following His example.

## THE WAR BETWEEN THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT

There is a great hindrance to having the character of Jesus formed in us. The problem is not with God. The problem is with us. We still have many things within us that are of the flesh, and therefore are sinful. We must learn to put aside the desires of the flesh and allow God to fill us with the fruit of the Holy Spirit. This is not always easy because we do not always behave properly. When we do not behave properly, we feel guilty and afraid or sad. Read Galatians 5:16-18, and you will understand what the problem is. Read these verses and answer the questions below.

What command is given?

If we do this, what will happen?

The word “lust” means to desire something intensely or to fight against something else. For example, if you know that you should be doing your homework, but you would rather spend the time talking on the phone to your friends, you would probably feel a strong desire to talk in your heart. That desire fights against the knowledge that you ought to be doing what you ought to be doing.

According to verse 17, why is it so difficult to do the things we should?

How should we be led if we are to do the things we should? (verse 18)

If you do need to do homework, and yet you desire to talk on the phone, you should depend on the Holy Spirit to lead you and enable you to do the right thing. This means that you must be willing to choose obedience over your internal desires. You should forget about the phone and simply sit down at a table and complete the work you have to do. Then you can spend the extra time you have later talking to a friend. If you do this, you are walking in the Spirit and not fulfilling the desires of the flesh, which are wrong desires. Afterwards, you will know true success and joy because you have done right, and God has rewarded you.

If you had not obeyed, and if you had chosen instead to pick up the phone “just for a minute,” you might have found your whole evening gone. You would realize that you did not have the time to accomplish what you should have, or maybe you would have been too tired to study profitably. The results of rebelling against the Spirit and following the flesh would have been guilt and unhappiness because you had not prepared yourself for your classes as you should have.

## FIRST THINGS FIRST

Remember, God does not want to hold truly good things away from us. He wants us to enjoy our friends and all the other good things in our lives. But He does want us to learn to put first the One who ought to be first: God Himself!

What does Matthew 6:25–33 (especially vs. 33) teach should be the first things we seek?

What is the result when we have these priorities?

How does this verse apply to what you have been learning?

As you have been studying this section, God has probably brought something to your mind concerning the fight between the flesh and the Spirit inside you. Perhaps it has to do with your responsibilities or attitudes at home, something to do with your friends

or some aspect of some activity you really enjoy doing, such as computer games or sports. Tell about the “fight” that is going on as you face this situation.

- What would you do if you were yielding to the Spirit?

- What does your flesh want to do?

- How does it feel to be in the middle of this “fight” against temptation?

- What do you need to do in order to win these battles?

- If you walk in the Spirit and resist temptation, what will the results be (both external and internal results)?

## TEACHER'S LESSON

### *The Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)*

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.
8.
9.



# WHAT IS CHARACTER?

God has made us to have external characteristics and internal characteristics. The external things are “the outside.” They include those things about us that everyone can see—how tall we are, what we look like, how good we are at music or sports or art, how well we do in our schoolwork, what we wear, and many other aspects of our lives. Human beings naturally tend to place the most importance on these external things. They are very concerned about what they wear and whether they have clothing that’s popular. They are concerned about the cut and style of their hair. Even the brand of the shoes that they buy can seem greatly important. People are even picky about the other people with whom they are willing to be seen in public.

It is not wrong to look sharp and wear stylish clothing. It is not wrong to succeed in school. It is not wrong to excel in soccer, basketball, music, or art. These are good things to desire. But your “outside” characteristics are not the most important things about you! Part of growing up and becoming a mature man or woman is knowing what is really important and what is not really so important.

The most important part of you is the internal part called your character. The reason this is important is that sooner or later, what you are really like on the inside will show on the outside. If you are a liar and think you can get away with it, you will soon find yourself lying more and more often. Eventually, you will be discovered, and then both your external and internal character will be evident to all. If you have too much pride in some ability, soon others will notice your pride and will not want to acknowledge the ability God has given you.

They will not care how good you are at something then. In fact, they will not even want to be around you. But if you respond to God with trust and obedience as He works to change your inward character, your inward changes will begin to show on the outside too. The change in you will be evident to others. If you are genuinely a giving and sharing person, others around you will be happy for you when something good happens to you. If you are self-centered and think only of yourself, others will not be glad for you when something good happens to you.

Why is it that some pretty girls can seem less pretty after you have gotten to know them a little better?

Why is it that the best-dressed boy with the most money is often not the most popular?

Why is it that sometimes very smart young people do not have many friends?

One reason that some people have a hard time keeping friends is that they may not be truly wise, beautiful, or good on the inside—even if they seemed that way on the outside. It might not show up right away, but what we are on the inside will become obvious to everyone else eventually.

Just to remind yourself of what is really important, list at least ten fleshly attitudes and nine spiritual attitudes to complete the chart below. Try to write these without looking back at Lessons 13-15 for help. If you have forgotten some of them, look them up so you can complete your list.

| Works of the Flesh | Fruit of the Spirit |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| •                  | •                   |
| •                  | •                   |
| •                  | •                   |
| •                  | •                   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| • |   |
| • | • |
| • |   |
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| • | • |
| • |   |
| • | • |
| • |   |
| • | • |
| • |   |
| • | • |

As you study the difference between walking in the Spirit and walking in the flesh, it will become painfully obvious which aspects of our character are of God and which are of the flesh. If we are to grow in our character and be conformed to the image of Jesus by the Holy Spirit working in us, we must remember some very important things.

- You must desire to be like Jesus and consciously choose to walk in the Spirit.
- You must recognize that from time to time you will fall back and choose to give in to the desires of the flesh. When you do give in to the desires of the flesh, you must realize that you have sinned and confess your sin to God. He promises in 1 John 1:9 that if you confess your sins to Him, He will forgive you and cleanse you from all unrighteousness.
- After a failure, you ought to get back up again, repent, and renew your determination to be like Jesus. If you are a believer, you can do this because of what Jesus has already done for you and what He continues to do in you.

As you stay conscious of these things, you can also be sure that God will be working to make you more and more like Jesus. Look again at the fruit of the Spirit, the spiritual attitudes that you have listed. This is the way you should want your life to be—filled with love for others, with peace and joy in your hearts, with longsuffering and patience when things do not go your way, with gentleness and goodness in your attitudes toward others, and with faithfulness when God wants to use you to do something good. When you are walking in the Spirit, you will not have to suffer guilt, anger, rebellion, and all the other harmful attitudes and feelings that come along with sin. You will be free to be all that God wants you to be.

## REMEMBER NOAH?

We recently reviewed what happened when the people of Noah's time were indulging in the lust of their human desires and did not desire to seek after God. It was not long before God destroyed them all because their hearts were sinful and wicked.

Noah and his family were not perfect people, but God says in Genesis 6:8 that Noah found grace or favor in the eyes of the Lord.

What did God mean by this?

How many examples can you find of God's blessings to Noah? See Genesis 6-9. Write down verses that support your answers.

- 

- 

- 

-

## GOD'S PROMISES FOR THOSE WHO LOVE AND OBEY HIM

Noah's testimony can be an encouragement for all of us. God does not expect us to be perfect either, but He does want us to learn to walk in the Spirit and to desire to become like His Son. When those are the desires of your heart, God promises to bless you in many ways. These verses in Proverbs will remind you of some of the ways God has promised to bless those who find grace in His eyes. Write God's promise beside each reference from Proverbs.

- 3:6
- 5:21
- 16:7
- 20:24
- 21:31
- 27:26-27
- 30:5

## CONSEQUENCES OF IMPROPER ATTITUDES

One of God's promises to Noah was that He would never again destroy the earth with a flood. But God does tell us many times that if we continue to walk in the flesh and have no desire to learn to walk like Jesus, there will be consequences in our lives that are not good. Just as your parents might give you consequences of punishment for misbehavior, so does God warn us of consequences of allowing ungodly attitudes to dominate our lives.

Read the verses from Proverbs and complete the following chart.

|       | Results of Fleshy Attitudes | Results of Godly Attitudes |
|-------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 10:12 |                             |                            |
| 11:2  |                             |                            |
| 12:2  |                             |                            |
| 15:29 |                             |                            |
| 19:23 |                             |                            |
| 28:13 |                             |                            |
| 28:14 |                             |                            |

## TEACHER'S LESSON

### *Character*

- Original Meaning

- Definition

Living and acting by a  set of  
 that  right  
 patterns of behavior into my life.

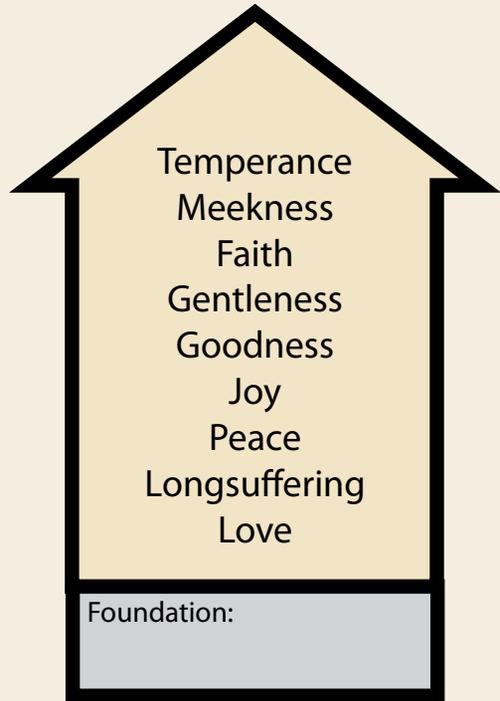
## Building Christian Character

- Carpenters:

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

- The Structure:

Bible   
 or  based  
on the  of God  
which never  and by  
which we govern our





# LOVE AND GENTLENESS

When we studied the fruit of the Spirit, we learned that the entire fruit of the Spirit emanates or comes out of love. Love is the true character of God, and everything springs from this foundation.

## THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT

When Jesus spoke of His love for us and our love for Him and others, He said that nothing in our lives is more important. In Mark 12:28, a man asked Jesus, “Which commandment is the greatest?”

In Mark 12:29-31, you can read the answer Jesus gave this man. Then read John 13:35 and 1 John 4:7-8, 20-21. Think about all these verses and explain in your own words the meaning of these two most important commandments.

- Most important command:
- Second most important command:

Give some examples of how you can obey these commands.

## HOW TO SHOW LOVE

Our love for people is shown by how we treat them. Read each of the following verses and match the references to the correct corresponding thoughts about kindness. Some of the words that mean the same as “kindness” are gentleness, goodness, and manners.

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| 1. Romans 2:4          | A. We serve God and show our love for Him by our kindness. |
| 2. Ephesians 2:7       | B. God's goodness leads us to repentance.                  |
| 3. 2 Corinthians 6:4-6 | C. Learn to be gentle instead of angry.                    |
| 4. Proverbs 19:22      | D. Wrong friends will hinder us from being kind to others. |
| 5. 1 Corinthians 13:4  | E. We should want kindness to characterize our lives.      |
| 6. 1 Corinthians 15:33 | F. In the ages to come God will continue to show kindness. |
| 7. Proverbs 24:17      | G. Do not be glad when your enemy falls or stumbles.       |
| 8. Proverbs 15:1       | H. Kindness is an evidence of genuine love.                |

## PROVERBS TEACHES US HOW TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER

Proverbs has much to say about how we ought to treat one another. Much of what the Bible teaches us to do involves simple and obvious things that should come naturally for those who walk in the Spirit. Read the following verses and explain (1) what we should do, (2) why we should do it, and (3) for whom we should do it.

| Verses             | What Should We Do? | Why Should We Do it? | For Whom? |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| Proverbs 3:27      |                    |                      |           |
| Proverbs 3:28      |                    |                      |           |
| Proverbs 3:29      |                    |                      |           |
| Proverbs 14:21, 31 |                    |                      |           |

|                   |  |  |  |
|-------------------|--|--|--|
| Proverbs 24:28    |  |  |  |
| Proverbs 25:21-22 |  |  |  |
| Luke 6:35-36      |  |  |  |

## BEING KIND TO OUR ENEMIES

Loving enemies may be the most difficult part of learning to love others. In the Bible, Jesus says that it is not to our credit when we are kind to those we care about and have as our friends. To be kind and loving to someone who is kind and loving to us is easy. It is easy to love someone we like!

But when someone has mistreated us and hurt us in some way, it is very difficult to treat him kindly. What we need to do is learn to let God's Holy Spirit work in our hearts and help us to respond in the right way. Jesus says that He can make even our enemies to be our friends. How does Proverbs 16:7 explain this?

## JESUS FORGAVE HIS ENEMIES

- The greatest example we have of forgiving and showing kindness to an enemy is what Jesus did on the cross. Jesus had done no wrong, yet many people wanted Him to be crucified. Read Luke 23:33-37 and answer each of the following questions: What groups of people persecuted Jesus?

- What kinds of things did these groups do?

- What did Jesus ask God on their behalf?

## THE STORY OF RUTH

The story of Ruth and Naomi is a beautiful story of love, devotion, gentleness, and kindness in action. Consider Ruth's story carefully with these characteristics in mind.

This story begins with another woman named Naomi. Naomi's family, including her husband and two sons, left the land of Canaan (the Promised Land) because there was a famine there. They went in search of food and what they thought would be a better life. While in a foreign country, Naomi's sons married heathen women. But soon Naomi's husband and both of her sons died. So Naomi decided to return to her people and her homeland.

When Naomi decided to go back, one of her daughters-in-law chose to stay in her homeland. The other, Ruth, had learned about the one true God and wanted to stay with Naomi, so the two women went to live in the town of Bethlehem. They were very poor, but God took care of them.

Back then, it was customary for the poor people to gather the grain that was left over after the farmers had harvested the fields. Ruth went into these fields to gather leftover grain for food. The field where she gathered grain belonged to a man named Boaz. As she gathered her grain, Boaz began to watch her and noticed her beauty and her gentle, loving ways in the midst of hardship. God brought them together, and they were married.

Although Ruth was a poor foreigner from a heathen nation, God honored her devotion to Him and her loving and kind ways. He helped her meet someone who would take care of her and love her. In this way the Lord graciously blessed her life and even honored her with a place in the lineage of His Son! Ruth eventually became the great-grandmother of King David.

Who was King David's most important descendant?

Read the following verses in the book of Ruth and explain how the spiritual qualities of love, gentleness, and kindness can be seen in Ruth’s life.

- Ruth 1:16-18
- Ruth 2:2-3
- Ruth 2:8-12
- Ruth 3:11

## HOW DO WE BECOME KIND?

The story of Ruth illustrates how gentleness and kindness could be a part of your life. God will bless you for your loving attitudes and your strength of character. As you have already studied, there is only one way to build your character in these areas and all others. You must allow the Holy Spirit to change you from the inside. You must also fulfill your responsibility to submit to His commands. Developing godly character involves both trusting Him and obeying Him.

## TEACHER’S LESSON

| Ruth’s Situation                       | Attitude(s) Shown | Attitude(s) Not Shown | Blessing(s) |
|--|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| She suffered the death of her husband. |                   |                       |             |
| She left home and moved to Canaan.     |                   |                       |             |
| She worked hard in the fields.         |                   |                       |             |



# INTEGRITY

In our last lesson we studied the most important commands. The Bible says, “God is love” (1 John 4:7–10). When we demonstrate true love and kindness to people, we are showing them God. In this lesson we are going to learn about another quality that is a key in the development of our character. Like the quality of love, it should be part of every aspect of our lives.

To have integrity is to live consistently according to a code of core values. It means to be completely honest in all matters, to be sincere and faithful, to be strong and steadfast, and to have the courage to do right. A person who has integrity is a trustworthy person. He lives righteously in all he does. He does not lie, he does not cheat, and he does not steal.

## THE PRINCIPLE OF TRUTH AND HONESTY

Making truth and honesty a basic part of your life will show all who know you what kind of person you are. If you have integrity, you will be trusted.

Read the following verses in Proverbs and explain what God says about the importance of truthfulness in our lives.

- 11:3

- 12:17

- 12:19

- 12:22

- 19:5

- 20:11

- 20:17

- 28:13

## THE PRINCIPLE OF SOWING AND REAPING

One of the recurring ideas in the Bible is the principle of sowing and reaping. Read Galatians 6:7 and state the principle in your own words.

A Bible story that illustrates the meaning of this principle is the story of Jacob and Esau. Jacob and Esau were twin brothers. Esau was the first of the twins to be born. Being the first-born son held many advantages for boys in those days. One advantage was that Esau would inherit the birthright. However, Esau was not the favorite son of his mother, Rebekah. She wanted Jacob to have the advantages of being the first-born, so she helped him deceive his father, Isaac. Read a part of their story in Genesis 25:27-34. In your own words, explain how Jacob used craftiness to obtain Esau's birthright.

Later, Rebekah and Jacob together used deceit to take what they wanted. By this time Isaac was very old, and his eyes were weak. Isaac wanted to give the traditional inheritance blessing to his first-born son Esau before he died, so he called Esau and sent him to hunt and prepare food for them both before he gave the blessing. Read the rest of the story in Genesis 27:1-41 and complete the following.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Isaac was old, and...                               | A. ...to kill his brother.   |
| 2. Isaac asked Esau to get food for him so he might... | B. ...take food to Isaac to receive the blessing before Esau came. |
| 3. Rebekah told Jacob to...                            | C. ...he believed Jacob was Esau.                                  |
| 4. Jacob tricked Isaac by...                           | D. ...that his father had been deceived.                           |
| 5. Isaac was deceived because...                       | E. ...his eyes were weak.  |
| 6. Isaac gave the blessing...                          | F. ...give him his blessing before he died.                        |
| 7. Esau came back and learned...                       | G. ...covering his neck and arms with goatskins.                   |
| 8. Esau was so upset that he planned...                | H. ...to Jacob.  |

Now the sowing and reaping principle began to take effect in the lives of Jacob and Rebekah. Read Genesis 27:41-45. What happened and why?

Jacob never saw his mother alive again. When Jacob left home, he went to Haran to live with his Uncle Laban. Laban was Rebekah's brother. Soon after he arrived at his uncle's home, Jacob met Rachel and wanted to marry her. Laban said that if Jacob worked for him for seven years, he could have Rachel as his wife. So Jacob worked for his uncle for seven years until Rachel could become his wife. God used Laban's dishonesty to show Jacob the importance of the principle of integrity and honesty. Jacob was deceived just as he had deceived his father, Isaac. Read Genesis 29:21-28 and explain how Laban deceived Jacob.

Now we see the principle in action. The things we do, whether they are good or bad, will come back to us. Jacob sowed deception, and he reaped deception. He sowed dishonesty, and he reaped dishonesty. If you hurt others, others will hurt you. But if you spread love and kindness, love and kindness will be returned to you. If you sow honesty, that too will be returned. God has set this principle into action, and it will happen as He says.

Integrity is a key ingredient in your character. Integrity means that you have pure motives and honesty. You are dependable to do what is right. God always focuses on our motives and purposes. If our inner motives and inner purposes are pure and right, our lives will be right. Others will see that we can be trusted.

## PURE MOTIVES

Read 1 Samuel 16:7. When Samuel was seeking out the young man God had chosen to be the next king of Israel, what did he say about the difference between the way man judges and the way God judges?

The Lord showed Samuel that David was the young man that He had chosen to be king. Why? Because David had a pure heart and pure motives.

## WALKING IN INTEGRITY

The concept of integrity relates to many areas. Read each of the following verses and match it with the correct statement.

|  |  |                   |
|--|--|-------------------|
|  | 1. Do not tell someone that you plan to give him something and then later not give it. Do not make promises you cannot keep. | A. Exodus 20:15   |
|  | 2. Do not take what does not belong to you.  | B. Proverbs 11:9  |
|  | 3. Do not say anything intended to injure the reputation of another person. This is slander.                                 | C. Proverbs 15:3  |
|  | 4. Do not be a talebearer and tell false stories about others. Do not start, repeat, or listen to gossip.                    | D. Proverbs 18:8  |
|  | 5. Do not lie to anyone about anything.  | E. Proverbs 21:6  |
|  |  | F. Proverbs 25:14 |
|  |  | G. Colossians 3:9 |
|  |  | H. James 1:22     |
|  |  | I. James 5:16     |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | 6. Do not accept a gift or payment of any sort to do wrong; do not try to make money by telling lies. |  |
|  | 7. Openly admit when you are wrong.   |  |
|  | 8. Do not do wrong things, thinking that no one will ever find out.                                   |  |
|  | 9. Determine to do those things that are pleasing to the Lord so you will not deceive yourself.       |  |

It is important to look inside yourself and think about your own motives. Why do you do what you do? Is it because you want to do what is right or because you are afraid of punishment? Why are you nice to others? Is it because you want to be loving and kind or because you want something in return? Impure motives should be taken out of your life by confessing wrong attitudes that you see inside yourself.

## SEEING THE SOWING AND REAPING PRINCIPLE IN MY LIFE

It is a sign of maturity to begin to understand how the principle of sowing and reaping works in our lives. We can see how the principle works both when we do wrong and when we do right.

On the following chart, share several instances from your own life when this principle was at work. Share both good and bad examples.

| I Sowed... | I Reaped... |
|------------|-------------|
| 1.         | 1.          |
| 2.         | 2.          |
| 3.         | 3.          |



# MEEKNESS AND HUMILITY

The idea of developing a meek and humble attitude is not generally appealing to young people because they do not understand its true meaning. Many think that meekness and humility show weakness. But this is far from the truth. Actually, meekness and humility in the life of a Christian result from the recognition that God has supplied us with *everything* that we are. Because His power has broken into our lives, and because He has a purpose for our lives, we realize that we do not have to show everyone how great we are. We have nothing to prove because we depend on God for everything, and He supplies it all. This trust in God produces patience, love, wisdom, control over anger, and courage. A person who is not dependent on God does not have these qualities. This kind of person is impatient, angry, proud, haughty, and arrogant because he believes he has to accomplish everything on his own. Thus meekness and humility have at their core strength and courage that are grounded on faith in God.

## RESULTS OF HUMILITY AND PRIDE

Compare Proverbs 8:13 and Isaiah 13:11. What does God think of arrogance and pride?

We need to begin to recognize the problem of pride and arrogance so that we can begin to develop the strength of humility and meekness in our lives. Pride says that we are in control, not God. It says that our desires and plans are more important than God's.

Read the following verses in Proverbs and record what they say about the results of humility and pride.

| Proverb | Results of Humility | Results of Pride |
|---------|---------------------|------------------|
| 11:2    |                     |                  |
| 13:10   |                     |                  |
| 15:25   |                     |                  |
| 16:18   |                     |                  |
| 18:12   |                     |                  |
| 21:4    |                     |                  |
| 22:4    |                     |                  |
| 28:25   |                     |                  |

Review what you have written in each section above and think of some ways you need to have humility in your life. What will happen if you allow pride to control what you do?

## ESTHER THE QUEEN

The book of Esther is the story of a young Jewish woman who became the queen of King Ahasuerus of Persia. Esther had been raised by her Uncle Mordecai, who at one time had saved the king's life.

The king decided to promote a man named Haman to a very important position. Read Esther 3:1-6 and complete the following questions.

- What were the people commanded to do?

- Who would not do this?

- Why was Haman so angry?

- What did Haman decide to do?

- What was Haman's heart problem?

After what you have studied about the results of arrogance and pride, what do you think God caused to happen to Haman?

The king did not know that his queen was also a Jew, so he agreed to Haman's plan. So Queen Esther and Mordecai began to pray and ask God to show them what to do. God showed Esther that she should have a banquet to show her husband the truth of what was happening in his kingdom. Haman was invited to the banquet. How did Haman evidence even more pride at this invitation? See Esther 5:11-12.

Haman was so filled with pride and arrogance that he thought he could do anything he wished. He ordered a gallows to be built on which Mordecai would be hanged. But God reminded the king that Mordecai had once saved his life and had not been rewarded. So the king caused Mordecai to be honored by having him led through the streets on a richly arrayed horse with Haman leading the parade. Haman was mortified. At a second banquet held by Queen Esther, Haman was present once again.

Read Esther 7:1-10 and answer the following questions.

- What did the king learn at this banquet?

- What was the king's response?

- What happened to Haman?

## KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR

During the days of Daniel, there was a very powerful king named Nebuchadnezzar. King Nebuchadnezzar developed the same attitudes of pride and arrogance that we saw in the life of Haman. But there is a difference in the story of Nebuchadnezzar. See if you can discover the difference between the two men. Read the story in Daniel 4:28-37.

- How did Nebuchadnezzar's arrogance and pride evidence themselves?

- What did God allow to happen to the king?

- What attitude began to change in Nebuchadnezzar's heart?

- What happened to the king then?

Compare Haman with King Nebuchadnezzar. What was the key difference between these two men, and what results did God provide because of this difference?

## ARROGANCE AND PRIDE

One of the key ingredients of pride is arrogance. An arrogant person exaggerates his own importance before others. He acts cocky and thinks he knows everything.

Read the following verses in Proverbs and record what each says a foolish, prideful person does.

- 15:5

- 15:20

- 30:11

- 30:12

- 30:13

## MEEKNESS

The Bible has much to teach about meekness. Read the following verses and place the correct reference beside the statement that best matches each verse.

|  |   |                          |
|--|---|--------------------------|
|  | 1. Meekness cooperates with others and seeks unity. | A. Matthew 21:12         |
|  | 2. Meekness humbly helps those in need.             | B. 1 Thessalonians 2:7-9 |
|  | 3. Meekness is teachable.                           | C. Galatians 6:1-3       |
|  | 4. Meekness is submissive.                          | D. James 1:21            |
|  | 5. Meekness nourishes and cherishes others.         | E. Ephesians 4:2-3       |
|  | 6. Meekness is not the opposite of courage.         | F. 1 Peter 3:1, 4        |

## HUMILITY OR PRIDE?

Look up each verse listed on the following chart and indicate who the passage is about and then whether the person is showing humility or pride.

| Passage               | Person | Humility or Pride? |
|-----------------------|--------|--------------------|
| Genesis 32:9-10       |        |                    |
| Exodus 5:2            |        |                    |
| 2 Kings 5:9-12        |        |                    |
| 2 Kings 5:13-15       |        |                    |
| 2 Chronicles 26:1-5   |        |                    |
| 2 Chronicles 26:14-16 |        |                    |
| Matthew 3:13-15       |        |                    |
| Luke 15:11-13         |        |                    |
| Luke 15:14-19         |        |                    |

## WHAT ABOUT YOUR LIFE

List those areas where you have exhibited pride, arrogance, self-will, a bad temper, the determination to have your own way, and rebellion toward your parents.

In which of these areas do you face the greatest struggles?

With this in mind, give yourself a project to do that will help you exhibit patient, quiet submission to someone.

## TEACHER'S LESSON

### *Meekness*

- Definition

An inward attitude that  all  and  to

- Antonyms

- 
- 

- Synonyms

- 
- 

### *When we are meek, we do not...*

- and  our rights

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
-



# HARD WORK AND FAITHFULNESS

All of our talents and abilities come from God. God has a purpose for all of these things that He has given us. As we have already studied, God has a purpose and plan for us and wants to direct our paths so we will be successful. To achieve the goals He has for us, we must learn several things.

1. First, we must know the will of God so we know we are obeying Him.
2. Second, we must learn to be faithful and work hard so that our goals may be achieved. A lazy person will never succeed in any area.
3. Finally, we must learn that trials and obstacles will come into our paths, and we must not allow ourselves to use these obstacles as excuses. Instead, we need to persevere and be faithful in our tasks.

Let's analyze the life of Christ to see how this fits into the pattern we have outlined above. Jesus had a definite purpose and goal for coming to the earth. What was His purpose and goal? (Luke 19:10)

Was God directing Jesus to complete this goal?    Yes    No

Using John 17:3-6 as an example, list some of the other goals God had given Jesus to accomplish.

- 
- 
-

These are goals God wants all of us to accomplish.

Was Jesus faithful to complete this goal?

How do you know that He was not lazy?

Trials and obstacles definitely came into Jesus' path and threatened to defeat Him. What was His greatest trial?

What other trials did He face?

Was Jesus defeated?    Yes    No

How do you know? What happened to show that He was not defeated and instead completed the goal set before Him?

## FAITHFULNESS AND DILIGENCE WILL BRING SUCCESS

Using a dictionary, find and record definitions for the following words.

- Slothful:
- Sluggard:
- Slack:
- Diligent:

Read the following verses in Proverbs and record how God views a faithful, diligent worker and what He thinks about laziness.

| Proverb | Hard Worker | Lazy Person |
|---------|-------------|-------------|
| 10:4-5  |             |             |
| 12:24   |             |             |
| 13:4    |             |             |
| 19:15   |             |             |
| 20:4    |             |             |
| 22:29   |             |             |
| 23:21   |             |             |

Read and observe the lesson that can be learned from Proverbs 24:30-34. Then complete your own proverb based on this lesson, substituting a situation that would fit into your lifestyle.

A  young person , but  
a  young person .

## MAKING EXCUSES

When faced with criticism, verbal abuse, mockery, hard work, or failure, we tend to have one of these responses:

- We carry a grudge.
- We retaliate by trying to get even.
- We quit.
- We make excuses.
- We become discouraged.

Read Proverbs 22:13 to see a type of excuse that people make for not completing a goal. What is it?

List some of the excuses that you and your friends make for not completing the tasks you have.

Look back over your list carefully. Check those types of excuses that you tend to use. What should you do instead of making excuses?

## JOHANN GUTENBERG

God uses our hard work and faithfulness to Him to accomplish great things through us for His people. Let's study one example of how God used one man's hard work to change the world by making Bibles available to ordinary people. As you read this story, pay close attention so you will be able to answer the questions at the end.

For hundreds of years, copies of the Bible were made by monks one copy at a time. They copied the Word of God by hand, and they believed that this was the only proper way to make the Holy Bible live on. They also believed that those who were priests and monks were the only ones who should read the Word of God because others could not interpret God's Word properly. They did not believe that common people like us could ever understand the Bible for themselves.

Johann Gutenberg was born in Mainz, Germany around 1400. As a boy, he went to school for only five years, which was all that was required. He became an apprentice in the Mainz mint, where his father was director. At work he learned to make gold coins, but at home he carved wooden blocks in the shape of the letters of the alphabet and used these to make copies of his grammar book. Johann loved to read, but books were far too expensive for someone like him to be able to buy.

From his experiments with wooden letters, Johann decided that wood was not clear enough for printing. He wanted to find a way to use a cast metal strong enough to take constant use, so he began to experiment with a variety of molds and frames. God had given Johann a special interest and goal. His goal was to invent a new way to make books so they could print books for everyone to read. He had a dream of giving the Bible to the common people.

Constant problems came along that could easily have defeated him and kept him from his goal. In those days guilds of craftsmen had rules about what a person could make in their shops. According to the guild, Johann was to work only at goldsmithing as he had been apprenticed to do. They learned that Johann was going against the guild rules by experimenting with other things. As a result, the guild prevented money from being sent to Johann's shop. Now he could not pay his bills. Lawsuits were brought against him, and his lenders wanted their money. Johann then printed the grammar book used by wealthy children. This enabled him to borrow money from Johann Fust so he could continue his work.

This caused further problems because Fust knew of Gutenberg's dream to print the Bible. Fust decided to control the market of all Bible printing so he could receive all of the money from these sales for himself. Gutenberg was not interested in profit. His primary goal was to let all the common people, not just the priests, have the Bible to read. So Fust had his son-in-law work in Gutenberg's shop since he was now Gutenberg's biggest creditor. The son-in-law watched to see when the invention was finished. Just as Johann had gotten his start on the New Testament, Fust took him to court and legally forced Johann out of his shop to pay back his bills. Fust began to print Bibles on Gutenberg's printing press for a great profit.

Gutenberg then went back to his home and set up his own shop and printing press. A very important man in politics and in the church became his patron and helped him. Through Gutenberg, God caused many thousands of Bibles to be printed and brought into the hands of common people all over the world. When we realize how many libraries and stores are filled with books of every description, it is important to realize that the first books printed on the printing press invented by Gutenberg were Bibles. God had given Gutenberg a dream; and though there were many obstacles, Gutenberg did not allow his dream to leave his heart. He worked hard, persevered, and saw his dream come true.

Dreams and goals are important when they are motivated by a desire to serve and honor God, not merely to get earthly things for ourselves. God uses those goals in our hearts to

accomplish His purposes. Review the three concepts that we studied at the beginning of the lesson and that we applied to Jesus. Think about the life of Gutenberg from the same perspective.

What had God planned for Gutenberg to accomplish in his life? What dreams and goals did He put into Gutenberg's heart?

What background did Johann have to allow him to achieve this goal?

In what ways did Gutenberg evidence faithfulness and hard work to achieve his goal?

What trials did Gutenberg have to overcome to achieve his goal?

Did he use the trials as excuses, or did he achieve his goal?

## SETTING PERSONAL GOALS

Everyone goes through the same process to achieve their goals in life. God gives us goals to achieve. Trials and problems come into our paths, and we must work to overcome our problems. Finally, then, we achieve our goals. Perhaps your goal is to get better grades. Perhaps it is running for a student office or being a part of a sports team. Perhaps it is to complete some service in your school or youth group.

Choose one area of your life in which you believe you would please the Lord to set a goal. What do you believe would be a reasonable and profitable specific goal?

In what areas and ways must you demonstrate hard work and faithfulness to achieve this goal?

What problems and trials might hinder you from reaching this goal?

What attitude must you have to overcome these problems?

## FAITHFULNESS IN REAL-LIFE SITUATIONS

A number of real-life situations are listed below. Describe what it will take to be faithful to the Lord in each specific situation.

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| You are given a difficult assignment at school. | You are alone with friends, and your parents are not home. | You borrow money from a friend and promise to repay him the next day. |
|---|--|---|

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p>You decide to go out for a team sport.</p>                                   | <p>The teacher gives an assignment to be done individually and steps outside the room.</p> | <p>Your parents give you a chore you do not want to do.</p>          |
| <p>You are asked to watch your younger brother or sister for the afternoon.</p> | <p>You return to school after being sick for three days.</p>                               | <p>You have offered to help organize a youth activity at church.</p> |





# SELF-CONTROL

Two words, “temperance” and “self-control,” are often used in our English Bibles to describe a very important quality—the quality of a disciplined life. Self-control will provide stability and inner character for your life. Self-control is the balance between freedom and responsibility. You cannot have true character without discipline and control over yourself.

We have already discussed the important balance between freedom and responsibility. Teenagers desire to have more freedom to be on their own. But, as we have discussed, many teens do not realize that with more freedom comes more responsibility. And responsibility requires self-control.

Self-control is the ability to say “no” when an acquaintance offers something that would be wrong for you. It is the ability to say “no” when somebody wants you to go somewhere that would be wrong. It is the ability to choose to do your chores without being told. It is the ability to choose to complete your homework on time. It is the ability to control your actions so that the choices you make will honor God, and God will continue to work in your life to accomplish His purposes and to bless you.

## WHAT PROVERBS SAYS ABOUT SELF-CONTROL

Read the following verses in Proverbs and match them to the following descriptions. You may use more than one verse for some descriptions, and you may use some verses more than once. Here are the verses: Proverbs 6:6-8; 6:9-11; 10:4; 10:5; 12:24; 13:4; 20:4; 23:21; and 24:30-34.

### *Characteristics of the Undisciplined*

- Will not achieve a position of leadership
- Will come to poverty

- Has good intentions but has no accomplishments

- Will bring shame to his parents

### *Characteristics of the Disciplined*

- Will rule the undisciplined

- Is wise

- Prepares ahead of time

- Will be rich and satisfied (or “fat”)

Answer the following questions that deal with the subject of self-control based on the verses in Proverbs in parentheses after each question.

- How much should we eat? (25:16)

- What is one thing that wise people control? (10:19)

- Who is better than the mighty who conquer a city? (16:32)

- Who is like a city that has lost its defenses? (25:28)

- What happens to the man who has control over his speech? (13:3)

- What happens to the man who has no control over his speech? (13:3)

- What happens to those who linger over wine and get drunk? (23:29-30)

## HOW TO LIVE A DISCIPLINED LIFE

It is absolutely essential to realize that we cannot change our lives on our own. We need God's help through the ministry of the Holy Spirit to transform our lives from the inside out so that we can become what He wants us to be (Rom. 8:22–30). Otherwise, we will never be able to please God. But God also holds us responsible to be fighting against sin and yielding control of our lives to God (Rom. 6:14–15). Here are five steps to follow that will help you yield control to God and live a disciplined life.

### *Start with the Routine Things*

Take responsibility to complete the routine activities of life. Remember that when you avoid your responsibilities, it makes unnecessary work for others or causes others to have to nag you to complete the tasks you should do naturally. Therefore, hang up your clothes, make your bed every morning, pick up your clothes and towels after taking a shower or bath, and complete your routine chores around the house. The beginning of maturity is accepting responsibility for the ordinary things of life.

### *Discipline Your Body*

Eliminate those things that irritate others and show you have little control over your own body. Stop fidgeting, shifting, biting fingernails, constant tapping, or anything else that causes frustrations for others. Take control over what you eat so that it is balanced and healthy while you are growing so fast. Take responsibility for taking showers, washing your hair, brushing your teeth, and all the other things that keep you sharp and healthy.

Show your maturity by listening to others. Look into the eyes of those who talk to you, pay attention to what they say, be willing to listen to counsel and criticism if it is necessary, and be willing to communicate.

Don't allow griping, whining, and worrying to become a part of your life. Control your attitudes toward the little frustrations of life because they will always be there. Take control of the frustrations rather than allowing them to control you.

### *Be on Time*

Practice consistent punctuality. Determine to be in control of time rather than allowing it to control you. Get to bed in time to get enough sleep so you can get up on time.

Tardiness indicates a lack of control and discipline and is rude to others. Don't allow yourself to put off your schoolwork, especially memorizing Scripture, reading a book for a book report, or beginning work on a major project. Often such tasks are put off to the last minute. With this in mind, read the next section.

### *Do the Hard Tasks First*

Most people make the mistake of completing easy tasks and leaving difficult things until last when there is the least time and energy to do these things well. Attack the most difficult tasks first so you have time to do them well and then complete the easier things.

### *Learn Self-Restraint*

Curb your temper and control how you talk to others. The greatest indicator of your ability to control yourself is your ability to control your temper and your countenance. Don't say things that you wish you could take back later. Don't get angry and frustrated with others. A mature person will control himself in the way he treats others.

## PROJECT

For each of the above areas, list specific things over which you have the most difficult time gaining control. Then list some things you can do to show more self-control in these areas.

- Start with the routine things:

- Discipline your body:

- Be on time:

- Do the hard tasks first:

- Learn self-restraint:

Remember, none of these are actions that you have the power to accomplish in your own strength. Pray for God's help as you desire to develop self-control and bring your life under His control.

## SELF-DISCIPLINE IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Read the following passages in Daniel and tell how each shows the characteristic of self-discipline in the lives of Daniel or his friends and how God acts in each of these stories to bless His people.

- 1:8-16

- 3:1-28

- 6:1-27

## TEACHER'S LESSON

### *Self-Control*

- Definition

The  of the whole life:  and

- Antonyms

- 

- 

- Synonyms

- 

- 

- Basis of Spirit-control:

- Principle

We need the  of the Holy Spirit to lead a  life

- Proverb

One who has no   
is like a city with  (25:28).





# COURAGE

Courage is doing a right but difficult thing under adverse circumstances. In this lesson we are going to look at two aspects of courage. First, we will look at the problems fear can cause in our lives when we allow it to keep us from trusting God to take care of us when we do what is right. Second, we will talk about having the courage to do right, to take a stand when it is important, and to accomplish God’s purpose for our lives.

## THE FEAR OF MAN VS. THE FEAR OF THE LORD

We need to remember that there are different kinds of fear. The fear of the Lord is good because it means we have a great and trusting respect for God because we understand who He is. Many young people do not have courage because they do not have this great fear and respect for God. Courage is a direct result of having the power of God in your life because you have confidence that God will help you do what you ought to do and will bless you for doing it.

Another kind of fear actually hurts us. Fear that hurts us comes when we have sinned, and we have fear in our hearts because of our guilt. We also have fear of other people for many reasons that we will talk about later.

Explain what the verses below say about fear of man and fear of the Lord.

| Fear of Man | Fear of the Lord |
|-------------|------------------|
| Psalm 56:4  | Psalm 19:9       |
| Psalm 118:6 | Psalm 111:10     |

| Fear of Man    | Fear of the Lord |
|----------------|------------------|
| Proverbs 29:25 | Proverbs 14:26   |
| Hebrews 13:6   | Proverbs 14:27   |

## THE PROBLEM WITH FEAR

Everyone is fearful at some time or another. Fear is common with man, and God knows this very well. The greatest fear is the fear of death, and Jesus overcame this fear by dying on the cross so we can be assured of going to heaven. We have nothing to fear in death if Jesus is our Savior.

We also have many other situations to contend with while we live on the earth. List the kinds of fears that come into your life from time to time. Don't forget to mention the fear that comes when you have done wrong because this is also common to all of us.

## HOW DO WE GET RID OF FEAR AND DEVELOP COURAGE?

Read each verse and explain what God says you must do to eliminate fear and develop courage inside your heart so you will not have to be afraid of anything.

- Deuteronomy 31:6

- Joshua 1:7

- Joshua 1:8

- Psalm 23:4

- Proverbs 3:7

- 1 John 4:18

## EXAMPLES OF COURAGE AND FEAR

### *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Dan. 3:13-18)*

What did these young men have to fear? If they did not bow down before the golden image, they would be thrown into a fiery furnace. How did they respond? They said that God could deliver them. They did not bow down. They obeyed God and trusted Him.

### *Stephen (Acts 7:54-60)*

- What did Stephen have to fear?

- How did he respond?

### *David and Goliath (1 Sam. 17:20-37)*

- Why were the Israelites afraid?

- How did David respond?

### *The Twelve Spies (Num. 13:16-33)*

- What did these men have to fear?

- How did the majority respond?

- Who responded differently, and what was his attitude?

Actually, Caleb and Joshua stood together against the other spies, saying that God would be with them in the land of the giants and that they would be victorious. But because of the unbelief of the other spies and the Israelites themselves, the nation wandered in the wilderness for nearly forty more years until all those who feared man instead of God had died. Then God took Joshua and Caleb and allowed them to enter the Promised Land and win victory after victory. Because they feared only God and not what man could do to them, God showed Joshua and Caleb great and wonderful things by allowing them to enjoy the blessings of God's promises.

## **HAVING THE COURAGE TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT**

Just like those we have looked at who showed courage, we must understand that to have the courage to do right is a conscious choice we make.

To have courage you must choose...

- To care more about what God thinks than what your friends think.
- To do what is right rather than follow a crowd that is choosing to do wrong.
- To be more concerned about being honest than getting your own way.

- To follow God's purpose for your life, not your own immediate desires. God does not ever want you to become involved with anything that will hurt you in any way.

Remember: Courage is a result of trusting God to provide His power in our lives.

Having courage to do right is a choice that must be made. When we trust God to give us that power to do right and we decide not to do evil, we are well on our way. Remember, the courageous person is not the one who gives in to his friends and goes along with the crowd. The courageous person is the one who can stand alone. That is the person who will be victorious.

Consider those who go along with their friends and decide to do things under pressure from their friends that they otherwise never would have. What choices did they have to make?

Who has won the victory when they decide to yield to the influence of others, and how will these young people eventually face defeat?

If they had chosen to have the courage to stand for right, how would they have been victorious?

Think of some other areas in which others might tempt you to do wrong or when situations might be a temptation to get you to do wrong. List some of these below.

What must you do when such temptations come into your life so that you can overcome the fear of man and make wise decisions for your life?

## TEACHER'S LESSON

### *Courage and Temptation*

- The Command:

Be  and  (Josh. 1:9).

- The Danger:

We wrestle against the   
(Eph. 6:12).

- God's Provision:

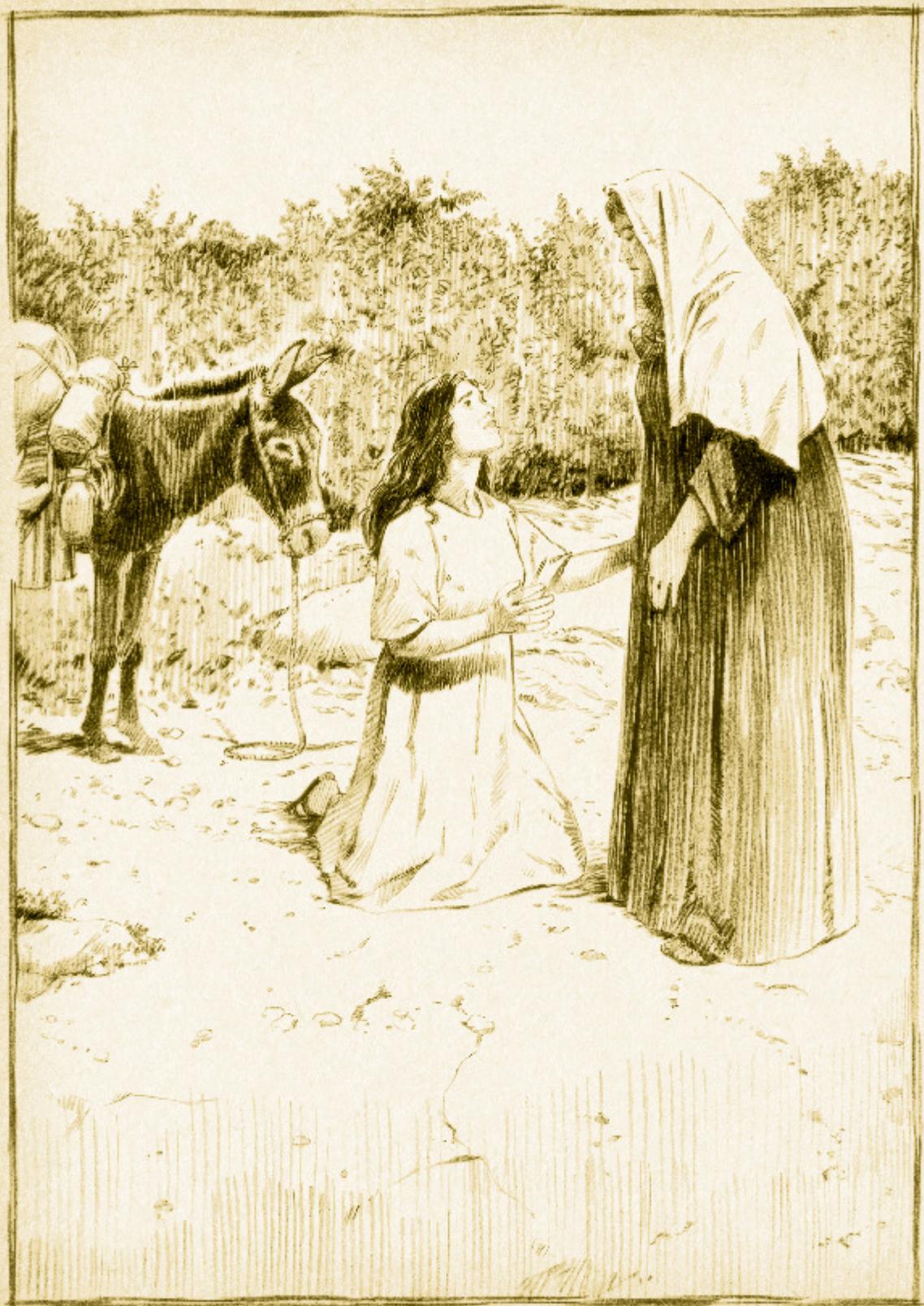
, , and a   
(2 Tim. 1:7)

- Our Attitude:

Be  and  (1 Pet. 5:8).

- The Result:

The  will  from us (James 4:7).





## LESSON 23

# SUBMISSION AND OBEDIENCE

Obedience and submission to God bring about the promises and provision of God to enable us to live lives that have purpose and worth. God's blessings rest on those who trust Him and obey Him completely. Therefore, as we study this lesson, we will realize that stubbornness, self-will, and rebellion do not hurt others as much as they hurt us.

### SELF-WILL AND STUBBORNNESS

Read the following verses and write what the verses say about self-will and stubbornness.

- Exodus 32:9

- Deuteronomy 1:43

- 1 Samuel 8:19

- Zechariah 7:11

- Acts 7:51

- 2 Peter 2:10

## THE EXAMPLE OF CAIN AND ABEL

Read Genesis 4:1-12 to review the story of Cain and Abel because it is an excellent example of a stubborn and self-willed man.

Who were Cain and Abel?

What was the difference between the offerings they each brought to the Lord?

Why do you think Cain was angry and his face showed disappointment?

With what sarcastic question to the Lord did Cain evidence that he was still stubborn and self-willed?

What was the result of Cain's rebellion?

## WALKING IN SUBMISSION AND OBEDIENCE

Many verses show us how important it is to submit to God and obey Him. What commands concerning submission are contained in each of the following verses?

- Romans 6:13

- James 4:7

## THE STORY OF RUTH

We have previously studied the story of Ruth from a different viewpoint. We saw her as a young woman who showed love and gentleness wherever she went. Now we will see how she also displayed submission and obedience to the Lord.

The story of Ruth is one of the most beautiful in the Bible. The story found in this book is one of hardship and many trials. But because the people in the story were submissive to God and did not become hardened through their experiences, God gave them great rewards. The story actually begins with a woman named Naomi. Naomi, her husband, and their two sons had to leave their homes and move to a new country because they faced a great famine. They went to the land of Moab to find food. While they were in Moab, the two sons married. Their wives were named Orpah and Ruth. After a few years, Naomi's husband and both of her sons died. So Naomi decided to return to her homeland to live. She did not expect that her daughters-in-law would want to return with her. Orpah decided to stay in the land of Moab. But Ruth, despite her hardships, had come to know the God of Naomi and decided to go with her. Read about Ruth's response in Ruth 1:16-17.

What decision did Ruth make?

Why had she decided to do this?

For how long was her commitment to last?

Ruth and Naomi then returned together to Bethlehem. For what reason is this city important?

You will learn later how this fits with this story.

After they returned to Bethlehem, life was still very difficult. Read Ruth 2:1-12. How did Ruth find enough food to eat?

Who was Boaz, and how did he help Ruth?

Why had he decided to help her?

After a time, God allowed wonderful things to happen in the lives of Ruth and Naomi. What happened to Ruth in Ruth 4:13-15?

What happened to Naomi in Ruth 4:16-17?

Read the last verse of the book of Ruth, and you will see how years later, King David was born to her descendants. From the line of David, Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

## COMPARING SELF-WILL WITH SUBMISSION

The lessons we need to learn about submission are great and valuable. If you compare the life of Cain with the life of Ruth, you will see how and why God blesses one person and not another.

|  | Cain | Ruth |
|--|------|------|
| What trials or problems did they face?                 |      |      |
| What was different about their attitudes?              |      |      |
| How did they evidence their attitudes toward God?      |      |      |
| What was the result of these attitudes in their lives? |      |      |

Remember: God is not as concerned with what the problem in your life is as He is with how you respond to the problem.



# KNOWING GOD'S WILL

The first lesson that the book of Proverbs teaches us regarding knowing God's will is that the first step is to learn to know God. As we seek God, we will find His will along the pathway toward Him.

Thus, Proverbs, the book of wisdom, tells us how to find God's will. Read Proverbs 3:5-7. What do these verses say about how we find the right ways to go in our life? If we trust in the Lord with all our heart, do not depend on our own understanding, and acknowledge Him in all our ways, He will help us choose the right path for our lives.

Short summaries of the main parts of these verses are below. Explain in your own words what these principles mean. Then give examples of how you can practice each one in your life.

**1. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding.**

Meaning:

Example:

**2. Acknowledge Him in all your ways.**

Meaning:

Example:

### 3. He will help you choose the right path.

Meaning:

Example:

### 4. Do not be wise in your own eyes.

Meaning:

Example:

### 5. Fear the Lord and avoid evil.

Meaning:

Example:

## OBEDIENCE IS STILL THE KEY

Remember what we learned in our last lesson? The unifying character quality that makes Christianity work is our obedience to God. Without a submissive spirit, we will never know God's will for our lives, and we will never be completely happy, content, and satisfied with our lives. Something will always be missing.

As you study God's Word and read of great men and women who were truly successful, you will find that they were successful because they loved and obeyed God and fulfilled His plan for their lives. Their priorities were to put God first. Some, like Elijah and Elisha, were preachers and prophets; some, like David and Gideon, were kings, judges, and statesmen; some, like Abraham and Job, owned land and herds of sheep and cattle. It does not matter what kind of work we have to do. If we are to be truly happy and satisfied in this life, we need to obey God and yield to His control.

Read each of the following verses and write the name of the person(s) who obeyed God.

- Genesis 6:22
- Genesis 22:2-3
- Exodus 36:1
- Joshua 11:15
- 2 Kings 18:1, 6
- Luke 2:33, 39

Think of others in the Bible who had great success because they obeyed God. What are some other names you can think of?

## ABRAHAM OBEYED GOD'S WILL

The life of Abraham was based on obedience to the commands of God; and because of this, God greatly blessed Abraham's life. There were times when Abraham sinned. Twice he lied and said his wife, Sarah, was his sister. Another time, he tried to fulfill God's promise of a son by having a child with his wife's maid. In instances like these, Abraham had consequences because of his sins, but he did repent and choose to follow the right path once again.

Complete the following chart by telling (1) what command or promise of God is recorded in each passage and (2) what Abraham did in response.

| Genesis | God's Command or Promise | What Abraham Did |
|---------|--------------------------|------------------|
| 12:1-5  |                          |                  |
| 12:7-8  |                          |                  |
| 15:1-6  |                          |                  |
| 22:1-14 |                          |                  |

## MAKE SURE YOUR CONSCIENCE IS CLEAR

A clear conscience before God is one more key to obeying God's will. If we have sinned, and God has convicted us of that sin, we should confess it to God so it can be put aside. The following verses are very specific about the need for repentance before God.

Acts 24:16 is a very strong statement regarding this point because in it Paul says that he always tried to

Psalm 66:18 says that if we permit sin to remain in our heart,

First John 1:9 says that if we confess our sins, God is

Look at these three verses again and explain the principle of repentance in your own words.

## JESUS OBEYED GOD'S WILL

Just before Judas betrayed Him, Jesus and His disciples went to a garden on the Mount of Olives to pray. Why do you think Jesus was concerned about talking to God at this time?

Based on Luke 22:42, what did Jesus say to the Father?

What was His attitude concerning what was about to happen to Him?

Why did Jesus tell the disciples that they should also be praying? (verses 45-46)

What do you think He meant by this?

Apply what happened in the garden to yourself. What can you learn for your own life from what happened there?

## HOW TO KNOW GOD'S WILL

Based on what we have studied in this lesson, make a list of what you believe to be important if you are to know that you are in God's will. Be ready to share your ideas with the rest of your class.

### TEACHER'S LESSON

#### *Why should we desire to know God's will?*

- God made us
- Finding God's will is finding

#### *Doing God's will means...*

- Obeying the clear  in Scripture
- Doing what we were  to do
- God





# STAYING IN GOD'S WILL

As we have learned, finding God's will is not difficult if you know the blessing that comes with obedience. There is no other way to be in the will of God than through obedience. Some people think that they can do as they please without giving much thought to what is right and still find success. They may find some pieces of temporary success that way, but they will miss out on the blessing that they could have had. God wants only the best for us, and He will bless us if we obey Him.

## BLESSING OF OBEDIENCE

Read the following verses and note some of the blessings God has promised to His people for obedience.

- Exodus 19:5

- Exodus 23:22

- Deuteronomy 5:29

- Joshua 1:8

- Proverbs 3:1-2

- Isaiah 1:19

- John 14:23

- 1 John 3:22

## PENALTY FOR DISOBEDIENCE

What do the following two verses say about the importance of your obedience to the Lord?

- 1 Samuel 12:15

- Ephesians 5:6

## STEPS AWAY FROM GOD

When we rebel against the will of God and live in disobedience, we must realize that we have started on a path that can lead to more and more failures. Failure does not happen all at once. But when we disobey God once and do not confess that sin, we are more apt to do something else in disobedience to Him. Sooner or later, we will have great problems and will experience failure.

Lot, Abraham's nephew, took a great step away from God and did not return to God to confess his sin. That made it easier and easier to sin again and again. Finally, Lot lost everything that was important to him in his life.

Read the story of Lot in Genesis 13 and 18-19 and complete the following chart.

| Genesis | Steps to Lot's Failure |
|---------|------------------------|
| 13:1-7  |                        |
| 13:8-11 |                        |

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| 13:12-13 |  |
| 18:20-33 |  |
| 19:12-15 |  |
| 19:30    |  |

Remember, the world, like Sodom and Gomorrah, will pass away, but the one who does the will of God lives forever (1 John 2:17).

Also remember that we are not to be unwise as Lot was, but we are to understand what the will of the Lord is (Eph. 5:17).

## KNOWING GOD'S WILL

We know God's will as we know and obey God's Word. The difficult decisions in life will become more clear when we are faithful in obeying God's clear commands. Here are some things that will be taking place in our lives if we are seeking to obey God's commands:

- Have a clear conscience before God and men.
- Spend time in prayer to God.
- Be honest with God about your feelings.
- Be willing to do what the Lord has commanded you to do.

What steps could Lot have taken so that he would not continue on the pathway to failure?

## GOD'S WILL FOR YOU RIGHT NOW

Many times we do not even have to think about whether something is consistent with God's will or not. List some of the things that God has called you to do that you do not have to pray about. You simply have to do them willingly.

There are also many times when we must make a decision about how we should respond in a particular situation. We may wonder whether we should try out for the basketball or soccer team, try out for the cheerleading squad, run for a class office, take part in a speech contest, volunteer for a special project, or help in Sunday school with little children. These are only a few of the things we might consider doing, and we need to be sure that we are making wise decisions.

Sometimes if we are very good at something, we might think that God wants us to follow through and do it. But that may not be true. You may be a great soccer player, but perhaps it would be wiser to take more time with your grades before you play school sports. Or maybe you do not think you are good at soccer, but it would be a wise choice to try it and learn to be a part of a team. You see, there is not a right or wrong answer to some of these things, and that is why you must learn to make your choices for the right reasons. What your friends do is between them and God. God wants to show you what is best for you, and that is between you and Him alone.

What does Psalm 37:4–5 say about the kind of motivations we should have as we make decisions in our lives?

What does James 1:5 say about how we gain the wisdom we need for our lives?

What activities are you interested in doing?

How will you know if these things are wise and are motivated by a desire to please God?

## TEACHER'S LESSON

### *Why We Don't Do God's Will*

- Satan blinds us...

- By making us think God's will makes us

- By making us judge by our  and by

- Believers are not in a position to act wisely when...

- in our lives keeps us from

- Failing to  keeps us from



# LEARNING HOW TO USE MONEY

Learning how to use money is not the *most* important part of life, but it is still very important. As you have more freedom in life, you will see that you have more and more responsibilities that require money. For example, as soon as you have the freedom to drive a car, you will have the responsibility of keeping it filled with gas, keeping it in repair, buying insurance, and many more expenses that come with the ability to drive.

## LEARNING FOR THE FUTURE

Right now, your parents probably still help you with most of your needs. What kinds of things do your parents purchase for you with their money?

You may receive an allowance, or perhaps you do some work for your parents or others to earn money. How do you earn your money? What responsibilities do you have with your money right now?

What additional financial responsibilities do you think you will have over the next few years?

Since you will begin to take on more responsibilities for your own money through the years, it is important to begin now to decide how you will best use your money. Some people never become mature about money. They do not know how to save their money, and they do not know how to buy things that they need or desire without going into debt. Many times they mishandle their money so badly that they must go into bankruptcy and begin again. When you must begin again, it is never the same because your reputation with money has been badly damaged. Learn now to handle your money wisely. If you

begin to possess more and more money, manage it wisely and ask God for wisdom to help you use it. After all, it ultimately belongs to him.

## HOW TO HANDLE MONEY

God has given us many instructions in the book of Proverbs concerning how we should handle money wisely. Read the verses from Proverbs listed below and write the principle by which God wants you to live.

- Principle 1 (3:9-10):

- Principle 2 (16:16):

- Principle 3 (17:18):

- Principle 4 (21:6-7):

- Principle 5 (21:20):

- Principle 6 (22:7):

- Principle 7 (23:4-5):

- Principle 8 (28:8):

- Principle 9 (28:27):

- Principle 10 (30:8-9):

## THE PROBLEM OF GREED AND COVETOUSNESS

In Luke 12:15, Jesus said that we need to guard against greed because life does not consist of

Proverbs 15:27 tells us that greed brings

First Timothy 6:10 warns us that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil so that some

Read the story of Judas in Matthew 26:14-16. What did Judas do?

Which of the principles that we have discussed above did Judas violate?

Read the story of Achan in Joshua 7:1-26. What did Achan do wrong?

Which principles did he violate?

Read the story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-10. What had Zacchaeus done wrong?

Which principles had he violated?

## PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

Matthew 25:14-30 contains the parable about three men who were given different amounts of money. Read the parable and explain what God is teaching you about money.

What else could God be referring to besides money when He speaks of talents? Give examples from your own talents.

What similar lesson is God teaching you about these talents?

## PROJECT

Pretend that you have been given \$1,000 to spend as you think best. This is a great responsibility, and you need to consider how you will use the money that has been given to you. Read over the ten principles that we studied earlier in this lesson. Then explain what you will do with the money. Be very specific.

## TEACHER'S LESSON

### *Develop a Thankful Attitude*

- Thankfulness overcomes:

- 

-

- 
- 
- Thankfulness  us up.  and  pull us down and keep us  and .
- Giving thanks in everything is  (1 Thess. 5:18).

## *Money Is a Gift from God*

- Blessings
  - A benefit for the  (Prov. 14:24)
  - Many  (14:20; 19:4)
  - (10:15)
- Our Responsibility
  - Be  (10:4)
  - Take  of things (27:23-25)
  - Remember... (27:23-27)
    - Things do not .
    - Everything has a  for our .
    - God promises to provide .

Proverbs 15:16-17

It is better to have  and  the Lord than to have great  with great .



# HAVING RIGHT THOUGHTS

Computer technology coined a new phrase: output equals input. This axiom of computer science holds true in our thought lives. The mind, like a giant computer, works according to the type of information it is fed. What you put into your mind and think about affects what you become. And what you think about will come out in the way you talk and act. Therefore, the real you is not just what you say or how you act, but what you think.

## THE USE OF YOUR MIND

How then are you to use your mind? What kinds of ideas should you be putting into your mind? What should you be thinking about? Read the following verses and state God's principles for what you think about.

- Romans 12:2

- 2 Corinthians 10:5

- Philippians 4:8

Based on the principles found in these verses, make two lists that you can share with your class that identify things you should think about and things you should be careful not to think about. Include those external things that can be good for you or bad for you.

| Good Thought Influences | Evil Thought Influences |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
|                         |                         |

## WHAT DOES GOD THINK ABOUT?

Read the following verses and tell how they describe God's thoughts.

- Psalm 40:5

- Psalm 139:17

- Isaiah 55:8-9

- Jeremiah 29:11

What does this tell you about the character of God and what His interests are?

## WISE AND EVIL THOUGHTS

As you read each of the verses listed on the chart, decide if the verse is describing wise or evil thoughts (or both) and explain why they are wise or evil.

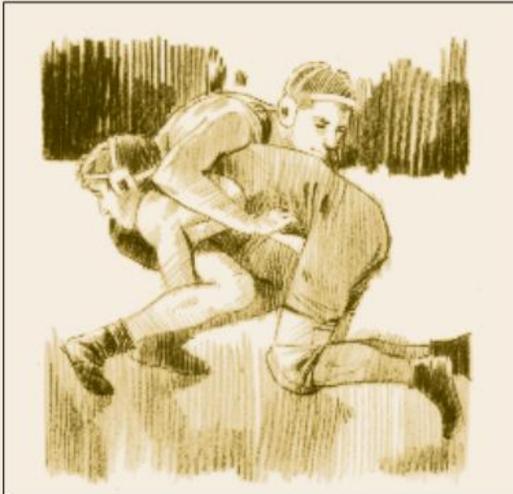
|                  | Wise or Evil Thoughts? | What It Says About Thoughts |
|------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Proverbs<br>12:5 |                        |                             |
| Proverbs<br>16:3 |                        |                             |
| Proverbs<br>24:9 |                        |                             |
| Psalm<br>94:11   |                        |                             |
| Psalm<br>119:59  |                        |                             |
| Matthew<br>9:4   |                        |                             |
| Matthew<br>15:19 |                        |                             |

## GOD'S PROMISE OF PEACE

In Isaiah 26:3, God promises  peace to the one who  in Him.

## THREE SCRIPTURAL ILLUSTRATIONS

Look at each of the following pictures and then read the Scripture verses. In your own words, describe what the picture is illustrating about the working of our minds.



Galatians 5:17



Proverbs 19:27



Proverbs 13:14; 14:27

## TEACHER'S LESSON

### *Our thoughts affect our...*

- (Prov. 14:30)
- (15:13)
- (15:28; 16:23)
- (16:6)



# MAKING RIGHT DECISIONS

One basic decision in life is the foundation upon which all other decisions will be based. Study each of the following verses. Then tell who is talking and what basic decision he is asking the people to make.

| Verse             | Person | Decision That Needs to Be Made |
|-------------------|--------|--------------------------------|
| Exodus 32:26      |        |                                |
| Deuteronomy 30:19 |        |                                |
| Joshua 24:15      |        |                                |
| 1 Kings 18:21     |        |                                |

In your own words, state the one basic decision that everyone must make for their lives.

Every other decision that you make will come from this one basic decision about whom you will follow and obey in your life. As you study in this lesson some of the decisions that Daniel made, you will see that this basic decision to obey God was the foundation of everything else. Based on this decision, you will find that there will be certain things in life that you must stand for and certain things that you must stand against. Such types of choices are very clear in the life of Daniel.

## DECIDING TO STAY AWAY FROM EVIL

In the story of Daniel, we see a young man who has been taken away from his home and family to a strange land. He had some friends who were also taken away from their homes and families and who were also godly young men. These four young people helped each other to obey God. But before they could help each other, they had to come to some decisions about their own individual lives. To understand the decision Daniel made from the beginning, read Daniel 1:8. What does it mean that Daniel determined not to defile himself?

In the situation in which Daniel found himself, Daniel decided not to eat the king's food or drink the king's wine because it was not what the Lord wanted him to eat and drink. Later, Daniel's three friends had to take a stand. What did they decide not to do in Daniel 3:14-18?

Now think about yourself! You live in a different world than Daniel and his friends. But in your world today, there are things that are wrong for your body and things that would not be right to do as a Christian. What are some things that God would have you make up your mind not to do?

## DECIDING TO STAND FOR RIGHT

Many years later, Daniel was placed in a position where he did not have to decide to abstain from evil, but rather he had to take a stand for right. Taking a stand for the Lord could have cost him his life.

Review the story of Daniel and the lions' den in Daniel 6. What law was made to hinder Daniel's Christian stand?

What stand did Daniel make?

Did Daniel have to take a public stand?    Yes    No

Why did he do so?

What happened to Daniel as a result, and how was Daniel protected by God?

## THE STORY OF MARTIN LUTHER

It has been said that more books have been written about Martin Luther than about any other person except Jesus. It is impossible to know completely how great an influence this man has had on our lives and on our world.

Martin Luther was born on November 10, 1483, in a province of Germany. His family was very humble since his father was a copper miner. It was unusual for someone from his background to be educated, but Luther went to a university to become a lawyer. When he was a young man at the university, he narrowly escaped death in a terrible thunderstorm. He realized that life was very fragile and that God should be important in his life. Therefore, he made a vow to God to serve Him. Luther decided to join a monastery, and in 1507 he became a priest. His superiors soon realized what an intelligent man he was and wanted him to teach theology at a university.

Luther devoted his life to God and the church. He did everything the Roman Catholic Church asked of him. He fasted and punished his body; he prayed and studied constantly. He would not allow himself to have any of the pleasures or goods of the world, but he lived in poverty and humbled himself to do the most menial tasks. But in spite of all of his works for God and all of his self-discipline, Luther was unhappy and empty in his heart. He knew that something was very wrong.

The church leaders thought so highly of Luther that they chose him to represent them in Rome. He was to go to all the shrines and perform penance (acts to demonstrate his

sorrow for his sins) at each one. Luther looked forward to being in Rome and seeing the glories of the Church firsthand. But he was greatly disappointed because the worldliness that he found there shocked him. The wealth of the priests, the constant feasting while the poor suffered, and the wickedness that he found seemed such a contrast to how the priests in Germany lived and to the example of Christ Himself.

Still, he went to the church that contained the steps where people claimed Christ had walked during His last trials and began to climb up these steps on his knees. At each step, he would stop and say a ritual prayer to gain forgiveness from God. Suddenly a verse from Scripture came to his mind that changed his life. The verse was Romans 1:17, which says that just or righteous people live by faith. Remembering this verse immediately caused him to stand and leave the staircase. What did it mean? What about the penances? What about all the works he had done for God? Didn't they mean anything?

Luther went home and began to study God's Word closely, and his studies deeply affected his life. For a long while, he still taught the church doctrine at the university, but in his heart his ideas about the truth of God's Word began to change. Luther had realized that salvation is a free gift from God—that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, and we can do nothing on our own to pay for our sins. We must simply believe what Christ did and turn from our life of sin to trust in Him alone.

Then in 1517, the pope (leader of the Roman Catholic Church) wrote out a new set of indulgences (pardons for sin) to sell to the people. The people flocked to buy the new indulgences, and Luther finally had to say what he now believed. He wrote out his objections in a special paper that today we call the "95 Theses." Only one of the theses had to do with the indulgences because Luther had many points of disagreement with the beliefs of the church. Nailing the "95 Theses" to the door of the Wittenberg church was the same as putting them on television or in the newspaper today. It did not take long for everyone to hear about them. They were copied and sent all across Germany and then across Europe.

Luther did not want to leave the Roman Catholic Church. He wanted to remain a part of it and help it to become scriptural. But this was not to be. Luther was eventually forced to leave Roman Catholicism because of his beliefs. Throughout the rest of his life, he spoke out strongly and wrote books about his beliefs. His stand for scriptural truth started a movement that we now know as the Protestant Reformation. Though he faced many trials, he continued all his life to take a stand, and the impact of his life is still felt today.

What basic decision did Martin Luther make in his life?

What did he decide he had to stand against?

What did he decide he had to stand for?

Because Martin Luther stood for right, how did God use him to change history?

Have you made the basic decision to follow God instead of following other gods?

What have you decided to stand against?

What have you decided to stand for?



# KEEPING OUR PROMISES

It is very easy to make promises. We often promise to do little things for a friend or family member. We promise the Lord that if He will just help us out of a situation, we will do something important to show our gratefulness. Usually, however, promises or vows like that are made to overcome a problem or to get something we want. We usually do not take these vows seriously, and they are soon forgotten.

## MAKING A VOW

We need to learn that when we make a vow before the Lord, we need to take it seriously. When God makes a vow to us, He never goes back on His word. He established a covenant (a promise or vow) with Abraham thousands of years ago, and He has not gone back on this vow. He established a covenant with mankind after the Flood, saying that He would never again flood the earth. He has kept His promise. The most important vow is the New Testament (or new covenant), made by Jesus in Matthew 26:28, which says that Jesus shed His blood to pay for the forgiveness of our sins.

We need to learn to keep vows to the Lord in the important areas of our lives. In your own words, explain what each of the following verses says about making vows to the Lord.

- Numbers 30:2

- Deuteronomy 23:21

- Ecclesiastes 5:2, 4-6

Proverbs also has much to say about saying things in haste that you do not mean. Match each verse with the phrase that explains the key idea of the verse.

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| 1. Proverbs 4:24  | A. Don't be a hypocrite and use your words to destroy your neighbor.<br>B. A righteous person thinks before he talks.<br>C. A fool speaks words in haste.<br>D. God will establish truth forever.<br>E. A righteous man will not lie to God or anyone.<br>F. Don't allow the wrong kinds of words to come from your mouth.<br>G. God hates lying lips. |
| 2. Proverbs 11:9  |  |
| 3. Proverbs 12:19 |  |
| 4. Proverbs 12:22 |  |
| 5. Proverbs 13:5  |  |
| 6. Proverbs 15:28 |  |
| 7. Proverbs 29:20 |  |

## HANNAH FULFILLS HER VOW TO THE LORD

One of the most beautiful stories in the Bible is the story of Samuel and his mother, Hannah. Hannah had been married for a long time but had not had any children. According to 1 Samuel 1:8, why was her husband concerned about her?

Then on one of her trips to the temple to give a sacrifice to the Lord, Hannah went before the Lord in a different way. What happened in 1 Samuel 1:10-11?

Eli, the priest at the temple, watched Hannah praying before the Lord and approached her in verse 17 to tell her that .

With this in mind, what attitude did Hannah have now, and what happened to her? (vss. 18-20)

What did she do to keep her vow to the Lord? (vss. 25-28)

## A KEY PART OF MAKING DECISIONS

One of the most important aspects of learning to make decisions is learning to seek good advice. The Bible is very clear about the need for wise counsel. List those whom you would consider to be the ones who would give you the best counsel.

For what kinds of situations or problems would you need counsel from the people you listed above?

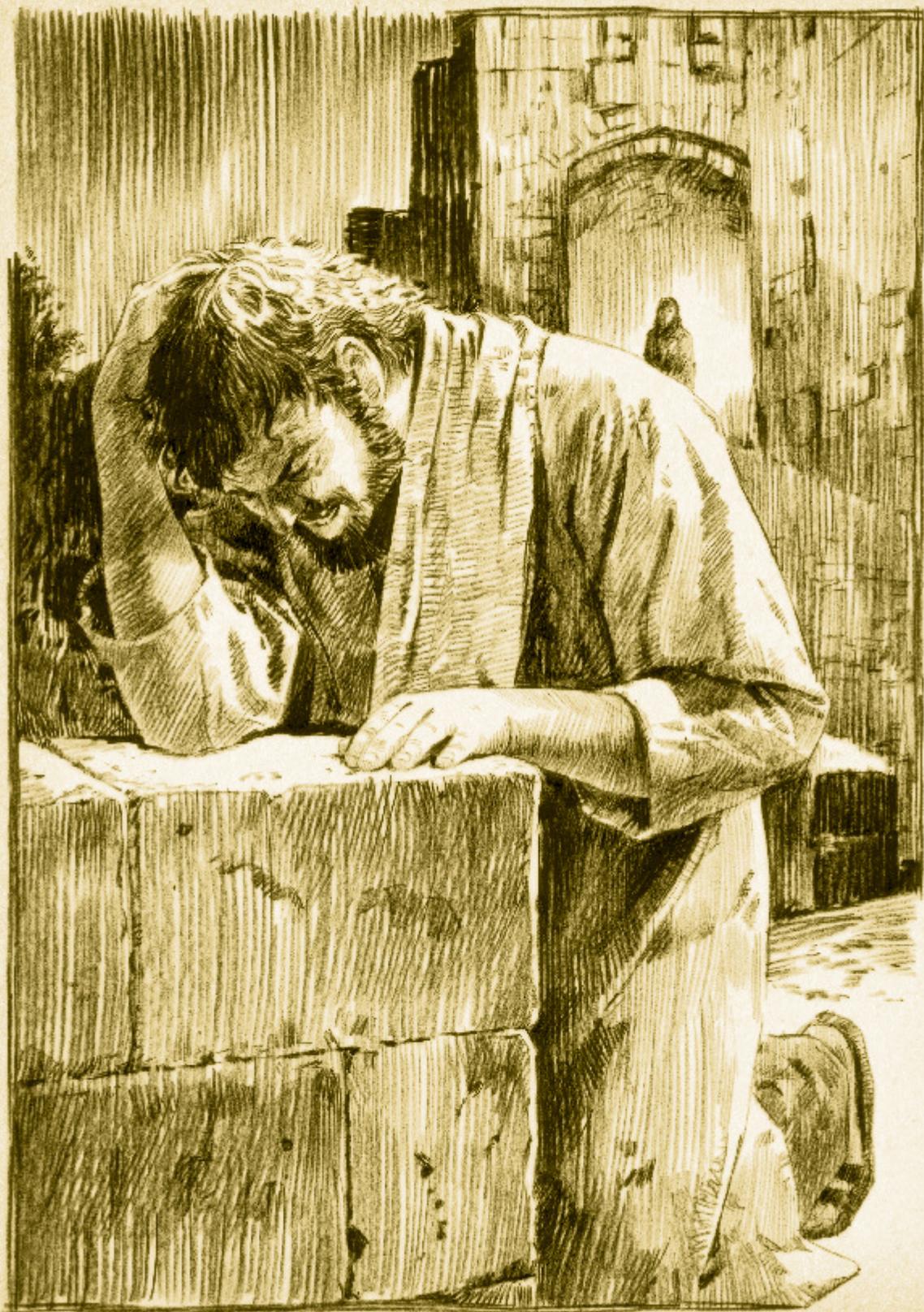
Should you get advice from your friends?    Yes    No

Under what types of situations would you receive wise counsel from a friend?

The following verses from Proverbs show the need for wise counsel. When you receive wise counsel, you will be more likely to make a good decision. Look up each verse and write under the appropriate column the problems or rewards you will experience based on the kind of counsel you seek. (Some verses will need to be recorded under both columns.)

- Proverbs 11:14
- Proverbs 12:15
- Proverbs 13:18
- Proverbs 15:22
- Proverbs 19:20

| Problems | Rewards |
|----------|---------|
|          |         |
|          |         |
|          |         |
|          |         |
|          |         |
|          |         |
|          |         |
|          |         |
|          |         |
|          |         |





# CONTROLLING WHAT WE SAY

When you think of Jesus and the way He reacted to others, what characteristics do you think marked His speech and the way He talked to others? Make some notes below about some of the things that come to your mind about the way Christ talked to others. Be ready to discuss these with your class.

## THE TONGUE

The tongue is one of the most important parts of our bodies. Though it is a very small muscle, it contributes to how we enjoy life in several ways. First of all, it has that wonderful ability to allow us to taste. Taste buds on our tongues are separated into four categories—sweet, sour, salty, and bitter. Much of our enjoyment of life would be gone if we had no taste because all of our enjoyment of food comes through our ability to taste.

The other capability of the tongue is to enable us to form words. Many times we form our thoughts into words without considering the role of the tongue. What we think in our minds simply comes out our mouths through the enabling ability of our tongues. Obviously the tongue is very important to us. Because of it we can be understood, and our ideas can be heard. But the Bible says that it is also a great force for evil in our bodies. With our tongues we can build up and tear down others, we can speak good and pure thoughts, or we can use our words to speak evil.

James 3 explains the problem that we have because of our tongues. Read verses 2-4 and list the analogies made about the control of the tongue.

What point is James making?

Now read James 3:5-8 and see if you can find nine charges that James makes against the tongue.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.

Just as the tongue can be used for evil, it can also be used for good. We have discussed some of these ways. Read the verses below and list other ways it can be used for good.

- Proverbs 10:21
- Proverbs 12:25
- Proverbs 15:1
- Proverbs 16:24

According to James 3:8, it is impossible for us to tame our own tongues. We all too easily fall into the problems of lying, gossiping, rudeness, angry words, and other sins that hurt others. According to Matthew 12:34 and 15:18-19, why is this true?

What we say is the outward evidence of what we are thinking inwardly.

Since we cannot tame our own tongues, we need to learn how what we say can be controlled. The answer is in learning to allow the Holy Spirit to control our thoughts and our speech. As you study part of the life of Peter, you will see how greatly the Holy Spirit can change you if you give Him the freedom to work in you.

## THE EXAMPLE OF PETER

Sometimes we make bold promises to the Lord about how we will act and what we will or will not say and do.

### *The Vow or Promise:*

What bold promise did Peter make to the Lord just before Jesus was to be crucified? (Matt. 26:33-35)

### *Jesus Knew His Heart.*

Did Jesus know the true condition of Peter's heart?    Yes    No

How do you know?

What did Jesus tell Peter would happen before the night was over? (Luke 22:34)

Jesus also made another statement in Matthew 26:40-41 concerning the flesh and the spirit. What did Jesus say, and how did it apply to Peter?

### *More Rash Behavior:*

Peter was obviously very emotional about the things that were happening to Jesus. He probably did not understand it all, even though Jesus had told His disciples what to expect. Read John 18:10-11 and Luke 22:49-51 and explain what other behavior showed Peter's emotions. Explain, also, why you think Peter did what he did.

### *The Denials:*

Was Jesus correct in His predictions of what Peter would do?    Yes    No

What did Peter do to prove Jesus correct? (John 18:15-18, 25-27)

Mark 14:70-71 explains even more about the way Peter was talking. What do these verses say about Peter?

Now we realize that Peter had made a promise that he did not keep. Jesus knew that Peter would not keep his promise and that he would fail. But Peter had to learn that great lesson for himself.

If we make promises and our hearts are not right, we will fail. Our mouths will easily say things we do not really wish to say. Can you think of some times when you said things that you did not intend to say, and you were sorry later? Think about things you have said to your parents or friends that you wish you could have taken back.

## *New Boldness and Courage:*

Now we are going to look forward a couple of months and see what has happened to Peter. You will notice that his speech and attitude have completely changed. What does he say in each of the following verses, and under what circumstances is he speaking?

- Acts 4:19-20

- Acts 5:27-29

- Acts 5:40-42

In your own words, explain what is different about Peter now. Is he afraid to stand up for Jesus under persecution?

## *The Source of New Power:*

Just before Jesus ascended into heaven, He made a new promise. What did He promise in Acts 1:8?

The promise came true just as He said, because on the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came and filled all the believers. There were many evidences that the power of the Holy Spirit had

indeed come. People began to speak with other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them the ability (Acts 2:4). Everyone was astonished to understand those who spoke in a different language, but many who were watching thought they were simply drunk and mocked them. Then in Acts 2:14, Peter began to speak with great authority. To whom was he speaking?

According to Acts 2:40-41, what were the results of this first sermon after Pentecost?

***Compare Peter with Peter:***

We have seen how Peter acted before he had the power of God in his life and after the Holy Spirit filled him. Review what you have studied about Peter and compare the Peter before with the Peter after in regard to his speech, his attitudes, and his actions.

| Peter Before the Crucifixion | Peter After Pentecost |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
|                              |                       |
|                              |                       |
|                              |                       |
|                              |                       |
|                              |                       |
|                              |                       |
|                              |                       |
|                              |                       |
|                              |                       |

It is very important to realize that the power of the Holy Spirit can change how you speak and how you act. He can also change your attitudes. You do not have to react to the things you see and hear as Peter did when he cut off the servant's ear or denied Christ. You can allow the Holy Spirit to change everything you say and do and give you boldness and courage. One important way this happens is to trust and depend on Him, not on our own strength.

## TEACHER'S LESSON

### *Our Tongues Reveal Our Character*

- The tongue needs to be  (James 3:2-4).
- A  is needed for an  who is not ready to run his own life.
- A  is needed for and  to speak in the right spirit.
- Uncontrolled, it has  (James 3:5-8).
  - It is a raging  that can  yourself and others.
  - It is a deadly  that can destroy .
- Controlled, it has  (James 3:9-12).



# WHAT WE SAY AFFECTS OTHERS

## THE EFFECT OF OUR WORDS ON OTHERS

Read each of the following verses and decide on a word or phrase that describes the effect of the words the verse is discussing. Then list the verse and a descriptive word or phrase in the correct column below. Some verses may fit under both columns.

- Job 16:3
- Proverbs 15:1
- Proverbs 15:23
- Proverbs 16:24
- Proverbs 25:11
- Proverbs 29:20
- Ecclesiastes 10:12
- Ecclesiastes 12:10
- Isaiah 50:4
- Malachi 3:13
- Colossians 2:4
- 1 Thessalonians 2:5
- 2 Peter 2:3
- 2 Peter 2:18
- 3 John 10

| Foolish or Evil Words | Wise or Kind Words |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
|                       |                    |

## GOSSIPING AND LYING

Our speech becomes a tool of sin in two key ways. These are two of the most difficult problems to overcome. They are gossiping and lying. We enjoy gossiping because we enjoy sharing what we know or think we know about one another. We lie because we are afraid of what will happen if we speak truthfully in all situations.

Summarize what the following verses in Proverbs say about these two problems.

### *Gossiping:*

- 11:13
- 16:28
- 20:19
- 26:22

### *Lying:*

- 12:19
- 12:22
- 13:5
- 14:5
- 19:5, 9

## CONTROLLING YOUR TONGUE

Read the following verses in Proverbs and tell what they say about our words.

- 10:14
- 10:19

- 17:28

- 18:6

- 29:11

- 29:20

In your own words, state a biblical principle that you can conclude from the above verses.

Probably the most difficult thing to learn about our speaking habits is that many times it is best not to say anything. Controlling ourselves in this way can be the most difficult lesson of all. After looking up each verse, note in your own words when it is wise to keep silent.

- Joshua 6:10

- Psalm 34:13

- Ecclesiastes 3:7

- James 4:11

Jesus knew when to speak and when to be silent. Usually when we are rebuked or accused of something, we want to defend ourselves. But sometimes we need to wait until it is the right time. Otherwise, we may respond in anger and hurt ourselves even more. Read the following verses and explain the situations when Jesus remained silent.

- Matthew 26:62-63

- Matthew 27:13-14

- Luke 23:8-9

## THINK OF A BETTER WAY TO SAY IT!

Beside each statement listed below, write a better or more edifying way to say the same thing.

- You're lying.

- That's a stupid thing to say!

- What makes you think I would want to go with you?

- Why didn't you say that in the first place?

- Wait your turn!

- That's the ugliest shirt (or dress) I've ever seen!

- He always gives us too much homework.

- I'm tired of her—she acts too childishly!

Composition: Should a person always say what he thinks? Why or why not? Write a composition to answer these questions. Read Proverbs 29:11 before you answer. Give good examples of when you should say what you think and when you should hold your tongue.

## TEACHER'S LESSON

- Don't  what you are  until you are sure that it will  the other person.

Always consider...

- to say
  - to say it
  - to say it
- Why we should not always say what we think

Wise men...

- before they
- Get the  before they
- Consider the  before they
- Speak only the things that  (build others up)



# TRUE SUCCESS

We began our study this year by learning the definition of true wisdom. We found that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and that apart from God, there can be no true wisdom. Therefore, as we conclude our study this year, we need once again to remind ourselves that the wise person will continually acknowledge God.

Before we begin to study how to be successful, think through the idea of success and try to come to your own conclusion of what success is.

What is your definition of success?

Think through your definition and then list several aspects of success that you would consider important.

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- 
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## TO PROSPER AND HAVE GOOD SUCCESS

The Bible usually refers to success as prospering. The thing most people think of when they hear the word “prosper” is having money. But there are many ways in which we can prosper. We can be prosperous in having good friends, in getting good grades, in encouraging others spiritually, and in enjoying special talents. Many people are very prosperous in their enjoyment of life even though they have little money. Success and

prosperity can take many avenues. But to prosper and have good success, God must be at the center of our lives, as He shows us in His Word.

Jesus was the greatest person who ever walked the earth. Even many people who are not Christians acknowledge Him to be a great man and teacher. Think about Jesus' life in terms of prosperity and success.

Do you consider Jesus' life to be a success?    Yes    No

Was He prosperous in regards to money and earthly goods?    Yes    No

Explain.

What was Jesus' primary goal in life? (Mark 10:45; John 6:38)

Did He accomplish this goal?    Yes    No

What were His other goals? (John 1:18; 8:28; 1 Pet. 2:21)

How did He accomplish these goals?

Look at your list of important aspects of success at the beginning of this lesson. Do you think that any of the items on your list should be changed or that certain things should be added?

## HOW TO PROSPER

Read each of the verses listed below and explain what the verse says under the correct column.

| Verse(s)             | Do This, and You Will Prosper | Do This, and You Will Not Prosper |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Num. 14:41           |                               |                                   |
| Deut. 28:15          |                               |                                   |
| Deut. 29:9           |                               |                                   |
| 1 Chron.<br>22:11-12 |                               |                                   |
| 2 Chron.<br>26:3-8   |                               |                                   |
| Neh.<br>2:19-20      |                               |                                   |
| Ps. 1:2-3            |                               |                                   |
| Prov. 28:13          |                               |                                   |

## THE LIFE OF WILLIAM TYNDALE

As you read the story of William Tyndale, think through the reasons he was such a great and successful man.

Even though John Wycliffe (1330-1384) was the first one who promoted the idea of translating the Bible into English, William Tyndale (1492-1536) has been called the true father of our present English Bible. It was Tyndale's desire for every person in England to have the Holy Bible in his own hands to read. William Tyndale had made a vow years

before. “If God preserves my life,” he had said, “I will cause a boy that driveth a plow to know more of the Scriptures than the Pope.” The pope was the head of the Roman Catholic Church. Tyndale felt that each person should be able to learn as much as possible from God’s Word for himself and not have to depend on the accepted teachings and interpretations of the church.

Tyndale was arrested by the king of England for speaking out against some of the common church beliefs. But while he was in prison, God greatly used him because there he worked on his translation of the Bible. He was a great man, and the story of his life is one that should be read by all. Part of his story follows. It is from *History of the Reformation in Europe* by J. H. Merle d’Aubigne (1794-1872), a man who devoted his entire life to the study of the Reformation.

“This man Tyndale, so active, so learned, and so truly great, whose works circulated far and wide with so much power, had at the same time within him a pure and beneficent light—the love of God and of man—which shed its mild rays on all around him. The depth of his faith, the charm of his conversation and the uprightness of his conduct touched those who came near him. The jailer liked to bring him his food, in order to talk with him; and his young daughter often accompanied him and listened eagerly to the words of the pious Englishman. Tyndale spoke of Jesus Christ; it seemed to him that the riches of the divine Spirit were about to transform Christendom. The jailer, his daughter, and other members of their house were converted to the gospel by Tyndale’s life and doctrine.

“However dark the machinations of his enemies, they could not obscure the divine light kindled in his heart, and which shone before men. There was an invincible power in this Christian man. Full of hope in the final victory of Jesus Christ, he courageously trampled under foot tribulations, trials, and death itself. He believed in the victory of the Word. ‘I am bound like a malefactor,’ he said, ‘but the Word of God is not bound.’ The bitterness of his last days was changed into great peace and divine sweetness.

“Friday, the 6th of October, 1536, was the day that terminated the miserable but glorious life of the reformer. On arriving at the scene of punishment, the reformer found a large crowd assembled. The government had wished to show the people the punishment of a heretic, but they only witnessed the triumph of a martyr. Tyndale was calm. ‘I call God to record,’ he said, ‘that I have never altered, against the voice of my conscience, one syllable of His Word. Nor would I do this day, if all the pleasures, honors, and riches of the earth might be given me.’

“The joy of hope filled his heart—yet one painful idea took possession of him. Dying far from his country, abandoned by his king, he felt saddened at the thought of that prince, who had already persecuted so many of God’s servants and who remained obstinately rebellious against that divine light which everywhere shone around him. Tyndale would not have that soul perish through carelessness. His charity buried all the faults of the monarch; he prayed that those sins might be blotted out from before the face of God; he would have saved Henry VIII at any cost. While the executioner was fastening him to the post, the reformer exclaimed in a loud and suppliant voice: ‘Lord, open the king of England’s eyes!’ Those were his last words. Instantly afterwards he was strangled, and flames consumed the martyr’s body.

“His last cry was wafted to the British Isles and repeated in every assembly of Christians. A great death crowned a great life. ‘Such,’ says the old chronicler, John Foxe, ‘is the story of that true servant and martyr of God, William Tyndale, who, for his notable pains and travail, may well be called the Apostle of England in this our later Age.’

“His fellow-countrymen profited by the work of his life. As early as 1526, more than twenty editions of Tyndale’s New Testament had been circulated over the kingdom; and others had followed them. It was like a mighty river continually bearing new waters to the sea. Did the reformer’s death dry them up suddenly? No. A greater work still was to be accomplished; the entire Bible was ready. But could it be circulated? The king had refused his consent to the circulation of Coverdale’s Bible; would he not do the same with this, and with greater reason?

“Henry ran over the book: Tyndale’s name was not in it, and the dedication of his Majesty was very well written. The king regarding (and not without reason) Holy Scriptures as the most powerful engine to help him to emancipate England from the Romish domination, came to an unexpected resolution: he authorized the sale and the reading of the Bible throughout the kingdom.

“For centuries the English people had been waiting for such a permission, even from before the time of Wycliffe; and accordingly the Bible circulated widely. The impetuosity with which the living waters rushed forth, carrying with them everything they met in their course, was like the sudden opening of a huge floodgate. This great event, more important than divorces, treaties and wars, was the conquest of England by the Reformation. ‘It was a wonderful thing to see,’ says an old historian. Whoever possessed the means bought the book and read it or had it read to him by others. Aged persons learned their letters in order to study the Holy Scriptures of God. In many places there

were meetings for reading; poor people clubbed their savings together and purchased a Bible, and then in some remote corner of the church they modestly formed a circle and read the Holy Book between them.

“In all the towns and villages of Tyndale’s country, the holy pages were opened, and the delighted readers found therein those treasures of peace and joy which the martyr had known. Many cried out with him, ‘We know that this Word is from God, as we know that fire burns; not because any one has told us, but because a Divine fire consumes our hearts. O the brightness of the face of Moses! O the splendor of the glory of Jesus Christ, which no veil conceals! O the inward power of the Divine Word, which compels us with so much sweetness, to love and to do! O the temple of God within us, in which the Son of God dwells!’ Tyndale had desired to see the world on fire by his Master’s Word, and that fire was kindled.”

It is miraculous to see how God worked to allow the Bible to be in the hands of individuals. For so many years the Bible was not permitted to be read. Then after it was translated into English, the king of England still did not allow it to be read. Little by little, the king tolerated his subjects reading the versions in print. But finally, as you have read in the story of William Tyndale, King Henry of England actually commanded that it be readily available to all his subjects. This was truly a miracle of God.

What made Tyndale’s life successful?

What desires do you think motivated Tyndale most?

How could you cultivate similar desires in your own heart right now?

# TEACHER'S LESSON

## *Peace*

- Principle

Success is having peace in .

- Definition

Peace is .

- Three Kinds

1. Peace  ()

2. Peace  ()

3. Peace  ()

- Antonyms

- 

- 

- Synonym



# BEING A SUCCESS

In our last lesson, we discussed what it means to be successful. You wrote your own definition of success and a list of important aspects of success.

We can say based on the Bible's teaching that success is accomplishing what God made us to do. Read Joshua 1:7-9 and Psalm 1:1-3. From these verses, list those things that God says must be a part of your life for you to prosper and have good success.

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Now look back at your definition of success in Lesson 32. Think about your definition and change it if you think it can be improved. If you think the way you wrote it originally is acceptable, write the same definition again.

Success is

## THE SPIES

Do you remember the story of the twelve spies that Moses sent into the Promised Land? Now at the beginning of the book of Joshua, spies were again sent into the land. Read the stories of these two incidents and compare what happened each time. Read Numbers 13:17-14:4, 20-23 and Joshua 2:1-3:17.

|  | Numbers 13-14 | Joshua 2-3 |
|--|---------------|------------|
| Purpose for Sending Spies              |               |            |
| What the Spies Found                   |               |            |
| The Attitude of the Spies              |               |            |
| The Attitude of the People             |               |            |
| Did They Have Success? Why or Why Not? |               |            |

Numbers 14:11 shows what part faith (or the absence of it) played in the above situations. What do you think had to do with Israel and the Promised Land?

After comparing the above two spying situations, in what ways should you be thinking about how faith needs to appear in your life?

## LEARNING FROM EXAMPLE

We have studied the lives of many different people during the year. As you review some of these people's lives, think through why their lives were successful or why they were not.

- Lot: the nephew of Abraham, was a very rich man with many cattle and herds of sheep. He ended his life having to live in a cave. Why was he unsuccessful?

- Ruth: began her life in the land of Moab and moved with her mother-in-law to Israel where she married and became an ancestor of Jesus. Why was she successful?

- Judas: became one of Jesus' disciples and ended his life hanging himself. Why was he unsuccessful?

- Peter: failed Jesus by denying Him at the time of His trial, but he later became a great preacher of the gospel, leading thousands to salvation. Why was he successful?

- Daniel: was taken as a slave to Babylon and went through many trials. He ended his life as a great leader in this country. Why was he successful?

- Name another Bible character. Following the pattern given above, briefly tell about this person's success or failure and explain the reasons for this.

## TEACHER'S LESSON

### *Finding the Proper Balance*

Setting  and

- Forget the .
- Look forward to the  God has planned for you.
- Press  to the  God has called you to accomplish.

Learning to be

- Do not .
- Be  with your situation.





# BEING A GOOD LEADER

Someday you will be a leader in at least one area of your life—and probably in two or three areas. You will be a leader in your home over your children; you may be a leader at work; and you may be a leader at church, perhaps as a Sunday school teacher. These are only three of the primary areas of leadership you may have, but there are many other areas in which God will use you as a leader. Because you will be a leader, God is in the process of preparing you now. All of the lessons we have studied this year are meant to prepare you for leadership. Perhaps you are a leader in your school right now. If so, then God is using this also to prepare you for future leadership roles.

Read John 15:16 and answer the questions below.

- Who decides that you will be a leader?
  
- What had Jesus chosen His disciples to do, and what does this mean?
  
- How long will the results of producing fruit in others last?

## GOD CALLS US TO LEADERSHIP

The first thing we must remember is that it is God who equips and prepares us to lead in certain areas. Read each of the following verses and tell whom God was calling to leadership and what He was calling that person to do. For some of these you will have to read more of the context to find out who the person is.

| Verses            | Person(s) | What Had God Chosen Him to Do? |
|-------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|
| Genesis 12:1-2    |           |                                |
| Exodus 3:10       |           |                                |
| Judges 6:14       |           |                                |
| 1 Kings 19:16, 19 |           |                                |
| Jeremiah 1:4-5    |           |                                |
| Jonah 1:1-2       |           |                                |
| Acts 13:2         |           |                                |
| Acts 26:16        |           |                                |

## HUMILITY AND COURAGE

The qualities of humility and courage are two sides of the same coin. They seem vastly different, but they are powerful when they are used together.

Humility is the quality that causes a person not to think too highly of himself. A humble person is not proud or arrogant, he does not attempt to flaunt his position, and he does not consider himself to be better than anyone else. God does not use someone who is not humble because then the work that is done will be done in the flesh and for the person's glory rather than for God's glory. The person God uses will recognize that God is in control and is using him to accomplish great and wonderful things.

Courage, on the other hand, is the quality within a person that allows him to stand for truth and right even when he is afraid of what will happen. It does not mean that you never feel afraid but that you can overcome your fears because you know that God will give you the strength to do what you must do.

As you read the following verses, note the attitude that each person showed and then decide whether the person was evidencing humility or courage. (Note: Some of the following examples of humility may include times when people spoke lowly of themselves to give themselves an excuse for not doing what God wanted them to do.)

| Person                       | What Did He Do or Say? | Humility or Courage? |
|------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Moses<br>Exodus 3:11         |                        |                      |
| Caleb<br>Numbers 13:30       |                        |                      |
| Gideon<br>Judges 6:15        |                        |                      |
| King David<br>1 Samuel 18:18 |                        |                      |
| King Solomon<br>1 Kings 3:7  |                        |                      |
| Elijah<br>1 Kings 21:20-21   |                        |                      |
| Isaiah<br>Isaiah 6:5         |                        |                      |
| Jeremiah<br>Jeremiah 1:6     |                        |                      |
| Daniel<br>Daniel 5:22-23     |                        |                      |

| Person                             | What Did He Do or Say? | Humility or Courage? |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| John the Baptist<br>Matthew 3:14   |                        |                      |
| John the Baptist<br>Matthew 14:3-4 |                        |                      |
| Stephen<br>Acts 7:51-60            |                        |                      |

## THE LIFE OF JOHN WYCLIFFE

John Wycliffe (1330-1384) lived during the days of the Dark Ages when the Roman Catholic Church and the priests strongly controlled the actions and attitudes of the people. Most of life centered on the rituals and beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church. The people generally lived as very poor peasants, and much of the little money they did have went to the Church to pay for penances for sin and for indulgences. People believed that if you paid money, you could get a loved one out of purgatory or hell. The extent of the relief from hell depended on the amount of money that was paid. Often people paid the priests a little each month because they believed it would gradually relieve the agony of a relative who had died.

Wycliffe lived in the midst of all of these problems. He was a great scholar who taught at Oxford. From his study of Scripture, he came to the conclusion that the Church had replaced Christ in the people's hearts. Instead of teaching Scripture, it taught traditions and fables through the preaching of the priests. Wycliffe saw how the priests lorded over the people and caused fear to be a part of their lives.

Since Wycliffe was a student of God's Word, he came to realize that the key to changing this system was to give the Bible to the common people. At this time, only the priests had the Scriptures, and it was believed that the common people could never understand God's Word for themselves. Besides this, the majority of the peasants could neither read nor write. To overcome the problems that the Church had created and used to its own advantage for years, Wycliffe began to translate the Latin Vulgate Bible into common English so that people could understand for themselves the simple truths of God's Word.

Along with doing this, Wycliffe began to take public stands against the Roman Catholic Church. For example, the Church had even begun to tax the government to obtain more money for its own use. The Church became richer and richer while the people became poorer and poorer. Wycliffe said that the government should not be held in bondage to the Church. He also said that the Church did not have the right to charge for indulgences (payments for forgiveness of sins).

Because of his teachings, the Roman Catholic Church named Wycliffe as a heretic and wanted him out of his post at Oxford. A trial was held to determine Wycliffe's fate. Many people did not think that Wycliffe would live through the trial. They believed that he would be executed. Instead, the leaders of the Church and the government had heated arguments between themselves, and Wycliffe was finally forced to retire from Oxford. By this time, however, most of the government leaders agreed with Wycliffe, and they were all threatened with excommunication if they did not recant (admit they were wrong). Instead, with Wycliffe's example, they stood firm for the truth.

Great turmoil continued over Wycliffe's teachings, and eventually Wycliffe had to go into hiding. While in hiding, he was protected by many friends and scholars and was able to complete his translation of the Bible into English before he died of a stroke in 1384.

Three years after Wycliffe's death, a group of his followers called Lollards began to distribute his translation of the Bible throughout the countryside. The Lollards were like missionaries who taught the Word of God to those who had never heard the truth before. As more Bibles were printed, people began to learn to read so they could read the Scriptures for themselves. Over the years, a great change began to come over the common people since they no longer feared what the Church could do to them, and they began to trust more and more in Jesus.

Answer the following questions about John Wycliffe:

What great thing did Wycliffe accomplish?

What were the results of what Wycliffe accomplished?

How did Wycliffe show courage?

***Composition:***

Write a composition discussing the following: (1) the most important qualities necessary to becoming a good leader, (2) which qualities you already have and which you need to develop, and (3) how you can be a leader right now.





# SPENDING TIME WITH GOD

During the summer months, you will not have the daily studies in Proverbs that you have had all year. You will be on your own to have your own quiet time with God in His Word. You will not be continually reminded by your teachers of how you should act and what attitudes you should have. You will need to continue your own personal relationship with God. With this in mind, let's remind ourselves of some ideas that are important to a good relationship with God.

## HAVING A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

What was important about Enoch and Noah's relationships with God? (Read Gen. 5:22 and 6:9.)

The most important thing to remember is that a good relationship with God involves learning to walk with Him moment by moment throughout each day. It is not just a matter of spending time each day reading the Bible, though that is important. It is not just remembering to pray each day, though that too is important. Having a relationship with God is walking continually in His presence. It means that we are always aware of His commands, His purpose for our lives, and our need for His wisdom.

God wants to have a wonderful relationship with you this summer. Study Genesis 28:15 and state in your own words the promises He made to Jacob about His relationship with him that also apply to you.

## BEING NEAR TO GOD

How can we know that God is near to us and walks with us according to these verses?

- Psalm 16:8

- Psalm 34:18

- Psalm 145:18

### LET'S REVIEW

As a review of the previous 34 lessons, choose the *best* answer to complete each of the following statements. The number for each statement corresponds to the lesson number where the answer is found.

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | 1. One thing that wise people do <i>not</i> do is<br>(a) prepare for the future (b) depart from evil<br>(c) show stubborn and rebellious attitudes (d) win souls. |
|  | 2. The fool's reaction to advice and teaching is to<br>(a) love knowledge (b) listen to counsel<br>(c) seek after knowledge (d) despise wisdom and instruction.   |
|  | 3. Solomon asked the Lord for<br>(a) understanding and discernment (b) a long life<br>(c) riches and honor (d) vengeance on his enemies.                          |
|  | 4. The wise teenager<br>(a) despises his mother (b) makes his father glad<br>(c) brings reproach to his father (d) brings shame to his mother.                    |
|  | 5. The woman who should be honored because she protected her son from death was the mother of<br>(a) David (b) Samuel (c) Daniel (d) Moses.                       |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | 6. The correct order for the three results of sin seen in Genesis 3 is<br><b>(a)</b> guilt, fear, blaming others <b>(b)</b> fear, blaming others, guilt<br><b>(c)</b> blaming others, fear, guilt <b>(d)</b> fear, guilt, blaming others. |
|  | 7. The word of the following four that does <i>not</i> refer to perversion is<br><b>(a)</b> frowardness <b>(b)</b> deviousness <b>(c)</b> vengeance <b>(d)</b> crookedness.   |
|  | 8. Psalm 37:4 tells us that if we delight ourselves in the Lord,<br><b>(a)</b> God will take care of us <b>(b)</b> God will give us the desires of our hearts<br><b>(c)</b> we will prosper <b>(d)</b> we will be free from our enemies.  |
|  | 9. The king in 2 Chronicles 24 who began to reign at the age of seven and<br>who led the people in restoring the temple was<br><b>(a)</b> Jehoiada <b>(b)</b> Josiah <b>(c)</b> Jehoiakim <b>(d)</b> Joash.                               |
|  | 10. The man who showed the right kind of attitude during his trials even<br>when his friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, did not understand was<br><b>(a)</b> Peter <b>(b)</b> Job <b>(c)</b> David <b>(d)</b> Isaiah.                   |
|  | 11. The man who was David's faithful friend and who could be trusted to<br>keep his secrets was<br><b>(a)</b> Saul <b>(b)</b> Daniel <b>(c)</b> Jonathan <b>(d)</b> Solomon.  |
|  | 12. The tax collector that Jesus went to visit in his home to show that He did<br>not play favorites was<br><b>(a)</b> Zacchaeus <b>(b)</b> the Good Samaritan <b>(c)</b> Simon <b>(d)</b> Jairus.  |
|  | 13. The works of the flesh are listed in<br><b>(a)</b> Romans 3 <b>(b)</b> Galatians 5 <b>(c)</b> Ephesians 1 <b>(d)</b> Philippians 3.   |
|  | 14. The man who was a priest in the temple but whose sons were not godly<br>was<br><b>(a)</b> Levi <b>(b)</b> Eli <b>(c)</b> Elijah <b>(d)</b> Asa.   |
|  | 15. The fruit of the Spirit includes all of the following <i>except</i><br><b>(a)</b> joy <b>(b)</b> love <b>(c)</b> knowledge <b>(d)</b> gentleness.   |
|  | 16. All of the following are results of godly character <i>except</i><br><b>(a)</b> wisdom <b>(b)</b> the favor of the Lord<br><b>(c)</b> your prayers heard by the Lord <b>(d)</b> shame.  |

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|  | <p>17. The woman who showed gentleness, kindness, and loyalty to her mother-in-law was<br/> <b>(a)</b> Naomi <b>(b)</b> Ruth <b>(c)</b> Orpah <b>(d)</b> Boaz.</p>   |
|  | <p>18. The principle that is seen over and over in the lives of Isaac and Jacob is the principle of<br/> <b>(a)</b> truthfulness <b>(b)</b> love <b>(c)</b> sowing and reaping <b>(d)</b> holiness.</p>                    |
|  | <p>19. The man who had a problem with pride and arrogance, which he showed when Mordecai refused to bow to him, was<br/> <b>(a)</b> Haman <b>(b)</b> Ahasuerus <b>(c)</b> Nebuchadnezzar <b>(d)</b> Belshazzar.</p>        |
|  | <p>20. All of the following words describe a lazy person <i>except</i><br/> <b>(a)</b> slothful <b>(b)</b> diligent <b>(c)</b> slack <b>(d)</b> sluggard.</p>  |
|  | <p>21. The man who showed self-discipline by refusing to eat the king's diet was<br/> <b>(a)</b> Moses <b>(b)</b> David <b>(c)</b> Daniel <b>(d)</b> Jeremiah.</p>   |
|  | <p>22. A good example of fear would be<br/> <b>(a)</b> Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego <b>(b)</b> the 10 spies in Numbers 13<br/> <b>(c)</b> David <b>(d)</b> Stephen.</p>   |
|  | <p>23. The man who killed his brother and remained self-willed and unrepentant was<br/> <b>(a)</b> Cain <b>(b)</b> Abel <b>(c)</b> Seth <b>(d)</b> Lot.</p>  |
|  | <p>24. First John 1:9 encourages us to<br/> <b>(a)</b> love one another <b>(b)</b> fear the Lord<br/> <b>(c)</b> obey God's commands <b>(d)</b> confess our sins.</p>  |
|  | <p>25. The man who pitched his tent toward Sodom and moved to Sodom before escaping God's judgment on that city was<br/> <b>(a)</b> Abraham <b>(b)</b> Ishmael <b>(c)</b> Lot <b>(d)</b> Noah.</p>                         |
|  | <p>26. The parable that teaches us about how to use our money or abilities wisely is the parable of the<br/> <b>(a)</b> lost coin <b>(b)</b> talents <b>(c)</b> vineyard <b>(d)</b> good Samaritan.</p>                    |
|  | <p>27. According to Proverbs 13:14 and 14:27, the law of the wise that enables us to depart from the snares of death is like a<br/> <b>(a)</b> fountain of life <b>(b)</b> computer <b>(c)</b> tree <b>(d)</b> mirror.</p> |

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|  | <p>28. The man who nailed his “95 Theses” to the door of the Wittenburg church was<br/> <b>(a)</b> Gutenberg <b>(b)</b> Tyndale <b>(c)</b> Luther <b>(d)</b> Wycliffe.</p>   |
|  | <p>29. The woman who made a vow to the Lord that if He would give her a son, she would dedicate him to the Lord’s service was<br/> <b>(a)</b> Hannah <b>(b)</b> Sarah <b>(c)</b> Hagar <b>(d)</b> Ruth</p>   |
|  | <p>30. The disciple of Jesus who denied Him was<br/> <b>(a)</b> Judas <b>(b)</b> Andrew <b>(c)</b> Bartholomew <b>(d)</b> Peter.</p>   |
|  | <p>31. All of the following are statements the book of Proverbs makes about gossiping except<br/> <b>(a)</b> it reveals secrets and is unfaithful <b>(b)</b> it is common among the wise<br/> <b>(c)</b> it sows strife and separates friends <b>(d)</b> it wounds deeply.</p> |
|  | <p>32. The man whose last words before he was executed were, “Lord, open the king of England’s eyes!” was<br/> <b>(a)</b> Gutenberg <b>(b)</b> Tyndale <b>(c)</b> Luther <b>(d)</b> Wycliffe.</p>  |
|  | <p>33. The passage that tells us how to prosper and be successful is found in<br/> <b>(a)</b> Joshua 1 <b>(b)</b> Psalm 3 <b>(c)</b> John 3 <b>(d)</b> Romans 1.</p>   |
|  | <p>34. The man who translated the Bible into English so the common people could understand it was<br/> <b>(a)</b> Gutenberg <b>(b)</b> King James <b>(c)</b> Luther <b>(d)</b> Wycliffe.</p>   |