

God The
FATHER

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Our
Peace

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IF IS
THERE

BIBLE STUDY

Teacher's Bible Study

God the Father and the Bible

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Introduction

You can make a difference!

There are more than 30 million teenagers in our nation. To be used of God to ignite the hearts of students to love and serve God is an awesome task, but it is not impossible! So how do you reach the millions of teenagers in our nation? You reach them one at a time. Once a week you meet with a group of students to teach the life-changing message of God's Word. The Word of Life doctrinal Bible study you hold in your hands is a practical tool to help you effectively communicate God's truth to the students you minister to each week.

We read of Jesus, "And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes" (Mark 1:22). Wouldn't it be great if your teaching was astonishing and authoritative? With Jesus as your example and enabler, it can be! You are not teaching your ideas or opinions. The lessons in this book are not the ideas and opinions of the Word of Life Local Church Ministries team. You are teaching the Word of God and it speaks with amazing clarity and authority to the needs of each student. Teaching His Word...you *can* make a difference!

Thinking *feast* in a fast food culture

To think clearly about impacting this generation of students through the teaching of God's Word, let's think for a moment about eating...stay with me on this. Which would you rather eat, a fast food burger or a Thanksgiving Day feast with all the trimmings? If you are like me you will take the Thanksgiving Day feast any time. A fast food meal is prepared in a matter of minutes while hours go into the preparation of a Thanksgiving Day meal.

Spiritually malnourished students will struggle to impact their culture. We can't continue to give them the equivalent of a *fast food* Bible study and expect lasting change. Your students need and deserve a *Thanksgiving Day feast* on the truth of God's Word each time you meet together for your Bible study.

Preparing a *feast* for your students...

Here are six **R**'s that will help you as you prepare to teach the Word of God to your students each week.

- **Read**
Plan to read through the Bible study lesson for the week two or three times to get the flow of the lesson. Do this five or six days before you teach and you will have plenty of time to think on the lesson and its practical application to your students.
- **Research**
Set aside time to conduct your own research on the lesson. Be sure to look up all of the Scripture references used in the Bible study. You may want to consult some of the listed reference materials. The greater your understanding of the topic at hand, the greater your confidence in teaching it to your students. They need to hear someone who speaks with authority from the Word of God.
- **Rewrite**
While the notes and helps given in each lesson are thorough and helpful, it is important that you make them your own. Many have found it best to take the information given in each lesson and develop their own set of teaching notes.
- **Review**
Spend a few minutes each day reviewing the lesson. Teaching the Word of God should demand our best, and a daily review is a good way to give it your best.

- **Recruit**
Don't forget to recruit the people and obtain the props needed to effectively communicate the truth to be taught. Group dynamics and various props are written into each lesson for a reason...to make the lesson come alive for everyone involved.
- **Request**
Since it is God's Word you are teaching; you certainly want to request His help. Plan to pray daily over each lesson you will teach. Pray for your understanding, pray for the individual students who will hear the lesson, and pray that you will teach like Jesus...with authority.

The ingredients that go into your weekly *feast*

We like to think of this Bible study manual as several bags of groceries. We are confident that what this Bible study contains is spiritually nutritious. While we know and stand behind the contents of this study, we recognize that you know best and understand the uniqueness of your group. In the following pages, you will find great flexibility regarding what you teach, when you teach, and how you teach each lesson. We supply the groceries; you prepare the meal.

- **Student Life Basics**
Four lessons make up this section covering some of the *basic* areas of the Christian life. These lessons are ideally taught at the start of your teaching year.
- **Bible Lesson Modules**
Twenty-eight lessons arranged in seven four-lesson modules. Each module contains practical lessons on the doctrinal topic for the year as well as applications to the day-to-day life of your students.
- **Teens Involved**
Three lessons are provided in this section to help prepare your students for ministry in your church.
- **Current Issues**
Four lessons that demonstrate the ability of God's Word to clearly address current issues that are important to your students.
- **Parent Insights**
Three lessons to assist you in communicating with the parents of your students the focus of your ministry.

A word about the Bible Lesson Modules

The desire of Local Church Ministries is to put tools in your hands that will assist you in communicating the unchanging message of God's Word to students in a manner relevant to the culture in which we live. . In the Teacher's Bible Study twenty-eight of the lessons have been arranged into seven four-week teaching modules. Each module comes with the following creative elements:

- ***Name***
Each module has a unique name that is relevant and intriguing to a student's imagination. Putting the lessons into four-week modules and giving each module a unique name helps keep the Bible Study fresh and exciting for both you as a teacher and the students in your youth ministry.
- ***Logo***
Each module has a logo based on the name of the four-week module. The logo has a unique look and feel which will help set each module apart from the others.

- **Stage Décor / Room Environment**
Each module includes several room décor ideas to assist you in giving your youth room a unique look based on the module you are teaching. No matter what the size of your room or budget there are décor ideas that will help your teaching come alive visually.
- **Promotional Ideas**
Each module contains at least one creative promotional idea to promote the topic and to encourage students to invite their friends. Some of the promotional ideas should be used during week three or four of the current module to get students excited about the next one.

So, what's on the menu?

This Bible study contains 39 quality lessons to be taught to your students. So how do you determine what to teach each week? Well, what would you like to teach? What do your students need?

If you are just starting out, we highly recommend teaching through the four *Student Life Basics* lessons. They will lay a foundation for the spiritual growth and direction of the year. The *Bible Lesson Modules* can be taught in any order that you would like and need not be taught consecutively. You may want to teach the first module and then move to a *Current Issues* lesson. Teach another module and then cover a *Teens Involved* lesson.

What many leaders have found helpful is to establish a teaching calendar. Look at your church, school, and holiday calendar to determine the best order to teach the lessons during the year.

Getting ready to dig in

When I am eating I don't care about the recipe, I just enjoy the food. But I have come to learn that the food I enjoy the most is always the result of a well-followed recipe. Think of the following lesson format as your recipe for a life-changing, dynamic Bible study. This format is designed to provide you with a weekly Bible study that your students will be anxious to attend.

The **bold** sections also appear in the *Student Bible Study*

- **Look It Up!**
Here you will find the question and reference for the key verse of this lesson. The key verses from the first six *Bible Lesson Modules* make up the verses for the Scripture Memory Pak.
- Lesson Objective
A clear and concise statement of the objective of the Bible study. Read this and you will know where you are headed with this lesson.
- **Listen Up!**
This section of text is written for your students. The goal is to capture their interest and communicate truth about the topic at hand. Ideally your students could read this prior to your Bible study to whet their appetite for the material to be covered.
- **Learn It!**
Key words or phrases used in the lesson that students may not be familiar with but are important to understanding the truth taught.
- Checklist
This is a very helpful section reminding you of the props and materials you will need to most effectively teach this lesson.
- General Lesson Format
This section contains the main teaching content of your Bible study. While every lesson is ideally taught

in 25 to 30 minutes we usually give you more than enough material to teach in that time frame. Just remember we want to supply you with all of the *ingredients* you need to teach a life changing Bible study. It is up to you to choose and prepare the information you need for your students.

- **Liven It Up!**

We think of this as the *interactive* aspect of your Bible study. It is here that the students will take notes and follow along with the lesson in their *Student Bible Study*. In this copy of the Bible study, you have the completed visual for reference, to enhance your teaching.

- **Truth for Life**

This section lists practical principles for everyday life in a very straight-forward manner and referenced in the Bible. These are great tools that not only encourage you, but others as well. Your students will want to memorize these and keep them handy.

- **Live It!**

This is an application of the truths of the lesson geared toward the students. They will have this section in their *Student Bible Study*.

- Lesson Options

Our writers know the material and know students well, but we do not know the specifics of your group. Do you have mostly junior high or senior high students? Is your group small or large? The adaptations given here will allow you to practically customize the lesson to the particular needs of your ministry.

- Reference Materials

Do you want to do additional research on the lesson? Here is where you will find some of the books and resources that were helpful to the writer.

- Discipleship Groups

Discussion starters have been written to provide help and direction for your discipleship groups. These questions can serve as a bridge moving the lesson from the printed page and into the lives of your students.


- **Try this week...**

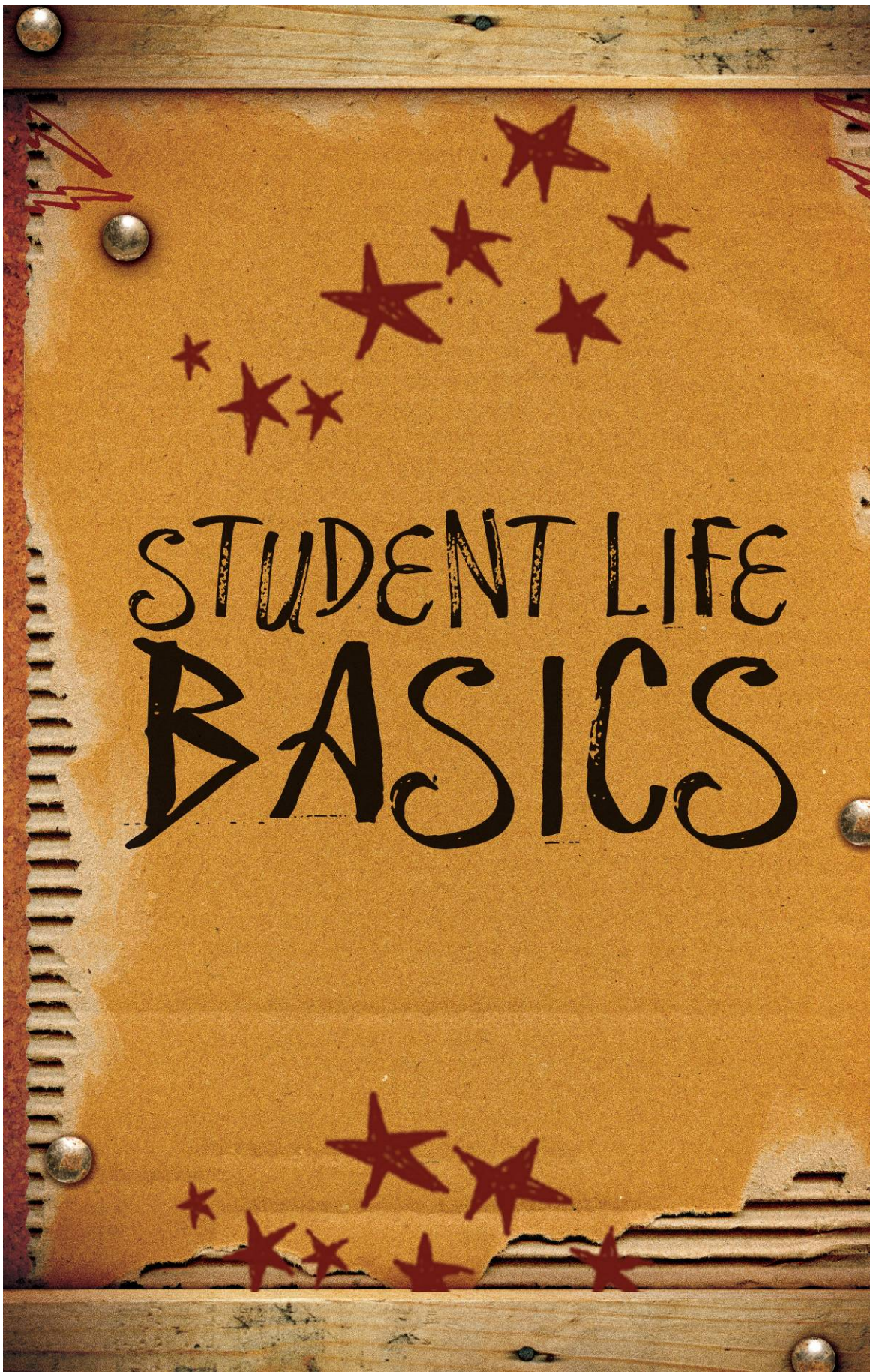
A Christian service activity will be suggested in this section each week. This is a great way to keep ministry opportunities in front of your students on a weekly basis.

It's time to get *cooking*!

The students in your church and community need to hear the truth of the Word of God taught practically and passionately. Every lesson in this manual will help you to do just that. Why not pause right now and commit to the Lord to no longer serve your students *fast-food* Bible studies, but to serve up a spiritually nutritious *feast* every week, starting this week. It's time to get cooking!

WORD OF LIFE STUDENT BIBLE STUDY 6-YEAR SCOPE & SEQUENCE

							
		God the Father and the Bible (2012)	Jesus Christ (2013)	The Holy Spirit (2014)	The Church; Its Allies and Enemies (2015)	Man, Sin, and Salvation (2016)	Future Events (2017)
Student Life Basics		Salvation	Salvation	Salvation	Salvation	Salvation	Salvation
		Testimony	Testimony	Testimony	Testimony	Testimony	Testimony
		Quiet Time	Quiet Time	Quiet Time	Quiet Time	Quiet Time	Quiet Time
		Evangelism	Bible Reading	Evangelism	Bible Reading	Creative Discipleship	Accountability
Bible Lesson Modules	One	God's Existence	Christ's Pre-existence and Eternality	His Deity and Personality	The Beginning of the Church	Man: His Creation by God	Reliability of God's Prophecy
		Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Omniscience	Christ's Pre-incarnate Activities	The Indwelling	The Church: the Body of Christ	Man: The Image of God	Future Events Time Line
		God the Father	Cost of Discipleship	Conviction	Baptism	Manhood	The Churches of Revelation 2
		The Transformed Life	Love that Transforms	Sins Against the Spirit	Communion	Womanhood	The Churches of Revelation 3
	Two	God's Mercy and Grace	Christ's Deity	Lost, Carnal, or Spiritual	The Relationship Between Israel and the Church	Man: The Fall of Man	Tolerance
		God's Holiness & Justice	Prophecies Concerning Jesus Christ	Sealed and Secure	Purpose of the Local Church	The Results of the Fall	Apostasy
		Christian Liberty	Pruning & Bearing Fruit	Spirit Baptism	Worship in the Church	The Purpose of Life	The Rapture
		God's Chastening	Peace	The Filling of the Spirit	Church Accountability	Creation vs Evolution	Godly Living
	Three	God's Sovereignty	Christ's Incarnation and Humanity	His Guidance	Church Leaders, Responsibility	The Reality of Being Lost	The Tribulation: Personalities
		God's Love	Christ's Temptation and Sinlessness	Will of God	Church Leaders, Qualifications	The Reality of Hell	The Tribulation: Events
		Peace	Servanthood	Sanctification	Church Members: Duties	The Good News of the Gospel	Martyrs
		Sovereignty and Disappointments	Witnessing	Evidences of Salvation	Warfare Through Missions	Witnessing	The Tribulation: Judgments
	Four	The Trinity	Christ's Teachings	His Intercession	The Existence and Nature of Angels	Our Sin Nature	Judgment Seat of Christ
		Names of God	Christ's Miracles	Fruit: Love, Joy, Peace	The Organization of Angels	Old vs New Nature	Rewards
		Emotional Struggles	The Lord's Prayer	Fruit: Longsuffering, Gentleness, Goodness	Our Duties As Soldiers	Sin: What the Bible Teaches	Marriage of the Lamb
		Strength from God	Christ's Prayer for Believers	Fruit: Faithfulness, Meekness, Temperance	Evangelism	Sin In a Believer's Life	The Two Resurrections
	Five	Inerrancy / Inspiration	Christ's Death & Resurrection	Spiritual Gifts: An Overview	The Ministry of Angels	Salvation: Propitiation and Reconciliation	The Second Coming of Christ
		Canonicity	Christ's Ascension	The Speaking Gifts	The Existence and Nature of Satan and Demons	Justification, Forgiveness, and Adoption	The Millennium
		Personal Bible Study	Value of Scripture	Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues	Satan's War On Believers	Eternal Security	Satan's Final Rebellion
		Bible Study Tools	Overcoming Sin	Healing	Our Defensive Armor	Accepted By God	Great White Throne Judgment
	Six	Uniqueness of the Bible	Christ's Present Ministry: High Priest	The Serving Gifts	Satan's Methods	Salvation: Substitution and Redemption	Hell and the Lake of Fire
		The Power of the Bible	Christ's Future Ministry: Judge and King	The Spirit Filled Life	Separation from the World	Evidences of Salvation	New Heaven and Earth
		God's Will	Backsliding	Witnessing	God's Judgments of Satan	Stewardship	Treasures in Heaven
		Decision Making	Who we are in Christ	The Holy Spirit in Different Times	The Occult	Man and Human Government	Final Words of Jesus
	Seven	Genesis	Colossians	Ephesians	2 Peter and Jude	James	Daniel
	Current Issues	Contentment	Risk-taking	Dangers of Online Journals	Shoplifting	Pleasure	Cheating
		Social Media	Sexing	Gangs	Binge Drinking	Abortion	Marriage Partner Qualities
		Paranormal	Customizability	The Other Side of MTV	Control of Your Mind	Apathy	Gay Lifestyle
		Curiosity	Reality and Character	Teen Spending	Anger	Tolerance	Broken Relationships
	Teens Involved	Teens Involved Promotion	Teens Involved Promotion	Teens Involved Promotion	Teens Involved Promotion	Teens Involved Promotion	Teens Involved Promotion
		Special Presentations	Teaching Children	Quizzing	Puppets	Teaching Children	Quizzing
		Instrumental Music	Puppets	Vocal/Instrumental Music	Electronic Media	Vocal Music	Creative Writing
	Parent Insights	Program Overview	Biblical Priorities	Parental Involvement	Biblical Priorities	Parental Involvement	Parental Involvement
		Parental Involvement	Biblical Principles	Parental Support	Biblical Principles	Biblical Principles	Biblical Priorities
Biblical Principles		Youth Emphasis Service	Biblical Priorities	Youth Emphasis Service	Youth Emphasis Service	Youth Emphasis Service	
Pressure Points	The Gospel	Worship	Temptation	The Tongue	Forgiveness	Cults	
	Servanthood	Authority	Peer Pressure	Continous Personal Revival	Missions	Real Change	



Heads Up!

Lesson Objective

The students will understand their need to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior, and the alternative if they do not do so.



LOOK IT UP!

John 3:16

What is the only way to escape eternal punishment?



LISTEN UP!

Have you ever been at a baseball game and heard someone yell, “Heads up!”? Maybe you’re a golfer, and as you are golfing one day, someone from the next fairway yells, “Fore!” Both of these expressions are warning you of immediate danger. At this point you have a choice to make. You could ignore the warning and keep on doing what you are doing, or you could look all around, find the danger, and do whatever is necessary to protect yourself. If you choose to ignore the warning, there’s a good possibility you will go home with a nice, colorful bruise. If you heed the warning, you will save yourself a lot of pain and discomfort.

That’s what God is doing for you. He’s yelling out a great big, “Heads up!” He wants you to know about the imminent danger that is ahead and how to avoid it. The danger is a lot worse than a baseball, and the consequences are infinitely worse than a bruise! To avoid the danger, God offers you salvation.



LEARN IT!

Lake of Fire: A literal lake of fire that will be the place of eternal punishment for Satan, his angels, and all whose names are not found written in the book of life.

Salvation: Deliverance from the power and effects of sin through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Sin: The lack of conformity to, or transgression of, the law of God.

Checklist

1. Prepare 3×5 cards with the references of the verses students are to find and read during the lesson. (Hand out prior to the lesson.)
2. A blindfold
3. PowerPoint presentation available at www.wolstore.org

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Teacher's Note: Ask for a volunteer to be blindfolded. Have him stand on one side of the room. After he is blindfolded, have everyone else in the room get up and rearrange all the chairs. Tell the person to walk to the other side of the room. He is obviously in danger. Have the rest of the group instruct him how to get to the other side of the room safely. Some people may try to trick him into going the wrong way. This is fine. When he finally gets to the other side, ask the volunteer how he first felt when you told him he had to walk to the other side blindfolded. He will probably mention feeling helpless or scared. Then ask how he felt knowing his friends were trying to help him get safely across. If there were people trying to trick him, ask him why he followed the direction of some and not others.

Content

Lecture

Our life's situation is very similar. We all began our life on a very dangerous course. We were all born under the curse of sin (Romans 5:12). To continue on that sinful course will have devastating consequences. Thankfully, God loves each one of us, warns us of the danger ahead, and offers a way to escape that danger.

Teacher's Note: Divide the students into two groups to debate the question, "Do I really need Jesus Christ to get to Heaven?" Assign a leader to each group to guide their preparation for the debate. Moderate the debate and make sure it doesn't get out of control. Allow only one person to speak at a time.

The *No* side may use arguments they have heard as they have tried to witness. Some examples may include the following:

- "I'm a good person."
- "I was baptized as a baby."
- "I go to church."

The *Yes* side should use arguments from verses in the Bible such as Acts 4:12, Ephesians 2:8-9, and others.

When the debate is over, answer any questions that may have been left unanswered such as, "What about all those people in Africa?" Romans 5:12 and 1:20-21 are good verses for that question.

Lecture

John 3:14-18 (read or have a student read) answers three questions concerning the danger of ignoring God's "Heads up!"

First Question – "So, what is this danger anyway?"

Jesus told us in John 3:18 what the danger is. He used the word *condemned*. It gives the idea of sentencing someone to some sort of punishment. We all stand guilty before God because of the curse of sin (Romans 5:12). We deserve whatever punishment God decides to give us.

Later in John 3:36, John the Baptist gave a little more insight into what the punishment would be. He said that the person who does not put his faith in Jesus Christ will not see life, but instead will experience the wrath of God.

Finally, anyone whose name is not in the book of life will be thrown into the lake of fire, which is the second death (Revelation 20:14-15, have a student read). There, in the lake of fire, God's wrath will be experienced for all eternity. That's the danger!

Second Question – “Why is salvation so important?”

Because the danger is so great, God has provided a way to escape. He is saying to everyone, “Heads up!” The salvation that God offers through His Son, Jesus Christ, is the only way. John 3:15-18 makes that point in each verse. Unless you put your faith in Jesus Christ, you will perish (vv. 15-16). It is not enough simply to believe in God intellectually (James 2:19). Salvation through Jesus Christ is the only way to escape the condemnation (vv. 17-18).

The writer of Hebrews said it well, “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” (Hebrews 2:3). Without accepting the salvation that God offers, we are doomed. We have nothing of our own to offer to God. No amount of money or good things will allow us to escape. Being baptized and being a member of a church won't help. Even a clean life won't cut it. Only the salvation that God offers through Jesus Christ will allow you to escape the danger. Salvation isn't just a fire escape from God's eternal punishment. It offers a life of meaning and purpose and a close, personal relationship with God Himself to name just a few.

Third Question – “Well, how do I get this salvation?”

God has made His plan of salvation very simple, so simple that even very young children can understand it. Here's a simple way to remember it.

Teacher's Note: Have the students fill in their Liven It Up section as you go through this part.

A – Admit you are a sinner. Romans 3:23 tells us “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” There is no one who can say that he has never sinned. Sin is the lack of conformity to, or transgression of, the law of God. Everyone has broken God's law at some point in his or her life.

B – Believe that Jesus, the Son of God, died and rose again to pay the penalty for your sin (1 Corinthians 15:3-4, have a student read). What Jesus Christ did for us on the cross is amazing. Peter explains that Jesus paid the penalty for our sins by dying in our place on the cross (1 Peter 3:18, have a student read). Someone has said, “God treated Christ on the cross as if He had committed the very sins we committed.” Three days later He rose victorious over death.

C – Call upon Jesus to save you from the penalty of your sin (Romans 10:13, have a student read). God is waiting for you to confess to Him your need of forgiveness. Romans 10:9-10 tells us that confession with the mouth and belief with the heart are essential for salvation. It is not enough just to say words; it is a matter of the heart.

Jesus is the only way. John 3:18 (read) makes that very clear. Without faith in Jesus Christ, you stand condemned before God. Accept God's free gift today!

Conclusion

God is saying to you all today, "Heads up!" He is warning of the danger ahead of you. If you have never come to Christ and been forgiven for the sin that condemns you, there is no better time than now. Receive God's gift before it's eternally too late. If you have been forgiven, tell somebody about how they can escape the danger they are facing. Give them a "Heads up!" before it's eternally too late for them.

The A-B-Cs of Salvation



Admit

(Romans 3:23) you are a sinner.

Believe (1 Corinthians 15:3-4) that Jesus Christ died and rose again to pay the penalty for your sin.

Call (Romans 10:13) upon Jesus to save you from the penalty of your sin.



LIVEN IT UP!



TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- Anyone whose name is not in the book of life will be thrown into the lake of fire, which is the second death (Revelation 20:14-15).
- It is not enough simply to believe in God intellectually (James 2:19).
- Peter explains that Jesus paid the penalty for our sins by dying in our place on the cross (1 Peter 3:18).
- Romans 10:9-10 tells us that confession with the mouth and belief with the heart are essential for salvation.



LIVE IT!

The Bible contains many promises. Two of the most important ones concern where you will spend eternity. For those who believe in Jesus Christ and trust Him as their Savior, God promises eternal life (John 3:16). For those who do not trust Him as their Savior, He promises eternal death in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10, 14). Be sure you know where you are going when you die. You will be dead for a looooooong time!

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. Why do you think it is so difficult for some people to trust Christ for salvation?
2. What were some of the reasons it may have been difficult for you to trust Christ?
3. How can you help others overcome their difficulties?

Try This Week...

Giving a testimony: Share the ABCs of salvation with a friend who doesn't know the Lord.

Always Ready

Lesson Objective

The students will learn how to be always ready to share their testimonies when the opportunities arise.



LOOK IT UP!

1 Peter 3:15

What should you always be ready to do?



LISTEN UP!

Have you ever wondered what you would say if you witnessed a major crime and someone asked you what you saw? That's what a person does when they testify in court. They are not asked what they think, or guess, or what their opinion is. They are asked to simply state the facts. What happened? What did you see? What do you know about this that the court needs to hear? Courtroom testimonies are important. They may set someone free.

What if a friend asked you why you prayed, or went to church, or why you were so kind to others? What would you say? Would you be able to use that opportunity to share Christ with them? Sharing your testimony is something you should always be ready to do (1 Peter 3:15). In reality, your testimony may be used of God to set a person *free* from sin and its penalty. Isn't that reason enough to prepare and practice so you are always ready to talk about your relationship with Christ?



LEARN IT!

Testimony: A declaration of events as witnessed or experienced by an individual.

Faith: Trusting, believing, or taking God at His Word; having a confident assurance of unseen things.

Checklist

1. Before the lesson, select three students to share a testimony with enthusiasm about the highlights and what they will remember most about a game or event they attended within the past week.
2. Choose three students to share one of the parts of a testimony:
 - A student testimony about their background before salvation.
 - A student testimony about how they became a Christian.
 - A student testimony about the changes that salvation brought into his or her life.
3. Prepare copies of the Testimony Worksheet for each student.
4. A power point presentation available at the [Word of Life Online](#)

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Testimonies

I want to begin our study tonight by hearing some highlights of the past week from three of our students. I have asked (students' names) to share with us about a game or event they attended this past week. Let's listen as they share with us.

Discussion

Do you have any comments about what you have just heard? What stood out in the testimonies as they shared about their experiences? (*Possible answers may include:*

It sounded like they had fun.

They paid close attention to the game or event they attended.

They were pretty excited to talk about the game or event.

They seem knowledgeable about the game or event.

They are persuasive in talking about it, making me want to attend the next time.)

Content

Lecture

Each of these students has just shared a testimony with us about a game or event they have recently attended. What is a testimony? Where would you find a good definition of a testimony (*in the Learn It section*)? The testimonies we heard were a clear declaration about an event each student witnessed or experienced. You get the idea that if someone were to ask them about the same event at school tomorrow, they would be more than ready to tell them about it.

What if someone asked you why you are different from other students in your school? Would you be able to give an answer if they asked why you are hopeful when others are typically down? How would you respond if one of your friends at school wanted to know what you thought about Jesus? In 1 Peter 3:15 (have a student read), the Bible reminds us that we are to be always ready to answer those who ask about our faith.

We are to be always ready to give an answer or testimony to others concerning our hope with gentleness and respect. Notice, also, we are to be ready to speak to everyone who asks. This makes me think that we should live in such a way that others will be compelled to ask us what makes our lives different from others.

Thinking through and writing out your testimony will help you to be always ready when that time comes. Here are three simple reasons for writing out your testimony:

1. It gives you something to say when given the opportunity.
There is nothing more frustrating than being asked something that you just are not prepared to answer. Have you ever thought about something later and wished you answered someone a different way?
2. It gives you time to think and pray ahead of time about what you will say.
If you knew someone really important was going to ask you sometime *today* how you came to know Christ personally, wouldn't you do something to be prepared so that you could give a clear answer? Well, anyone that doesn't know Christ personally is an important person. Jesus died for him or her. What would you tell them? Would you be thorough enough so that they could place their faith and trust in Christ based on your answer?

What a person does with the message of salvation is between him and God. The Holy Spirit does the convicting and converting. That's why we are encouraged to *pray* that the Spirit of God would take the Word of God to penetrate hearts. And it may be the very Word of God that you share that opens their eyes to the truth of the Gospel.

3. It helps you to stick to the subject and prevents rambling.
Sometimes the more we say the less people listen. The fewer words you say, but say well, may be just what they need to hear and what they will remember. If you sound like you are trying to convince yourself, you may not be convincing them.

Knowing what you are going to say gives you confidence in speaking. It also allows you to listen well to the other person because you are not trying to figure out what you are going to say next, since you have already prepared what you are going to say. One note of caution, don't be so tied to your testimony that your presentation becomes *canned* with no life or passion. Knowing the basics of your testimony and being prepared to share it should give you flexibility and zeal in sharing how Christ has changed you and can change your friend, too.

Student Testimonies

You should include four things in your testimony. A Testimony Worksheet in the Liven It Up section in your *Student Book* lists the four parts of a testimony. Several students are going to assist me as we take a look at each one of those four parts.

1. What my life was like before receiving Christ as my Savior.

When sharing your testimony with another it may be helpful to share a little about your life before you trusted Christ as your Savior. I've asked (student's name) to share this portion of a testimony with us.

Student Testimony Part One

Additional Comments by the Teacher

Be careful that you do not make the mistake of glorifying your past sins. You may be thinking that you have to show them how much of a sinner you were, but be careful that you don't end up promoting the pleasures of sin instead of bringing them to the place of conviction.

If you were saved at an early age, you may not have specific sins to mention in your life prior to salvation (1 Peter 4:3). You could focus on how Christ has kept you from the sins and heartaches that others your age have dealt with.

Remember, the focus of your testimony is not *you*, but what *Christ* has done in your life. Don't magnify the sin; magnify the Savior.

2. The circumstances that led me to receive Christ as my Savior.

It's always interesting to hear how another person came to Christ. This is what makes every person's testimony unique. For this section, I have asked (student's name) to share with us how he (or she) became a Christian.

Student Testimony Part Two

Additional Comments by the Teacher

This might include the person who was faithful in sharing Christ with you, the preacher who spoke God's Word, or even the place where you heard the truth for the very first time in your life.

God uses people and we should be thankful for the one who took the time to bring us the Good News. It's not bad for them to see the passion you have for knowing God and for helping others to see the truth.

3. How my life has changed since receiving Christ as my Savior.

True saving faith not only changes your destiny but it changes your life. Salvation should bring about a change in your life. (Student's name) will briefly share with us some of the changes that have come about in his (or her) life since trusting Christ as Savior.

Student Testimony Part Three

Additional Comments by the Teacher

Often this will include things that have changed in your life now that you know Jesus as your personal Savior. A transformed life is a good testimony that you are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).

It may involve a simple goal such as starting your day investigating God's Word for yourself as you have a personal quiet time each day.

4. One of the verses upon which I base my salvation is...

The Bible tells us that faith comes by hearing, and hearing comes by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). It is important for you to share God's Word in your testimony. In fact, it is His Word that He has promised to bless.

When it comes right down to it, it really isn't what we think that matters, but rather what God says! One of the last thoughts you should leave them with is a verse that confirms in your mind that you are saved and that God will keep His Word. God's Word is powerful and often the last thing we say is what people will remember the best. One of the last things that John wrote in his Gospel account is found in John 20:31 (have a student read).

The verse you choose should make it clear that you belong to God. It might be as familiar as John 3:16 or John 1:12, or whatever your favorite verse is to remind you of that great day when you trusted in Christ as your personal Savior. This might even become your life verse. Be sure you can say it from memory.

Teacher's Note: Give each student a copy of the Testimony Worksheet to complete to help them the next time they have an opportunity to share their testimony. Also be sensitive to the fact that some students may realize that they do not truly have a personal testimony. You may have a prime opportunity to lead some students to Christ as a result of this Bible study.

Conclusion

I appreciate each student who shared with us a portion of his or her testimony. I trust that from their involvement you better understand that your testimony is your personal story of how God has worked in your life and saved you. You ought to be so excited about knowing God that you want others to know how they can know Him

also. A witness simply tells what they know to be true. Don't wait until you are put on the spot. Let other people know how they can be saved. Hearing a verse of Scripture that you base your salvation on just may help them to see the light. What an incredible thing to be available to God as a witness for Him. May each of us determine to be always ready to share our testimony with another!

Testimony Worksheet

Name _____

1. What my life was like before receiving Christ as my Savior:

2. The circumstances that led me to receive Christ as my Savior:

3. How my life has changed since receiving Christ as my Savior:

4. One of the verses upon which I base my salvation is...



LIVEN IT UP!





TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- In 1 Peter 3:15 the Bible reminds us that we are to be always ready to answer those who ask about our faith.
- Remember, the focus of your testimony is not *you*, but what *Christ* has done in your life.
- A transformed life is a good testimony that you are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- The Bible tells us that faith comes by hearing, and hearing comes by the Word of God (Romans 10:17).



LIVE IT!

Always Ready! Does that describe you when it comes to sharing your testimony? It should. You can decide today that you will be ready the next time you have an opportunity to share your testimony. Take a few minutes each day this week to review what you have written on the Testimony Worksheet. Then ask God to give you an opportunity to be ready to share it when it might make a difference in someone's life for all eternity. It will be exciting!

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. Based on this lesson, what does it mean to be always ready?
2. Why will your testimony be different from someone else's?
3. How can God use your testimony as you share it with a friend?

Try This Week...

Giving a testimony: Now that you have written out your testimony, plan to share it with three people this week.

Kick It Up a Notch – BAM!

Lesson Objective

The students will be challenged to step up their daily quiet times a notch.



LOOK IT UP!

Colossians 1:10

In what should believers be increasing?



LISTEN UP!

Have you ever seen that show on the food channel where the Cajun cook is making all sorts of ordinary dishes, but he kicks them up a notch with his special blend of hot spices? He's shaking hot pepper all over everything and yelling, "BAM, BAM, BAM!" He takes the ordinary and makes it extraordinary just by adding a little spice!

OK, so you might not be a food channel enthusiast, but think of all the routine stuff you do that after awhile feels like it needs a little spice. It might be your workout in the gym, the route you walk home from school or the playlist on your iPod. Your quiet time is no different. Colossians 1:10 speaks of increasing or growing in the knowledge of God. We should never stay where we are spiritually. We need to increase. If you've done your quiet time faithfully now for a few years, that's awesome, but it might be time to start growing. You need to kick it up a notch!



LEARN IT!

Knowledge of God: A correct understanding of God gained through experience with the Scriptures.

Checklist

1. Copies of the Buzz Group Assignments for each group
2. PowerPoint presentation for this lesson available at www.wolstore.org

General Lesson Format

Icebreaker

You could introduce the lesson with a spicy food contest. Get two volunteers and some food that's hot (hot BBQ sandwiches, hot wings, chili, etc.). Be careful that it's not so hot it will hurt someone. The one who can eat the most in thirty seconds wins. Have some water available and clean up materials. Use this to lead into your introduction.

Introduction

No one can stand it when things get monotonous. When you feel like you're doing the same old thing in the same old way, day after day, things get dull pretty quickly. It seems like you're just going through the motions, just checking off the next thing on your list. No one likes to live that way. That's why we regularly try to spice things

up a bit. Whether it's your food, your daily chores, or your spiritual life, every routine needs a little change every once in a while. Change brings fresh perspective and renewed vitality. Changing by increasing your activity also builds you up. It makes you stronger. If you do the same routine every day at the gym, you'll grow only so much. Eventually you'll plateau and the only way to get growing again is to change your workout by increasing it a bit. It's exactly the same with your quiet time. You may have become very faithful in your quiet time, but now it seems a bit monotonous. It seems like you're just going through the motions. If that's the case for you, let's kick it up a notch. Let's check out some ways you can increase your time with the Lord to bring a fresh perspective and renewed vitality.

Content

First, we're going to take a look at three different passages that talk about increasing or growing in our relationship with Christ. Then, we'll check out some practical ways we can change our quiet time to keep us growing in our relationship with the Lord.

Buzz Groups

Divide your students into three Buzz Groups (or a number divisible by three) and appoint an adult leader for each group. Give each group one of the Buzz Group assignments. Allow about seven minutes for their discussion. Supplement each Buzz Group Report with the Teacher's Comments which includes the answers to the questions in italics.

Buzz Group One Assignment

Read 1 Peter 2:2 and answer the following questions:

Why does this verse talk about milk?

What is this analogy describing in the life of a believer?

What's the point of desiring the milk of God's Word?

Select a reporter to take sixty seconds to read each question and give a brief answer to the whole group.

Buzz Group Report

Teacher's Comments – 1 Peter 2:2

This verse is not saying we are babies in need of milk. It is not comparing those who drink milk to those who can eat solid food. Rather it is merely *talking about the intense desire* a baby has for milk.

The analogy to the believer's life *describes the intense desire we should have for God's Word*. Like a baby who won't go very long without returning to the bottle, we should be attached to God's Word. When we go without it, we should be so upset, nothing else matters until we get God's Word.

What will God's Word do for us? It will cause us to grow. Just as a baby drinks more and more as he grows, so we as believers should be growing. It should take more and more of God's Word to satisfy us because we keep growing more and more in Him. When we stop desiring more of God's Word, we stop growing.

Buzz Group Two Assignment

Read Colossians 1:10 and answer the following questions:

What illustration of growth is given in the passage?

What is the knowledge of God that we should be growing or increasing in?
How is a quiet time an effective tool to help you increase in the knowledge of God?

Select a reporter to take sixty seconds to read each question and give a brief answer to the whole group.

Buzz Group Report

Teacher's Comments – Colossians 1:10

The illustration is one *of growing and being fruitful*. Only growing plants can produce fruit. The moment a plant stops growing, it stops producing fruit.

The knowledge of God is a *correct understanding of God* gained through experience with the Scriptures. The Word of God is powerful (Hebrews 4:12) and it will change your life if you make the daily application of it a priority.

You gain knowledge by reading God's truth in His Word. You become closer to God because *you spend time with Him* in prayer and worship.

Buzz Group Three Assignment

Read Proverbs 1:5 and answer the following questions:

What kind of person increases their learning?

What makes a person wise?

If you're wise, what else will you do and how does that relate to your quiet time?

Select a reporter to take sixty seconds to read each question and give a brief answer to the whole group.

Buzz Group Report

Teacher's Comments – Proverbs 1:5

A wise person will increase his learning.

Increasing in knowledge is what a wise person does, but the increase of knowledge is not what makes a person wise. That is merely one thing that a wise person does. What makes a person wise is found in the word *hear*. The fact that one hears and regards God's Word higher than anything else is what makes a person wise. But remember, you are not only to hear the Word in your quiet time, you are to do the Word in your life (James 1:22).

A wise person has devoted his life to following the principles found in Scripture. To make that possible, the wise person spends a lot of time studying and learning God's Word.

Seek wise counsel from someone who is farther along spiritually than you are. Find someone who has more wisdom in God's Word than you do, someone who is farther along in their depth of quiet time and can help you grow in yours.

Lecture

Did you notice how each of those verses placed some importance on increasing or growing? In all aspects of our spiritual lives we need to be kicking it up a notch. When it comes to quiet time, we can't keep doing the same thing the same old way,

or it will get stale, we'll stop growing, and we'll stop producing fruit. With that in mind, here are some ways that you can kick it up a notch in your own quiet time.

How to Kick It Up a Notch

Change the Time of Day

Try changing the time of day that you do your quiet time. Whatever time you pick, make sure it's a time that can be totally quiet and free from any other distractions. Early in the morning, free time at school, a break at work, in the evening, or late at night are all good times.

Change the Amount of Time

Increase the time you spend in quiet time by ten minutes. Use the extra time to read over your quiet time passage more times, to pray more, to read another passage, or to write extra in a separate journal.

Change the Place

If you normally do your quiet time in your bedroom, try sitting at the kitchen table or in the living room, if it's quiet. Sit on your porch or on your back lawn. If you're near a park, try a park bench or a spot by the water.

Add a Commentary

Consider reading through a companion guide or additional commentary on the scripture currently being studied in the Quiet Time. Many are available online or at Christian bookstores.

Change the Translation

Read a different translation than the one you are currently using. It can be very refreshing to see familiar passages written in a slightly different translation.

Share With Others

Your quiet time is not really done until you share it. So, find someone new to discuss your quiet time with. Hopefully, they can share theirs as well. You'll be surprised how much life a new perspective can breathe into your devotional time!

Try one or more of these variations to help spice up your quiet time a bit. One caution, however, is you shouldn't change it every day. Changing too often will lead to instability. Instead, pick one or two changes that you would like to try for this school year. At the end of the year, come back and evaluate what new changes you can try.

Conclusion

Like any disciplined routine, your quiet time can fall into a rut. You may find yourself stuck on a plateau with no room to grow. If that's the case, you need to kick it up a notch. You need to step up your time with the Lord and increase your quiet time. You may choose to do that by increasing the amount of time you spend reading, praying, sharing, or singing. You may also do that by simply changing your routine a bit. Whatever the Lord is leading you to do, He will bless it if your attitude is to please God and grow in your knowledge of Him.

**Quiet Time—
Kicking It Up a Notch**

Change the Time of Day

Change the Amount of Time

Change the Place

Add a Commentary

Change the Translation

Share with Others



LIVEN IT UP!



TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- When we stop desiring more of God's Word, we stop growing.
- The Word of God is powerful (Hebrews 4:12) and it will change your life if you make the daily application of it a priority.
- You are not only to hear the Word in your quiet time, you are to do the Word in your life (James 1:22).
- Your quiet time is not really done until you share it.



LIVE IT!

As you spend time in your quiet time each day this week, set aside some time to pray and ask the Lord to help you make a decision as to how you can step it up a bit. When you feel you've come to a conclusion, share your decision with a leader so that they can hold you accountable for your new routine. Remember that Proverbs 1:5 says a wise person gets guidance from godly people. Let your leaders help you kick it up a notch in your quiet time.

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. What do you do right now for your quiet time routine?
2. Why is it so important to be constantly increasing in our knowledge of God?
3. What suggestion stood out most to you as a way you could kick up your quiet time?

Try This Week...

Family Devotions: Broaden your quiet time experience by leading your family in devotions this week.

An Urgent Text Message

Lesson Objective

The students will realize the importance of evangelism, become aware of various areas of evangelistic activity, and commit to be a more consistent witness for Christ.



LOOK IT UP!

Matthew 28:19-20

What is the Great Commission?



LISTEN UP!

Most people are interested in information that will affect them. Your friends and their activities are important to you. That is why online social networking is so popular. It is a community of people who meet via the Internet, connected through mutual associations with family, friends, or interests. Logging on to Facebook or checking your phone for text messages is a constant activity. The messages are important to you.

There is an urgent message that will affect every person on earth. Jesus Christ provides a way to God (John 14:6). He lived a perfect, sinless life (2 Corinthians 5:21). He died on the cross for our sins. He was buried in a grave and rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). He is alive now and offers eternal life to all who believe.

Christ has entrusted you with it so you can share it with your friends. You have a personal responsibility to communicate this urgent message with them (Matthew 28:19-20). It has the potential to change their lives (2 Corinthians 5:17).



LEARN IT!

Gospel: The good news of God's salvation of man made possible by Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

Online Social Network: A community of people who meet via the Internet, connected through mutual associations with family, friends, or interests.

Checklist

1. ping-pong balls
2. containers
3. plastic spoons
4. large poster board
5. marking pens
6. dates for activities to suggest
7. PowerPoint presentation available with this lesson at www.wolstore.org

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Game: Gospel Scrabble

Props for game: 14 ping-pong balls, two containers, 14 plastic spoons, a marking pen

Select two teams of seven players each. Create two sets of ping-pong balls. On each set write one letter from the phrase “Go & Tell” on each Ping-Pong ball. Capitalize the “G” and the “T” to give them a clue. Provide a set of balls, a container for the balls, and plastic spoons for each team. Each team lines up with members standing side by side about an arm’s length away from each other. Each team is parallel to one another. Place the container of balls at one end of each team line. Before you begin, announce that the game they are playing is called “Gospel Scrabble.”

The object of the game is to pass the balls from the container to the last person in the team’s line. Then make a two-word phrase from the seven letters. Give the students this clue: This is the summary of Matthew 28:19. On “Go,” the first person in each team scoops a ball onto his spoon and passes it on to the next player in line. Each player collects the ball with their spoon and gives it to the next player in line. Once the process begins, the first person in line keeps scooping the balls from the container to pass them along the line. When all the ping-pong balls have reached the end of the line, each team forms the two-word phrase with the ping-pong balls. The first team to arrange and proclaim the secret phrase wins.

Lecture

Go & Tell is the summary of the Great Commission, which is a command. The Gospel is the good news of God’s salvation of man, made possible by Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. It is used today to encourage Christians to tell people what Jesus Christ did for them. This is the Gospel message. The Gospel message is to be taken to the whole world (Matthew 28:19-20). As each team worked together to win the game, we must not drop the ball but work together to share the Gospel. It is a vital message and we have the freedom and means to deliver it.

Content

Teacher’s Note: Distribute the tools, materials, and information to three project groups. Assign at least one leader to guide the students in their projects. Give the groups as much time as possible to complete their projects (suggested: 7-10 minutes). Show the Great Commission video – Go Warn Them – All 6.5 Billion Precious Souls – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0vtkmc-Oh4&feature=related>

Project One: The Significance of Sharing the Gospel

Using a large poster board, create a greeting card that will highlight why we must share the Gospel message. (Provide marking pens and poster board.)

We must share the Gospel because:

1. It is the compassion God demonstrated (John 3:16; Romans 5:8).
2. It is to obey the command of God’s Word (Matthew 28:19-20).
3. It is to help the lost escape the consequences of sin (Romans 6:23).

Project One Presentation:

Teacher’s Comments

The **Significance** of Sharing the Gospel

We share the Gospel because:

The Gospel is a message of compassion and hope (John 3:16) to sinners who are separated from God because of their sin (Romans 5:8). It reveals the work that Jesus Christ did so that we as sinners can be forgiven by God and given new life. The penalty of sin is cancelled and no longer held against us. Jesus Christ purchased our freedom with His death by being nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:13-14; 1:14).

Sharing the Gospel is not optional for any Christian. Every believer is commanded to go and tell others this urgent message (Matthew 28:19-20).

We are motivated to go and tell others so that they have the opportunity to escape the consequences of their sin (Romans 6:23).

There is no other message with more significance. That's why each believer must make it a high priority in their daily life to take opportunities to tell others about Jesus Christ.

Project Two: The System of Sharing the Gospel

Teacher's Note: Decide on an event that you want to promote. Choose a STORM event, the Word of Life Superbowl, or one of your own local church youth events that is designed for evangelism. Give the students the details that can be put in a text message. Show Word of Life Superbowl Promotion video:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MyhS7-VNa6o>

As a group, create a text message that will promote the following event. Include the details: name of event, date, location, etc. Then text that message to _____ (insert name of leader here).

Event: _____ (Insert the name of the event here.)

Project Two Presentation:

Teacher's Comments

The System of Sharing the Gospel

Here is the text I received from Project Group Two. I've been invited to attend an event. As a leader, I know that this message is designed to get me to the event to hear the Gospel. That's exciting to me! But if one of your friends received this text message, they might come to the event just to have fun. But then they would hear the Gospel. This is one way we take the Gospel message to our world.

Jesus said we are to be His witnesses even to the uttermost part of the world (Acts 1:8). People are exposed to the Gospel in various ways. In youth ministry we have tools that help us get the Gospel to others. There are Christian Service opportunities like Tract Distribution, An Evangelistic Car Wash, or even a Mall Ministry. We can use large evangelistic events like STORM and Superbowl to bring our friends and classmates to hear the Gospel. Our church from time to time has an evangelistic emphasis that you can use. And many times we challenge you to talk to your friends when we apply our

weekly Bible study. There is a system to sharing the Gospel. God has provided the command and program to share the Gospel.

Project Three: Sharing the Gospel Message

As a group write a four or five statement Gospel presentation that could be posted on an online social network Web site. Use the following Scriptures and/or others to formulate your statements: Romans 3:10, 23; Romans 6:23; Romans 5:8; Romans 10:9-10; and Romans 10:13. This is known as “The Roman’s Road.”

Project Three Presentation:

Teacher’s Comments

Sharing the Gospel Message

Project Group Three wrote out the Gospel message and posted it or will post it on a social media Web site. They contributed to the message getting out to others. The Gospel message is spread by people (Romans 10:14). We, as believers, are the people God uses to spread or share the Gospel. When we genuinely believe that the Gospel is significant for the world, we will be serious about our approach to sharing it. A serious believer will be determined to know what to say and how to say it. People come to faith in Jesus Christ because they hear the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

These are basic statements of the Gospel. These in some form should be learned and a method of communicating them should be practiced.

1. God loves the world (John 3:16).
2. All people have sinned (done wrong) and are sinners, thus deserving death (Romans 3:10, 23; 6:23).
3. Jesus paid the debt for our sin on the cross (Romans 5:8).
4. We must be willing to confess that we are sinners and admit or confess that God has raised Jesus from the dead (Romans 10:9).
5. We must call on the name of the Lord for salvation and get saved (Romans 10:13).

Conclusion

The Gospel is the greatest news that can ever be offered to the world. Its value to each of us should be priceless. If we truly believe the Gospel is significant, then it is our responsibility to spread it. We must be willing to do things that encourage us to share the Gospel. Our youth group has many possible outreach opportunities. We can reach the students in our community. Each of you can do your part to reach out to the lost. You can invite friends to attend events that are designed for them to hear the Gospel. You can encourage them to come to our youth group and even personally tell them about Jesus Christ. Are you willing to do your part to get the Gospel to them? We have all failed to get the Gospel to others from time to time. Ask God to forgive you and give you strength now to follow through with this opportunity. Think of at least one or two friends, neighbors, or classmates that you can go and tell. Write their names in your “Student Lifelines.” Then choose how you will get them to hear the Gospel. Will you do it personally or with a text to invite them to an event where they can hear the Gospel?

Sharing the Gospel

Significance

Romans 5:8

System

Acts 1:8

Text a Friend



LIVEN IT UP!



TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- The Gospel message is to be taken to the whole world (Matthew 28:19-20).
- The Gospel is a message of compassion and hope to sinners who are separated from God because of their sin. (Romans 5:8).
- Jesus Christ purchased our freedom with His death by being nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14).
- The Gospel message is spread by people (Romans 10:14).
- People come to faith in Jesus Christ because they hear the Word of God (Romans 10:17).



LIVE IT!

Who are your friends or classmates? Have they heard the Gospel? It is obvious that there is conflict in many of their lives. Many of them are looking for relief. They have a sin problem and you have the answer to it. Be fully convinced that the faith you hold fast is real. Know how to pass it on to others and be deliberate about doing it. Determine to share Jesus Christ with someone God places in your path this week.

Reference Materials

Bible Knowledge Commentary, John Walvoord, Roy Zuck, Romans 10 in Logos Bible Software

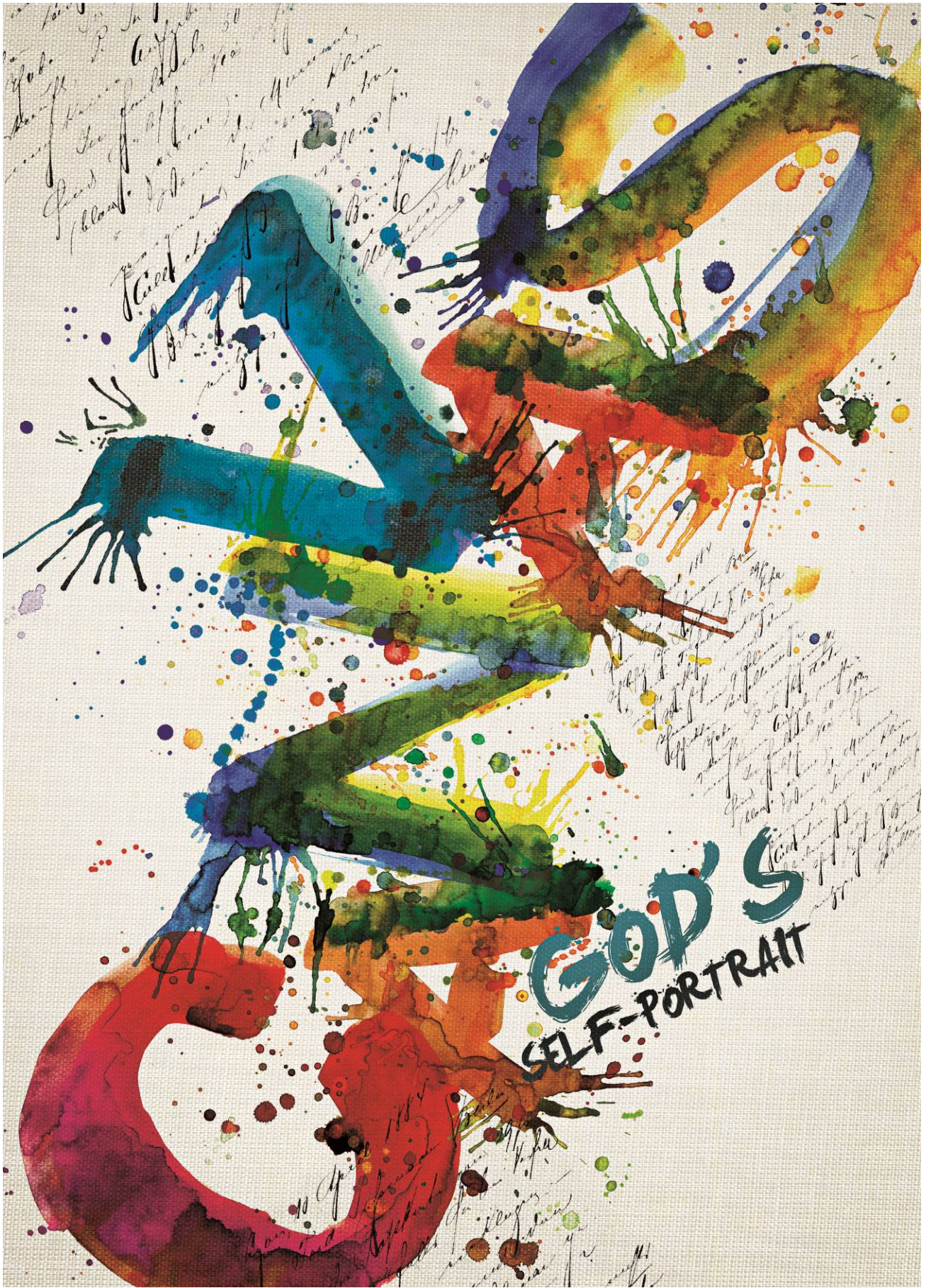
Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. Why do you believe the Gospel message must be spread?
2. What are your favorite ways to help others hear the Gospel and why?
3. Who do you know that needs to hear the Gospel and what do you plan to do about it?

Try This Week...

Tract Distribution: Plan an evangelistic outreach. Gather Gospel tracts. Take them to your school or community prayerfully seeking the lost.



Canvas

(Module One)

Stage Décor / Room Environment

- **Plan:**

- Buy canvas in 10'x10' squares and use tape to write “CANVAS” on it. Splatter paint all over the canvas, then remove the tape leaving “CANVAS” blank and having color surrounding it.
- Hire an artist to paint faces on canvas and put on wall throughout the series.
- Make a wall of canvas (either using canvas stretched between wood or by attaching it to the wall) and paint “CANVAS” on it. Have students write on it what they think about who God is.
- Buy enough canvas to give a small square to each teen. Have each student write what they think about who God is and tape them to the wall.
- Instead of canvas, buy a large roll of paper and paint the logo on it.
- Buy artist supplies (paintbrushes, paint cans, easels, etc.) to put on stage and around the room.

Promotional Ideas

- Buy canvas and allow teens to dress in it (over their clothes). Hold a fashion show the week before the series launch.
- Hire an artist to come and paint students before and after youth group.
- Hire a caricaturist to draw students the week before series launch.
- Attach small pieces of canvas with youth group info painted/written/drawn on it, and connect to a key chain as a giveaway.
- Design pencils or paintbrushes with “CANVAS” written on them as giveaways.
- Have the youth group do a service project painting someone’s house, the church building, or any other place that is in need.

The Existence of God?

Lesson Objective

The students will learn two ways to demonstrate the existence of God: by observing creation and observing the transformation of a life in Christ.



LOOK IT UP!



LISTEN UP!

Romans 1:20

Has God made it evident to all that He exists?

Did you ever look into a telescope and think, “What would it be like to be an astronaut and travel into space or walk on the moon?” How do you know that the moon exists? You have never been to the moon. Several astronauts have, and you can have faith in what the astronauts have experienced.

What is faith? It’s simply trusting, believing, or taking God at His Word—having a confident assurance of unseen things. What about God? We can see the moon, but we can’t see God. How do we know He exists? Can we prove it? Romans 1:20 speaks of the existence of God being seen through the creation of the world. Many people still believe in the Big Bang theory, despite the incredible amount of faith it takes to believe that we came from an explosion in space. By the way, where did space itself come from? When it comes to the existence of God, take a look at His marvelous creation and simply have faith. He is clearly seen.



LEARN IT!

Faith: Trusting, believing, or taking God at His word; having a confident assurance of unseen things.

Creation: The act of God bringing the world into ordered existence.

Transformation: The process by which something is changed in its character or structure.

Checklist

1. Obtain various photos or PowerPoint slides of God’s miraculous creation.
2. Prepare to show the video introduction.
3. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Teacher’s Note: Show a video that demonstrates noodling or hillbilly hand fishing as part of the introduction. You can use this video or search YouTube for others.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EMaOUqyzz_Y&feature=relmfu

Introduction

Ask students if they have ever fished for catfish. Show them a few pictures of some giant catfish. (For a visual obtain and show pictures of giant catfish found on the Internet at <http://www.snopes.com/photos/noodling.asp>.)

These men caught these huge catfish by a method called noodling. Noodling for catfish involves wading out into the river and feeling under water for holes in the bank, in logs, and under rocks. When the fisherman finds a catfish hole, he sticks in his hand, wiggles his fingers, and when the catfish latches on he pulls out a monstrous catfish. The size of these catfish can be proven because we have photographic evidence that they exist. But what if I told you there were catfish alive that are six or seven times bigger than these—catfish the size of an automobile that are capable of swallowing a man whole? Would you believe me? There is no evidence of catfish that big, but some men say they have seen them. Can you imagine an argument about the existence of such catfish? Have you ever been in an argument about the existence of God?

Content

Teacher's Note: Have the students refer to the **Liven It Up!** section and turn to those passages as you teach this lesson.

If you haven't been in a discussion about the existence of God, you will one day. Someone may ask you, "How do you know God exists?" What would you say? (Wait for responses.) Do you get frustrated when their argument of scientific *proof* may sound more educated and persuasive than yours? How do we demonstrate the existence of God? The truth is that God cannot be proven through scientific method.

Creation of the Universe

God's work of creation is irrefutable evidence of His existence. His creation is truly miraculous! When we talk about creation, we're talking about the act of God bringing the world into ordered existence.

Teacher's Note: Obtain photos of various nature scenes. Pass them around or project them onto a screen. Note: Auroras are some of the most breathtaking creations of God. Try to obtain photos of auroras. Aurora facts: greenish-yellow ones occur sixty miles into the earth's atmosphere. That's twelve times higher than the average plane flies. Red ones occur two hundred miles up, forty times higher than jet planes fly.

Creation shows the **existence** of God. One way to demonstrate the existence and glory of God is to observe His creation. Psalm 19:1 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." Another translation of this verse says it like this, "How clearly the sky reveals God's glory! How plainly it shows what he has done!"

Brainstorm: By just taking a quick mental glance at creation and what we see around us, what tells you that God exists?

When God's beautiful creation is on display, His existence is crystal clear! Verse two of Psalm 19 says that creation declares God's glory non-stop, day and night. At night we observe the marvelous moon that God gave us. During the day we see His glory in the sun. The diameter of the sun is about one hundred times wider than the earth.

The sun takes up ninety eight percent of all the mass of the solar system. It's huge! Do you know that approximately one million earths can fit inside the sun? Psalm 19:4 says that God has made a home for the sun in the sky. Since the day He created the sun when God said, "Let there be light," it has not ceased to rise and fall every day, according to His will.

There is order in God's creation. It doesn't just happen. Intelligent creatures point to an intelligent designer. Paul Enns said this in his book *Approaching God*, "Order and harmony do not happen by accident – they are the resultant work of a loving, all-wise, and merciful God." Warren Weirsbe said this, "Certainly so complex an entity as our universe (and the universes beyond our own universe) demands a Creator and Sustainer. To believe that the universe evolved out of nothing and arranged itself in this orderly manner is folly." Just because God cannot be proven scientifically, does not make a skeptic right.

It is through observing creation that the Bible says man is without **excuse** (Romans 1:20). How has God made Himself known? According to Romans 1:20 God has made Himself known through His marvelous creation that screams out His existence! What if people still don't recognize the existence of God through creation? (Wait for responses.)

Mariners can accurately plot their course by the stars. God's law is firmly fixed in man; it's called a conscience, which is the faculty within the human being that evaluates his attitudes, thoughts, and actions. Because man has a conscience, he must either allow it to accuse him or else he will excuse himself by declaring that God does not exist. So when man asks if there is a creator, the answer is a resounding YES, but he is too spiritually deaf and blind to see it. He does not want to be held accountable.

But there is good news for men in this condition, especially if they want to know the truth. For those who are willing to change and earnestly seek God, they will find that God is remarkably near and is desirous of saving them if they are willing to repent and trust Christ as Savior (Acts 17:27-28).

There is yet another way of knowing that God exists. It is through your personal testimony of how you encountered God.

Transformation of a Life

Transformation is the process by which something is changed in its character or structure. Let's look at the life of a man who, after his **encounter** with the Lord Jesus Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit, wrote about half the New Testament. His name was Saul of Tarsus. He hated Christians so much that he had them thrown into jail and beaten (Acts 8:3; 22:19). He even took part in the murdering of Stephen, a leader in the early church (Acts 8:1; 22:20). Then something happened—he met someone Who changed his life. This change was so drastic that God even changed his name from Saul to Paul. From the moment he met Jesus Christ face to face, he was never the same again. Look at how his life changed (read Acts 9:20-22). He went from persecuting Christians (Acts 8:3) to preaching Christ (Acts 9:27). After seeing this radical transformation in the Apostle Paul, people saw living proof of God's existence. The old life was gone and a new life had come. Paul had a life-changing encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Brainstorm: Name some people you know whose lives radically changed, indicating that they had an encounter with God.

After a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, God changes a person's life (2 Corinthians 5:17). If you know Jesus Christ as your Savior, you have also had a life-changing encounter with God.

While we may not be able to prove the existence of God scientifically, we as children of God know He exists because of what He has done in our lives. One way to demonstrate the existence of God is simply to give a personal testimony. No one can deny a change in your life. The evidence is in a transformed life (Read 2 Corinthians 5:17). Your friends can argue with you that God does not exist, but one thing they can't argue with is your personal testimony of the difference that Jesus Christ has made in your life.

In demonstrating the existence of God, two things can be observed: the evidence of creation and the evidence of your life.

Conclusion

Creation and my personal testimony are evidence enough to demonstrate the existence of God. Is there enough evidence in your life to demonstrate the existence of God? Do you live your life in such a way that people say, "There has to be a God!" In demonstrating the existence of God, make it a point to tell someone this week to observe His creation and observe your life.

Application to the lost

Some of you may still be questioning the existence of God. How can you observe the amazing detail in creation and not believe that there is a designer? Have you had a life-changing encounter with God? The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that if a man is saved, his life will be changed. God can and will change your life if you give your life to Him. You can receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior today. (Give a Gospel presentation and an opportunity to respond.)

Application to the saved

You may be confident that you know the Lord. Do you get frustrated when people try to disprove the existence of God? Have you ever been at a loss for words? Remember that no one can argue with a transformed life. No one can argue with your personal testimony. A life changed by God demonstrates that He exists. My question to you is, "Are you really a changed individual?" Why would your friends want to give their lives to God if your life is no different than theirs? Do you give your friends a reason to believe in the existence of God? In demonstrating the existence of God, what evidence does your life give to unbelievers around you? It is going to require faith on our part. The element of faith – trusting, believing, or taking God at His Word is necessary if we expect to please God (Hebrews 11:6).

Proof of God's Existence

Creation of the Universe

- Creation shows the **existence** of God (Psalm 19:1-6).
- Man is without **excuse** (Romans 1:20).



LIVEN IT UP!

Transformation of a Life

- An **encounter** with the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 9).
- The **evidence** of a transformed life (2 Corinthians 5:17).



In proving the existence of God to others they can observe the evidence of **creation** and of **your life**.



TRUTH FOR LIFE!



LIVE IT!

- According to Romans 1:20 God has made Himself known through His marvelous creation that screams out His existence!
- One way to demonstrate the existence and glory of God is to observe His creation (Psalm 19:1).
- After a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, God changes a person's life (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- The element of faith – trusting, believing, or taking God at His Word is necessary if we expect to please God (Hebrews 11:6).

How can you demonstrate the existence of God? There are two ways. The first way is to observe creation. The only explanation of the orderly manner of creation is God. The second way to demonstrate His existence is to hear how a true and living God changed your life. There's power in personal testimony. There's one common element in both ways—faith. The Bible says in Hebrews 11:6 that without faith it's impossible to please God. The bottom line is that it just takes faith!

Reference Materials

Warren W. Wiersbe, *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1993) p. 634.
Paul Enns, *Approaching God* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publishing, 1991)

Internet resources:

Sun facts – <http://library.thinkquest.org/15215/Facts/>

Aurora facts –

http://library.thinkquest.org/15215/Science/aurora_facts.html?tqskip1=1

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. Why is man without excuse when it comes to believing in God?
2. What two things can people observe to know that God exists?
3. What in your life do you need to get rid of that can hinder people from believing in the existence of God?

Try This Week...

Teaching Children: Do a children's Bible study on God the Creator. Emphasize that His creations demonstrate His existence.

Suggested Videos

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EMaOUqyzz_Y&feature=relmfu

Be Real – God Is!

Lesson Objective

The students will understand and respond to the fact that God can do all things, sees all things, and knows all things.



LOOK IT UP!

Psalm 139:1-3

Does the Lord know everything about me?



LISTEN UP!

Have you ever seen a polygraph machine? It detects unseen changes in the body to determine if someone is lying. However, it's not always accurate and is unable to determine the motives of the heart. You may be able to fool the machine, maybe even your teachers, pastors, friends, or parents; but you cannot fool God. God is omniscient. He has complete knowledge of everything past, present, and future, including everything about you (Psalm 139:1-4). He even knows what you are thinking right now.

Omnipotence and omnipresence are two of the other attributes of God's nature that begin with the prefix *omni*, which means *all*. God's omnipotence means He has unlimited power and authority to do anything consistent with His own nature. He can never grow weary (Isaiah 40:28). His omnipresence means that He is present in all places at all times. Psalm 139:7-10 tells us that there is nowhere we can hide from God. So, why not be honest and real? You can't fool God. He knows more about you than you know about yourself.



LEARN IT!

Omnipotence: God's unlimited power and authority to do anything consistent with His own nature.

Omnipresence: God's ability to be present in all places at all times.

Omniscience: God's complete knowledge of everything past, present, and future.

Checklist

1. A polygraph machine (If unable to borrow one, use a box with a few wires to attach to the subject or use a computer monitor and mouse and have the subject rest a hand on the mouse.)
2. A police officer in uniform, a detective, or an individual to act as one for the role play
3. A table and two chairs
4. A series of questions to ask the person of interest about a fake crime
5. Video introduction
6. Ring or something round for object lesson
7. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Teacher's Note: Use the following questions to stimulate a discussion among the students concerning polygraph machines. Allow a brief time for them to answer. (You can find some detailed polygraph information on the www.people.howstuffworks.com/lie-detector.htm Web site.) Also, you can consider using the TV show "Lie to Me" as an illustration and possibly show part of a video from YouTube about the show.

What is a polygraph machine?
Does anyone know how a polygraph machine works?
What's the purpose of a polygraph test?
Does anyone know how accurate one of these machines is?

Teacher's Note: Interrupt your discussion with a role play that shows the inaccuracy of a polygraph test.

Role play

Have a policeman (or a detective) enter the room and ask to question one of the students, a person of interest in a crime. Bring that person to the front to sit at a table to be hooked up to your polygraph machine. Have him ask some questions about the fake crime to which they must answer "yes" or "no." Go through the questions and add some humor by saying they were lying or telling the truth. Indicate whether they passed the test.

Lecture

The idea of the polygraph is to measure changes in blood pressure, respiratory rate, and various electrical properties of the skin. These changes or the lack of them, indicate whether a person is lying. Although scientists have spent years trying to develop more accurate polygraph machines, they are still not one hundred percent perfect. One man cannot know for sure when another man is lying. But this lesson is not about man lying; it's about God knowing. You can fool man and machine by deceitfulness (Proverbs 14:8), but not God. He knows more about you than you know about yourself.

Open your student book to the lesson "Be Real – God Is!" and we will discuss how by knowing God we can respond to His knowledge (omniscience), as well as His power (omnipotence) and His presence (omnipresence).

Content

Teacher's Note: Look up and discuss the references for each attribute: God's omnipotence, His omnipresence, and His omniscience. Discuss these attributes and qualities of God and the response to that attribute. In the **Liven It Up!** section, have the students put the number to match a response with each attribute. There could be more than one match to each attribute, so give some guidance to the students and come to a consensus of what response is best.

Omnipotence (All-Powerful)

Definition: God's unlimited power and authority to do anything consistent with His own nature.

1. Unlimited Power

God's unlimited power is demonstrated by such events as His Creation (Jeremiah 32:17), His deliverance of His people from Egypt (Psalm 114), and the resurrection of Christ (Ephesians 1:19-21).

Our Response: 1 – Depend on His strength.

Knowing that God is all-powerful gives us confidence to place our faith in the God who created us and sustains our life. Do you depend on God in all situations?

2. Never Gets Tired.

God never gets tired and weary like we do (Isaiah 40:28). He never has to be replenished because He is perfect and lacks nothing. When God rested on the seventh day as recorded in Genesis 2:2-3, He ceased from doing any more creation work. God's rest here is not the same as our rest. We not only cease from working when we rest, but we also do so to get our strength replenished.

Our Response: 2 – Rest in the Lord our God.

God will not only strengthen us (1 Peter 5:10); He will also give us rest for our soul.

3. Nothing Is Impossible.

Luke 1:37 and the first part of Job 42:2 say that there is nothing too difficult for God to accomplish. The things that are difficult or impossible with man are within the realm of the possible with God (Matthew 19:26). Everything is possible with God as long as it does not deny His nature of sinless perfection and holiness.

Our Response: 3 – Cast all our cares on Him.

Do you sometimes get frustrated with life? Since nothing is too difficult for God, why do we try to control our lives instead of trusting in God's promises (1 Peter 5:7)?

4. One of a Kind

In the Book of Job the word *Almighty* is used thirty-one times, which indicates God's omnipotence. He is holy, unique, unchangeable, and has the authority to do as He desires (Job 23:13).

Our Response: 4 – Glory in His uniqueness.

How often do you thank God for Who He is? We often appreciate God's gifts for us, but we neglect to appreciate the giver for Who He is. Let's thank Him right now for His attributes! (Lead in prayer.)

Omnipresence (All-Present)

Definition: God's ability to be present in all places at all times

5. Always There

There is nowhere we can go or hide to escape the presence of God. Absolutely nowhere (Psalm 139:7-12)!

Our Response: 5 – Be holy in His sight.

How often do you forget that you are never alone? In your room, the closet, the basement, or the attic—God still sees you. As God’s children, we will want to be true to our calling and imitate our Father, which means living a holy life (1 Peter 1:15-16). Are the things you do in secret pleasing to a holy God?

Omniscience (All-Knowing)

Definition: God’s complete knowledge of everything past, present, and future

6. Complete Knowledge

His understanding is infinite, which means He knows everything there is to know (Psalm 147:5). Not only has He made us, but in His infinite wisdom He has established the principles that we need to live by.

Object Lesson: To describe “infinite” is difficult, but have the students look at your ring or a round object. Ask them, “Where does it start?” or “Where does it end?” Answer: It doesn’t have a beginning or an end. It is infinite.

Our Response: 6 – Obey His principles.

Are you living each day according to the principles of the Word of God or the ways of man? Let the One Who knows you best establish your ways.

7. Needs No Teacher

In a set of rhetorical questions in Isaiah 40:13-14 the question is asked, “Who has been the Lord’s counselor?” We find that the answer is no one. God has no counselor or teacher. He is the source of all knowledge and is just in His execution of it.

Our Response: 7 – Learn from Him.

How much of the Word of God do you know? Are you growing daily through your reading of the Bible? If you and I are honest, I’m sure it is a lot less than what we want it to be. Commit today to learn from the source of all truth, God Himself, through spending more time in His Word.

8. Knows Our Heart

Much is written about God judging the thoughts and intent of our hearts (Luke 16:15; Psalm 139:2). You may be able to fool your friends and even your family, but no one can hide their motives and thoughts from God. He always sees and knows everything.

Our Response: 8 – Evaluate your motives.

Ask God to give you a pure heart that is soft and pliable toward Him.

Conclusion

What I would like you to do in the last couple of minutes of this lesson is to look at Who God is. In the quietness of your heart, read down the list and thank God for Who He is. (Pause for a minute.) God knows what you need to do in order to grow spiritually, but real change begins when you tell someone else so that they can pray

for you. Share a need or decision you have made with a friend. Remember to pray for one another and remember to thank God for Who He is.

Now look to the other column and find just one response that you need to work on in your life. I can't review them all, but do you need to depend on Him instead of your own ability? How about being holy or evaluating your heart? Whatever your eyes keep coming back to, give to the Lord right now! (Pause.) If you have never received God's Son, Jesus, see one of us before you leave. Take a minute to confess what God has laid on your heart. (Pause again for a minute and then close in prayer.)

God's Attributes

Our Response

Omnipotence (All-Powerful)

1. Unlimited Power
(Jeremiah 32:17)
2. Never Gets Tired
(Isaiah 40:28)
3. Nothing Is Impossible
(Luke 1:37)
4. One of a Kind
(Job 23:13)

3 – Cast all our cares on Him.

2 – Rest in the Lord our God.

4 – Glory in His uniqueness.

1 – Depend on His strength.

Omnipresence (All-Present)

5. Always There
(Psalm 139:7-12)

5 – Be holy in His sight.

Omniscience (All-Knowing)

6. Complete Knowledge
(Psalm 147:5)
7. Needs No Teacher
(Isaiah 40:13-14)
8. Knows Our Heart
(Luke 16:15)

8 – Evaluate your motives.

6 – Obey His principles.

7 – Learn from Him.



LIVEN IT UP!





TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- God will not only strengthen us (1 Peter 5:10), He will also give us rest for our soul.
- Things that are difficult or impossible with man are within the realm of the possible with God (Matthew 19:26).
- As God's children, we will want to be true to our calling and imitate our Father, which means living a holy life (1 Peter 1:15-16).
- You may be able to fool your friends and even your family, but no one can hide their motives and thoughts from God (Psalm 139:2).



LIVE IT!

Have you been experiencing spiritual defeat because you have not been trusting in God's power? Have you been grieving the Spirit of God by living as if He was not there? Have you been rejecting His counsel by not being in the Word? God's power, presence, and knowledge are all available to you.

God knows what you need to do in order to grow spiritually. Share a need or decision you have made with a friend. Remember to pray for one another and thank God for Who He is.

Reference Materials

Charles C Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1986) pp. 40-42.

Floyd Barackman, *Practical Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1992) pp. 57-60.

A.W. Tozer. *The Knowledge of the Holy* (New York, New York: Harper, 1975) pp. 55-58, 65-68, 74-77.

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. How has your view of God changed as a result of this lesson?
2. Which area of response do you feel the Lord wants you to work on?
3. Why is it important to share this need with someone else?

Try This Week...

Family Devotions: Share points of the lesson over three days of this week and highlight a different *omni* each day.

Who's Your Father?

Lesson Objective

The students will learn the implications of having God as their Heavenly Father.



LOOK IT UP!

Ephesians 4:6

What does it mean that God is my Father?



LISTEN UP!

Have you ever gone to a family reunion and when you got there, you met your third cousin, twice removed on your great aunt's neighbor's hair dresser's side? You just smiled and were polite, but thought to yourself, "Who cares? I have no idea what *third cousin, twice removed on my great aunt's neighbor's hair dresser's side* even means." The reunion finally ends; you go home and forget all about your third cousin, twice removed on your great aunt's neighbor's hair dresser's side.

Do you ever find yourself wondering the same thing about your relationship with God? You've heard that God is your Father. You smile but you don't really know what that means, so you just forget about it. Because God is limitless and we are not, He has to tell us about Himself in terms that we can understand. One of the ways He describes Himself to us is as our Father (Matthew 6:9). Earthly fathers have certain character qualities that we can use to help us understand about God, our Heavenly Father.



LEARN IT!

Heavenly Father: The relationship of God to those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior thereby being born anew into His family.

Chasten: To punish, chastise, or rebuke with words in order to correct or mold the character of others.

Checklist

1. Prepare five 3×5 cards with the question, "What does this verse teach about God's authority over your life?" and one of the following verses:
 - Isaiah 64:8 – God has the authority to shape me however He desires.
 - Jeremiah 3:4 – God has the authority to guide me where He wants me.
 - Matthew 12:50 – God has the authority to expect my obedience.
 - John 12:49 – God has the authority to tell me what to say.
 - Hebrews 12:9-11 – God has the authority to correct me.
2. Prepare three 3×5 cards with the question, "What does this verse teach about your relationship with God?" and one of the following verses:
 - Psalm 68:5 – God is a Father to the fatherless.
 - Matthew 6:32 – God knows our need.
 - Jeremiah 31:9 – God will protect and provide for His children.
3. A Power Point presentation is available for this lesson at the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Read Ephesians 4:4-6

Each of the names for God tells us something a little different about Him. In this passage God is described as the Father of all. He portrays Himself as the Father for a reason. Psalm 103:13 (read) makes a comparison between the behavior of an earthly father and our Heavenly Father. David wrote, “Like as a father... so the Lord.” God portrays Himself as our Father because He wants to relate to us as a perfect Father.

Content

Lecture

Not everyone is fortunate enough to have a good home life situation. Some fathers are absent and the children never know who their real father is. Some have fathers who are angry or even abusive and seldom sense a father’s genuine love. Many fathers are aloof or have abandoned their children altogether. They are just not there. The family has to literally fend for themselves.

For the family that is blessed to have parents who are saved, that’s a different scenario. How stark the contrast between the family that has a saved and an unsaved father. Should the dad be saved and really living for the Lord, it allows us to see the best comparison between our earthly father and our Heavenly Father.

Teacher’s note: Consider going to www.skitguys.com and purchasing the script called “The Father’s Love” and doing a reader’s theater with the script. This will add around seven minutes in your teaching time, but the content is very good—especially if you have students from difficult backgrounds.

By revealing Himself as someone Who is like our father, God wants to teach us some important truths about our relationship with Him. When we speak of God as our Heavenly Father we’re talking about the relationship of God to those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, thereby being born anew into His family. As our Heavenly Father, God “is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Ephesians 4:6). Let’s look at three aspects of our relationship with God.

1. **He Is Above All.** As our Father, God is in a **position** of **authority** over us.

The word *above* gives the idea of superimposition. What in the world does that mean? Moviemakers use this technique all the time for special effects. They film the background, or the explosion, or the model city, or whatever first. Then they film the actors and put their image over the first image. They superimpose the second image over the first. The second image has authority over the first. Let’s look at some verses that talk about God’s authority over us.

Discussion: Why is it sometimes hard to submit to human authority and how does God act differently in His position of authority? (Pause and allow for a response. Possible answers might be: Human authorities are hypocrites, they are mean, or their expectations are unreasonable.)

Scripture Search

Teacher’s Note: Have the students to whom you gave the 3×5 cards read their verse and give the one line statement following the reference. As leader, you can further explain the concept by sharing a bit more of the meaning from what is listed below.

- A. Isaiah 64:8 – God has the authority to shape me however He desires.
Isaiah illustrates God’s authority over our lives to shape us however He desires. The picture of the potter and the clay is wonderful. God is the potter. We are the clay. The potter has complete control over the clay. He can make it into a bowl, a cup, a pitcher, or any number of things. The clay has no say in the matter. It is in complete subjection to the will of the potter. The same is true in our lives. God is the potter of our lives. As the clay, we are to be in complete subjection to the will of the potter (Jeremiah 18:4). We have no say over how our lives are shaped or molded. Our job is simple obedience to the potter.
- B. Jeremiah 3:4 – God has the authority to guide me where He wants me.
Jeremiah shows God’s authority to lead us and guide us wherever He wants us to go. The driver of a car has complete control over the path the car takes, how fast it goes, and its final destination. The car can’t decide to go another way because the driver chose a road full of bumps or because there is a traffic jam. It doesn’t matter if the car likes the road or not; it must be completely obedient to the driver because the driver is the authority. God has the same authority in our lives. Sometimes we don’t like the path God chooses to take us on. Sometimes the road is bumpy and uncomfortable. Sometimes we may think we are moving too slowly, but God is the driver. We must let Him guide and direct. Wherever He leads, we must follow.
- C. Matthew 12:50 – God has the authority to expect my obedience.
In Matthew, Jesus said that His spiritual family would do the will of His Father. The children of God should naturally want to please Him and be obedient to Him. Jesus said in John 14:15, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” Our obedience is an indicator of our love for God. How well do you show your love for God? Would other people know by your actions that you love God? God has the authority to expect your obedience. Show Him how much you love Him by obeying Him every day.
- D. John 12:49 – God has the authority to tell me what to say.
John tells of Jesus’ obedience to His Father. He obeyed completely in saying everything that His Father sent Him to say. Has God ever told you what to say? He doesn’t speak in an audible voice, but have you ever felt God’s leading to say something? Did you obey? Does God want you to talk to guests in your youth group and church? Yes. When there are guests, do you obey God and talk to them, or do you disobey and ignore them? Have you ever felt God leading you to speak an encouraging word to someone else? Did you obey? Has God ever given you an opportunity to witness to a friend or co-worker? Did you obey and take that opportunity to share the Good News with that person? Be obedient to God, even in the words you speak.
- E. Hebrews 12:9-11 – God has the authority to correct me.
The writer of Hebrews speaks of the correcting that a father must do in his son’s life. Sometimes our earthly father needs to correct us to make us better. We might be displaying a bad attitude or be involved in a wrong action. We all need to be corrected from time to time. Our Heavenly Father must also correct us sometimes for the same reasons. It’s referred to as chastening and means to punish, chastise, or rebuke with words in order to correct or mold the character of others. Think back to a time when you were punished for one reason or another. Was the punishment fun? Of course it wasn’t! It’s no fun when God has to chasten us either, but we can be certain that the chastening we

experience from Him is always for our good (Hebrews 12:11). God has your best interests at heart. If He didn't care about you, He wouldn't bother to correct you. Be thankful for the correction He gives us and learn from it. Just as your earthly father has authority over you, your Heavenly Father has authority over you as well. His thoughts and ideas are more important than yours are. Since God is above us all, He should be superimposed on every area of our lives. Choose every day to get to know your Father and to learn what He wants you to do.

2. He Works Through All His Children. As our Father, God desires to work through us.

The word *through* conveys the idea of acting as a channel for something to be done. You watch TV on different channels. On one you might watch a football game. On another you might watch the weather. On another you might watch a mystery drama. But each channel carries something different. Each channel has a specific purpose.

As God's channel, someone God desires to work through, you have a specific purpose. God doesn't make phone calls, but you can. God doesn't visit people in the hospital, but you can. God doesn't send cards in the mail, but you can. God doesn't smile at people, but you can. These are some of the ways you can express kindness and compassion to others on behalf of God. God can use you to serve people and show His love to them.

The Bible is full of examples of people God worked through to get a specific job done. God worked through Noah to save the human race (Genesis 6-8). God worked through Joseph to save the known world at that time from starvation (Genesis 41). God worked through Moses to bring the Ten Commandments to the people of Israel (Exodus 20). God worked through Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to change the mind of King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 3). God worked through these people in big ways, but God works in small ways as well. God can work through each of you in a way that may seem small to you, but could mean the world to someone else.

Brainstorm: Who are some of the young people that God used in the Bible to perform works for Him? (Answers could be: Miriam overseeing the baby Moses in the ark of bulrushes, Naaman's maid who told Naaman about the prophet that could cure him of his leprosy, David and his victory over Goliath, the little lad that offered his lunch to the Lord so as to feed five thousand, young Timothy who pastored a local church.)

One of the best and most exciting ways you can let God work through you is to witness to someone who needs to hear the Good News of the Gospel. Hopefully, you are thankful for your salvation. Aren't you glad someone took the time to tell you about Jesus? Take time today to pray and ask God to show you someone with whom you could share the Gospel. Then, ask God to give you that opportunity. Be patient and when the opportunity comes, take it. God may use you to bring that person to Christ.

What are some other ways that God could work through you this week? (Wait for responses.)

3. He Is In Us. As our Father, God wants a close relationship with us. Because He is in us, He wants to be involved in every aspect of our lives.

Do your parents ever ask you how your day went? Why do they ask that? They're not trying to pry into your life, even though it may seem that way, they are just interested in you. They want to be a part of your life. God in a similar way wants to be a part of your life—not just on Sundays and Wednesdays, but every day!

Adam and Eve knew what this was like. Before they sinned, God would walk and talk with them. Adam and Eve enjoyed a personal, face-to-face relationship with God. God was involved in their lives on a daily basis. After they sinned, that personal, face-to-face relationship ended. Sin destroyed it, not only for Adam and Eve, but for every person who has lived since then.

But God still desired a relationship with us, so He provided a way to restore that relationship. He sent His only Son, who is perfect in every way, to pay the penalty for our sin so the relationship could be restored. Now, those who have accepted God's gift of salvation can enjoy a close relationship with Him. In fact, James 4:8 commands, "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you." God wants a relationship with you.

Scripture Search

Teacher's Note: Have the students to whom you gave the 3×5 cards read their verse and give the one line statement following the reference. As leader, you can further explain the concept by sharing a bit more of the meaning from what is listed below.

- A. Psalm 68:5 – God is a Father to the fatherless.
Even if you come from a broken home, God will be your Father. You can trust Him. He will always be there for you.

- B. Matthew 6:32 – God knows our needs.
It is comforting to know that God knows our needs. He is more than able to meet them. If you are willing to seek God above everything else, He will take care of the rest (Matthew 6:33).

- C. Jeremiah 31:9 – God will protect and provide for His children.
God will lead you to a place where your needs will be met and where you will be safe along the way. God is not interested in making you fend for yourself. He is ready and willing to provide for you.

Have you ever felt like there was no one you could talk to? You had so much to say, but no one was there to listen? God is always there, so we never have to fear being abandoned (Hebrews 13:5). In fact, you have complete access to Him any time of the day. Romans 8:15 may be the best verse about God as our Heavenly Father. Paul uses the word *Abba* to describe Him. During the time of Jesus, small children used the word *Abba* to refer to their fathers just like children today would refer to their father as *daddy*. It is a wonderful picture of the relationship we have with God. It is a very endearing term. It's a son who excitedly runs up to his daddy, jumps up on his lap, gives him a big hug, and just enjoys being close to him. You can enjoy that same relationship with your Heavenly Father, your heavenly daddy. He wants you to be with Him. When you come to Him, He welcomes you with open arms!

God wants to be a part of your life. Let Him. He wants a relationship with you. Let Him have it.

Conclusion

If God truly is your Father, you have all the rights and privileges of being His child. So, who is your daddy? If you're a Christian, God is your Heavenly Father. He deserves your complete obedience. He desires to work through you, and He desires a close relationship with you. He also uses another term of endearment... "friend" (John 15:15). This does not mean a casual acquaintance but someone who is real close, a trusted relationship. It's like the best man or bridesmaid at a wedding. It is someone who is part of the inner circle and can approach God at any time and is privy to confidential information (His Word). Take time every day to develop the greatest relationship you will ever have, your relationship with your Heavenly Father.

If God isn't your Father, you are missing out on the greatest relationship you will ever know.

Teacher's Note: This would be a great spot to give a salvation presentation and invitation.

One God and Father of all...

Ephesians 4:6

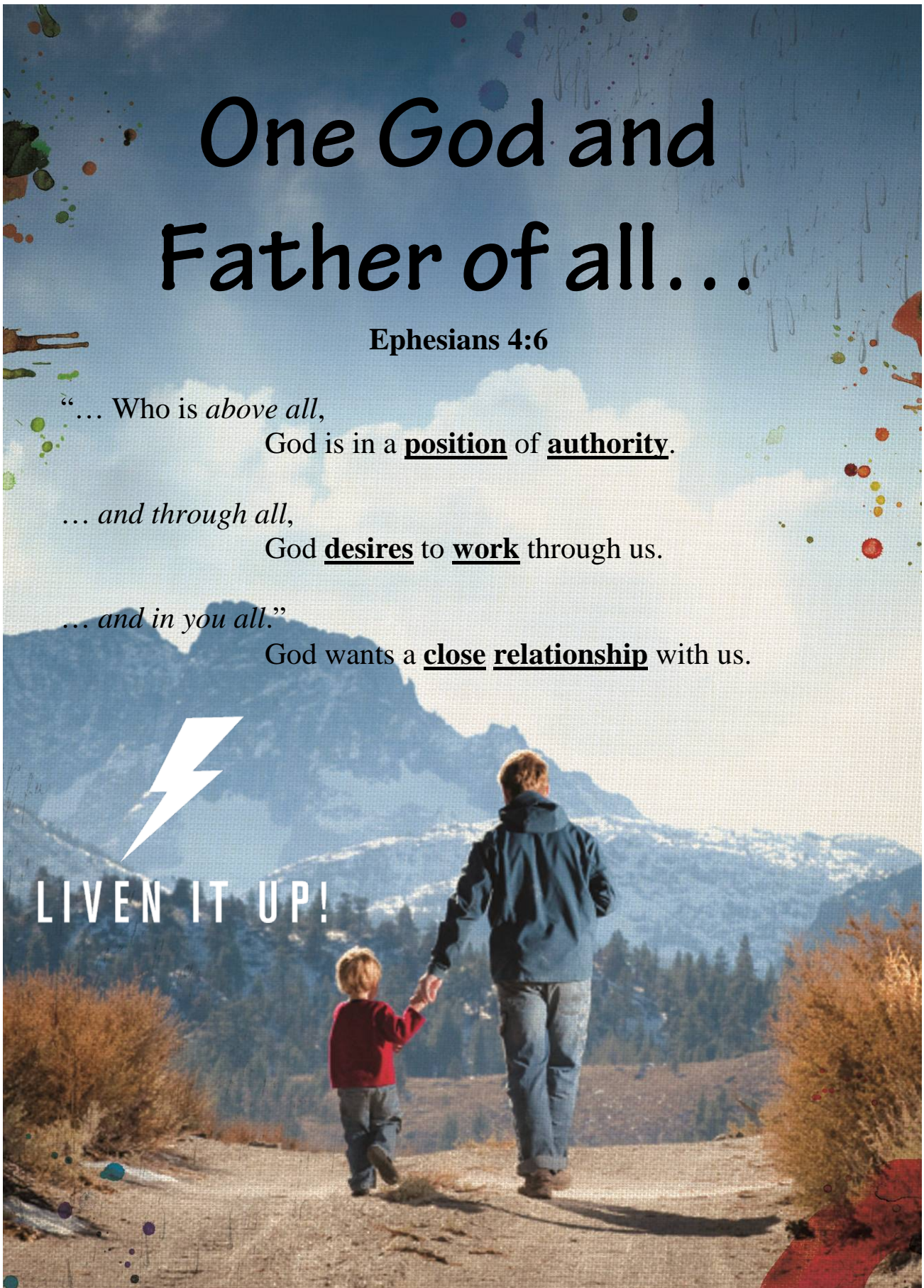
“... Who is *above all*,
God is in a position of authority.

... *and through all*,
God desires to work through us.

... *and in you all.*”
God wants a close relationship with us.



LIVEN IT UP!





TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- As the clay, we are to be in complete subjection to the will of the potter (Jeremiah 18:4).
- Our obedience is an indicator of our love for God (John 14:15).
- It's no fun when God has to chasten us, but we can be certain that the chastening we experience from Him is always for our good (Hebrews 12:11).
- If you are willing to seek God above everything else, He will take care of the rest (Matthew 6: 33).
- God is always there, so we never have to fear being abandoned (Hebrews 13:5).



LIVE IT!

When you admit you are a sinner and trust Christ as Savior, a whole new relationship begins. Jehovah is not only God, but He's now your Father. There is comfort in knowing that no one will ever care for you like God the Father.

God, your Heavenly Father, deserves your obedience, desires to work through you, and longs for a close, personal relationship with you. Only you can choose to make your relationship with your Heavenly Father all that it can be. Thank God today for being your Heavenly Father.

Reference Materials

W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (MacLean, Virginia: MacDonald Publishing Company) pp. 185, 548-550.
Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1999) pp. 41-50.

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. Briefly describe how a person develops a relationship with the Heavenly Father.
2. Since God is the Father of all, how should that affect your behavior toward others?
3. Which area do you plan to work on and what obstacles do you anticipate facing?

Try This Week...

Hospital Visitation: Visit someone in the hospital and discover the joy of letting God, your Heavenly Father, work through you.

All You Had to Do Was Ask!

Lesson Objective

Students will learn that prayer is commanded by God, is His appointed way for believers to express their needs, and is an absolute necessity in the life of a Christian.



LOOK IT UP!



LISTEN UP!

Philippians 4:6

How are we to ask for things from God?

Have you ever wanted something really badly, but were afraid to ask for it? Maybe you thought it cost too much and your parents couldn't afford it—so you asked for a less costly item. When you received it, you weren't happy and it was evident. Your parents asked you why you weren't pleased, and you told them that you didn't get what you *really* wanted. They explained to you that you could have had whatever you desired; all you had to do was ask.

Prayer is very similar. We may want to do great things for God, but we can't imagine actually asking God for them. We try to get them on our own, but come up short. God, our Heavenly Father, desires to give His children good things (Matthew 7:11). He tells us we have not, because we ask not (James 4:2). Prayer is humbly coming into the presence of God, praising Him for Who He is and what He does, and believing He will answer our requests.



LEARN IT!

Encounter: To come upon face to face.

Hallowed: Set apart, separated from ordinary things, holy.

Checklist

1. Cell phone and someone else to call the teacher
2. Whiteboard with pens for the discussion
3. An adult male, a little girl, and a sandwich on a plate for the Readers' Theater.
4. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

The summer day was reaching ninety degrees as Grandpa and Grandma Smith took their granddaughter Tori to Acadia National Park. Tori lived out of state and loved playing in the ocean waves. She convinced Grandpa to play with her in the surf. After his feet adjusted to the extremely cold ocean water, they had a great time. Later Tori was exploring on the jagged rocks along the ocean. Grandma warned her several times not to get too close to the edge, but a nine-year-old was thinking more of the

interesting sights rather than the apparent danger. Suddenly, Tori slipped and slid down the rock. She struggled to grab onto anything, but to no avail. She plunged into the icy ocean waters. Grandpa and Grandma Smith screamed for someone to help.

Content

It would have been foolish for the Smiths not to call for help. They were in a desperate situation and needed help. So it is with Christians and prayer. Sometimes we have great needs and cannot meet them ourselves. We must call to God and ask Him to meet our needs.

Teacher's Note: Have someone call your cell phone at this moment. Answer and pretend it is your spouse asking you to bring something home from the store. Get a piece of paper and write the items down and tell the caller you will bring them home. Close with, "I love you, too."

Resume with a discussion on the questions:

What is the purpose of prayer?

Why pray?

(Write down the students' answers to your questions on a whiteboard.)

Lecture

Thank you for your answers to the questions, "What is the purpose of prayer?" and "Why pray?" We can put all these answers in two basic groups: 1) to encounter a holy God and 2) to express our human needs.

1. **To Encounter a Holy God**

Jeremiah 29:12-13 says, "Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Twice in these verses there is an encounter with God, which means to come upon Him face to face. We pray and He hears us. We seek Him and we find Him. God desires for us to have an encounter with Him. God commands us to continually pray and not to faint or lose heart (Luke 18:1). In Philippians 4:6 we are told to "be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Let's look at some of the aspects of encountering God. When we pray...

- A. We are invited to come to Him **boldly** (Hebrews 4:16). Since Christ is our mediator, we are admonished to come boldly to the throne of grace. Have you thought about coming into God's presence as an important part of praying? Prayer is much more than talking to a stranger on the other end of the line. It is even more than talking to a loved one, which we illustrated earlier with the cell phone call. Many bring prayer down to a level of saying "give me" to a Santa Claus-type god. Effectual prayer is coming into the presence of God and searching for Him with all our heart (Jeremiah 29:13).

- B. We are to spend time in His holy **presence** (Luke 11:2). This allows us the opportunity to get to know Him more personally. We must see His holiness and must revere Him as Jesus taught His disciples, "Hallowed be thy name" (Luke 11:2). He is set apart from ordinary things, He is holy. We also see His omniscience (all-knowing), omnipotence (all-powerful), and omnipresence (all-present), and must praise and worship Him because none other has such attributes.

C. We are to pursue His will with all our **heart** (Ephesians 6:6). God, in His infinite wisdom, has a perfect plan for our life. We need to prove that good, acceptable, and perfect will in our lives (Romans 12:1-2). When we pray, we can reflect on whether we are pursuing the will of God or merely asking God to do our will.

D. We can expect spiritual **growth** (John 6:45). In God's Word, every person who encounters God will never be the same because we learn more of Him. Moses is one example. He wanted to help his people, but was helpless. He encountered God in the burning bush and found God's will for his life. He left shepherding sheep to lead God's people (Exodus 3:1-10).

Readers' Theater

Teacher's Note: A skit with little Susie and her dad. (A father and daughter would work well here.) Props needed: two chairs, a small table, a sandwich on a plate.

Let's continue our lesson this evening by eavesdropping on a meeting between Susie and her dad.

The Scene for the Readers' Theater

A restaurant scene with a table and chairs for two. (Place two copies of the script on the table so they appear as place mats.)

The Cast for the Readers' Theater

Susie – Someone from the Student Ministry youth group or a young child.

Dad – A senior member of the youth group or an adult leader.

The Script for the Readers' Theater

(Dad enters and takes a seat. Soon Susie follows.)

Susie: *(as she enters the room)* Daddy, can I have a sandwich? I'm hungry.

Dad: Susie, why would you want a sandwich?

Susie: 'Cause I like it and I'm hungry.

Dad: You just had one yesterday.

Susie: But I want some more now, I'm starving.

Dad: Give me some good reasons why you should have another sandwich.

Susie: 'Cause you're the best daddy in the whole world.

Dad: Give me another reason.

Susie: 'Cause you're the strongest, handsomest, smartest daddy in the whole world.

Dad: Do you really want a sandwich?

Susie: Daddy, please give me a sandwich.

Dad: How about a big hug?

Susie: Okay.

Dad: (*Goes over and gets the sandwich and brings it back to her.*) Here is your sandwich, enjoy.

Let's give our cast a hand.

Do you think the father was going to give her the sandwich from the beginning? I think so. So why did the father put her through the questioning? Here's another good question: Since God knows all things, why should I ask Him for what I need? He knows I need it. He knows if, when, and how He will supply it, so why pray? This leads us to our second point.

Object Lesson

Teacher's Note: Read Matthew 7:9 and then reveal a small loaf of bread and then a rock.

Which of these would you give your child if they asked for bread? Obviously, you'd give them the bread because that is what they need and what they could use. If our earthly father knows how to give the right things to his children, we can be confident that our loving Heavenly Father will also (Matthew 7:11)! God knows what we need and what we can use. Our prayers are answered (and therefore should also be asked) "according to His will" 1 John 5:14-15. Sometimes it may feel like our prayers go unanswered, but sometimes God is telling us "No" or "Wait." "No" or "Wait" as acceptable answers from a wise God. He gives us and does not give things to us according to what is best for us.

2. To Express Our Human Needs

Prayer is perhaps the greatest opportunity that humans have to show how much they need God. Man in his fleshly body is frail and no match for Satan, who is referred to as the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2). We must remember 1 John 4:4, "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world," and cry out to Him in prayer.

- A. Prayer is **needy** people coming before their Heavenly Father (Matthew 6:9-13). In order to call God our Father, we must be saved and be His child. We must recognize our helplessness and confess that without Christ we can do nothing (John 15:5). We must come to our heavenly Father for help. Prayer also proves the sufficiency of Christ since no one or anything else can meet our needs.
- B. We express our needs by asking our **good** Heavenly Father. We know God is a good Father because His very nature is goodness. He is perfect in His goodness. Everything about the Father is good, and it is in His nature to do good for His children. He does not ignore trouble and problems in our lives, but brings victory and peace in the midst of trouble (Psalm 107:6).
- C. God's appointed way is for us to express our needs by **prayer** (James 4:2). The world expects to meet their needs by working, planning, or scheming. God's Word says His children have a Father that wants to meet their needs. We don't

have to fight, war, struggle, or steal, but rather ask our good Father to meet our needs. This doesn't remove our responsibility to be an example to the world in all areas of our life.

Conclusion

You will never develop a close relationship with God by just attending church once a week or even having a quiet time periodically. God wants more than a time slot on your calendar each day. He wants to really meet with you. We are told to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17) which means to be in the frame of mind where you can talk with Him while doing school work, shopping, driving, playing sports or performing everyday tasks.

Prayer is an absolute necessity in the Christian life. It is a command of God. How faithful are you in prayer? If we want answers to our prayers, we must ask (Jeremiah 33:3). We know that God hears and answers prayer, but how many prayers has God answered for you recently?

If your family was dependent on your prayers and you were the only one who could be sure of getting prayers to Heaven, what kind of shape would your home be in? We must learn to get answers to our prayers.



Purpose and Need of Prayer

LIVEN IT UP!

1. To Encounter a Holy God

- A. We are invited to come to Him **boldly** (Hebrews 4:16).
- B. We are to spend time in His holy **presence** (Luke 11:2).
- C. We are to pursue His will with all our **heart** (Ephesians 6:6).
- D. There will be spiritual **growth** (John 6:45).

2. To Express Our Human Needs

- A. Prayer is **needy** people coming before their Heavenly Father (John 14:14).
- B. We express our needs by asking our **good** Heavenly Father (John 16:24).
- C. God's appointed way is for us to express our needs by **prayer** (James 4:2).

If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.
– John 14:14



TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- God commands us to continually pray and not to faint or lose heart (Luke 18:1).
- Effectual prayer is coming into the presence of God and searching for Him with all our heart (Jeremiah 29:13).
- If our earthly father knows how to give the right things to his children, we can be confident that our loving Heavenly Father will also (Matthew 7:11)!
- Man in his fleshly body is frail and no match for Satan, who is referred to as the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2).
- If we want answers to our prayers, we must ask (Jeremiah 33:3).



LIVE IT!

Do you believe your prayers are heard by God? Are you asking for things according to His will? If the answer is “no” to either question, confess it as sin. Since God commands you to pray, if you’re not doing it, it’s sin. Prayer is not an event to attend but it’s constant communion with God. Will you commit to spending time in prayer with God? Will you begin asking God for specific requests so you know for certain that He is hearing and answering your requests?

Reference Materials

Sammy Tippit, *The Prayer Factor* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1988) p. 142.

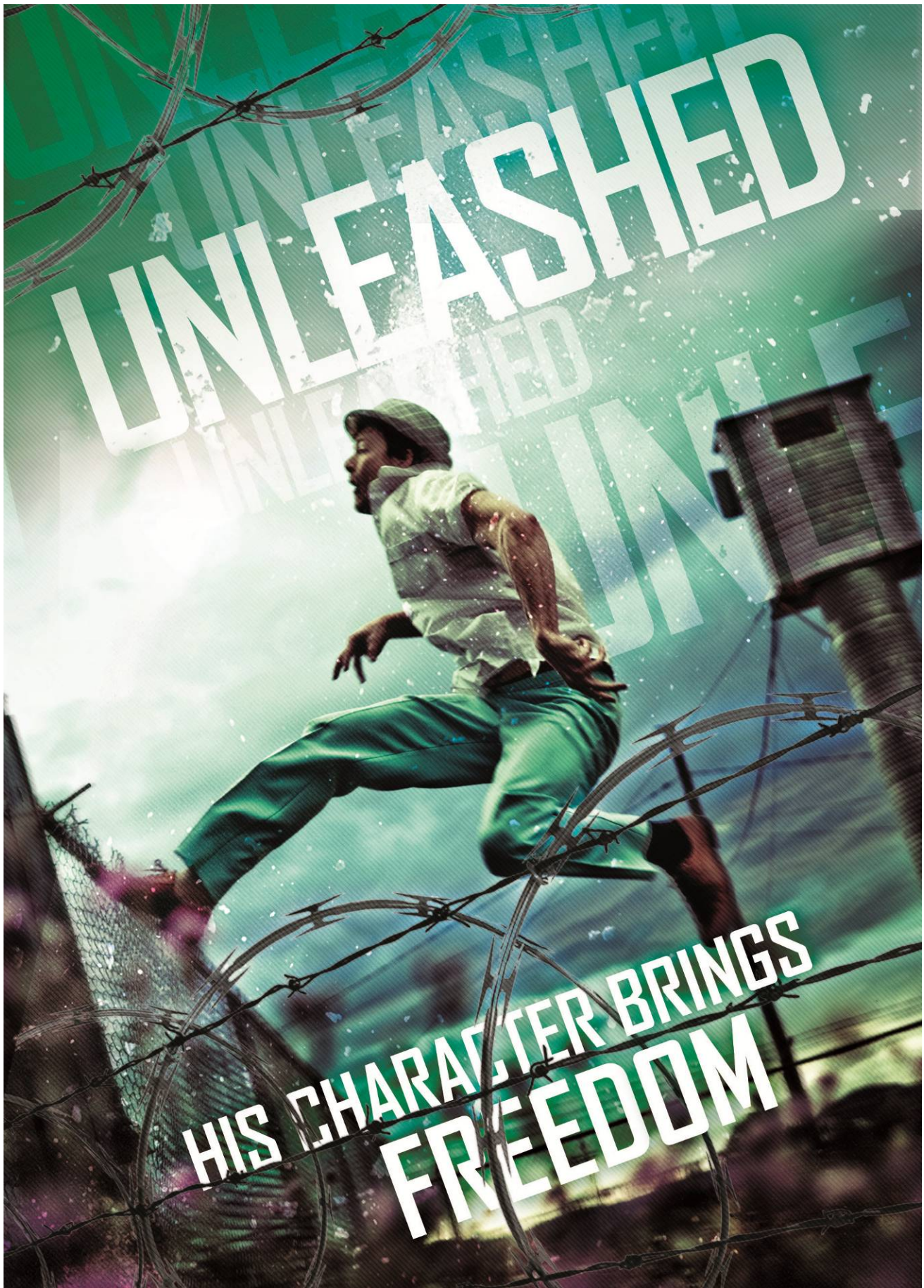
Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. Why do you think the disciples asked the Lord to teach them to pray?
2. How focused are you on God as you pray?
3. What would you like that you have not yet asked of God?

Try This Week...

Teaching a Sunday School Class: Teach on examples of prayer life as illustrated in the first three chapters of Acts.



Unleashed

(Module Two)

Stage Décor / Room Environment

- **Plan:**
 - Spray paint PVC pipes as prison bars and create a cell on or near stage.
 - Have people dressed as guards throughout the series.
 - Have a metal plate on a table with old food on it.
 - Create prison riot scene (with broken furniture, blankets, sheets, cots, etc.)
 - Use spot lights to create watch tower appearance.
 - Use spinning red and blue lights as though police are on the scene.
 - Attach chain link fence to walls.
 - Hang up wanted posters throughout the room.

Promotional Ideas

- Have adults or teens dressed as guards, standing near doors as though they are on duty.
- Have another adult dress as a police officer and arrest the youth pastor.
- Design wanted posters of students and use as giveaways.
- Give students sheriff badges and have them wear to school, creating invite opportunities.
- Feed teens bread and water as a snack.
- The week before, have a “last meal” to create buzz for the new series.

God's Perfect Couple

Lesson Objective

The students will understand how God demonstrates His mercy and grace in His dealings with man and how they should respond to these attributes.



LOOK IT UP!



LISTEN UP!

Psalm 103:8

The Lord abounds in what?

Superheroes. Everybody knows about superheroes. In the world of superheroes and villains there are always teams that form and come together to defeat the evil villains. Maybe you are a fan of the Justice League. Or perhaps you follow the Fantastic Four. One of the most well-known teams is Batman and Robin. Together, they fight against a number of villains defending Gotham City. At one time they were known as the Dynamic Duo.

God is at work in the lives of men every day, and He has a dynamic duo of His own called *Grace* and *Mercy*. Grace and mercy work together in one of the most important ways—salvation. Titus 3:5 says that it is in accordance with God's mercy that He saves us. It is His *mercy* that is at work in **salvation**. As well, Christians are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8). God has many attributes, but two of His more important ones when it comes to man and salvation are grace and mercy. They are God's Dynamic Duo.



LEARN IT!

Adoption: Being placed into God's family and regarded as a true son with all the privileges and responsibilities that belong to that new relationship.

Tolerance: Undeserved and unmerited favor.

Tolerance: The act of withholding punishment or condemnation that is deserved.

Checklist

1. Two volunteers for the Readers' Theater—preferably husband and wife
2. Signs for the Readers' Theater
3. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase at the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Teacher's Note: At least one week in advance recruit two leaders to play the parts of amazing "Grace" (a gal) and "Mercy" (a guy) for the Readers' Theater. An engaged or married couple would work very well.

Introduction

In the small village of Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania, a gunman shot ten Amish children at their school. The world watched to see the reaction of the Amish community. They were surprised to see the exemplary forgiveness extended by the Amish to the gunman's family. The Amish pledged to help heal the community as well. What is unique about the situation is that before they were shot the killer asked the girls to pray for him. Some of the surviving students reported that the girls actually did pray for their killer, giving him what he didn't deserve.

None of us deserves grace. We all hope for mercy. Let's look at it this way: Mercy is God withholding that which we deserve. Grace is God providing that which we do not deserve (Romans 6:23, John 3:16, Romans 5:8). Understanding the difference between these two words will help us comprehend God's love for us.

Brainstorm

Give me the names of some famous couples. (Allow time for the students to respond.)

Teacher's Note: Take some of the couples that the students name and ask the students to tell you why these couples go together. (Allow time for students to respond.)

There are just some things in life that go together. Let's see if you can name some of these things:

Peanut butter and... (Wait for students to respond with "jelly.")

Peaches and... ("cream.")

Salt and... ("pepper.")

Spaghetti and... ("meatballs.")

Chips and... ("dip.")

There are a lot of things that go together. Two of God's attributes that go perfectly together are grace and mercy. They are God's perfect couple. Today we are going to see how grace and mercy work together in your life every day. And we are very privileged to have them with us today. They will be telling us a little more about themselves. Let's give it up for amazing Grace and Mercy. (Have students applaud as Grace and Mercy come to the front of the room.)

Content

Readers' Theater

(The two readers should come to the front of the room with signs hanging around their necks. The "Mercy" character's sign should read, "*Mercy – Not Getting What You Do Deserve.*" The "Grace" character's sign should read, "*Grace – Getting What You Do Not Deserve.*")

Grace: Hi, I am Grace.

Mercy: And I am Mercy.

Grace: Today, we are going to be telling you a little bit about ourselves.

Mercy: A lot of people think that we are the same. But, in fact, we are very different.

Grace: That's right. You see, *Mercy* is not getting what you **do deserve**. It is kind of like when you are late for school and the teacher doesn't count you tardy. You deserve to be tardy, but instead the teacher shows you mercy and counts you on time.

Teacher: That is exactly right, Grace. Christians should be so thankful for God's mercy. He holds back things every day that each of us deserve that would send our worlds into a spin. Instead, He gives us mercy. *Mercy* is the act of **withholding punishment** or condemnation that is deserved.

Grace: You're right.

Teacher: In Jonah 4, God held back the destruction that He was going to bring on the city of Nineveh due to their wickedness. Jonah says to God, "You are a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger." God could have wiped out the city of Nineveh, but He decided to show them mercy instead.

Mercy: That leads us right to grace, which is undeserved and unmerited favor. Not only is God merciful but He is gracious, too. Grace, on the other hand, is getting what you do not deserve. Grace is like birthday or Christmas presents that you get. You didn't do anything to deserve them, but you get to rip into them anyways.

Grace: Thanks, Mercy. You really know what you are talking about.

Mercy: Oh, you're being too gracious.

Grace: Oh, mercy...

Teacher: You guys are too funny. That is exactly how grace is defined. *Grace* is getting what you **don't deserve**. God gives you things every day that you do not deserve. God doesn't even promise us tomorrow. James says that you don't know what will even happen tomorrow; your life is like a vapor that appears for a short time and then is gone (James 4:14). Even tomorrow is a gracious gift from God. This grace should give you a new, fresh perspective every day. God does not promise to give us tomorrow so be thankful for today. He does not promise to bless us, yet He does.

Mercy: Hey! I've got an idea. Let's give the students some examples of how God's mercy and grace are at work in their lives.

Grace: Sounds like a plan, Mercy.

Teacher: Would you guys mind if I stepped in every now and then to make some comments about some of the stuff you say?

Grace: That would be great!

Mercy: Well, first grace is at work in man's everyday needs—you know, the things that you get every day. God provides things like food, clothes, and shelter. God does not have to allow us to have these things or deal kindly with man at all. In fact, because man is a sinner, God should be judging man due to sin and rebellion instead of being kind to him and allowing him good things and daily provision. (James 1:17 read by Mercy.) Every generous act and perfect gift that man receives is only a result of God's grace. Man does not deserve these good things, but God in His grace allows man to have them anyways.

Grace: Wow! Grace is great!

Mercy: I know you are...

Teacher: *Grace* is at work in man's **everyday needs**. Mercy quoted James 1:17 which says that every good thing that we receive in life comes from God. The air you breathe, the clothes you have, the bed you sleep in, the house you live in, the country you live in, and the freedoms you enjoy are all a direct result of God's grace. It is grace because if God gave you only what you deserved, things would look very different! God in His grace allows you to have them. You should thank God for his grace (1 Corinthians 1:4).

Mercy: Yes you should thank God for His grace. You are exactly right.

Grace: Mercy is at work when God forgives sins. Psalm 103:8-12 says that God is compassionate and slow to anger when dealing with man's sins. Instead of judging man, God provides a way for man's sins to be removed from his account. (Read Psalm 103:8-12.) Because of His mercy, God doesn't deal with us according to our sins (Psalm 103:10). Instead of punishing man for his sins, which is what man deserves, God forgives and removes man's sins from his account. Now that is mercy!

Teacher: *Mercy* is at work in the **forgiveness** of sin. Psalm 103:8-12 also says the Lord is merciful and slow to anger when dealing with your sin. He has not dealt with you according to your sin. His mercy keeps Him from striking you dead each time you sin. God's mercy allows you to seek His forgiveness and repent from your sin.

Mercy: Man! I AM AWESOME! Hey, Grace. I've got another one about mercy. Mercy is at work in salvation. Just as man does not deserve forgiveness of sin, he does not deserve salvation either. Man deserves eternal judgment, but God in His mercy allows salvation. (Titus 3:5 read by Mercy.) Salvation is not gained by any good works that man can do. You can help one hundred old ladies across the street. You can give all your money away. You can live your life working in 24/7 ministry, but all those good works will never earn your salvation. Salvation is through God's mercy. He gives us salvation when we do not deserve it.

Grace: There's really a ton we could say about God's gift of grace in salvation. Listen to this passage. (Ephesians 2:8 read by Grace.) Man is saved by the grace of God. Salvation is a gift that man does not deserve given to him by God. You know Mercy, we have been working together hand-in-hand for a long time.

Teacher: This is amazing, *Grace*. You're the one that provides **salvation** to man! Ephesians 2 says that we are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8). Salvation is a gift from God. There is nothing you can do to buy it, earn it, or steal it. He offers this gift to all.

Mercy: Yes, you are right. Mercy, that's me, and I am at work in the life of everyone who comes to Christ by faith.

Teacher: Yes, and salvation is completely a work of God and has nothing to do with anything that you have done. All the good that you can do in your life will never earn your salvation. In fact, salvation is mercifully given to man in spite of all that he has done. Isaiah 64:6 compares all the good that you can do in your life with a disgusting mess (read). Why would God grant salvation to you for all of your disgusting, nasty "good" works? He would not. It is by His mercy that we are saved.

Grace: God redeems those who believe in Him. At that very moment the believer is born again into the family of God. Romans 5:1 says that believers now enjoy peace with God because of His grace and mercy. Also, God's grace gives believers the ability to come boldly to God's throne to find grace in a time of need (Hebrews 4:16). And as children, they have access to God. Believers do not deserve this right, but God's grace gives it to them anyways.

Teacher: So, what you're saying Grace is that *grace* gives believers a **positional standing** before God (Ephesians 1:6-7). Those who receive Jesus become the children of God. When you get saved, you are not only born again into the family of God but also adopted. Adoption means being placed into God's family and regarded as a true son with all the privileges and responsibilities that belong to that new relationship. You become a full son or a full daughter of God. This new relationship comes with some benefits and one of those is our positional standing before God. Hebrews 4:16 says that we can come boldly to the throne of God to find help in a time of need. Bold, direct access to God is a provision of His grace. We do not deserve it, yet He gives it to us.

Grace: You're right! You said that better than I could have.

Mercy: Also, God's grace gives believers life. Man deserves death and nothing more. He does not give death to those who receive his offer of salvation and that is mercy. But God gives life to all those who ask and that is grace. (Romans 5:17 read by Mercy.) God's grace has now given man life instead of death. Because of Adam, death has spread to all man. Death is what man deserves. But those who receive God's grace will receive life, and they have received something that they did not deserve.

Grace: Mercy, you get me; you really, really get me.

Teacher: Well what you were saying about grace giving believers life makes a lot of sense. Because through Adam, each of us received death, but grace provides life through salvation. Jesus said that He came to give us life and to give it to us more abundantly (John 10:10). Once you are saved your life isn't over; it has just begun. Yeah, it is correct to say that, *grace* gives believers **life** instead of death.

Mercy: *Grace, grace, God's grace, Grace that is greater than all our sin* (the refrain for Grace Greater Than Our Sin).

Grace: You know, we're a pretty good couple. We do a lot together and for believers.

Mercy: Yeah, I know. I was kind of thinking about giving us a title.

Grace: What? A title? What are you talking about?

Mercy: Well, we work together like a team and teams have names. So, I think I've got one for us.

Grace: Really? Let me hear it.

Mercy: I think this will work for us. Grace and Mercy... the Perfect Couple.

Grace: Mercy, I kind of like it. I think it will work. How about this though? God's Perfect Couple!

Teacher's Note: The main teacher steps back in to take over the message.

Conclusion

Our God is amazing! To see how His grace and mercy affect our lives should humble us. His mercy and grace are at work in turning you from darkness to the light of the Gospel. God has provided salvation for eternity when He had every right to send us to Hell. That's mercy! But salvation is also an undeserved, unearned, free gift to all. It's a demonstration of God's grace. All we have to do is accept it. Have you accepted this free gift of salvation? If not, I would invite you to do so today. Who else in your life needs to know of this free gift of salvation? Tell them about it this week.

His mercy forgives our sins. Everything and anything that you have ever done wrong, He will forgive when you come to Him. Nothing is too bad that His mercy will not allow Him to forgive. Some people tend to think that some sins are forgivable like lying, cursing, cheating, and disobedience. Then there is the whole list of sins that some people think are unforgivable like premarital sex, getting drunk, drug and porn addiction, and that sort of thing. God's mercy will forgive any sin, no matter what it is. What is it in your life that has a hold on you that you don't think God will forgive? Why not give it up and ask God for forgiveness today? We should never frustrate or nullify the grace of God (Galatians 2:21) as we do not know how much time we have remaining here on this earth. It's time to heed the Bible. The Bible says it's appointed to man once to die (Hebrews 9:27). Someday we will be leaving. It will either be by the undertaker, or the upertaker. Why not choose to accept God's mercy and grace and become a child of God today?

His grace has provided us with the everyday things we need for forgiveness and to live the abundant life. Every day is a gracious gift from the Lord. Make a list of all of His gracious blessings and thank Him for every one of them.



GOD'S PERFECT COUPLE

Mercy and Grace

1. *Mercy* is not getting what you do **deserve**.
2. *Mercy* is the act of **withholding punishment** or condemnation that is deserved.
3. *Grace* is getting what you **don't deserve**.
4. *Grace* is at work in man's **everyday needs** (James 1:17).
5. *Mercy* is at work in the **forgiveness** of sin (Psalm 103:8-12).
6. *Grace* provides **salvation** to man (Ephesians 2:8).
7. *Grace* gives believers a **positional standing** before God (Ephesians 1:6-7).
8. *Grace* gives believers **life** instead of death (Romans 5:17).



LIVEN IT UP!



TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- God does not promise to give us tomorrow so be thankful for today (James 4:14).
- You should thank God for His grace (1 Corinthians 1:4)
- Because of His mercy, God doesn't deal with us according to our sins (Psalm 103:10).
- God's grace gives believers the ability to come boldly to God's throne to find grace in a time of need (Hebrews 4:16).
- Jesus said that He came to give us life and to give it to us more abundantly (John 10:10).



LIVE IT!

God knew you needed a Savior so He provided one in His Son, Jesus Christ. He has chosen to use His mercy and grace to provide everything you need. When you consider that He offers forgiveness of sins, helps you develop your spiritual gifts, meets your everyday needs, and gives you eternal life, the best thing you can do is to accept it by faith. Have you done this? There's no better time than right now; and there's no better place than right here! Will you trust Him?

Reference Materials

M. G. Easton, *Easton's Bible Dictionary* (Oak Harbor, Washington: Thomas Nelson, 1987).

Paul Enns, *Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1997), 332-337.

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. Explain in your own words how both grace and mercy are at work in salvation.
2. What does it mean to you to be adopted into God's family?
3. How should I remember not to nullify or frustrate the grace of God or take it for granted?

Try This Week...

Follow-Up of a New Convert: Take a new believer through the truths of this lesson about mercy and grace.

The Holy Judge

Lesson Objective

The students will better understand God's holiness and justice as they and are challenged to live a holy life.



LOOK IT UP!



LISTEN UP!



LEARN IT!

1 Peter 1:15-16

How should we live in response to God's holiness?

Twenty-six batters have come up to the plate and each one has gone down with an out. Bottom of the ninth inning and two outs, one more out and a perfect game has been pitched, no hits, no runs and no errors. The batter grounds a ball to the first baseman and the pitcher runs over to first base to cover the bag. The ball is thrown and the pitcher catches it before the runner gets to first. He's out, and the next perfect game in Major League history has been pitched. Then the first base umpire calls, "Safe!" The umpire missed it; he made an imperfect call.

We are imperfect people and make imperfect calls all the time. In a world that seems unfair we ask for justice and fairness but rarely do we ever see it. God on the other hand is perfect and just. This means that His judgments are always perfect and just, too. We are called to live up to His standard of holiness (1 Peter 1:15-16).

Holiness: Moral and ethical perfection; the absence of any evil.

Justice: Upholding what is morally right and fair.

Checklist

1. Student report to be given to two students at least two weeks ahead
2. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Teacher's Note: Show video from YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B5Fs5xhyClQ&feature=related>

This video is about a pitcher who threw a perfect game, only to have it taken away on the last out by an umpire that missed the call.

Lecture

This video is about a baseball player that had an amazing accomplishment taken away from him because of the imperfect call of an umpire. How could that happen? How could the umpire miss such an obvious call? The umpire missed the call because he is not perfect. In fact, no man is perfect.

God, on the other hand, is perfect. One of God's most notable attributes is his holiness, which is defined as moral and ethical perfection; the absence of any evil. God will never do anything that is immoral or unethical, and He certainly will never sin. He will never lie, cheat, swear, or any of the numerous other things that may be considered wrong or evil. God is also just. This means that God will uphold everything that is morally right and fair. God's holiness and God's justice: these are two attributes of God that impact the life of every human whether or not they are a child of God. Tonight, we will explore these two attributes so we can better understand how we, as Christians, should conduct ourselves in this world.

Content

God's Holiness

There are three facts about God's holiness that warrant our study if we're going to understand God better. His Holiness is unique, unequalled, and completely separate from sin.

God's holiness makes Him:

Unique (Have a student read Exodus 15:11.)

Exodus 15:11 asks the question, "Who is like You, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness?" This is what we call a rhetorical question. The answer is an implied "nobody." God is unique because of His holiness, and no one or no god is like Him. His perfect holiness is not mirrored in any other created being, whether in Heaven or on earth.

Unequalled (Read Isaiah 57:15)

Here, the prophet Isaiah proclaims the words of God. Isaiah refers to God as the *High and Lofty One Whose name is Holy*. There is no one or nothing that is God's equal. He is the High and Exalted One. There is no one who is above or equal to God.

God's holiness can be described as moral and ethical perfection, the absence of any evil.

Student Report

Ask two students to research an athlete that they believe to be the unequalled athlete of their time. This athlete must be one that most people would recognize and be very successful in their sport. Then have each student give a three minute or less report about that athlete, giving their rise to fame, the success that this athlete has had, and some statistics.

Lecture

These athletes certainly stood out in their respective sports as displaying a standard of excellence. In fact, some would say that their accomplishments cannot be equaled or surpassed. But the truth is that sports records are broken all the time. For example, Roger Maris played with the New York Yankees back in the 1950s and 60s and set a Major League record with sixty-one homeruns in a single season in 1961. Though the record stood for forty years, Barry Bonds broke the record with seventy-three homers in 2001 when he played with the San Francisco Giants.

God is more than a famous athlete. His holiness is unmatched, and He will always be the standard for holiness that we are to strive to imitate.

God's holiness makes Him unique. God's holiness is unequalled. And God's holiness is completely:

Separate from sin. (Leviticus 11:44-45; 20:26)

Throughout God's interaction with and instructions to the Israelites as His chosen people it was emphasized that they were to be separate from defilement and uncleanness. He had brought them out of Egypt and out of slavery to give them freedom to experience a relationship with God. They would be different from any other people. For this reason, God gave detailed commandments to the Israelites like those found in Leviticus 11:44-45 (have a student read). Because of God's perfect standard of holiness, the people were to be holy. And, the specific call of God to attain this holiness was for the people to *consecrate* themselves, or set themselves apart from unclean things.

Leviticus 20:26 continues this theme, as God again speaks of having *set apart* the people from the nations they were about to conquer (have a student read). What is evident in these passages from Leviticus is that God wants His chosen ones to keep themselves from anything He considers unclean or evil. Since God is eternal and unchanging, this standard of holiness continues today. Because He is holy, God will not abide with sin. He cannot condone anything that is corrupt or sinful or unclean—it cannot be a part of Him.

You may be asking, “So what?” Maybe you're thinking that God is so much higher and so much holier than you that you can't even imagine trying to match His standards. But is that a biblical response?

Our Response

What is our proper response to God's standard of holiness? Perhaps our most fundamental response as believers is to **admit** our sinfulness and see our desperate need of a Savior. God's holiness should always cause man to see his sinfulness. We're all pretty good about comparing ourselves to other people. By doing this, we can usually find someone who is more wicked or sinful than we are. But this is the ultimate cop out. We cannot compare ourselves to others and be in right relationship with God. Instead, our response must be more like Isaiah's responses when he finds himself in the presence of God. He records a vision in Isaiah 6 (read verses 1-5, especially v. 3 in which he is in the presence of Almighty God and two winged creatures who are singing out the holiness of God. In this setting, Isaiah can only pronounce woe upon himself as an unclean and wicked man. Just like Isaiah, seeing God's holiness should make us see our true sinfulness.

There's more to pursuing holiness than simply agreeing with God about our sinfulness. Isaiah truly was driven to humility and brokenness when he was in God's presence. A close inspection of 1 Peter 1:15-16 provides insight into how understanding God's holiness should affect our lives (read again 1 Peter 1:15-16).

Notice that the inspired writer, Peter, encourages the reader with these thoughts:

- A. *God has called you...* This makes it clear that Peter is addressing believers. God has called every believer by His grace to turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God (Acts 26:18). Have you ever stopped to consider the importance of these words? As a believer, you are called by God. Though you may think you cannot live up to God's standards, the Word of God tells us in 1 Thessalonians 4:7 that God has called us *unto holiness* (read). Remember, God will not call on you to do something you cannot do! However, in our own power it

is impossible to live a life that attains God's standard of holiness. Rather, we count on God's **power** to enable us to pursue holiness with diligence, seeing that He has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3).

- B. We are to be holy *in all manner of conversation*, or in our conduct (1 Peter 1:15). This phrase is important because it specifies how holiness is to manifest itself in our lives. It's not just an attitude of holiness we should have; we are to **change** our **conduct** to conform to God's standard. It's beyond head knowledge of what holiness is and how it should impact us. Though many believers don't take this seriously, the fact remains that God expects us to strive toward this standard in our daily conduct.

God's Justice

Because God is holy, everything He does will be morally and ethically right. And since justice upholds what is morally right and fair, God is also just. His justice is the standard in how He deals with man.

From His Word, we find a set of simple truths about God's justice:

God rewards the obedient (Deuteronomy 7:9; Psalm 58:11).

Deuteronomy 7:9 says that He is faithful to keep His promises and show mercy on those who remain obedient to His commands. Isn't it comforting to know that our interaction with God is very simple? We don't have a detailed and complex plan to put into place. We're not required to perform like a circus monkey to please God. All He requires of His people is obedience.

Do you remember a time when you were rewarded by your mom or dad for an act of obedience? Hopefully you can remember such a reward. It's not uncommon as a parenting practice to reward your children for behavior that you value. Likewise, our Father in Heaven rewards us with blessings when we are obedient to Him. And the greatest reward or blessing that He could offer us is the intimate relationship of experiencing fellowship with Him! That is what He offers in obedience!

However, we must be careful not to view our obedience to God as a way to get rewards from Him. Keeping His commandments includes having the proper motivation in our hearts. We serve and obey Him because we love Him. When we love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and all our strength (Mark 12:30) we will be properly motivated to obey Him.

God punishes the disobedient (Genesis 2:17; Galatians 3:10; Romans 6:23).

God cannot ignore sin. His justice demands that something be done to those who sin. This is why God had to send His Son to be the perfect sacrifice for sin and satisfy the justice of God. In the Garden of Eden God told Adam and Eve to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If they did eat from it and disobey His command they would be punished with death (Genesis 2:17). Galatians 3:10 tells us that those who do not follow everything written in the book of the law is cursed. They are under the punishment of God because of the sin of disobeying God's law. The ultimate punishment for sin given by God is eternal separation from Him in Hell (Romans 6:23), but Christ took our punishment on the cross.

Now you may be wondering, "Why does it seem that all the kids who do the wrong things get away with it and I get busted for doing what is right? That doesn't seem to

be justice. Why doesn't God do something about that?" These promises that God gives about His justice are referring to that fact that one day everyone will stand before Him and receive judgment for the way they lived their lives. Evil people may seem to be getting away with it now, but one day they will receive their due punishment (Revelation 20:11-15).

The believer has a choice to either live according to God's holiness, as He commands us to do in 1 Peter 1:15-16, or to live disobediently and suffer the consequences of sin. When the believer chooses to live in disobedience, Jesus has already taken the punishment for sin by his death, but God chastens or disciplines that believer as a loving father does his own children (Hebrews 12:6). It is a decision that must be made every day, every hour, every minute, and every second.

Conclusion

Today you have seen the holiness and justice of God. God's holiness is unique, unequalled, and unquestionably separate. His justice is a direct result of His holiness. He will perfectly judge the obedient and the disobedient. But God gives us an almost impossible task. He tells us to be holy. We cannot do this on our own but we must allow Him to continue to work in our lives as His masterpiece. We are saved by faith and we also learn to live a holy life by faith – trusting the power of God's Word and the indwelling Holy Spirit to help us.

God is not honored by a believer who simply blows off God's standard of holiness as "unreachable." If we're serious about becoming more Christlike, we must take God's standard of holiness more seriously. What sin does He want to remove from your life today? Do you struggle with lustful thoughts? Allow Him to remove those thoughts and replace them with things that are good and pure. Are you influenced by the wrong kinds of friends? Allow God to show you how you can avoid wrong influences in your life. Have lying and deception become issues in your life? Commit yourself to measure your words and put a guard on your mouth, so that you may speak only the truth. You can do this with God's help.

Teacher's Note: As an alternative ending to your conclusion, display the video recommended below and use the comments provided to draw your students to a decision to follow after holiness.

In just a few minutes we are going to watch a video entitled "God's Chisel." In this video a man has a conversation with God about the things in his life that God wants to remove. God is in the process of creating a masterpiece but it is up to Tommy to yield to the changes that God wants to make. This video will challenge you to yield to God as He creates His masterpiece in you.

Teacher's Note: Show video "God's Chisel"

The holiness of God should cause us to see ourselves for who we truly are. There is so much that is wrong with us and we could never meet God's standard of holiness by ourselves. Thankfully though, God is standing there with chisel in hand waiting to craft His next masterpiece. What is it that He wants to chisel out of your life today? Will you control your life or let God do the chiseling? Control or chisel... control or chisel? Which will it be? He wants you to be holy; will you give Him control and allow Him to start the process today?



LIVEN IT UP!

God's holiness makes Him:

1. **Unique** (Exodus 15:11)
2. **Unequaled** (Isaiah 57:15)
3. **Separate** from sin (Leviticus 11:44-45)

Our Response:

1. **Admit** our sinfulness (Isaiah 6:3).
2. Count on God's **power** (2 Peter 1:3).
3. **Change** our **conduct** to conform to God's standards (1 Peter 1:15).

God's Justice:

1. He **rewards** the obedient (Deuteronomy 7:9).
2. He **punishes** the disobedient (Galatians 3:10).





TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- God is unique because of His holiness, and no one or no god is like Him (Exodus 15:11).
- God wants His chosen ones to keep themselves from anything He considers unclean or evil (Leviticus 20:26).
- Seeing God's holiness should make us see our true sinfulness (Isaiah 6:3, 5).
- When we love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and all our strength (Mark 12:30), we will be properly motivated to obey Him.



LIVE IT!

When you think of the holiness of God how do you see yourself? God has commanded you in His Word to be holy and you should strive to do all that you can to obey this command. Share with a friend and accountability partner your commitment to pursue holiness from this point forward. Whether it's lying, cheating, gossiping, or lustful thoughts—whatever it is take a positive step to tackle this issue biblically by engaging God's help and the accountability of a trusted Christian friend.

Reference Materials

Chad Brand, General Editors, Charles Draper and Archie England, *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003) p. 968.

James Hastings, *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994) p. 508.

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. How should we see ourselves when compared to the holiness of God?
2. Is it hard to accept the perfect justice of God? Why?
3. How would you advise a friend who asks "Why do bad things happen to good people?"

Try This Week...

One-On-One Witnessing: Witness to someone this week using the holiness of God as an example of their need of salvation.

I Can Do Whatever I Want!

Lesson Objective

The students will learn that a Christian's security in Christ does not grant them license to commit sin without consequences.



LOOK IT UP!

Romans 6:6-7

Why are we no longer slaves to sin?



LISTEN UP!

School's out for the summer! Freedom! Usually this means no more school, books, and teachers. During summer you have freedom. No more tests to study for. No more homework to complete. No more papers to write. Usually summer and the freedom that comes with it is a good thing. It means that you can do whatever you want! Right? Well, maybe within reason.

Freedom from school's rules and restrictions can be compared to the freedom enjoyed by Christians. Romans 6:6 says that as Christians our old nature is crucified, put to death, so that we will no longer be slaves to sin. Also, we have Christian liberty – referring to the freedom from needing to obey the Law. We have the indwelling Spirit who will provide discernment needed to choose correctly in any situation. The sad thing is many Christians take Christian liberty to the extreme, suggesting that their freedom in Christ means that they can sin and do whatever they want. This is not the way God intended for their freedom to work. As believers, we cannot just do whatever we want.



LEARN IT!

Christian Liberty: Freedom to do what is scripturally permissible as long as it does not offend a weaker brother.

Checklist

1. Copies of the Buzz Group assignments
2. Your driver's license
3. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

School's out for the summer! This means that you can enjoy yourself with no more school, no more books, no more homework, and no more tests. During summer you have freedom. Usually this freedom is a good thing. It means that you can do whatever you want! Right? Well maybe within some boundaries.

How many of you have a driver's license? Get them out and hold them up.

What does this license mean? (Allow time for discussion and students' responses. Students may say "I have freedom, I can drive, I can go where I want... when I want.")

Does a driver's license give you freedom? (Allow time for students' response. They may say yes or no.)

What kind of freedom? (Allow time for discussion and students' responses. Students may say, "To drive where I want... when I want, go out on dates, to drive to school, to get a job," etc.)

Can you go out and drive however you want, ignoring traffic laws, other cars, and pedestrians? (Students may say, "Yes but I will get in trouble.")

What would happen if you ignored the traffic laws? (Allow time for discussion and students' responses. (Students may say, "Go to jail. Get a ticket. Have my license taken away.")

Having a driver's license means freedom, but with freedom comes responsibility. We must use our freedom correctly. Problems arise when those responsibilities are ignored and abused. The freedoms that we have and enjoy in life are a lot like Christian liberties. These freedoms enable us to enjoy our lives, but they can be abused.

Today we are going to be talking about Christian liberty. Many Christians have a wrong idea about what Christian liberty is. Some think it means Christians have a license to sin. They believe that because of the grace and forgiveness of God they can go out and live however they wish. This could not be further from the truth.

Content

Christian Liberty is the freedom to do what is scripturally permissible as long as it does not offend a weaker brother. It is designed to build up believers spiritually. It also means that we are free from the enslavement of sin. It does not mean that we have the freedom to sin. Some people believe that they can live however they want, commit any sin that they want, and it is alright because God will forgive them. It is a biblical truth that God will forgive our sins (1 John 1:9), but He also expects us to live holy lives.

You may be wondering, "How does Christian liberty work in my life?" Well, today we will see a four-question process that you can use to guide yourself through Christian liberty. Before we get to these questions that may govern our "gray areas" of life, let's first understand that the first and most basic question to be asked is:

Does this activity violate any command of God or is it opposed to the Word of God?

A search of the Scriptures, or seeking the wise counsel of a spiritually mature believer, will most often help answer this question. A decision about involving oneself in sinful actions should not be exposed to any other decision-making process, as the Word already addresses sin. Avoid it. Stop it. Don't do it! The questions we are talking about for the remainder of the lesson are meant to be applied only to areas not specifically addressed by Scripture.

So let's ask these four basic questions about determining if you have Christian liberty in a particular matter, for instance—watching a certain movie.

Buzz Groups

Teacher's Note: Divide your group into four buzz groups and hand each group a copy of their assignment. Give the groups approximately five minutes to read the passage, discuss, and answer the questions (the desired answers are italicized in the Teacher's Comments). Use the material in the Teacher's Comments to supplement the Buzz Group Reports.

Buzz Group One Assignment

Read Galatians 5:16-17 and answer these questions:

1. How does the Scripture describe the relationship between the flesh and the spirit? (v. 17)
2. What is required in order for us to not fulfill the lust of the flesh?

(Select a student to read the verses and report the group's answers when you reassemble.)

Buzz Group One Report

Teacher's Comments

So, one way to determine whether something qualifies as a Christian liberty is to answer this question:

Question 1: Does it help me or hinder me in living a **surrendered** life to the Holy Spirit?

There is a constant conflict raging inside each Christian. It is the conflict between the flesh and the spirit. The flesh represents man's old sin nature. It is that part of man that just knows how to lie or be deceptive without being taught how. Paul teaches that when a person is in Christ, they become a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17). It is the part of a believer that tells him, "HEY! What you are doing is wrong. You shouldn't do that." Every Christian faces the battle between the spirit and the flesh. The true way to win this battle is to surrender. Every believer must walk or live surrendered to the Spirit if he intends to defeat the desires of the flesh (Galatians 5:16). Paul uses the phrase here to "walk in the Spirit." This means to live controlled by or surrendered to the Spirit.

When faced with a decision wherein it is difficult to determine the correct Biblical answer, you should run this decision through the filter of question #1. Will this help me to live surrendered to and controlled by the Spirit? Or will this hinder me from being surrendered to the Spirit? Choices that we make feed the flesh or the spirit. A third answer may exist in some instances. Some of the things we involve ourselves with neither draw us closer to a Spirit-controlled life, nor do they lure us away from a Spirit-filled life. Take Facebook for example. Does getting on Facebook help or hinder you from being surrendered to the Spirit? Perhaps the answer is that it is neutral—it does neither. If that is truly the case, you have no issue with Christian liberty and using a social network like Facebook would be perfectly fine. However, if it will hinder you from walking in the Spirit, perhaps because you are getting on Facebook during youth meetings or possibly to feed your pride in promoting yourself, trying to look cool, or seeing how popular you are, then you have crossed the line from Christian liberty into an area that should be avoided.

You may be thinking that this all sounds sort of vague. But let's take a real-life situation you or someone else may be working through and see if we can apply this decision process to that situation to determine if our Christian liberty gives us freedom to take part in the issue at hand. The issue is what kinds of media should I be enjoying?

Using our first question, we ask ourselves, "Does this entertainment choice (movie, music, etc) help me or hinder me from living a life that is surrendered to the Holy Spirit? Or, is it neutral?" If this media hinders me from living surrendered to the Holy Spirit then I should not watch it. Or, if enjoying this entertainment does help me live surrendered to the Holy Spirit or it is neutral on the subject then it is ok to move on to the next question.

Buzz Group Two Assignment

Read 1 Corinthians 10:31 and answer these questions:

1. Christians are supposed to do everything to bring what to God?
2. What are some ways that we can bring glory to God by eating or drinking?

(Select a student to read the verses and report the group's answers when you reassemble.)

Buzz Group Two Report

Teacher's Comments

When Christians use their Christian liberty to live however they want, they are focused on themselves. They are only concerned about doing what they want. They are giving in to the desires of their flesh. God created man to bring glory to Himself. Everything you do should bring glory to God. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 10:31, goes as far as to say that even when we are eating and drinking we should be glorifying God. This means that everything we do, say, or think should be done in such a way that God is glorified. When we are concerned about giving God glory in all that we do our focus changes from ourselves to God.

Continuing with our four-question decision process, we must ask a second question.

Question 2: Does it bring **glory** to God? The answer may be "no," "yes," or it may be "neutral."

Our real-life situation to consider in applying this decision-making process is entertainment choices. From our first question, we tried to determine if taking part in this would hinder or help me surrender to the Holy Spirit. Though some media choices would obviously be "No, it does not help me live surrendered to the Holy Spirit," let's move on as if we answered "yes" or we were "neutral." We must then ask the second question. Does enjoying this entertainment bring glory to God? There are some choices that would be "no," some "yes," and some "neutral." You could also look at it this way, "Does this media choice help us value what He values—loving what He loves and hating what He hates? If not, you know whether it truly glorifies God.

Buzz Group Three Assignment

Read Ephesians 5:11 and answer these questions:

1. What are Christians called to do when confronted with an issue that may be considered contrary to Scripture?

2. What things can you think of that you need to avoid even the appearance or suggestion of your involvement in?"

(Select a student to read the verses and report the group's answers when you reassemble.)

Buzz Group Three Report

Teacher's Comments

If you look guilty you probably are guilty. Let me give you a little hint about your parents. You know how sometimes your parents just know that you are doing something wrong? Usually they can tell because of the look that is on your face. Since the Bible tells us to flee youthful lusts, we should not even be close to looking like we might be doing something wrong (2 Timothy 2:22) Christians should not put themselves in questionable situations. When it comes to sin, God tells believers to not even mess around with it. Believers are told to run, or "flee," from evil things (1 Timothy 6:11).

When listing things that are considered *evil*, people most commonly think of offenses that are detestable or obviously opposed to God's Word. They think of murder, rape, or child molestation as being evil. However, in the context of these verses, *evil* is the word used to refer to all forms of wickedness, including all sins that one may commit. What we forget is that in God's eyes evil can be lying, gossiping, hating someone, or even disobeying your parents. Paul's point here is this: We should live in such a way that there is no question that what we are doing is right in the eyes of God. A fair example of this may be a pastor or youth pastor who goes regularly to the local bar to play darts. Perhaps there's nothing sinful about entering into the bar or playing darts, but members at the church may not know that he is only playing darts, and his regular visits to the bar have the appearance of sin. Men in that situation would be wise to find another place to satisfy their love for darts. In the same way, Christians need to avoid the very appearance of doing evil.

In our process to determine if an action is within the realm of our Christian liberty, we need to ask:

Question 3: Does this help me or hinder me in avoiding the **appearance of evil?**

Here's an application question for you as we continue analyzing the issue of entertainment choices: Will watching this help you avoid the appearance of evil?

Discussion Starter

What types of entertainment should you not watch because you would not be avoiding the appearance of evil? What media could you enjoy? (Allow the students to discuss briefly, but walk them through the three questions posed thus far.)

Buzz Group Four Assignment

Read 1 Corinthians 8:9-13 and answer these questions:

1. Why are Christians supposed to be careful with their liberty?
2. Identify some "gray" areas that may represent a stumbling block to other believers.

Select a student to read the verses and report the group's answers when you reassemble.

Buzz Group Four Report

Teacher's Comments

The background for this passage helps us to better understand the fourth question. There were some Christians in the city of Corinth who were purchasing their food from one of the pagan temples. The pagan priests would perform sacrifices and then turn around and sell the meat from the sacrifices which were offered to idols for a discounted rate. Some of the Christians were wondering if this was wrong to buy this inexpensive meat (food) since it had been offered to a false god. So they asked Paul about it. Paul told them that if something that they were doing caused another Christian to stumble into sin, they should not do it (1 Corinthians 8:9-13) as it would be creating a stumbling block to that Christian brother. Paul says that we should not be a hindrance or stumbling block for less mature Christians. In other words, our Christian liberties are not to be a stumbling block that would trip others up and cause them to sin, or to be a cause to set us back in our walk with God.

Christians can take many liberties in their lives, but if they ever cause a less mature Christian to stumble into sin, they are in the wrong. Though some believers are unwilling to give up their liberties simply to benefit another, this really is a matter of maturity. In fact, believers are to consider the needs of others, including their spiritual needs, rather than just thinking of themselves (Philippians 2:3-4).

What are some of the gray areas in your life that may cause another Christian to stumble into sin because they see you doing it? Instead of throwing out trip wires by disregarding their spiritual condition and view of liberty, it's best to ask this question:

Question 4: Does this cause me to become a **stumbling block** for another believer?

So let's go through this last question: Does watching this movie cause me to be a stumbling block to other believers? It could be alright for you to watch, but could it cause another person to be tempted by sins such as laziness, greed, or another sin.

Discussion Starter

What media choices would be considered stumbling blocks for weaker believers? What entertainment would not be considered stumbling blocks for other believers? (Allow the students to discuss briefly, but walk them through the four questions posed thus far.)

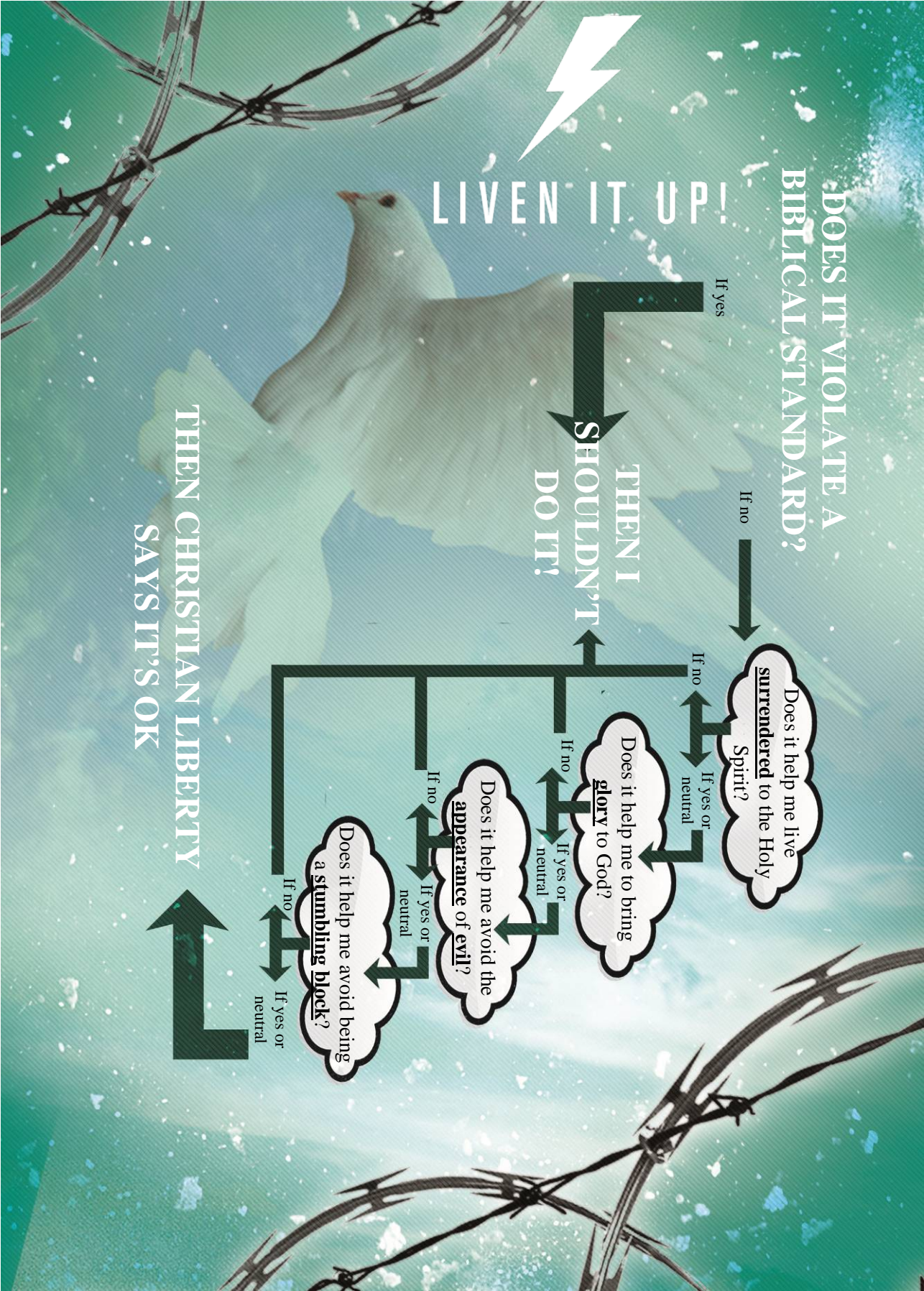
One of the most important issues in determining questions of Christian liberty really boils down to who occupies the throne of your heart. Realize that every believer makes a daily decision whether he wants to enthrone self (also called the "flesh"), or whether he will enthrone Jesus Christ as Lord of all. We read in 1 Peter 3:15 that we are to sanctify, or set apart, the Lord God within our hearts. This truly gets at the issue of whom or what we wish to serve. We should not serve sin, since our old man is dead to sin (Romans 6:6-7). Still, our freedom from sin must be measured to assure that we do not use our liberty in such a way that we sin against Christ (1 Corinthians 8:12).

Conclusion

We've identified five criteria that can be applied to any situation to determine if a particular activity falls under the realm of Christian liberty. First, does it violate any Scriptural command of God? Second, does it help me live a life controlled by the Spirit? Next, does it bring glory to God? Fourth, does it enable me to avoid the appearance of evil? And finally, does it cause me to become a stumbling block to

another believer? A negative answer to any of these questions should be considered a roadblock to any activity.

Why not take these questions today and start filtering the decisions you make through them? How about your music? Filter your musical preferences and choices through the grid of these questions and determine whether you need to make adjustments. Think about your media intake. Run your TV shows, your DVDs, movies, and internet viewing through this grid and see how they measure up.



DOES IT VIOLATE A BIBLICAL STANDARD?

LIVEN IT UP!

If yes

THEN I SHOULDN'T DO IT!

If no

Does it help me live surrendered to the Holy Spirit?

If no

If yes or neutral

Does it help me to bring glory to God?

If no

If yes or neutral

Does it help me avoid the appearance of evil?

If no

If yes or neutral

Does it help me avoid being a stumbling block?

If no

If yes or neutral

THEN CHRISTIAN LIBERTY SAYS IT'S OK



TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- Every believer must walk or live surrendered to the Spirit if he intends to defeat the desires of the flesh (Galatians 5:16).
- Believers are told to run or “flee” from evil things (1 Timothy 6:11).
- Believers are to consider the needs of others, including their spiritual needs, rather than just thinking of themselves (Philippians 2:3-4).
- Our freedom from sin must be measured to assure that we do not use our liberty in such a way that we sin against Christ (1 Corinthians 8:12).



LIVE IT!

Have you been misguided about Christian liberty? You may have been and not even realized it. The important thing is to realize that God has not given you a license to sin. He wants you to live a life free from sin. Using the four-question criteria provided in this lesson, make a decision about a particular area of your life that you may consider a “gray” area, like what kinds of choices you make for entertainment. See if you are abusing your Christian liberty because of your previous misconceptions.

Reference Materials

John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Topical Bible: New King James Version* (Nashville, TN : Word Publishing, 1999) 217 and 1379.

John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck, Dallas Theological Seminary: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985) S. 2:606-607.

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. Why do some Christians believe that they can live however they want?
2. What topics would you like to see put into the grid we developed?
3. What does freedom in Christ mean to you?

Try This Week...

School Bible Clubs: Use this lesson to lead other students at your school’s Bible Club this week.

Divine Doghouse

Lesson Objective

The students will learn to respond to the discipline of God with obedience.



LOOK IT UP!

Hebrews 12:10-11

Why does God chasten Christians?



LISTEN UP!

Have you ever been sitting in class when the secretary's voice comes over the intercom, asking you to report to the office? Panic begins to set in. How did they catch me? Who was it that told? How am I going to explain this to my parents? As you walk down the hall to the office you begin to run through a billion excuses in your mind. When you walk into the office an instant rush of relief sets in as you remember that you have to go to a doctor's appointment.

We all dread being punished. It hurts; it is uncomfortable, and it is awkward at times. It is an unpleasant experience in life that we go through when we turn our back on God. When believers disobey God He must discipline those He calls children (Hebrews 12:7). Sometimes God's discipline is not easy to accept, but we must learn to respond to God's discipline with obedience.



LEARN IT!

Chasten: To punish, chastise, or rebuke with words in order to correct or mold the character of others.

Discipline: God's formative and corrective teaching in the lives of believers to conform them to the image of Christ.

Checklist

1. Paper and pencil for Word Association Game
2. Cards with verses written out that will be read aloud during the lesson
3. Panel Discussion – Pick out panel members (parent, single adult, and student) and give them their assignments two weeks ahead of the lesson.
4. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Teacher's Note: Hand out paper and pencils for a Word Association Game. Give students three minutes to write down their answers and then allow three minutes for them to share their answers. Here are your instructions: I am going to call out a list of seven words and I want you to write down as fast as you can the first word that comes to you mind. Get ready because I am going to pause for only five seconds before I call out the next word. Here is your first word:

- pink
- school
- best friend
- food
- music
- movies
- discipline

I am going to go around the room and ask you what some of your responses were for 1-6.

Teacher’s Note: Ask at least six of the students what their answers were so that you can cover the list up to number six. Then to start a discussion, ask them to share what they gave for number seven.

Now I know that some of you said this about discipline: (repeat some of their responses).

However, I didn’t hear anyone say that discipline is a blessing. Did anyone put happy down for discipline?

(Have student read Psalm 94:12.)

This verse says that those who are disciplined by God are blessed. Another word for blessed is *happy*. Would you agree with the author of the Psalm that discipline makes you happy or that it is a blessing? You know, most of us wouldn’t agree with this author of Psalm 94, but he knew something about God’s discipline that most of us don’t naturally realize.

We are going to have a panel that has had some experience with discipline in their life come in and talk about discipline. We have a parent, a single adult, and a student coming to share with us. Then we will compare these experiences to how the Bible says that God disciplines us.

Content

Panel Discussion

Teacher’s Note: Select panelists at least two weeks ahead of time and give them the list of questions to be prepared to answer. I suggest selecting a parent (Panelist A), a student from your ministry (Panelist B), and an unmarried young person out of high school (Panelist C). Ask the panel to prepare at least a one or two sentence answer for the questions they are given and to be able to discuss their answers with the class.

Here is the first topic for our panel:

1. The **Impact** of Discipline

Panel Discussion

Teacher’s Note: Ask Panelist A this question: Is administering discipline a positive or negative experience for you? Please explain why. (Allow time for the panelist’s response.)

Let's see what God's Word has to say about the impact of His discipline (Deuteronomy 8:5-6, have a student read). To chasten means to punish, chastise, or rebuke with words in order to correct or mold the character of others. Discipline from God is like the discipline of a loving father to his child. God disciplines us to keep us on the right track as it is the formative and corrective teachings in the lives of believers that conforms them to the image of Christ. This passage shows us that God's discipline is meant for our good. When God disciplines His children it is meant to encourage them to walk in His ways or simply to live like He wants them to. God desires for His children to obey His Word and avoid sin. So when one of His children does something wrong God disciplines His children because He loves them (Read Hebrews 12:6). Correct discipline is done out of love, not out of anger or hatred.

Now, let's move on to the second topic for our panel:

2. The Causes for Discipline

Panel Discussion

Teacher's Note: Ask Panelist B this question: What are some things you get disciplined for? (Allow time for the panelist's response.)

In Deuteronomy God continually reminds Israel that if they obey, He will bless them and if they disobey, He will discipline them. Simply put, when a child of God commits a sin, God will discipline him. Let's look at some examples from the Bible of things that God says He will discipline.

A. Pride

In Deuteronomy 8 Moses is speaking to the children of Israel in the wilderness. Moses gives them some things to remember. He tells them to remember the commands that God has given to them. He tells them to remember that it was God who led them through the wilderness for forty years providing for them every day (vv. 2-4). Moses also tells them to walk in the way of the Lord and to fear Him (v. 6). In this speech, Moses also warns them of some sins that they could commit that would bring about discipline from the Lord. (Deuteronomy 8:14, Have a student read.) Here Moses warns the children of Israel about pride.

The book of Proverbs tells us that there are several things that God hates, seven to be specific. Pride is the very first thing on the list of things that God says He hates (Proverbs 6:16 -17). He refers to it as a proud look and it's another way of saying a prideful attitude. What a strong statement that God hates a prideful attitude. Pride is an exaggerated view of one's own importance or the love of oneself. Someone who loves himself first has no room to put God first in his life.

Do you have a problem with pride? Let's think of a few ways that pride rears its ugly head in our lives.

Brainstorm

Ask the students to come up with actions that point to the fact that we still have problems with pride. Give them about three minutes to discuss this topic. Let the panel brainstorm this question, too.

B. **Self-Sufficiency**

(Have a student read Deuteronomy 8:17.) Here Moses warns the children of Israel that they will be tempted to trust in themselves instead of God. Self-sufficiency is depending only on yourself, not depending on God.

Don't believe the lie that you don't need God. Don't seek a life of pleasure alone. We do need God and our own self-made pleasure should not be the goal.

Who are you depending on more, yourself or God?

C. **Idolatry**

(Deuteronomy 8:19, Have a student read.) In this verse, Moses warns the children of Israel against worshipping other gods. Since God first gave the nation of Israel the Ten Commandments, idolatry has been a sin that God will punish. This was one of the most important commandments that God gave to the nation of Israel. It is a theme that is repeated over and over again, and the nation of Israel breaks this commandment over and over again. Idolatry is excessive devotion to something other than God. God desired the nation of Israel to be fully devoted to Him, but at times they were fully devoted to other things.

God desires that you fully love Him with your heart, soul, and mind (Matthew 22:37). You may not bow down and worship an idol or statue today, but you can still be guilty of idolatry. Anything that you are devoted to more than God is an idol in your life. It is easy to put God in the backseat of your life and move on to what you think are more "important" things, but if you do this you are guilty of idolatry—and God takes this sin seriously.

Who or what are you the most devoted to? You may not think you have any idols, but what comes first—doing your quiet time or watching TV? Doing a service project or going on a date with your boyfriend or girlfriend? Going to church on Sunday morning or staying in bed because you're tired?

Did you notice the progression in this passage? God told them their downfall would start with pride, and then self-sufficiency would set in because they would think that they didn't need God. Self-sufficiency would lead to idolatry, and idolatry would leave them replacing God with cheap counterfeits. These counterfeits would never fulfill them as God does; they would leave them empty and wanting more. This is what sin does to us. It deceives us and leads us down a path away from God. God disciplines us to bring us back to Him. He disciplines us to help us see what we have lost, and gives us the desire to find it again.

Now let's look at our third topic of the night.

3. The **Benefits** of Discipline

Panel Discussion

Teacher's Note: Ask Panelist C this question: What do you think your parents hoped to accomplish when they disciplined you? (Allow time for the panelist's response.)

God uses discipline to instruct the believer. God uses the opportunities He has to discipline the believer to teach him life lessons. Here are a few of the lessons that we can expect to learn from the discipline of God:

A. **Submission**

God's discipline teaches us submission. (Have a student read Hebrews 12:9.) When our human parents discipline us, we are to respect them and submit to them. The same is true with God. God's discipline teaches us that it is best to submit to Him and His will. Discipline sometimes hurts, but that may be what is needed to shock us back into reality. There should be a natural order to things in our lives. Children obey their parents; man obeys God. When we get those things out of place we need to be put in our place. We should have an attitude of submission to God and others in authority. Sometimes students are the worst about not being submissive to their parents, to their teachers, or to any authority figure. You may not realize this either, but when you don't submit to those over you such as your parents, teachers, and other authorities you are not submitting to God either. Whom do you need to apologize to for not being submissive to their authority? Have you also asked God to forgive you for not being submissive to Him?

B. **Holiness**

(Have a student read Hebrews 12:10.) God's discipline teaches us about His holiness and how we can be holy. Our human parents discipline us to protect us or help us to live wisely. God's desire is to produce similar results in our lives, too. God's discipline allows us to partake of His holiness (Hebrews 12:10). When you examine yourself who do you see, yourself or God? God disciplines us to conform us to His image. If you have been conformed to His image you will be loving to the unlovable, caring to the uncared for, and sacrificing yourself for the needs of others. The end result is supposed to be that people see God when they look at us. Who do people see when they look at you?

Now, let's look at our final topic of the night.

4. The Believer's **Response** to Discipline

Panel Discussion

Teacher's Note: Ask all three panelists this question: How should a Christian respond to God's discipline?
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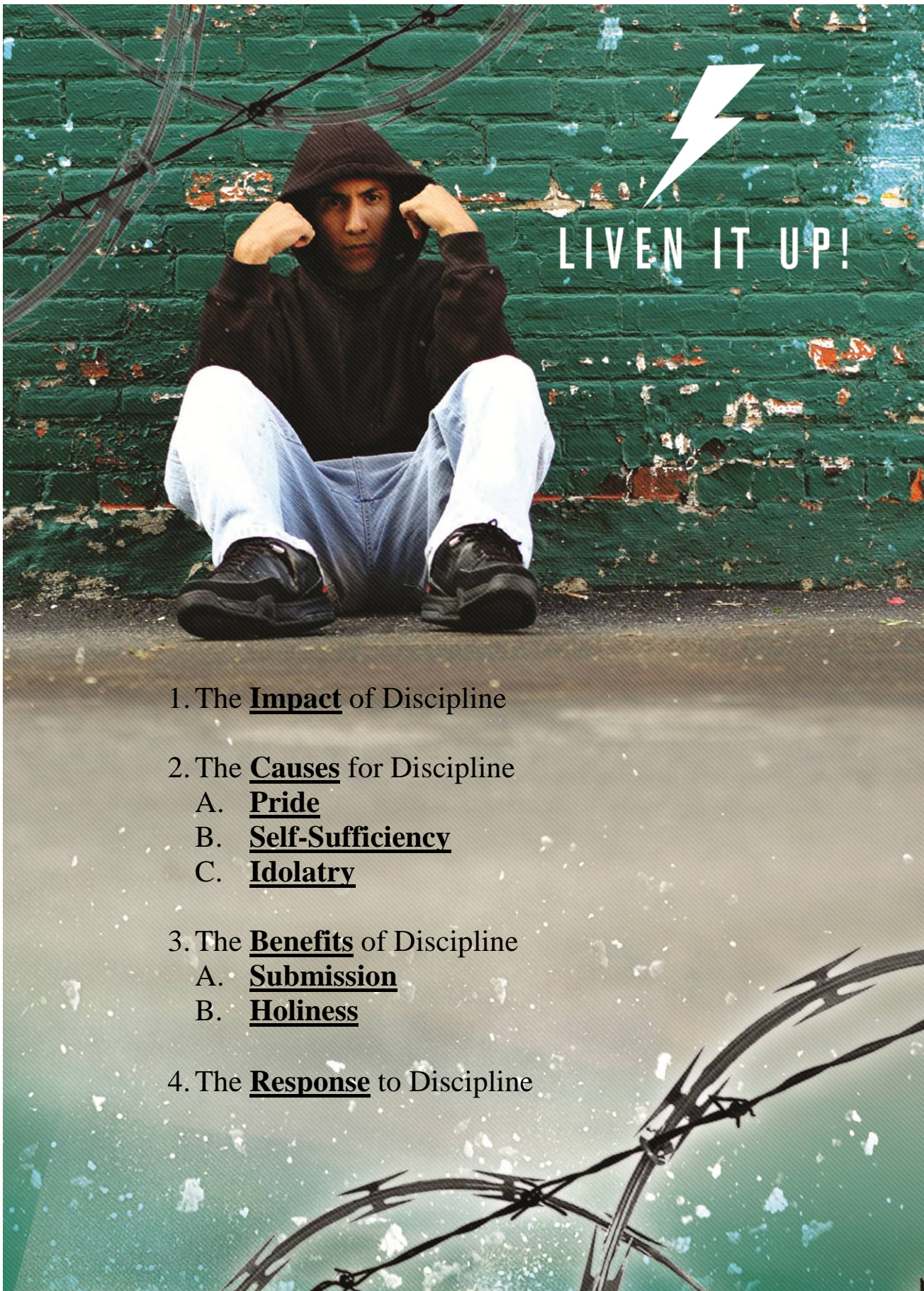
Sometime we respond to God's discipline incorrectly. We rationalize what we've done wrong, believing the lie that truth is relative. We harden our hearts, refusing to accept God's discipline because we think that God's discipline is unfair. We excuse our failures as weaknesses that really shouldn't be our fault, but God doesn't accept our excuses.

Believers should respond to discipline with obedience. Jonah was a prophet of God that disobeyed God and was disciplined. God told Jonah to go preach to the city of Nineveh. Jonah decided to ignore God and run instead. He tried to run as far from Nineveh as he could, but he couldn't run from God. God put Jonah in the belly of a great fish. That must have been some kind of smelly punishment. While in the fish Jonah had a change of heart about disobeying God. The fish spit Jonah

out and God once again told Jonah to go to Nineveh. What did Jonah do in response to God's discipline? He obeyed God.

Conclusion

Discipline can be a tough pill to swallow sometimes. No one ever enjoys being punished. God's discipline in our lives is a result of sin, but God always intends to do good in our lives through His discipline. God desires to teach us about His holiness and our submission through discipline. Our job is to respond to His discipline with obedience. Have you been ignoring God's discipline in your life? There are many ways that idols can work themselves into our lives. We can have idols of sports, friends, entertainment, pornography, or even laziness. Give up these idols and get back to being fully devoted to God.



1. The **Impact** of Discipline
2. The **Causes** for Discipline
 - A. **Pride**
 - B. **Self-Sufficiency**
 - C. **Idolatry**
3. The **Benefits** of Discipline
 - A. **Submission**
 - B. **Holiness**
4. The **Response** to Discipline



TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- God disciplines His children because He loves them (Hebrews 12:6).
- Pride is the very first thing on the list of things that God says He hates (Proverbs 6:16-17).
- God desires that you fully love Him with your heart, soul, and mind (Matthew 22:37).
- God’s discipline teaches us that it is best to submit to Him and His will (Hebrews 12:9).
- God’s discipline allows us to partake of His holiness (Hebrews 12:10).



LIVE IT!

God’s discipline can often be hard to accept. When we are chastened or corrected, our natural response may be to resist, deny, or fight with God. Maybe we complain that this discipline is unfair. Have you ever thrown a tantrum with God because of His discipline? The reality is that discipline will happen in your life. How are you going to respond from now on? Instead of fighting with God, submit to God and His will. Is it possible you could learn to see discipline as a good thing?

Reference Materials

John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985).

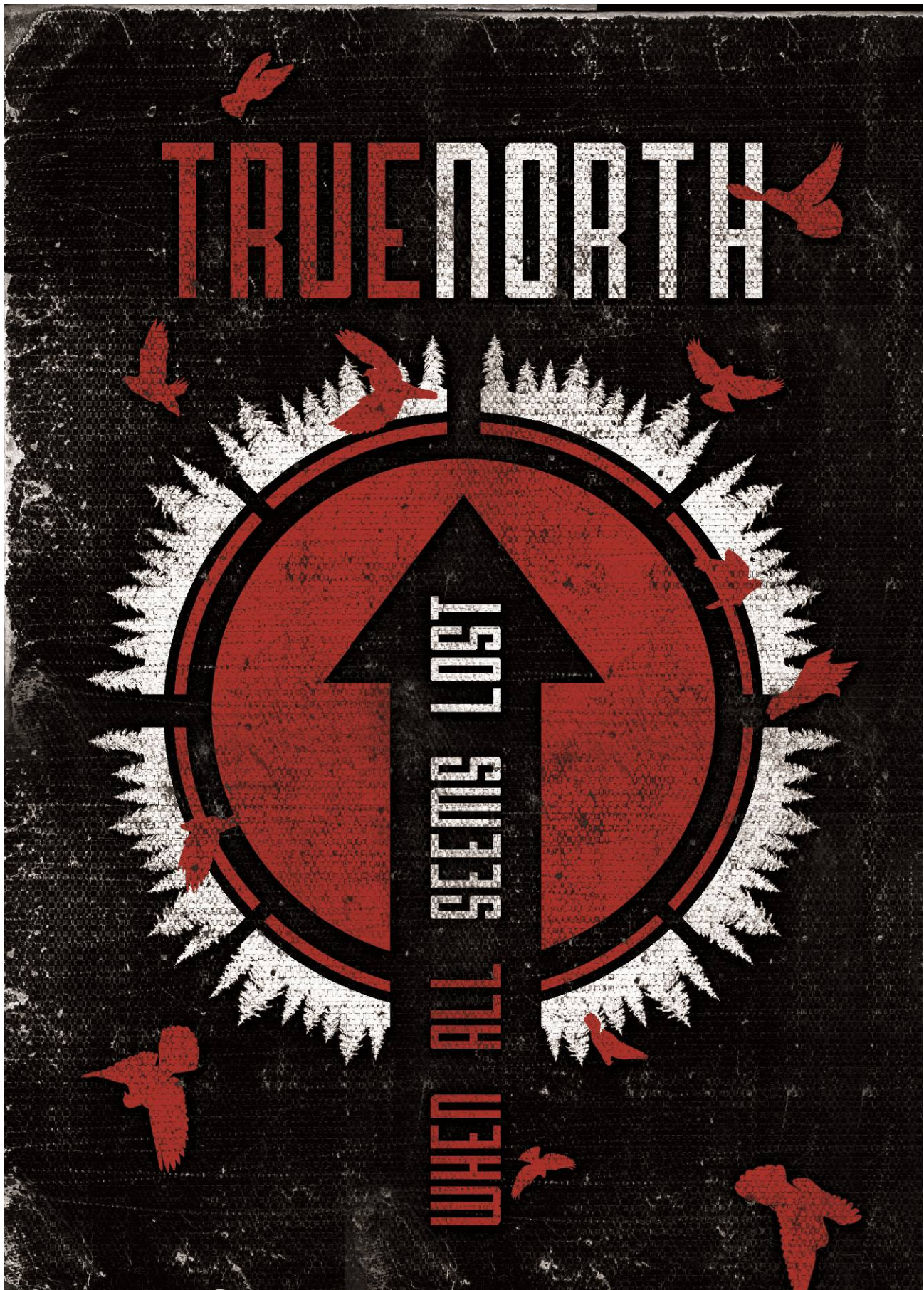
Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. What is the worst discipline you have ever received?
2. What is the purpose behind God’s discipline?
3. How does knowing His purpose change your view of God’s discipline in your life?

Try This Week...

Family Devotions: Prepare and share a family devotion based on what you learned in this lesson about discipline.



True North

(Module Three)

Stage Décor / Room Environment

- **Plan:**
 - Place camp/survival supplies all around the room (tents, fake campfire, canteens, backpacks, etc.)
 - Place trees and plants all around the room to create a jungle/wilderness look.
 - Play sound effects during the night with storm or jungle sounds.
 - Create notes in the form of a map. Crumple the paper and burn the edges to create a worn look.
 - Build makeshift tents with branches and leaves.

Promotional Ideas

- Have youth pastor or leader dressed as though they spent a week in the wilderness (looking dirty, hungry, tired, etc.) and invite teens to return the following week for series launch.
- Plan scavenger hunt for teens with survival challenges.
- Design map themed invite cards with the map leading teens to the church.
- Buy or borrow camping equipment and loan to teens 1-2 weeks before series launch. Have them take the equipment to school to create conversation/invite opportunities.
- Buy small plastic compasses to give to teens. Teens will give away to friends with an invite card.

It's Under Control

Lesson Objective

The students will develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for the sovereignty of God and be challenged to respond to Him with proper humility and worship.



LOOK IT UP!



LISTEN UP!

Daniel 4:35

Should we question God's decisions?

Crumbling economies, starving children, the AIDS virus, war, earthquakes, hurricanes, tsunamis—all are terrible events that cause us to question what God is doing. The world certainly does not like it when people suffer or when the world is ravaged by destruction. When these things happen we might begin thinking God is no longer in control and that maybe we have been wrong in thinking that He is. Sometimes, rather than accepting the truth that God is in total control of events, it seems easier to believe that nobody is. In the midst of these conflicting views we begin to ask questions like, "How could a loving God permit these terrible things?"

Is God really in control of everything? The answer is yes! Nothing can keep God from fulfilling His plans (Daniel 4:35). Maybe our difficulties in seeing God's control are based on a misunderstanding of who God is and what He wants to accomplish. Maybe if we understand God a little better we will humbly accept His rule.



LEARN IT!

Sovereign: One who exercises supreme authority or rule.

Sovereignty: Supreme authority and rule of God.

Tribulation: Having no beginning and no end.

Checklist

A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

When we look at the world around us it sometimes seems a little out of control. Like maybe God went on a coffee break or maybe He doesn't realize how bad things are down here. But could it be possible that we are just looking at God wrong? Maybe if we knew Him better and what He wants to accomplish in this world we could better understand why He allows things to happen the way they do.

Our view of God makes a difference. How does our perception and beliefs about Him compare with what the Bible says about Him? Let's compare society's general

perceptions about God's purposes with what the Bible says He desires. In clearing up these attitudes and perceptions, maybe we will come to appreciate God's sovereignty and humbly trust whatever He says and does as being necessary to accomplish His purpose.

Content

Lecture

1. God is the **Eternal** Ruler (Psalm 10:16, have student read)

This passage informs us that God is a King and a ruler forever and ever. In other words, His rule is eternal, having no beginning and no end. To us it may seem as though God is present with us one day and gone another, but He is, and was, and always will be.

We know that change and transition are part of life. However, because God is eternal, we can trust that He will never give up His role as the sovereign ruler. When it comes to sovereignty, He is the One who exercises supreme authority or rule. We do not have to worry about His plans changing on us midstream. In fact, God chose to speak to man through the prophet Malachi to assure us of his unchanging nature (read Malachi 3:6). God does not change. And since He rules forever as King, we can trust that His plans and purposes will not change either.

A. As **Creator** (Psalm 148:5-6) – God created this world. At His command it was created. Think about that fact for a moment. Genesis 1:1 tells us that God created the heavens and the earth, and in the first chapter of Genesis we learn that all the living things and all that exists were created by God. Everything from heaven to earth, man, angels, and creatures alike must stand in awe of Him because He formed them all. God's creative power gives Him full authority over all, just as the potter has authority over the clay being formed (read Romans 9:21).

Most people don't appreciate other people changing what they have created.

- How many directors would turn their movie over to someone else to do the final cut?
- How many writers would let another person write the final chapter of their great novel?

Nobody cares more about the outcome of a project than the one who created it. God doesn't give up His authority over His creation. We are His great work and His masterpiece. This world is not ours. It is His, and He is not going to give up control over what He created to any person, any power, or any thing.

In God's perfect plan, He created all that exists and issued His commands that last forever (read Psalm 148:5-6). Though sin has tainted this world, God's sovereign rule is not undermined or deterred.

B. As **Controller** of Human History (Daniel. 4:35, have student read) – This passage, written in the days when the nation of Israel was captive to the Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar, touches on God's control over human events throughout the ages. Nebuchadnezzar was not a God-fearing king. Being subject to slavery and captivity was not a pleasant reality for the Jews. In spite of all that, even King Nebuchadnezzar recognized that he was nothing more than a player in God's overall plan. Daniel 4:35 records the

king's own words as he acknowledges that God does what God wants to do. Nothing is out of His control. In God's sovereign plan, God does "according to His will," and nobody can stop Him.

We may not understand why bad things happen to good people, or why a rogue nation is allowed to carry out atrocities on the citizens of another helpless country. Our sense of logic and our hope for fairness as we define it, would lead many of us to expect nothing bad to ever happen. But we know from reading and listening to the news that human trafficking, slavery, genocide, and cruel treatment of men by other men are not that uncommon. Still, not one of these events has occurred because God couldn't stop them.

How, then, are we to react when we see such things in our world? Should we try to defend the helpless or right the wrongs we see? Certainly! The Word of God encourages believers to care for the helpless and the oppressed (James 1:27). Recognizing God's sovereign hand in all of history reminds us that we are not called by God to struggle against our human authorities (Romans 13:2). We are called to realize who is in control and submit to man's rule, when it does not contradict God's commands, knowing that God has everything under control.

God's sovereign care and concern for developments in human history includes His decree that men and women have freedom to choose how they live their lives. Men and women were created free, rational, intelligent beings. Therefore they will be held responsible for their decisions and God will be pleased when they love Him of their own freewill.

C. As the **All-Knowing** One (Job 37:16)

God knows all things—past, present, and future. We read in Psalm 139:1-6 (read) that He has intimate and perfect knowledge of man. We learn of God's perfect knowledge expressed again in Job 37:16 (have a student read).

Scripture Search

Teacher's Note: Ask two students to look up the following verses and describe what they say.

- Job 23:10 – When surrounded by calamity and destruction of all he had, Job did not turn from God because He believed God, Who knows all, would find that Job had been faithful.
- Hebrews 11:17-19 – Abraham, when asked by God to sacrifice his son, obeyed because He believed God would raise Isaac from the dead if needed to fulfill God's promise to him. He believed God knew exactly what He was doing.

Lecture

These two examples from Scripture highlight how man can and should respond when faced with unfavorable events. Whether illness, loss of belongings, or even loss of life, the righteous man recognizes that nothing surprises God. It all happens within the plans God has laid for this world and our lives. He knows what impact the death of an individual will have on this world. He doesn't make mistakes.

2. God is the **Involved** Ruler (Ephesians 1:11)

God is intimately involved in every aspect of our lives. Nothing is too great or too small for His attention. He isn't just interested in the big deals we face, or the significant challenges we confront. Ephesians 1:11 tells us that God works *all things* to conform to His will. He is not going to let any part of His creation out of His sight. Think of God, our Heavenly Father, in the way you think of a loving earthly father. A good dad is one who cares about the concerns of his children. He involves himself in every area of their development, whether it is in a school setting, a social situation, or even their sports activities. On a grander and perfect scale, our all-knowing Heavenly Father concerns himself with our affairs. This leads us to a second trait of God as the involved ruler.

3. God is the **Compassionate** Ruler. (Read Romans 8:28)

In this passage, the Apostle Paul assures the believer that every detail of our lives is worked into something good. This promise of God's compassionate care applies to *those who love God and who are the called according to his purpose*. What do you suppose Paul meant by that phrase? (Pause to allow students to respond.) Simply stated, we understand this verse to apply to believers. They are *the called*. Those who truly love God are believers, and only believers truly love God. But how can this passage be true when we consider all the tragedies and negative events that take place in the lives of believers?

The answer is found in God's unmatched, unqualified love for His own. Romans 5:8 is just one of many passages that speak of God's love for us. It is His love that motivated Him to sacrifice His Son, Jesus, on our behalf (read Romans 5:8). If He loved us enough to send his only Son into the world to die on the cross for our sins, surely we can accept God's love as evidence that He has our overall good as His plan for our lives. Many Christians are able to testify joyfully about how God, in His love, has taken what at first seemed to be a negative event in life and used it for the believer's best. Yes, it hurts to lose a loved one to cancer. No doubt, we go through pain when parents split up, when we lose everything in a fire, learn of an unexpected pregnancy, someone's addiction to either drugs or porn, or some other calamity hits our lives. In faith though, we must trust that we serve a compassionate God who will ultimately work even these tragedies into something good. After all, it's all in His sovereign hands. God never wastes pain.

4. God's Sovereignty and World Affairs

Sometimes Christians worry about or get stressed out over the impact of sin on the perfect plan of God. Maybe you don't qualify as a classic worrier, but you've wondered yourself how man may meddle with or thwart God's plan through the introduction of sin into the world. Rest assured that nothing can stop God's will from being fulfilled. In fact, we know that God's sovereignty is described by two significant characteristics. God's sovereignty is:

A. Immune from outside interference. Once God establishes His plan, it's as good as done! Genesis 50:12-20 (read) provides a perfect example of this in action. In this account, Joseph's brothers beat him and sold him into slavery. Joseph forgave them out of a realization that their evil act was part of God's plan for His life. Only God could orchestrate a situation like this. He took the evil act of Joseph's brothers and used it to provide for them. During Joseph's time in slavery and prison, it sure didn't look like God had Joseph's best interests in mind. But we see in the end the outcome of God's sovereign plan, as Joseph's position as second-in-command in Egypt ultimately was used to save his family by providing food during a time of severe famine. Though his brothers were motivated by sin, and though Joseph's apparent setbacks as a slave and a

prisoner were certainly as a result of this sin by his brothers, Joseph faithfully trusted God with his life.

God is not limited by man's freedom to choose. People make terrible choices in life. They are selfish and uncaring. They are cruel and sinful. Yet God is able to use even the worst of human decisions to bring about His great purpose for this world. It does not matter if it is by mistake or with great malice; nobody can mess up God's purpose.

So the Word of God teaches that God's sovereignty is immune from outside interference. That's not all. His sovereignty is also:

B. **Constant** (Isaiah 14:24-27, have a student read)

Have you ever worked on a project and hoped in the end everything would come together the way you wanted it to? Think about the complexity of some of mankind's creations like the space shuttle or a fighter jet. With thousands of interdependent parts, the lives of the pilots or astronauts are at risk if even one key part doesn't work as planned. God doesn't have that problem. Things always work out the way the Lord says they will. In the passage we just read from Isaiah, God speaks plainly. He says He will bring things to pass just as He has planned.

God is unstoppable. He has set the events of this world in motion and they will not be hindered. You and I cannot mess it up. Satan cannot mess it up. Powerful rulers, unhelpful parents, critical teachers, even unfair coaches cannot mess up God's plan for your life. God has a plan for eternity that will be fulfilled and He has a plan for you that absolutely, positively, and supernaturally will be accomplished.

Conclusion

There are many people today who claim they know the best way to live this life. They promise success if we will just follow *their* plan. Those people rise and fall; come and go. God doesn't want us to place our lives in someone else's hands. He asks us to place our lives in His care. So let us just for a moment think this thing through.

If the eternal Creator has a perfect plan for our lives, why would we not want to surrender to Him? We know from Scripture that His plans never fail. We know He loves us, and we know in Him all things work together for good. Why in the world would we not trust Him with everything? Would you do that today? Would you place every situation in your life in the hands of One Who has never failed? Don't just come to Him for salvation. Trust Him to care for your family and your future. Give Him your plans and your dreams and let Him do with them what He wants. It will be in your best interest. What do you say, will you trust Him today?

IT'S UNDER CONTROL

1. God is the **Eternal** Ruler (Psalm. 10:16)
 - A. As **Creator** (Psalm 148:5-6)
 - B. As **Controller** of Human History (Daniel. 4:35)
 - C. As the **All-Knowing** One (Job 37:16)
2. God is the **Involved** Ruler (Ephesians 1:11)
3. God is the **Compassionate** Ruler (Romans 8:28)
4. God's Sovereignty and World Affairs

His Sovereignty is:

- A. **Immune** from outside interference (Genesis 50:19-20)
- B. **Constant** (Isaiah 14:24-27)



LIVEN IT UP!



TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- God’s creative power gives Him full authority over all just as the potter has authority over the clay being formed (Romans 9:21).
- In God’s sovereign plan, God does “according to His will,” and nobody can stop Him (Daniel 4:35).
- We are not called by God to struggle against our human authorities (Romans 13:2).
- This promise of God’s compassionate care applies to *those who love God and who are the called according to his purpose* (Romans 8:28).



LIVE IT!

This week you may encounter times of joy, difficulty, excitement, boredom, or even tragedy. In every single situation God is working to fulfill His purposes for your life. Remember that God never wastes pain. Everything that happens is for your ultimate good and His glory. Mentally catalog or journal specific times and events where God has made it clear to you that He is working in your life and be ready to share it with your fellow students.

Reference Materials

Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Chicago IL, 1999) Chapter 6 the perfections of God
Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Old Testament Isaiah Vol. 11* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1950) pp. 169-170.

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. How would you explain God’s sovereignty to a friend?
2. Describe a situation in which you’ve seen or heard of a tragedy or crisis that ended up bringing good to someone.
3. Share a circumstance in your life that brought you closer to God and how it might possibly have resulted in others wanting to learn more of Him.

Try This Week...

Ministry of Helps: Look for opportunities to share the love of God with someone God has put in your life.

Real Love

Lesson Objective

The students will recognize the reality of God’s love and be encouraged to respond with love for others.



LOOK IT UP!



LISTEN UP!

1 John 4:10

In what way did God show His love for us?

Picture this. A young girl is sitting on a bench—flower in hand, peeling off one petal at a time. Alternating with each petal she declares, “He loves me; he loves me not.” She is practicing this romantic ritual, hoping in the end to affirm in her mind that she has found someone to love her. The movie “Dear John” in 2010 grossed eighty million dollars because people want to believe that TRUE LOVE exists and that one day they will experience it.

Hollywood shows us romantic love. Our young girl with the flower petals illustrates love based on fantasy. But God shows us REAL LOVE. We do not have to look good enough, smart enough, athletic enough, rich enough, powerful enough, or popular enough. God doesn’t even love us because we love Him. He loved us even when we didn’t love Him (Romans 5:8-10) and suffered for our sins to bring us back to God (1 Peter 3:18). God loves us because that is Who He is... God is LOVE (1 John 4:8).



LEARN IT!

Attribute: A distinguishing characteristic of God that sets Him apart and through which He reveals Himself to mankind.

Love: A purposeful act of selfless giving for the good of others.

Checklist

1. Sufficient copies of the *Top Ten Things I Love* list for each student
2. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Teacher’s Note: Hand out a sheet of paper titled: *Top Ten Things I Love* with the numbers 1-10. Have students fill out the list with the first ten things they love that come to their mind. After around two minutes, discuss their answers as a group. You could even compile a group list on a whiteboard if time permits.

Introduction

Food, movies, games, songs, days off from school, these are some of the things that make us happy. It is common to hear people say they love them. But what does that word “love” exactly mean? (Allow a couple of minutes for students to respond.)

Many people throughout history have tried to define love. And you all threw out some pretty good ideas. A good definition for love is a purposeful act of selfless giving for the good of others. Real love has the purpose of helping others. Love draws us to sacrificial action. Still, we use the word “love” a lot in our society. But is “love” a word that should be used about everything we merely like? Or does it have a more significant meaning?

Teacher’s Note: Discuss the distinction between things we really love and things we only like with the students. Use some of the items students just shared from their *I Love* list as a place to start the discussion.

Many of you mentioned you love your cell phone or texting on your *I Love* lists. In light of love drawing us to sacrificial action, how accurate is the statement that some love their cell phone? (Allow students to respond.) While we sometimes use the word “love” very lightly, it has a very serious meaning.

Think about it like this. If a child were to develop cancer, most parents would do anything they have to do or pay any amount of money to get their child the treatment they need. On the other hand, while we all love our family pets, there is a limit to the amount of money we would spend to save Fido’s life. The difference is that real love is deep and sacrificial.

Content

During this series we have been talking about finding the true answer in the middle of many competing ideas. As we look at real love today, the best example is not found in a Hollywood movie, in a romance novel, or even in a notebook of old love letters. The greatest example of love is found in God Himself and how much He loves us. The Bible clearly states, “God is love” (1 John 4:8). Love is a part of Who God is and it cannot be separated from Him. Our Heavenly Father is the ultimate expression of Who and what love is and how it is displayed.

1. Qualities of God’s Love

It’s not enough to simply say “God is love” for us to have a clear understanding. Instead, let’s dig deeper into the qualities of God’s love to help us understand the true nature of His affection for us. These are just a few. God’s love is:

- **Permanent** – Jeremiah 31:3 (have a student read)
Here, we see that God’s love is described as an everlasting love. This is different from mankind’s love, which often is here one day and gone the next. God is a covenant-making, covenant-keeping God. When He makes a promise, He keeps it. As the objects of His love, we can count on Him to love us all our days.
- **Sacrificial** – Ephesians 5:2 (have a student read)
God’s love is giving and sacrificial. God the Father has given us costly, extravagant gifts because He loves us. On Christmas or your birthday, your family gives you gifts because they love you. In a similar way, God gave us

some incredible gifts because He loves us so much. The greatest gift of all that God gave mankind was not just expensive. It was a huge sacrifice. God the Father gave us His one and only Son, Jesus Christ (John 3:16, have a student quote). God's love is compelling.

- **Unconditional** – Romans 5:8 (have a student read)
How many of you have the capacity to love even the unlovely? Think about it and be honest. Suppose a child molester, or a convicted rapist, or a murderer moved in next door to you. Do you see yourself taking cookies over to this guy's house to welcome him to the neighborhood? Or, imagine that you're attending a concert or a big event at the civic center or arena in your area and a homeless woman approaches you asking for money. She's dirty, she smells of alcohol, and she's not at all like the people you normally hang with. Would you ask this woman to join you for a meal, or would you be totally turned off and disgusted at the thought? Could you demonstrate true love for someone like this?

Most of us don't display love to people unless they love us first or at least show love to us in return for our love. But that's not how God works. According to the verse we just heard, God demonstrated His love for us *while we were sinners*. He didn't require us to love Him first. In fact, 1 John 4:10 tells us plainly that God loved us first and even sent His Son to make payment for our sins in spite of the fact that we're nothing less than dirty, rotten sinners. Aren't you glad to know that nothing you can do will take away God's love for you?

Now that we have described God's love, let's think about how it should affect our daily lives. What is our responsibility, knowing these few things about God's great love?

Teacher's Note: Lead a short discussion on how the truth of God's love should lead students day to day. Take thoughts from the students and make comments where needed.

When thinking about the overwhelming truth of God's love, there are many applications for our lives. Perhaps the clearest application is found in 1 John 4:7-8 (have a student read). We can sum up those two verses with this simple statement: God showed real love to us so we should reflect that love to others.

For the remainder of our time together, we are going to examine this critical statement for the Christian life.

2. God's Love in **Action** (1 John 4:9-10)

God's love is demonstrated by actions. We will look at two specific actions that show God's real love for us.

- God showed and initiated real love by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to Earth. (Have a student read 1 John 4:9.)

The cool thing about this passage is that God's action in sending His Son into the world was for our benefit. Love is most clearly demonstrated by the giver's willingness to do everything possible for the good of the recipient. Think about a loving father or mother for a moment. Most would agree that in a loving household mom and dad give willingly to their children those things that will

benefit them. In the case of Jesus Christ, God's Son, we see the greatest gift of all. God gave us His Son so that we may have eternal life!

But this passage also demonstrates God's initiative. He didn't wait for us to ask for such a gift, and He didn't just give His Son as a response to something we gave Him. Instead, even while we were unloving and unlovely, Christ died for our sins as a demonstration of God's supreme love for mankind (Romans 5:8).

- God showed real love by allowing Jesus to die on the cross for our sins (1 John 4:10).

Jesus became the sacrifice that made atonement for man's sins. Atonement is simply the reconciliation of God and man through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross for man's sins. In the Old Testament days, animal sacrifices were offered in a very strict code of procedures to atone for the sins of the Israelites. A sin offering was made yearly to forestall God's wrath, and this was the prescribed way God dealt with man in that time period (Leviticus 16:11-16). God, because of his great love, made a better way for you and me. God offered His Son as a once-and-for-all sacrifice, and made it possible for mankind to be reconciled, or made right with Him (Romans 5:10). God didn't have to do this. He wasn't forced into a corner and given no option. God chose willingly to allow Jesus' death on the cross as a fulfillment of His plan to draw men unto Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19).

3. God's Love is Our **Pattern**

- So we will love **others**
The love of God, demonstrated for us by the gift of His Son, is our model to love others. He is our pattern. The Apostle John records this love as the criteria that identifies us as true followers of the Lord—*if you love one another* (John 13:35). When others see true unconditional love displayed among the Christian community, they see Jesus in our actions and attitudes.

Do you know how attractive this is to the lost world? When an unsaved individual sees real, authentic love among God's people, it is like a breath of fresh air. In other words, we have the potential to show others a little glimpse of God's love every day. Think about this as you enter into each day and ask yourself if your attitude, your actions, or your words demonstrate God's love.

Conclusion

Love is so much bigger than our common view. It is an attribute of God that is a distinguishing characteristic of His that sets Him apart and through which He reveals Himself to mankind. It produced the way of redemption for us. In understanding God's love we are drawn to Christ. We are drawn to one who would sacrifice Himself for our good. His love is never-ending, sacrificial, and unconditional. We see it clearly in God's initiative in sending Jesus to this world to grow up into manhood, only to die on a cross for the sins of the world.

Thankfully God does not make our ability to love a requirement for salvation. If He did require love for salvation we would all fall short. But He does expect His children to love. This is a call you cannot escape. If you are a Christian God expects you to love and learn to love.

What have you done about God's love? Have you committed your life to demonstrate God's love to a lost world? Do you look at all people as God does—bound either for an eternal Heaven or an everlasting Hell? Will you pray right now that God will so change your attitude and your heart about His love, that you'll never look at people the same way again? Pray for a heart of love. Pray that He will cause you to see ways to love even those who are unlovely.

Teacher's note: This would be a perfect opportunity to present the Gospel and move to an invitation.

REAL LOVE

1. Qualities of God's Love

- **Permanent** (Jeremiah 31:3)
- Sacrificial (Ephesians 5:2)
- **Unconditional** (Romans 5:8)

2. God's Love in **Action**

- Sent His Son to Earth
(1 John 4:9)
- Allowed His Son to die for the
world's sin (1 John 4:10)

3. God's Love is Our **Pattern.**

- So we will love **others**
(John 13:35)



LIVEN IT UP!





TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- Love is a part of Who God is and it cannot be separated from Him (1 John 4:8).
- God loved us first and even sent His Son to make payment for our sins in spite of the fact that we're nothing less than dirty, rotten sinners (1 John 4:10).
- God offered His Son as a once-and-for-all sacrifice, and made it possible for mankind to be reconciled, or made right with Him (Romans 5:10).
- The Apostle John records this love as the criteria that identifies us as true followers of the Lord—*if you love one another* (John 13:35).



LIVE IT!

You have been a recipient of God's love in a very real way. Don't hoard it or hide it from a world that needs more of it. The challenge you face is how to share it. Go out and love the people in your world intentionally and sacrificially. Show love to them because God loved you. Start by intentionally looking for someone who is in need of a kind word, a gentle touch, or an act of service. Do it in the name of Jesus. That's real love.

Reference Materials

Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1999).

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. How does God demonstrate His love to us?
2. Which of the qualities of God's love is the most amazing to you and why?
3. Describe one way you can begin to reflect God's love in your world.

Try This Week...

Ministry of Helps: Look for something you can do to physically help another person, and do it in Christ's name.

FEAR Factor

Lesson Objective

The students will see that God wants believers to enjoy peace and not be captives to fear.



LOOK IT UP!



LISTEN UP!



LEARN IT!

John 14:27

What does Jesus give that the world cannot provide?

A pimple in the middle of your forehead the morning of Teens Involved, missing an open shot, final exams, getting the flu, speech class, allowing your art to be displayed in public, climbing on something that is high and wobbly—these are just a few things we fear. Fear is a feeling of anxiety and anguish and is a real part of many people's lives. Fear can be good and bad. When it's bad it keeps us from doing something we know we should do. When it is good, it's a safety device in our mind that keeps us from doing things that are potentially harmful or embarrassing. When we allow fear to control us it becomes a hindrance to living life as God intended.

As God's child you are called to live life free of fear (Romans 8:15). God cares for you and is looking out for your good. Even when you are aware of danger, you should not be afraid because the Bible reminds us that our lives are in His hands.

Fear: A feeling of anxiety and anguish.

Checklist

1. You will need a table, two boxes, and a clear container. You will also need a regular candy bar, a king-sized candy bar, and a ready-to-eat turnip or rutabaga.
2. Have sufficient copies of the **FEAR Factors Grid** for everyone.
3. Locate a whiteboard and markers.
4. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Ice Breaker

Teacher's Note: Select three students in advance to be the participants. Set up a table with two boxes and a clear plastic container. Have the two outside boxes contain hidden gifts already inserted. On the left have a king-sized candy bar, on the right have a small, raw ready-to-eat turnip or rutabaga. For the center box have a regular candy bar in a clear plastic container which you will put in the middle box in plain sight of the students so they know what's inside. You might want to have one extra of each of the objects as someone might decide to select the same one. It's highly unlikely that all three will play it safe and select the regular candy bar that is clearly visible. It is great to use food and make them eat what is inside. (This will allow for more willing participants and minimize the risk-takers.)

Tonight we are going to play a game that's a cross between **Let's Make a Deal** and **Fear Factor** in which some of you will be given a choice of one of three boxes. How much of a risk are you willing to take? There could be all good prizes or a mixture of good and bad. However, know this—whatever you choose, you must eat.

Participant one (name), you can clearly see that there is a candy bar in container number two. Will you play it safe and go with that container or select one of the others? Remember, whatever you choose, you must eat. In **Fear Factor** they had such things as fresh worms, raw eggs, or some other exotic delicacy. (Let them make their choices, but don't give it to them until all three participants have made their selection.)

Participant two (name), it's your turn. Are you willing to take a risk and be brave and bold... or are you going to take a sure thing and be meek and mild?

Participant three (name), you're the final one to make a choice. What will it be? Are you going to be different or select the same as one of the others?

(Once they have selected, reward them with their choice starting with the king-sized candy bar, then going to the regular candy bar, and finally ending up with the turnip or rutabaga.)

Content

Group Discussion

Thanks to our participants for being such good sports and illustrating a point for us. Let's give them a hand. Now it's time to pursue this Fear Factor a bit further. Fear is defined as a feeling of anxiety and anguish, so let's start our discussion off with a few questions.

1. Why would fear cause someone to choose the transparent box? (Some answers might be: Fear they may choose the box with something gross in it or fear they may miss out altogether, or it is safer to choose the prize they know rather than choose something risky. Allow time for discussion.)

How many people do you know who never try anything new because they are afraid it will be too hard or embarrassing or they just will not like it?

2. What kind of fear motivates someone to choose from one of the “mystery boxes”?
(Answers might be: They are afraid they may miss out on something really cool.)

In this case the fact that they may miss the chance for a better prize is more fearful than losing the prize they can see in the box. The fear of missing out can draw an individual into all kinds of danger. They may begin experimenting with things like sex, drugs, or parties, all because they are afraid they are missing out on something bigger or better.

Let’s think about this for a minute. Is fear always bad? (Allow time for student input.)

Fear is not bad when it is used as a tool of caution and it does not control us. For instance, when standing by a dangerous ledge, fear of falling and causing great injury or death to ourselves may keep us from standing too close to the edge. Knowing that fear can have positive outcomes, we see that the two fears highlighted in this game can have positive effects.

Fear that keeps a person from taking a risk can prevent them from doing something that just is not worth it. And fear of missing out, which draws an individual to take a risk, may open doors to new experiences, cultures, and activities.

Lecture

At every turn in our lives there are things that may make us fearful. Things are going to come up, like running into the school bully or having to take a final exam that could make or break your GPA for the next few years.

Though fear is a part of our lives, it should not control us. Jesus Christ gave Himself to free us from fear. Consider these possible fears:

- Fear of whether I am loved
- Fear of my life being meaningful
- Fear of how things will turn out for me in the end

When an individual is living in acceptance of Christ’s love, they do not have to live in fear. God tells us we no longer need to have the spirit of fear for He has given us power, love, and a sound or disciplined mind (2 Timothy 1:7). We are further assured that the peace that the Lord gives us is not the same as the world offers, so we do not have to be troubled or afraid (John 14:27).

Even with this truth in mind there are some scary things in life. Today we would like to give you a tool that can be used to determine if the fear you experience is right or wrong. It will help you know how to respond to that fear and how to replace it with peace, if necessary. To help us remember the lesson we will use the word F.E.A.R. as our pattern for selecting random possible fears even though you could place any fear in the grid.

Teacher’s Note: The **F.E.A.R Factors Grid** is a real tool for students to help them face and deal with fear in their lives. Therefore you must understand the grid and how it works before you teach this lesson. Below are the detailed instructions and the completed grid.

Across the top of the Grid place the following six columns:

- **Fear Factor** – is where the object of the individual’s fear is placed (example: Bullies).
- **Description** – is where the fear is described in detail (example: Bully at school).
- **Good Fear** – is a rating column.
- **Bad Fear** – is another rating column.
(Check boxes are provided to determine if this fear is good or bad. Example: Fear of being seriously hurt by a bully can keep you from going places and doing things that you need to do. It can also keep you from going places you should not go, so this one would be both good [√] and bad [√]).
- **Response** – is where you write scriptural answers on how I should respond to this fear. (Example: Matthew 10:28 – Do not fear those who can hurt the body but not the soul.)
- **Find Peace** – Since God’s desired outcome is for us to have peace, determine which truth can bring us peace while facing this fear (Matthew 10:29-31).

Fear Factors	Description	Good Fear (√)	Bad Fear (√)	Response	Find Peace
Friends	mockers	(√)		grow	impact the lost
Events	consequences for doing right		(√)	Obedience is what matters.	God can deliver.
Almighty	fear of not obeying	(√)		Obeying is for our good.	for our good
Rulers	authority over us	(√)		subjection to authority	pleasing God

Let’s try a handful of these together.

Teacher’s Note: Using the board you could begin filling out the grid while teaching through these examples.

1. Friends

- **Description:** (Have a Student Read Jude 16-19.)
Fear of friends who mock the things of God. There will be those who come into our lives, even into our church and youth group, who mock the things of God. They are often a disruptive force and cause division and frustration. These individuals should concern us because Jude warns us to be aware of **mockers**; they are a negative influence on our lives.

When we spend the day in the hot sun, it tends to burn our skin. Its effect on us can be dangerous if we are not careful. This can illustrate the truth that when we spend time with people who mock the things of God, it can impact us in a negative way as well. It is good to be cautious of the influence people have on us.

- **Good/Bad:** We would label this as a **good fear** (√). Remember this as we go through the lesson. Even if something is a good fear, you don't want it to control you. It would not be good for you to be afraid of spending time with unbelievers because they might influence us badly. We just need to be cautious and balanced when it comes to our relationships with them. Here is where the response area comes in.
- **Response:** (Read Jude 20-21) This should cause us to **grow**. The easy response is to run and hide or stay away from those people who may be a bad influence. That does not fit very well with the call to reach unbelievers. We can't really reach them if we never spend time with them. Jude said we should **grow**, or build ourselves up in the faith. That means our response is to grow strong in the Lord so we are able to stand firm among them. Growing in the faith is kind of like putting on a hazmat suit before going to the farm. Not only will you not smell like the farm when you get home, but you will most likely smell like the suit. When you grow in faith you can go out among your unbelieving friends, and not only be protected from their influence, but you could potentially come away looking more like Christ.

In the midst of this battle we desire to have peace about our decision to carefully be involved in their lives. So what peace can be found about this decision?

- **Find Peace:** (Read Jude 22-23) **Impacts the lost**
Peace can be found in knowing that by being scripturally involved in the lives of unbelievers, we should be able to show them compassion and make a difference, possibly seeing them trust Christ. Think about it. If a doctor refuses to wear protection when going into a quarantined area, he could potentially get sick. The consequence may keep him from ever being able to help anyone else. If he follows protocol, at least some of those he is trying to help will be saved. We find peace in putting a layer of protection on our lives by knowing it is the only way to have an impact on unbelievers. It doesn't benefit anyone if we don't reach out, but if we don't prepare we could endanger ourselves.

Let's look at another possible fear.

2. Events

- **Description:** (Daniel 3) There are **consequences for doing right**. Turn to Daniel 3. Instead of reading this entire chapter we will summarize it for you. Three young men are living and serving in a foreign land and as a result of their good testimony they are very well-liked by the king. One day the king builds a towering statue of himself and commands the entire kingdom to bow before it at the designated time. These three young men who love the Lord determine they will not bow when the signal is given. The challenge they face is whether to do what they know is right even when there may be terrible consequences.
- **Good/Bad:** This is a **bad fear** (√). The only way to deal with this fear is to overcome it. Those young men were brought before the king and he told them that if they would not bow he would throw them in a furnace of fire (v. 11). Look at their response so we can learn how to we should respond when faced with possible consequences for doing what is right (v. 16).

- **Response:** (Read Daniel 3:16) Not bowing down to idols is a command, so the consequences do not matter, obedience is what matters. They don't even have to think about this, they flat out tell the king they were not going to bow down to the golden idol that he had set up for everyone to worship... even if it meant facing the fiery furnace. When we know what God's Word clearly says, it makes choosing that much easier.

The end of this account is important because we want to have the same peace they experienced when we find ourselves standing for what is right. That peace comes from personal knowledge about our God. During this series we have learned that God is in control of all things and that He loves His children. Look at the truth that keeps these young men at peace.

- **Find Peace:** (Daniel 3:17) God can deliver. We read that God did a miraculous thing and saved them in, not from, the fiery furnace. So we see in hindsight that God was there. Even though these young men did not see Him or even have a specific promise that God would rescue them in the way that He did, they were still at peace because obeying God in the matter of not bowing down to idols was enough for them to find peace.

When you are faced with standing for what is right, don't get stressed out about the outcome. God is always able to deliver His people (Daniel 3:17), if he so chooses. Do what is right and know that God will bring the outcome He desires. When you are left out because you don't attend a party, He will take care of you. When you can't get a date because you have chosen to live in purity, He will be with you. Peace in these situations is found in knowing God's way will bring the best results.

3. Almighty

- **Description:** (Deuteronomy 10:12) Fear of not obeying God
God is a gentle, loving, merciful Father. He is full of grace and truth. He would never do anything that would ultimately hurt us. Let's remember that God sent His Son to die on the cross to redeem a lost world that did not know it was dying. In response to His great sacrifice, He wants us to obey Him. Don't you think it affects Him when we don't do what He asks?
- **Good/Bad:** This is a very Good Fear (√).
- **Response:** (Read Deuteronomy 10:13) Obeying is for our good. This is pretty clear and easy. Our response to the fear of not obeying God is simply to obey Him. This is much different than the fear of not getting your homework done. It's making certain that we know Who God is and that we give Him the proper respect He deserves. Just a suggestion that might cure that fear of school... do your homework! Some people drive around with very little gas in their car, fearful they may run out of gas. The simple solution is to go put gas in your car. When it comes to the fear of not obeying God, proper respect indicates that we just need to simply obey Him. The peace we enjoy after is just icing on the cake.
- **Find Peace:** (Read Deuteronomy 10:13) God's commands are for our good. Unless you are a very cruel person you don't ask people you love to do things that will not be good for them. Neither does God. Everything God commands us to do is for our good.

Let's look at one last fear factor.

4. Rulers

- **Description:** (1 Peter 2:18) Fear of those who have **authority over us**
It is really too bad that most rulers are just like the rest of us. Sinful, selfish, arrogant, boastful, rude, unthankful people that have been given power over others. We need to have some fear or respect of them because they have authority to drastically impact our lives. A teacher, whether good or bad, is going to give you a grade at the end of the semester that will stick with you the rest of your school years. Fear and respect of our authorities causes us to want their blessing.
- **Good/Bad:** This is a healthy or **Good Fear (√)**.
- **Response:** (1 Peter 2:18-19) **Subjection to authority**
We should respond to good or evil authorities with subjection. That means we put ourselves under their authority and submit to their rule. If we are playing a ball game and don't like the call of an official, we still have to submit to it. You can argue all night long, but the call will stand. So we play the game and endure the time. Sometimes it's necessary to submit to misused authority but God commends us if we suffer wrongfully. It's important to maintain a good attitude.

When the game is over, the job is done, or the semester has ended, the most important aspect when dealing with human authority is our testimony. It is easy to have a good testimony when life is easy; but when you are placed in a situation where respecting your authority is difficult, a healthy fear of who they are positionally is a big help. While you may be living under difficult authorities, God wants you to be at peace knowing this truth.

- **Find Peace:** (1 Peter 2:20) You are **pleasing God**.
You may end up losing a game because of a terrible call or getting a bad grade because a teacher does not like you. It can bring comfort to know that you are pleasing God when you submit gracefully. If you endure these times and maintain a good testimony for the cause of Christ, you will be pleasing the One whom we serve above all others.

Conclusion

Fear can be a difficult and paralyzing emotion—one that God does not want controlling our lives. With knowledge about how life should be lived we can live in peace. Jesus Christ died on the cross to make peace possible in our lives. The Word of God can give us great peace as we see His plan for our lives. Two questions remain. First, have you ever trusted Jesus Christ to save you? He is the author of true peace. Second, if you are a Christian, are you taking advantage of the power you have to live in peace through obedience to God's Word? Take some time before you leave tonight and run a fear that you are currently facing through the grid and determine how God's Word tells you to find peace instead of being paralyzed by the effects of it; then begin taking action to find freedom by obeying and trusting God.



FEARFACTORS

LIVEN IT UP!

Fear Factors	Description	Good Fear (✓)	Bad Fear (✓)	Response	Find Peace
Friends					
Events					
Almighty					
Rulers					





TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- God tells us we no longer need to have the spirit of fear for He has given us power, love, and a sound or disciplined mind (2 Timothy 1:7).
- By being scripturally involved in the lives of unbelievers, we should be able to show them compassion and make a difference, possibly seeing them trust Christ (Jude 22).
- God is always able to deliver His people (Daniel 3:17).
- Everything God commands us to do is for our good (Deuteronomy 10:13).



LIVE IT!

When you are afraid remember that Christ died so you would have power to overcome that thing you fear. If you've been afraid to give the Gospel to a friend at school, pray for strength and determine that tomorrow is the day to face that fear and share the message that could change their eternity. If fear about your reputation has kept you from being a friend to someone, decide that God's love is too powerful to hide. Sit with them at lunch. Don't let fear hold you in prison another day.

Reference Materials

Merriam Webster Dictionary Online

<http://www.britannica.com/bps/dictionary?query=fear>

Easton's Bible Dictionary <http://eastonsbibledictionary.com/search--fear>

Easton's Bible Dictionary <http://eastonsbibledictionary.com/search--peace>

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. What do you think are some of the biggest fears for people your age?
2. What are some of the fears that you have faced in your own life?
3. What could you do in a practical way to overcome these fears?

Try This Week...

Giving a Testimony: Overcome fear this week. Give your testimony to an individual from school and invite them to church.

Storms Ahead!

Lesson Objective

The students will understand that difficulties are a part of life, and learn how they can make them more like Christ.



LOOK IT UP!

Job 42:2

Can God’s plans be stopped?



LISTEN UP!

Pimples appearing on the day of the party, traffic jam when you are already late for school, an injury right before the most important game of your career. These would all be considered “Murphy’s Law” events—“If anything bad can happen it probably will.” All of us can be exposed to sudden, more serious events that may be called tragedies. In the words of more experienced adults, it is often said that everyone is either in the middle of a storm in life, headed into a storm, or just coming out of a storm. Sounds sort of depressing, but the truth is that storms do occur in everyone’s life.

Being a follower of Christ doesn’t put us in some sort of protective bubble that shields us from life’s storms. For the person who does not have Christ, difficulties in this life can prove to be absolutely devastating. For the Christian, losing everything isn’t the end of the world. We still have Christ and we can stand firm and not be moved (Psalm 16:8).



LEARN IT!

Sovereign: One who exercises supreme authority or rule.

Checklist

1. Handout assignments for buzz groups
2. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Teacher’s Note: Survey your students about storms in life. Being sensitive to those who may not want to share, simply ask students to raise their hands if any of the situations you’re about to mention have occurred in their lives. Give a rough estimate of the percentage of students who responded with raised hands, just to show that storms in life impact nearly everyone.

Hey, let’s take an informal survey. When I name a particular event or circumstance that you’ve experienced, will you just raise your hand? If you don’t want to participate, that’s ok. Some of these are tragic and some of these may be hurtful, but that’s what a storm in life does sometimes. These are all situations that can make us

sad or that try our faith, or events that make us question whether God is even paying attention. Here we go. Just raise your hand if this has happened in your life:

Dad or Mom lost their job suddenly

Parents divorced

Close loved one involved in an accident and was hospitalized or became seriously ill

Close loved one died

You were rejected by a friend or group of friends

Based on the hands that were raised, it looks like about _____ percent of the people in this room have been through what we might call a storm in life. If we knew the details, we'd probably find out that some of you are in the middle of a storm right now, and some of you are just coming out of a storm. We wonder sometimes how a loving God can allow us to go through tough situations. That's what we will discuss tonight in our lesson. The truth is that we don't live in a bubble. God doesn't protect us from every one of life's trials. In fact, we'll find that trials and difficulties in life are the things that can make us even stronger.

Many may believe that if you work hard, do what you are told, and trust God everything will be great. After all Romans 8:28 tells us everything works for good to them who love God. Would this belief be correct? If we follow God are we guaranteed a good life? If so, why is life so hard? Why do bad things happen in our lives?

Let's propose this theory. Maybe God does not intend to give us a good life. Maybe He intends to bring good out of our life. Think about all of the great Christians who suffered tragedy and continued to believe God loved them.

Joseph was cast into slavery by his brothers yet he still trusted God and was placed in a position to save his entire family.

David was promised a crown but for years lived in caves. By not taking the throne by force, he trusted God would fulfill His promise. In God's time, David became one of the greatest kings to ever rule.

Job was one of the wealthiest men in his day, but lost everything in what appeared to be moments. Yet he still believed and loved God.

Daniel was ripped from his family and homeland to serve in a foreign land. As a teenager he determined that he would still obey God. He ended up being the advisor to at least five of the most powerful men who ever lived.

Paul was probably the greatest apostle. He was cast into prison for teaching about Christ but joyfully concluded that God was using his prison experience to get the Gospel to Rome.

Why we face difficulty as God's children is not an easy question. However, we need to learn that God is sovereign and He is the One who exercises supreme authority or rule. So in light of that, our purpose is to discover the answer and prepare you to respond correctly when life seems to be falling apart.

Teacher's Note: Divide your group into three Buzz Groups and hand each group a copy of their assignment. Give the groups approximately five minutes to read the passages, discuss, and answer the questions. Use the material in the Teacher's Comments to supplement the student reports.
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Content

We have divided you into buzz groups and given you each a set of questions. We will take five minutes to fill these out.

Buzz Group One Assignment

Why Bad Things Happen (Read these passages and be prepared to answer the following questions:)

Why did the Israelites face suffering (Nehemiah 9:26-27)?

What did God hope to prove by allowing Job's suffering (Job 1:8-22)?

What quality or trait do you see coming out of difficulty (Romans 5:3)?

Select a student to read the verses and report your answers when we reassemble.

Buzz Group One Report

Teacher's Comments

The first question deals with Nehemiah, who served as the king's cupbearer in the days when the Israelites were in captivity to the Persians. In Chapter 9, the people are confessing their sins after hearing the reading of the law of God. However, when people do not follow God, He may allow suffering to remind them of their need for Him (Nehemiah 9:26-27).

This is an example of difficulty happening as a result of God's **discipline**. The children of Israel quit living the way God told them to. They were not keeping the law given to them through Moses. They were worshiping idols brought in by other nations. Not all of the Israelites had abandoned God, but the entire nation was disciplined together. Sometimes good people go through difficult times as a result of those around them not obeying God.

When on an athletic team you do what the coach wants if you want to play. On a drama team you play the part according to the director's instructions. In a band you play the same song as everyone else. With God's children it isn't any different. God wants His children to live the way He asks them to and when we do not obey He allows suffering to bring us back to obedience.

Our second report from Group One deals with Job. Job loved God and served Him faithfully. What did God hope to prove through Job's suffering?

When we have been faithful He allows suffering to prove or strengthen our **faithfulness** (Job 1:8-12).

Satan wants us to fail. He had been walking throughout the earth and Job caught his attention. This man obviously loved the Lord and God had blessed him for it with great wealth, power, and family. The devil accused God of spoiling Job. Do you know what God's response was? He allowed Satan to do whatever he wanted to Job, except kill him. Talk about a great testimony. Job was the guy God could count on to stay true to Him no matter how difficult life became. Are you that kind of Christian? Are you the one who others can trust to stay faithful through thick or thin? God even allows suffering in the lives of those who will be faithful to Him.

Our third passage from Group One uses the term *tribulation* to refer to difficulties. What is produced during difficulty?

Patience is the outcome of difficulty (Romans 5:3).

A patient person can endure when called to complete a difficult task. It takes practice to build endurance. The greatest soldiers in our military go through terrible, grueling training systems. The Navy Seals may possibly represent the best of the best in our military. On their training camp they have a bell that can be rung by anyone at any time if they want to quit. The

only catch is that if they ring that bell they are dismissed for good. They go back to being an everyday soldier. There is no shame in that, but they lose the opportunity to be the best of the best. Their training is so grueling because they don't have the luxury of a bell when they are out on a dangerous mission. If they are going to be in that elite group they have got to be ready for what they will face.

God allows suffering in the lives of those He wants to use in great ways. He allows it so the enemy will not be able to discourage them in the midst of this great war for the souls of mankind.

Buzz Group Two Assignment

Common Responses to Storms in Life

What qualities of a growing Christian are seen in this passage (Colossians 1:11)?

How did Paul respond to insults, difficulties, and trials (2 Corinthians 12:10)?

What does the writer tell us we can expect if we refuse to give in to anxiety (Philippians 4:6-7)?

Select a student to read the verses and report your group's answers when we reassemble.

Buzz Group Two Report

Teacher's Comments

Our focus in these passages has been the common responses we see when we're faced with trials or storms in life and how to respond biblically. Buzz Group Two gave us help understanding these three responses and the proper remedy for each:

Impatience – Frequently, our patience runs short when we find ourselves in the midst of a trial. We wonder, “When will this be over?” It seems sometimes like we're enduring difficulties forever, and that feeling often spirals us downward into hopelessness, despair, and depression. But that's not how God wants us to respond. Through the power of Jesus Christ, we can endure with confidence. Colossians 1:11 encourages us by promising that we can have patience and longsuffering with joyfulness, when we're strengthened through His power. Longsuffering is a quality that means to be patient; to bear with, or to be long tempered.

Patience can only be learned through waiting. God uses difficulties in our lives to create patience in us. We learn patience while waiting on God to work through the difficulty. Patience, especially today, is difficult in itself. We are used to getting most everything we want instantly. But no matter how fast technology makes our world move, some of the best things in life will never come quickly. Our relationship with the Lord comes as a result of slow, determined effort to know Him and seek Him every day.

Frustration is another common response to difficulty. What is the correct response seen in 2 Corinthians 12:10?

Find pleasure in the difficult situation (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

Paul said he could accept difficulties because he found strength through Christ. Very often the status of an individual on Facebook is “frustrated.” This is often because our fast-paced world seems to offer something new we cannot live without. We think we need a change of scenery to make us feel good. Paul was not frustrated when his life was difficult. Instead he found contentment because he believed God would be seen strong in his

weakness. We get frustrated because we think we have to be strong, cool, and put together all of the time. God has given permission for us to struggle from time to time so that He can be strong in us.

Anxiety – Far too many times we allow ourselves to grow anxious when things go bad. It's a response that cries out, "God, I can't trust you!" While some will say it's only natural to worry about things, God provides a fix for this problem.

The cure for anxiety is **peace** in Christ during difficult situations, which comes through prayer and thankfulness (Philippians 4:5-7).

When we go through difficult situations we worry. This worry turns into fantasy. We begin to think problems are bigger than they really are. Then we get on Facebook and tell the world about how awful our life is when it really isn't. You are just going through something that is possibly very hard. Before worry sets in and gets you all worked up, turn to the Lord in prayer and face those fears head on. Begin by thanking Him for your salvation and remember to praise Him for your friends, parents, and church leaders. Then tell God you will trust Him to not waste the situation you are presently in, but try to use it for His glory. Finally, commit to display the good in your life over this bad situation. Your new Facebook status can be: "Being prepared by God for something great."

Buzz Group Three Assignment

Preparation for Storms

What advice do you see here that will prepare you for storms in life (Proverbs 24:6)?

According to this passage, what is the key to navigating through difficulties and trials (Proverbs 3:5-6)?

What advice do you see here that will help you as you go through storms in life (2 Corinthians 10:5)?

Select a student to read the verses and report your group's answers when we reassemble.

Buzz Group Three Report

Teacher's Comment

Now one key element to defeating discouragement when faced with difficulty is preparation. Since we know bad things are going to happen we need to prepare ourselves for them. It is kind of like training for a race. Can you imagine signing up for a twenty-six mile marathon, having six months to prepare for it, but never going for a run until the day of the race? Not only will you lose the marathon, but you most likely will not finish the race. Buzz Group Three tells us what God says to do to prepare for difficulty.

What do you do when you think you know what should happen, but it doesn't? (Allow time for some discussion.) Who should you talk to?

You should talk to **people** who can help you (Proverbs 24:6).

We don't approach anything in life without talking to our friends. We ask them what we should wear. We call them to see if the boy or girl we like is a good choice. Part of preparation for difficult times is to have a group of individuals established in our lives who will give us good, godly counsel. These are not just everyday friends. These are people, probably not peers,

who will always provide us direction from a biblical perspective. Seeking help from others offers both wisdom and safety.

If you were facing a serious storm in life, where would you find your greatest comfort, or your trust? You must learn to **trust** God (Proverbs 3:5). Placing your trust in God is not an overnight decision. “OK, tonight I committed to trusting God with my life so I won’t have a problem with that anymore.” What? We have got to start trusting Him with little daily things and seeing Him care for them before we will learn to trust Him for the bigger things. Why don’t you begin by trusting Him to care for your social, financial, even athletic life while you commit to always making involvement in youth ministries a priority? When we learn to trust God with the daily things it prepares us to trust Him with the big stuff.

Group Three, what else can we do to prepare for difficulty? For instance, how do we prepare our minds?

Learn to keep your thoughts in **control** (2 Corinthians 10:5). Learning to control our thoughts will keep us from blowing things way out of proportion. This is a moment-by-moment effort. When troubling thoughts come into our mind we need to determine if they are good thoughts or sinful thoughts. Here is a good way to begin. The next time your friend says something to you that is hurtful, take a moment to find an element of truth to learn from it. This is not an easy assignment but it will save you from some extra drama and teach you to keep your thoughts under control.

It has been our desire today to prepare you for difficulties that are going to happen in life. So let us take one last step and give you some truths that will prepare you to respond to bad situations in a way that will bring glory to Christ.

Lecture

Things to Remember...

Before something bad happens, we can be confident of a number of things:

- *He is in **control*** (have a student read Job 42:2).
It does not matter how bad a situation may seem to be, God has not lost control of it. He is intentionally working through that situation to fulfill His purposes. This is what our **Look It Up!** verse is talking about. Yes, God is in total control.
- *He is **mighty*** (have a student read Psalm 150:2).
Our mighty God can do anything. The difficult situations are not outside His power. During Jesus’ ministry He and the disciples were on a boat in the middle of the sea when a storm hit. The Bible tells us the disciples were terrified. Jesus was sleeping in the back of the boat. The disciples woke Him up and asked Him why He was not concerned for their lives. Listen to Jesus’ response. He got up, rebuked the wind, and the storm stopped. Then He looked at them and said, “Why were you so afraid?” We do not have to fear the storms of life. Jesus can and will calm them when He is ready.

And finally we see...

- *He is **loving*** (have a student read John 15:9).

It is because His love is true and is firmly planted in our lives that we can place our hope in Him.

Conclusion

We must stop looking at difficulties as some kind of curse. Difficult times can develop our character. It is so easy to say you have something the world does not have when everything is going well. Anyone can be happy when life is good. It is in the midst of tragedy that your faith in Christ and the power you have in Him shines brightly. Bad things are going to happen; prepare for it now. Pets are going to die, cars are going to be wrecked, games are going to be lost, and parents are going to lose jobs. Get your mind right about tragedy before it happens. Seek the counsel and influence of other believers when going through it. Then watch intently as God begins to work in a very powerful way.

I. When Bad Things Happen

- A. Discipline
- B. Faithfulness
- C. Patience

II. Common Responses to Storms in Life

- A. Impatience
- B. Frustration
- C. Anxiety
- D. Peace

III. Preparation for Storms

- A. People
- B. Trust
- C. Control



LIVEN IT UP!

Things to Remember...

He is in control (Job 42:2).

He is mighty (Psalm 150:2).

He is loving (John 15:9).



TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- When people do not follow God, He may allow suffering to remind them of their need for Him (Nehemiah 9:27).
- God even allows suffering in the lives of those who will be faithful to Him (Job 1:8, 12).
- God has given permission for us to struggle from time to time so that He can be strong in us (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).
- Seeking help from others offers both wisdom and safety (Proverbs 24:6).



LIVE IT!

It's easy to look at the world around you and think you are the only one suffering. The reality is you live in a broken world that is full of suffering and despair due to sin and its destructive power over creation. This reality of suffering cannot be avoided, so the challenge is to prepare to shine through diseases in your family, fights between your parents, and mockery from peers about your faith. Make sure every person around you knows why you are still strong even in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Reference Materials

Dr. Joseph M. Stowell, *The Upside of Down* (Moody Publishers, 1991)

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. What kind of suffering have you seen in our world recently?
2. What are some of the most difficult experiences you have faced personally?
3. How have bad things drawn you closer to, or pushed you further from Jesus Christ?

Try This Week...

Hospital Visitation: You are not the only one experiencing suffering; visit a hospitalized person and encourage them with, "God cares."



Hello My Name Is...

(Module Four)

Stage Décor / Room Environment

- **Plan:**
 - Make giant name tag and put names of God on it to keep up throughout the series.
 - Look up real meanings of student names and write them on name tags for them to wear, or put them up on the wall.
 - Design free-standing letters (G-O-D, J-E-S-U-S, etc.) and put up throughout the room in a disorganized fashion. Each week, organize them better to illustrate the way that we see God more clearly as we learn His Names.

Promotional Ideas

- Have teens wear nametags to school, creating conversation opportunities.
- Design sticky notes with series graphics and info for teens to take to school. They can place them on friends' lockers, books, etc.
- Play game with teens where you present a celebrity's real name and they have to guess the stage name of the person. For example, The Rock's real name is Dwayne Johnson.
- Come up with funny fake name meanings for teens in youth group.
- The week before the series begins, have a teen or leader come in and introduce himself to everyone, repeating his name over and over.

Divine Relationship in 3-D

Lesson Objective

The students will gain some understanding of the relationship within the Trinity as well as the unique relationship God wants to have with them.



LOOK IT UP!

2 Corinthians 13:14

How is each member of the Trinity involved in your daily life?



LISTEN UP!

Do you have a best friend? How would you describe that relationship? Do you think or act alike? Can you finish each other's sentences? Isn't it amazing that we can get to know someone so well that we know what they are thinking just by the slightest clue? Friendships are amazing relationships. We all desire to have them because we all long for companionship. We want to belong.

The Bible describes a relationship with similar characteristics, but it is far greater than any earthly relationship—the personage of God, called the Trinity. The Bible reveals to us one God who is three persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. These three are in such an intimate relationship that they fully know and are known by each other. There is nothing lacking in their relationship. The amazing thing is that the Trinity is working to draw us into a relationship with Him: the Spirit draws us to a born-again experience and adoption into the Father's family to be joint-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:15-17).



LEARN IT!

Trinity: The common term used to describe God's one divine nature or essence, eternally co-existent in three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Godhead: God's one divine nature or essence eternally co-existent in three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Checklist

1. Video projector or TV
2. An egg
3. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Who can describe for me the uniqueness of your relationship with your best friend? What do you have in common? What differences do you have?

After God created Adam He made a statement that man wasn't meant to be alone (Genesis 2:18). Why do you think He said that? Sure, God was telling Adam he needed a wife, but maybe there was something more to it. Maybe He was getting at how all of humanity is designed for relationship and for companionship. This answers why we all seek to belong.

One more question, what did it mean when God said "Let us make man in our image" (Genesis 1:26)? This is an early example of the complex and intimate relationship within the Godhead. Part of being created in God's image is that we are relational beings.

Sometimes we read these verses and graze right over the importance of what is being stated, or we don't spend time on them because we don't understand them. Certainly there is a mystery in the verses that is curious, but there are also many truths we can draw out. Within the pages of Scripture we see a relationship like none we have experienced, far greater than our Best Friends Forever (BFF) relationship.

The Trinity is the common term used to describe God's one divine nature or essence, eternally co-existent in three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Within this relationship are perfect love, trust, and submission to each other. It is a complete companionship that lacks nothing. Another mystery here is that this complete relationship within the Trinity wants a personal relationship with us.

Content

Tonight we will seek to understand some difficult teachings about God. If it gets confusing or seems like a lot, don't worry—you are not alone. We all fail to comprehend this mystery, but God revealed it for our good. I am going to ask you to start thinking and not just listening. You will need to stretch your minds for this lesson.

The word *Trinity* is not used anywhere in the Bible, but it helps explain how the one true God is manifested in three distinct persons (1 Peter 1:2), and each has a part in our salvation. The teaching of the Trinity is one of the major teachings that sets Christianity apart from all the religions of the world. We need to be careful to remember that we worship one God and not three Gods, and that the names of the Father, Son, and Spirit are not different hats that God wears. So it is important that we understand that there is only one true God, existing as a single being comprised of three persons Who are equal in every way, yet distinct in their tasks and relations to humanity.

Throughout church history there have been attempts to explain and illustrate the Trinity, yet every illustration is limited and cannot fully explain such a magnificent teaching. For instance, some use the examples of: egg, water, a triangle, or even an apple pie. Each of these illustrations has some merit and can be helpful; but they all fail at some point because the Trinity is too great to fully explain.

Teacher's Note: Explain that the common egg is made up of three separate parts; the shell, the white, and the yoke. So these three parts make up one egg. They are distinct but part of the whole. However, each part of the egg consists of a different essence. The shell is not made of the same stuff the white and yoke are. Yet the three persons of God consist of the same essence—that is, God the Father is made of the same stuff that God the Son is, and so is the Holy Spirit. There are also the three states of water: liquid, gas, and solid. However, water cannot be all three at one time; it is either a gas, a liquid, or a solid. But in contrast, God is *always* Father, *always* Son, and *always* Holy Spirit—all at the same time.

Within the one being that is God there exists three coequal and coeternal persons, namely the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Confused? Yeah that is understandable. This does require some deep thought. There is no simple answer and there is no way to fully grasp something so marvelous. We need to allow ourselves a moment to dwell upon the majesty of our God and the complexities of His persons. He also has a unique relationship that He wants to establish with us as we will soon see. God is unique and different—unlike anyone that we know. This means that we can have a totally different relationship with Him than anything we have ever experienced.

Let us take a step back and consider what the Bible says about God.

1. God is One. (Unity of God)

One consistent theme throughout Scripture is the teaching that there is only one God (Isaiah 44:6; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; Ephesians 4:4-6; James 2:19). One of the greatest passages on this in the Old Testament is called the “Shema” which means “to hear” (Deuteronomy 6:4). It is a word used to grab attention and focus on a major point. Every child was to be taught this truth from birth in order to instill a deep understanding in them that there is only one God. The Old Testament assembly would say this together, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.”

Paul teaches us very clearly that there is one God, but he does it in a way that opens the door for us to see the relationship in the Trinity by mentioning that we have a mediator (“go between”) between God and man in the person of Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5). How the relationship in the Trinity reveals the oneness of God is demonstrated in the prayer of Jesus when He identifies His desire to see His followers experience unity as Jesus has unity with the Father (John 17:21-23).

When you think of your Christian friends here at youth group, do you think of unity? Do you think of oneness? Why or why not? How can we develop relationships in our group that reflect the prayer of Jesus?

Not only does the Bible teach that God is One, but it refers to three distinct persons as God.

2. God is Three. (God is revealed in the distinct personages of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.)

A. The **Father** is acknowledged as God throughout the Bible (Galatians 1:1; John 6:27; 1 Peter 1:2; Romans 1:7). He is seen as the source of divine foreknowledge, peace, and the power that raised Jesus from the dead.

- B. The **Son** (Jesus) is acknowledged as God (John 1:1; Colossians 1:15). We see in the stories of Jesus' life in the Gospels as well as other Scripture that speaks of his person of how He did things that only God could do, such as creating the universe (Colossians 1:16; Isaiah 44:24), forgiving sins (Mark 2:1-12) and raising the dead (John 12:9). Jesus Himself claimed the title "the first and the last," which is a title that God used of Himself (Revelation 1:17; Isaiah 44:6). Jesus claims to be one with the Father (John 10:30). By doing so, He is claiming to be God, but also testifies that He is in union with God who sent Him (John 6:38). So confident is Jesus in His union with the Father that He tells His disciples, if you have seen me you have seen the Father (John 14:9).
- C. The **Holy Spirit** is acknowledged as God (Acts 5:3-4). We see in the Bible that the Holy Spirit possesses the attributes of God: He is present everywhere, He is all-knowing, and He is eternal, which means He is the same Spirit that overshadowed the deep in the creation and that is given to all who believe as a seal of their salvation. We see that He does things only God can do: He participated in creation, the conception of Jesus in Mary's womb, Jesus' baptism, the resurrection of Jesus, and the inspiration of Scripture (Zechariah 12:10; Luke 3:22).

Teacher's Note: For further study here are some passages: Psalm 139:7-10; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11; Hebrews 9:14; Genesis 1:2; Ephesians 1:13-14; Job 33:4; Psalm 104:30; Luke 1:35; Romans 8:11; 1 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21.

God, as revealed in the Bible, is three distinct persons, each participating in the divine plan of creation and redemption. Each person in the Trinity shares the common attributes of divinity, such as sovereignty, holiness, love, eternity, and so on; yet they are distinct in their roles and relationship to each other and humanity.

If you or your friend are on the ball team at school, you would say you are on one team, right? How do you know that someone is on that team? They wear the jersey, they show up to practice and games, they're on the roster, and so on.

Why is it important that the members of the team have different positions? Imagine if all of the players of a basketball team were tall centers but couldn't dribble or shoot from long ranges, or if the whole team were short guards that could dribble but couldn't rebound due to their height deficiency. To make a good team you need different roles. Each person of the Trinity possesses the same characteristics, but plays different roles.

Well like the ball team, in the Godhead each being has a different role. What sets apart the Trinity from the ball team is that the Father, Son, and Spirit aren't different players; they are distinct and yet the same. This is the three-in-oneness of God.

3. God is three-in-one. (The Trinity is seen as a relationship of three distinct persons—all are equally God.)
The Bible not only makes it clear that there are three persons, but also demonstrates how these three persons relate to each other.

- A. In Jesus' own words to His disciples in what is known as the Great Commission, we see Jesus clearly present the three-in-one concept when He commands His disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).

Notice how He emphasizes the unity by using the phrase "the name" instead of the names. It is a demonstration of the oneness. The one true God's name is found in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Have you ever seen a baptism in your church? If you have, do you remember the pastor declaring the Trinity just before he lowered the candidate under the water? He will generally say something like this: "I now baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." He does that to uphold and proclaim the truth of the Trinity.

- B. One of the clearest interactions we see with all three members of the Godhead involved is at the baptism of Jesus (Mark 1:10-11). Simply put, the definition of the Godhead is: God's one divine nature or essence eternally co-existent in three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. When Jesus is baptized the Holy Spirit descends like a dove and a voice from Heaven (the Father) expresses the joy of the Father over the obedience of His Son.

Within the baptism of Jesus we can see some of the relationship within God. As Jesus was baptized it says Heaven opened for God the Father to speak, showing aggressive movement by the Father at the act of His Son. The word here is a passionate word and gives the imagery of a father bursting over with pride for his child. The Spirit descends upon Him to remain with Him throughout His ministry (John 1:33). Then the Father expresses that He is well pleased. The words used in the Greek are timeless and infer that the Father is continually pleased in His Son (Mark 1:11).

Consider the relationship of the Father to the Son and the Spirit. The Father set forth a plan to redeem humanity and it was His will to use the Son and the Spirit to accomplish it (John 6:38-40). He expresses great pleasure in His Son (Mark 1:10-11) for whom He has great love.

Even though the Son claims equality with the Father, Jesus demonstrates submission to the Father by acknowledging the will and purposes of the Father as primary (John 6:38-40; Matthew 26:39). Jesus voluntarily humbles Himself to be obedient to the Father's will and to bring glory to the Father (John 17:1-5; Philippians 2:6-11). Isn't it amazing to see that there is no jealousy or strife in this Father-Son relationship?

The Bible teaches that the Spirit is sent from both the Father and the Son, yet the Spirit never shows frustration or desire for control over the Father or the Son. It is clear in the Gospels that the Holy Spirit had a huge influence in the ministry of Jesus (Luke 4:1-2).

God's three-in-oneness means they are completely equal and yet distinct in their roles. They remain a union by lovingly giving of themselves to each other. There is no strife, greed, or pride in the Trinity. This is the example of how we are to live.

How is your relationship with other believers? Do you find yourself competing to bring attention to yourself? Do you seek to bring joy to God in your relationships?

C. Not only do we see the relationship within the Trinity, but the Bible shows the distinct way each member of the Trinity interacts with humanity. Paul clues us in on how all three members of the Trinity relate to us (2 Corinthians 13:14).

1) The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ – The Son gave up what was rightfully His and took on human flesh to provide a way for us to know the Father (Philippians 2:5-11). He has provided a means for us to be born again and adopted into God’s family with all the rights of a child (John 3:3; Romans 8:17). By becoming human, He identified Himself with our weaknesses and our struggles. He was tempted in every way we are, but He never sinned (Hebrews 4:15-16)—giving us an example of how to rely on the Spirit for power over sin.

Are you following the example of the Son? Do you look at your time with Jesus like spending time with an older brother who has set an example?

2) The Love of God the Father – It is only because of the Father’s love for us that we can love Him (1 John 4:19). The Father has communicated Himself to us as an inviting relationship of love and acceptance rather than a cold, distant, or angry God. He desires to gather us as His treasured possessions (John 17:11) and delights when we bring our requests to Him (Philippians 4:6-7). The Father loves us so much that He gave His only Son so that we might be made right with Him by placing our faith in Jesus (John 3:16).

How do you view the Father? Do you know Him as the loving, caring Father?

3) The Fellowship or Communion of the Holy Spirit – The Spirit partakes in our lives by drawing us to God (Revelation 22:17), comforting or helping us (John 14:16), and empowering us to serve God (1 Corinthians 12:11). He gives us strength to fight against sin and counsels us when we fail. He gives us assurance that we are children of God so we can live with confidence (Romans 8:16).

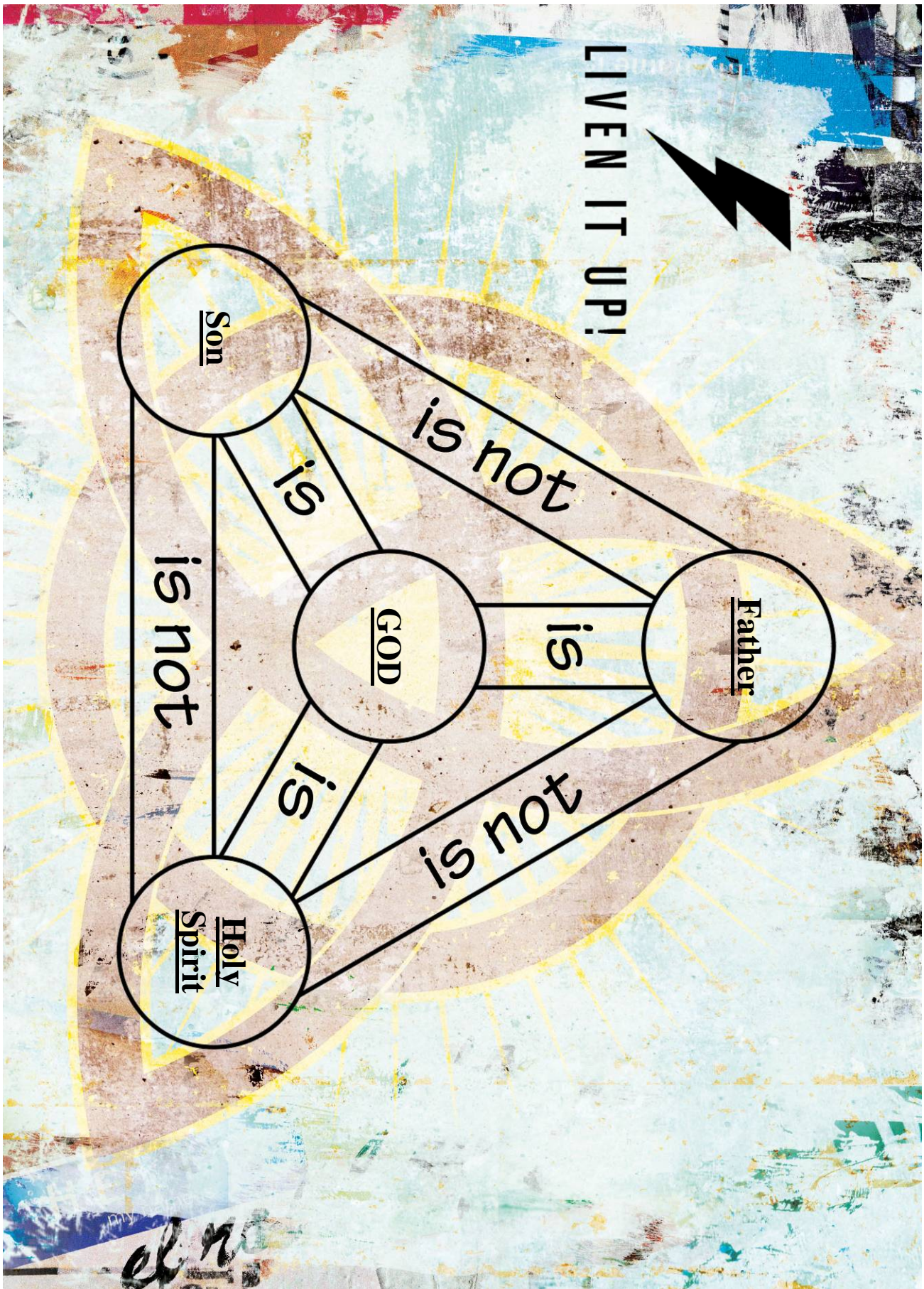
Are you listening to the Spirit? Do you rely on His strength to overcome? How do you know if the Holy Spirit is active in your life? (Have a student read the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-24.)

Conclusion

Within the Bible we are introduced to a relationship with the Godhead that is unique, different, and beyond our understanding. How can God be only one being yet three persons? We may not be able to understand it completely, but the wonder of the mystery and the relationship of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit should cause us to worship all three as equal. The Trinity is actively involved in our lives every day through the grace of Jesus, the love of the Father, and the fellowship of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14). Are you willing to let the Holy Spirit draw you into a closer relationship to the love of the Father through the grace of the Son? If you are, spend some time this week in 2 Corinthians 13:14 and ask these questions: Do I know the love of the Father? How can I demonstrate it? How can I follow the example of the

grace of the Lord Jesus? Am I experiencing the fellowship of the Holy Spirit?

Is there something the Holy Spirit is bringing to your attention that needs to be corrected? If so, will you obey Him and deal with it?





TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- The one true God is manifested in three distinct persons (1 Peter 1:2), and each has a part in our salvation.
- One consistent theme throughout Scripture is the teaching that there is only one God (1 Corinthians 8:6).
- He commands His disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).
- The Father loves us so much that He gave His only Son so that we might be made right with Him by placing our faith in Jesus (John 3:16).
- The Trinity is actively involved in our lives every day through the grace of Jesus, the love of the Father, and the fellowship of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14).



LIVE IT!

The Scriptural teachings of the Trinity show you how the one true God of the Bible is truly a three-in-one person: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They are completely equal, yet distinct in their roles. They remain a union by lovingly giving of themselves to each other. There is no strife, greed, or pride in the Trinity. This is the example of how Christians are to live. So when you are tempted to focus on yourself, you must instead give of yourself to others as the Trinity does.

Reference Materials

Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1986) pp. 51-59.

Donald G. Bloesch, *God the Almighty* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1995) pp. 166-204.

Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Zondervan, 2000) pp. 226-261.

<http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/aid/v3/n1/the-trinity>

<http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/2008/02/20/god-is-triune>

<http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/ipb-e/epl-10/web/edwards-essay-trinity.html>

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. What difference does it make to know that there is only one true God?
2. Why is it important to know that God is both one and three persons and each is fully God?
3. How does knowing how the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit relate to each other give us a pattern for life?

Try This Week...

School Bible Clubs: Teach your fellow students the importance of the Trinity and how each person works in their lives.

Hello, My Name Is...

Lesson Objective

The students will gain a better understanding of God through His various names and appreciate God's nature and characteristics, resulting in a more intimate relationship with Him.



LOOK IT UP!

Psalm 8:1

How is God's name described?



LISTEN UP!

Have you ever tried to think of all the people you know? Imagine that everyone you ever knew was a Facebook friend and you are browsing through their names. For some you might see their name and say "Who is this guy?" For others they are so close to you that you think of them fondly and their name brings back good memories. Names can be descriptive or conjure affection. As you get past someone's name and get to know them better, you start learning who they really are.

The writers of the Bible used different names to describe God. As we read the Bible, we see the *title* names that declare who He is. We read of *descriptive* names based on what God had done, or is presently doing. And we read of His *personal* names that reveal His character. His names will help you understand who He is and cause you to desire Him more (Isaiah 26:8).



LEARN IT!

Reveal: To take off the cover; to disclose; to give understanding.

Attribute: A distinguishing characteristic of God that sets Him apart and through which He reveals Himself to mankind.

Checklist

1. Paper, pens, and a bowl for the icebreaker
2. Internet connection or previously copied names from the Internet for the **Introduction**
3. Video: "A Majestic God - Psalm 8" from Bluefishtv.com
4. 3x5 cards with names of God and references
5. Projector and computer
6. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Icebreaker

"The Things Game" (<http://www.thingsthegame.com/>) Game adaptation: each student receives a blank piece of paper where they write the name of a person from a preselected category (Bible Names, Celebrities, Athletes, etc.) without letting anyone else know what they wrote. After folding it in half, a moderator will collect all the names in a bowl. The moderator will read through the names twice and then not refer

to them again. The game is played by one person starting and trying to identify who put what name in the bowl. So Amy guesses Steve put in “Brad Pitt.” If Amy’s guess is correct then she gets a point and Steve is now out. If Amy’s guess is wrong her turn is over and the next student guesses. The game is played until one player is left. Whoever has the most points at the end wins.

Introduction

What does your name mean?

What affects the meaning of a name? (original language and culture)

Teacher’s Note: Plug in your leaders’ names and look up their meanings and have some fun connecting your students with their leaders.

Top Six Most Popular Names

1. **Isabella** – God’s promise
2. **Emma** – whole or complete
3. **Olivia** – of the olive tree, peaceful
4. **Jacob** – he grasps the heel, supplanter
5. **Ethan** – strong, constancy
6. **Michael** – who is like God

Teacher’s Note: If you have a laptop or a smart phone, ask students to type in their name and pull up the meaning from a Web site like www.meaning-of-names.com and find out what their name means. Have fun discussing the meanings of the names and see how the name matches the character of the student. Save time by looking up several or all the names before youth group and just run through some of them.

Why were you given your name? Today our culture likes to name children based on what sounds cool. Like the couple who wanted to give their son the middle name “Danger” so he could grow up and say “Danger is my middle name.”

However, in Bible times they would name their children based on the character they hoped their child would grow to possess. It was a descriptive name. Let’s take a look at some of those names.

Content

Teacher’s Note: This is a video illustration: “A Majestic God.” Before we get into the names of God, let’s take a moment to reflect on who God is by watching this video. You will hear a couple of the names of God in it, but you will also be reminded of what He has done and is doing. See what stands out to you.

[http://www.bluefishtv.com/Store/Downloadable_Video_Illustrations/1570/A_Majestic_God - Psalm 8_Lesson_Available_/f=s1&s=a%20majestic%20god](http://www.bluefishtv.com/Store/Downloadable_Video_Illustrations/1570/A_Majestic_God_-_Psalm_8_Lesson_Available_/f=s1&s=a%20majestic%20god)

What stood out to you in the video?

Trying to understand God can seem impossible, like trying to contain the oceans in an aquarium. God knows that we cannot fully comprehend Him because our minds are so limited. Therefore, one of the ways that He chose to communicate about Himself is through His various names. We must remember that men were moved

along by the Holy Spirit to reveal God to us. The Bible has many names for God. Why do you think God has so many names?

Names have so many purposes. For instance, they reveal things to us. By “reveal” we mean to take off the cover, to disclose, or to give understanding. God is someone Who has many names and they reveal various aspects of His character and attributes. When we say “attributes,” we mean distinguishing characteristics of God that set Him apart and through which He reveals Himself to mankind. It also lets us know how He relates to us.

The very name of God brings us strength and safety (Proverbs 18:10). We are going to look at a few of these names and will classify these names as: title names, descriptive names, and personal names.

Teacher’s Note: Put the various names and references of God on 3×5 cards and distribute to students. As you refer to each name, have the student read the passage, then give your comments.

Title Names

Early on in the Old Testament, God revealed Himself to His people through titles that defined the relationship He had with His people. From Adam to Joseph, God was revealed to His people by His title names.

1. **Adonai** – Psalm 8:1 (*a-doe-nai*)

The first name is Adonai. Adonai means Master or Lord. Adonai emphasizes the servant/master relationship between man and God. For instance, Isaiah the prophet hears the voice of the Lord ask “who will go for us?” and Isaiah responded “Here am I; send me” (Isaiah 6:8). When the Lord called, Isaiah recognized the authority of his master and as a faithful servant he responded immediately. We need to learn from Isaiah and respond to God’s commands because He is the master of our lives. What is your response? Do you place yourself under Him as you are the servant and He is the master?

2. **El, Elohim** – Genesis 1:26 (*el, e-lo-heem*)

The next name we will look at is El or Elohim. El in English is God and Elohim is plural, but when referring to the God of the Bible Elohim is translated as God singular. Elohim is a plural word, which is peculiar because God is one (Deuteronomy 6:4). It reminds us of the fascinating truth of the trinity. Elohim points to our Creator God that made us in His image and points to the Trinity revealed later in the New Testament (Genesis 1:26). Elohim is one of three divine names by which the Creator is known as He creates. How does knowing God as your Creator and that every part of the Trinity is involved in creation impact you?

3. **God of the Fathers** – Exodus 3:16 (*ab, ab-ba*)

In some places the Bible refers to God as “God of the fathers” (God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, etc.). Here is a title given to distinguish the God of the Bible from the gods of the surrounding nations. In Old Testament times the surrounding cities and nations all had local gods they worshiped. God of the Fathers was used as a reassurance to the people of Israel that the same God Who called their Fathers is the God Who calls them. The title name, God of the fathers, connects God with the consistent, timeless, unchanging, faithful God that will keep His promises just as the God of Abraham kept His promises to Abraham.

The title names of God are the most commonly used and are pointers to who God is, but as the title “youth leader” doesn’t tell you who your youth leader is but what they are these names are limited. The people of the Old Testament recognized the limitations of the titles and, therefore, developed descriptive names for God to demonstrate how God revealed Himself to them.

Next, we are going to look at some of the descriptive names of God.

Descriptive Names

How many of you have nicknames? Does anyone want to share your nickname with the group? How did you get this name? (Example: a friend of mine had the nickname “red fro” because he had red hair and grew it out long.) Just as many of you have nicknames based on your attributes or accomplishments, God has revealed Himself in descriptive names.

1. **El-Shaddai** – Genesis 17:1-2 (*el-shad-dai*)

El-Shaddai is rendered in English as “The Almighty God.” God described Himself as The Almighty when establishing a covenant with Abraham and the early patriarchs. This name demonstrates that God has power over everything, specifically seen with Abraham—with time, governments, and families. Here His name demonstrates to Abraham that he can trust in the power and authority of God. In what ways can knowing that your God is the Almighty God impact your decisions this week?

2. **Jehovah-Rohi** – Psalm 23:1 (*je-ho-vah-ro-ee*)

Jehovah-Rohi is translated into English as “The LORD is my shepherd.” The significance of “The LORD is my shepherd,” as David writes in Psalm 23, is that God is the One who provides loving care for His people. A shepherd tends, cares for, and protects the sheep. He would speak and sing to them to keep them calm. He would lead them to green pastures and still waters. These are all great pictures of how God is there for you. As the shepherd, God cares for you, protects you, and wants to guide you to a place where you can learn and grow and have no want (Psalm 23:1).

How can you listen to the shepherd? Listening can come in many forms. The simplest is to get your Bible out and read it, study it, and search it out. There is also spending time in God’s creation and appreciating His creativity. Do you spend time in prayer talking to God? Are you listening to the voice of the shepherd?

3. **El-Roi** – Genesis 16:13 (*el-roe-ee*)

El-Roi is the “God who sees me.” The Bible tells us that God fulfills His promise to Hagar, a young single mom who was forced off into the wilderness. She calls Him the God Who sees because He remembered her and blessed her (Genesis 16:3). When we feel invisible and like nobody cares, remember El-Roi (the God who sees) sees you and remembers you. Think about that for a second. God sees you! God remembers you! You can call out to God with confidence knowing that He sees you and will take care of you (Genesis 16:13). In one sense this should encourage us to please God with our actions because God is there watching. However, El-Roi should mean more to us than a picture of a “Santa Claus” god checking off his naughty or nice list; it should be a name that reminds us He hasn’t forgotten us. El-Roi isn’t a name that we should relate with guilt or manipulation to please God, but rather a comfort to know that even when life doesn’t make sense and you feel all alone, God hasn’t forgotten about you. But we

must also be aware that he sees the ugliness too—the ugliness of our actions and our hearts. And we cannot disregard that fact. Do you believe God sees you? Do you believe He is always present?

There are times when all of us feel insignificant or maybe invisible. Or maybe that we will get away with a secret sin and no one knows. Have you ever felt that way? How can God's name, El-Roi, bring comfort or conviction to change in these times?

4. ***Jehovah-Jireh*** – Genesis 22:14 (*je-ho-vah-ji-rah*)

Jehovah-Jireh means “The Lord will provide.” This name is used many times in Genesis 22 when God called Abraham to sacrifice his only son, Isaac. Abraham's faith was being tested and he proved to be faithful to God. Just as Abraham raised the knife to sacrifice his son, God provided a ram in the thicket. Abraham's response was to describe God as the “Lord who will provide.” This name is a testimony to God's deliverance. So just think, as you begin to understand Jehovah-Jireh, you will begin to see that no matter what your need God is able to provide it for you. In what ways does God provide for you? Even the mundane things of life like waking up, drinking water, and eating food are evidences of God's provision that we often take for granted.

Who has a story that shows how Jehovah-Jireh provided for you?

Teacher's Note: This would be a good place to insert a personal story of how God has provided for you or your church.

Illustration: Things looked bleak for the children of George Mueller's orphanage at Ashley Downs in England. It was time for breakfast, and there was no food. A small girl whose father was a close friend of Mueller was visiting in the home. Mueller took her hand and said, “Come and see what our Father will do.” In the dining room, long tables were set with empty plates and empty mugs. Not only was there no food in the kitchen, but there was no money in the home's account. Mueller prayed, “Dear Father, we thank Thee for what Thou art going to give us to eat.” Immediately they heard a knock at the door. When they opened it, there stood the local baker. “Mr. Mueller,” he said, “I couldn't sleep last night. Somehow I felt you had no bread for breakfast, so I got up at 2 o'clock and baked fresh bread. Here it is.” Mueller thanked him and gave praise to God. Soon, a second knock was heard. It was the milkman. His cart had broken down in front of the orphanage. He said he would like to give the children the milk so he could empty the cart and repair it. The orphanage had a need and Mueller believed that Jehovah-Jireh would meet their need. Could you imagine what your life would look like if you had that kind of faith in God's ability to provide?

5. ***El-Olam*** – Isaiah 26:4; Psalm 90:2 (*el-o-lam*)

El-Olam means “God of eternity” or “God the Everlasting One.” God's rule extends through the passing of time and beyond our ability to see or understand. The psalmist uses this description of God in reference to His creation of the world. Isaiah refers to God as El-Olam to show that He is dependable and sure (Isaiah 26:4). When everything else in life is crazy, God is still reliable.

Everything we know in life is temporary. From the small things like your iPod and cell phone that have to be replaced every couple of years, to bigger things like the semesters at school, your house, and even your neighborhood. Friendships, a

possible divorce at home, or the loss of your grandparent would be examples of some of the even bigger concerns of life. Everything seems to change, everything, that is, except El-Olam, the God of Eternity. He remains constant, an unchanging force in our lives. He has longevity! He will outlive anything else and your relationship with Him has no end. When some relationships end or are broken and leave us uncertain, to know that God is El-Olam—everlasting—can bring us great peace.

How can knowing that God never changes and is always constant bring stability to your life?

Personal Names

1. **Yah, Yahweh** – Exodus 3:14-15; 6:2 (*yah, yah-weh*)

Yahweh is translated as Jehovah and/or LORD. In our English Bibles the distinction between Yahweh and Adonai is that Yahweh always uses the word LORD in all capital letters, whereas Adonai is spelled Lord. This is the covenant name for God. It carries the meaning of “self-existing one,” “the faithful covenant keeper,” and “I AM that I AM.” Early on in the Old Testament this name was thought to be a title name, and in Exodus God shows how this is His personal name. God demonstrates His intimacy with Moses by proclaiming that God did not reveal His personal name to “the Fathers” but, for the first time, He did reveal it to Moses (Exodus 6).

What promise has God made to us? God has promised His son (1 Corinthians 11:25). He promises that He would provide a Savior Who would forgive our sins in the person of Jesus Christ (John 3:16). He would continue to change us to be more like Him (Philippians 1:6) and that He will come back for us to take us to be with Him (John 14:3). His name, Yahweh, can remind us that He will keep His promises (Exodus 3:2-5).

The Jewish people, both in the Old Testament times and today, have such a reverence for this name that they will not pronounce it. It is recorded without vowels—YHWH. When they read the Old Testament and come to YHWH, they will read Adonai instead, so they don't defame the Holy Name of God. Later, they would pronounce YHWH with the vowels to Adonai, which is where we get the transliteration of Jehovah. The reverence and respect the Jewish people have for “The Name” should be a reminder to us to revere and honor God's names. After understanding this you can now see why taking God's name in vain is sin. We are never to use the name of God as a curse word. It is easy for us to slip into the common expressions of frustrations we hear every day. These aren't honoring or glorifying the name of God; they are belittling it. Instead we need to learn to reserve the name of God for worship and honor.

Yahweh indicates He is the faithful covenant keeper, or the One who keeps His promises. How does this name help you relate to God? What promises has God kept with you?

2. **Father, Son, and Holy Spirit** – Matthew 28:18-20

The last name we will look at is the name we commonly refer to as the Trinity. The name of the Godhead is revealed as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Notice it is not the “names” of the Father, Son, and Spirit, but singular “the name of.” This is important because as God revealed a personal name to Moses in Yahweh, He reveals Himself in a personal way in the Trinity. The One God in three persons shows us a way of relating to God that we wouldn't have known before. Just as

we spoke of in the last lesson, the name “Trinity” isn’t found in Scripture. It is a name we have derived to teach what is already taught in the Word of God.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit reveal to us a God of relationship. How can studying the relationships in the Trinity be a guide to our relationships?

Conclusion

The title, descriptive, and personal names of God all work together to help us understand God more clearly. They help us remember our position before God of servant/master. They tell us what He has done, is doing, or will do. They reveal to us His complex character. As we study and learn the names of God we will truly see the excellence of His name. So as we remember names like El-Shaddai, the Almighty Creator God of the universe, we will be compelled to respond in awe and respect of Him. And Jehovah-Rohi, the Lord is my shepherd, reminds us that the Almighty God is also One who personally cares and provides for His people. Knowing God’s names will bring confidence in all of life’s circumstances. God’s name is sacred. Will you commit to the following?

1. Seek to memorize some of the names of God and their meanings.
2. As you pray, address God and talk with Him about His names.
3. Refrain from taking God’s name in vain.

title names

1. Adonai – Master/Lord (Psalm 8:1)
2. El, Elohim – the singular God (Genesis 1:26)
3. God of the Fathers – the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exodus 3:16)

descriptive names

1. El-Shaddai – the Almighty God (Genesis 17:1-2)
2. Jehovah-Rohi – the Lord is my Shepherd (Psalm 23:1)
3. El-Roi – the God Who sees me (Genesis 16:13)
4. Jehovah-Jireh – the Lord Who provides (Genesis 22:14)
5. El-Olam – God of eternity (Isaiah 26:4; Psalm 90:2)

personal names

1. Yahweh – I AM WHO I AM, the Faithful Covenant Keeper (Exodus 3:14-15; 6:2)
2. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – the Trinity (Matthew 28:18-20)



LIVEN IT UP!



TRUTH FOR LIFE!



LIVE IT!

The very name of God brings us strength and safety (Proverbs 18:10).

- As the shepherd, God cares for you, protects you, and wants to guide you to a place where you can learn and grow and have no want (Psalm 23:1).
- You can call out to God with confidence knowing that He sees you and will take care of you (Genesis 16:13).
- Isaiah refers to God as El-Olam to show that He is dependable and sure (Isaiah 26:4).

God is too big for you to fully understand. That's one reason why the Bible uses multiple names to describe Him. As you learn them you will see God working in your life. They will also give you confidence in the One who is trustworthy as you learn about Him and what He is like. As you read through the Bible, look for some of the various names of God and you will be amazed at how many ways He describes Himself. These will only give you more reasons to love and trust Him.

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Wood, D. R. W. & Marshall, I. H., *New Bible Dictionary 3rd ed.* (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1996) pp. 801–802.

Video Recommendation: "A Majestic God - Psalm 8"

http://www.bluefishtv.com/Store/Downloadable_Video_Illustrations/1570/A_Majestic_God_-_Psalm_8_Lesson_Available_/f=s1&s=a%20majestic%20god

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. What names of God did you already know? How?
2. Which of the names of God that we talked about tonight spoke to you specifically? Why?
3. How do you think a study of the names of God will help you in your walk with Christ this week?

Try This Week...

Giving a Testimony: Tell someone about one of the names of God and how that helps you know God better.

I Am, Feeling You Bro

Lesson Objective

The students will learn to identify sinful emotions and be shown how each person of the Trinity can minister to them for victory and strength.



LOOK IT UP!

Ephesians 4:31

Believers are to put away what?



LISTEN UP!

Every day you face circumstances outside of your control that seem unfair, unpleasant, or unneeded. Maybe it's with your family and you get frustrated because your parents don't understand you. Or maybe every day at school someone messes with you. Each situation is different; therefore, your emotional responses are different. How should you respond to situations that are outside your control? How should you feel about these types of situations?

Did you know that God's Word gives us a guide on how to respond correctly (Psalm 119:105)? Scripture tells us that the normal human response often leads to sin. God wants us to learn how to think and feel in every situation so that we can respond like He would, even with our emotions. How we feel is linked to how we think; when we start to think the way God does, we will begin to feel the way He does. A correct understanding of God, revealed as the Trinity, will equip us to change our thinking and thus the way we emotionally respond to these uncontrollable situations.



LEARN IT!

Godhead: God's one divine nature or essence eternally co-existent in three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Emotions: A natural, instinctive state of mind deriving from one's circumstances, mood, or relationships with others.

Checklist

1. Video "Anger only makes things worse" – www.bluefishtv.com
2. Video projector and computer
3. Pictures of nine different fruit
4. A bowl
5. A PowerPoint presentation is available with this lesson at the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Review

In the last few weeks we have learned how God has revealed Himself to us in the Bible as stated in the Trinity and through His various names. The Trinity is another name for the Godhead and means God's one divine nature or essence co-existent in three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The many names of God reveal His character and help us relate to Him. This week we are

going to look at how each member of the Trinity can help us and, specifically, how to overcome sinful feelings.

Introduction

Every day we face different situations, circumstances, and people that evoke different responses. Many times these responses are a result of our emotions. Our emotions are a natural instinctive state of mind deriving from one's circumstances, mood, or relationships with others. If we have good feelings then we often respond in a good way. But what happens when the person is unpleasant, the situation seems unfair or the circumstance seems uncontrollable? What kind of feelings arise in your heart?

How would you feel and respond if you faced these situations?

Situation # 1 – You stand in line for a concert and as soon as you get to the ticket counter they tell you it is sold out.

Situation # 2 – Your youth group goes to the local school football game on a Friday night and your team loses in double overtime.

Situation # 3 – You're at your friend's house for a party and your parents call you and tell you they are going to pick you up early to have some family time.

Situation # 4 – It is lunch time and you go to your normal table and it is completely full.

Based on your answers to these situations, which do you think is easier to have—sinful feelings, like anger or bitterness, or godly feelings, like joy and peace? What really determines whether we will have sinful feelings in situations like these? It really depends on your desire to either please God or please yourself.

Content

In the Bible we have a clear teaching that tells us about our walk. Walking according to the Spirit's desire will not allow the sinful responses of the flesh to overtake us (Galatians 5:16). Not only that but the Holy Spirit commands us to put off the old sinful natural responses and put on new godly responses (Ephesians 4:22-24).

The Godly Feelings

There are several feelings, responses, and characteristics that God desires to be evident in a believer's life and are results of the Holy Spirit's influence in you. These are called, "the fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22-23). We are going to take a brief look at each of these.

Teacher's Note: Find pictures of nine different fruit (apple, pear, banana, grapes, orange, peach, pineapple, grapefruit, tangerine, or whatever). Number them 1-9 on the back along with the name of the corresponding fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control). Have students pull them out sequentially and read the characteristic quality of that fruit of the Spirit; then you can give the definition. It would be even greater if you can use real fruit instead of just a picture.

1. **Love** is a purposeful act of selfless giving for the good of others. How would you say love would be displayed at your lunch table?

2. **Joy** is rejoicing, in spite of circumstances, knowing that God is in control of everything and always has our best in mind. What would true joy look like when your parents won't let you go with your friends to a movie?
3. **Peace** is a sense of calm and quietness, even in the face of adversity, based on one's trust in God. How would this kind of peace be evident when a fellow student gets in a car accident?
4. **Longsuffering** is to be patient, to bear with, to be long tempered. What would patience look like when your brother or sister is annoying you?
5. **Gentleness** is a sympathetic kindness. a spirit of fairness and compassion. Give me an example of how you can show gentleness or kindness at school this week.
6. **Goodness** is an uprightness of heart and life, a quality of moral excellence. What would it look like to apply goodness when someone has gossiped about you? Will you try to get revenge?
7. **Faithful** is a quality that makes a person trustworthy or reliable. When the teacher walks out of the room during a test, what does faithfulness look like?
8. **Meekness** is a submissive and teachable spirit toward God that manifests itself in genuine humility before God and gentle consideration of others. When that weird kid at school keeps nagging you, what does gentleness and meekness look like?
9. **Temperance** (self-control) is control over one's desires and passions. When you are out on a date, what does self-control look like to you?

Displaying the fruit of the Spirit is evidence that you are walking in the Spirit. Wouldn't it be great if we had these feelings and responses all the time? The problem is that we are fallen humans that battle with sin (Romans 3:23). Sin means we aren't perfect and it is the reason we struggle to control our feelings all the time.

Teacher's Note: Find an article or story that invokes a negative emotional response in your teens. Here is an example of a type of story that you could use:

It was July 2010 and the United States watched intently for several weeks to hear the "BIG" news. You would think something major was about to happen, like a new president, or something of national importance. What the "big hoopla" was all about was where LeBron James, a famous basketball player in the NBA, would play in 2011. Really? Yep! And what transpired was that he chose to leave his hometown team, the Cleveland Cavaliers, where he got his start and had played for the past seven years. He instead chose to go play with a division rival, the Miami Heat.

With this announcement we saw the Cleveland fans respond with anger, wrath, and evil speaking. Many of the fans are still holding on to bitter grudges against their former hero. LeBron responded to ESPN.com, a sports Web site and magazine, with this statement: "Sports are very emotional and fans are very emotional...When you do something wrong and you leave their house they can become very emotional. But at the same time, you have to understand you have to do what is best for yourself."

If you were to go to the ESPN.com article on the Internet and scroll down to the end of the article and read the comments left by the readers you would see how the former fans responded with sinful emotions ...good thing ESPN censored them.

What feelings were voiced in this story? Would you say those are fruit of the Spirit or would you say these are sinful feelings and works of the flesh?

The Sinful Feelings (Works of the flesh)

When we face unfair, unpleasant, and uncontrollable situations we tend to follow our sinful nature. In Ephesians 4:31, the Apostle Paul outlines several emotional responses that we need to avoid if we want to glorify God with our feelings.

Can you define bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking, and malice?

Bitterness – keeping a list of wrongs suffered

Wrath – a fast burning anger

Anger – a strong feeling of instant displeasure and usually of antagonism

Malice – a feeling or intent to harm

Paul describes these as the normal responses of the old nature, the life without Christ (Ephesians 4:17-19). The Bible teaches us that we were born with an old, sinful nature (Ephesians 2:1-4). This is the part of us that naturally wants to sin. It is this nature that presents the need we have for the Savior, Jesus Christ.

What happens when we allow these sinful feelings to take control? What does that look like?

Let's look at anger. What happens when anger controls you? There can be a desire to retaliate and get your own way. Anger can lead to actions against friends or family without thinking that can cause further friction. Some respond by withdrawing from others because of their anger. We all get angry from time to time, but when we don't learn to check our anger against the Scriptures, it can begin to consume us. How many of you like to be around an angry person?

How about bitterness? What does bitterness look like in everyday life? Bitterness often begins when we begin to make a mental list of hurtful things that people have done to us. When this anger takes root it turns into a grudge. When the grudge takes root it becomes bitterness. We feel justified in our grudge, but when it turns to bitterness it spreads quickly. It begins to affect all our relationships and distances us from God. If you don't deal with it quickly it can even affect our health and can cause depression. What should we do when we realize we have bitterness in our heart? We confess it and let God clean us (1 John 1:9).

What are some other sinful feelings that we deal with regularly (laziness, malice, pride, fear, anxiety, etc.)?

When we trust that Jesus is Lord and believe in Him, He gives us a new nature, a righteous nature. We constantly battle between the old nature and the new nature (Ephesians 4:22-24). We need to continually examine our emotions and attitudes to see if they are of the old nature or the new. The Word of God gives us a guide in the battle so that we can gain the victory. It describes the old nature (Ephesians 4:22) and the new nature (Ephesians 4:24) and how we get the new one (Ephesians 4:23; Romans 12:2).

Sinful feelings are destructive and can damage your relationship with others and God. For example, these emotions can lead to sinful actions such as clamor (loud threats), evil speaking (slander or abusive language), and ultimately, lead to disaster (Matthew 5:21-22).

There is a constant battle for the way you think and feel. We are commanded to control our thoughts and feelings (2 Corinthians 10:5). We can change by thinking differently (Ephesians 4:23-24).

Let's look at the fruit of the Spirit again: love, joy, peace, longsuffering (patience), gentleness (kindness), goodness, faithfulness, meekness (gentleness), and temperance (self-control). Now, how does this list compare to the sinful feelings we looked at? Which ones do you want in your life?

Which ones will you allow to control your life? Will you choose the fruits of the Spirit or sinful, selfish emotions?

But how do we control our feelings? God desires us to have victory in our emotions. He has provided a way for us through a relationship with Him through Jesus Christ, God's Son. When we have this relationship we have eternal life (John 17:3). If knowing God is the way of eternal life, then learning more about who He is will help us overcome sin. God has revealed that He is a Trinity. Can anyone remind us what we mean by the Trinity? Trinity teaches us about God's three-in-oneness. He is one God in three distinct persons, one in essence but distinct in roles. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit can help you learn to control your emotions.

The Proper Perspective

If we remember that our negative emotional responses often come out when situations, circumstances, or people seem unfair, unpleasant, or uncontrollable, then we can learn how to think and feel differently. The root of sinful emotions is misplaced beliefs about who we are and who God is. We often think of ourselves too much and too highly and are slow at thinking about God. Or we think of our situation as a punishment from God and not an opportunity to learn more about God.

In order to help us gain a new perspective on these situations, we want to look at three foundational beliefs that will help us to think properly about who God is. In order to truly change, our thinking must be changed (Romans 12:2).

1. The Father Is In Control.

When something feels uncontrollable we need to remember that God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, has a plan for our lives. God the Father plans, directs, and orders all things according to His good pleasure (Ephesians 1:9-10) and for good (Romans 8:28). So when you feel overwhelmed by a situation in which you usually respond sinfully, stop and remind yourself that God is in control and that He has a plan for this situation in your life. Pray that He will calm your emotions and help you to trust Him.

Do we have confidence in God the Father? It is good to remind ourselves from time to time that we have confidence in the Father because of His great love for us. As we work to understand this love for us we will see that our negative emotions are contrary to His love, but our good emotional responses bring Him joy. Do you know the love of the Father? Consider that He is the Creator God (Genesis 1:1) who made you special (Psalm 139:13-14) with a plan and a future (Psalm 139:16; Jeremiah 29:11). And even though we have sinned and fallen

short of His standard (Romans 3:23) and while we continued to rebel against Him (Romans 5:8), He gave us an amazing gift of His Son Jesus (John 3:16). All we have to do is receive the free gift (Ephesians 2:8-9) and He will begin a new work in us (Philippians 1:6). Our confidence in God comes from remembering that He is God and is a rewarder of those who seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). When we place our trust in Jesus and receive the love of the Father, think of the secure foundation we have on which to base our emotional responses. .

2. **Jesus Is Our Focus.**

But not only do we have the truth that God is in control, even though we are not, we have the truth that Jesus, God the Son, has come to accomplish the will of the Father (John 6:38). Jesus has worked out the means of victory through the completed work on the cross and the resurrection. So when things seem unpleasant we need to focus on Jesus (Hebrews 12:2) who endured so much that we might be victorious. So the next time you are hurrying down the hall because you are late to class and someone bumps into you and knocks your books and papers all over the floor and you just want to scream at them in anger, remember that it is God's will to live at peace with one another (Romans 12:18). Now it is up to you to choose—do you lash out in anger or do you follow the example of Jesus to obey the will of God?

Are your eyes focused on Jesus? Have you ever looked through binoculars that are out of focus? You can pick them up and look in and everything is blurry. The binoculars have a dial to adjust the focus. If you turn it you can focus it. Focusing on Jesus is hard in the world you live in. Every day you face battles that challenge your emotions. From the videos and TV shows you watch to the music you listen to and your Facebook and school friends—each telling you something different. This unpredictability can make it hard to respond in a godly manner. The Bible is the dial to adjust your focus. If we want to be fruitful, we need to spend time abiding in him (John 15:5). We can do this by spending time in the Word of God. Sometimes we need to read a lot, like reading through a whole chapter or book, just so we can understand what is going on. Other times we need some fine tuning and need to just focus on a couple of verses and really think about them like we do in our quiet times.

3. **The Holy Spirit Is Our Power to Change.**

When things seem unfair the Holy Spirit comforts (John 15:26), gives power (Acts 1:8), leads (Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:18), and shows us how to live (or walk) (Galatians 5:16; Romans 8:14). The Holy Spirit is always working in our lives during these times. Sometimes we don't even realize it at the time, but later we wonder why we were so peaceful during a crisis or where the words of encouragement came from. Other times the Holy Spirit convicts us and we have to make a choice to obey Him.

So guys, when you are hanging out with your friends and they are teasing you for not fooling around with girls and you feel embarrassed and have such a strong desire to attack them, or maybe you feel insecure and you have this sense deep down that you should walk away, that's the Holy Spirit. Girls, when you find out that your friend told the lunch table about your secret crush and you want to hold a grudge, but you sense deep down that you should let it go, that is the Holy Spirit. Are you listening to the Holy Spirit speaking to you about your emotions?

Are you seeking the power of the Holy Spirit? If you believe in God and focus your eyes on Jesus, you will begin to understand the power of the Holy Spirit.

However, we need to seek and ask for the Holy Spirit to work in our lives. He is working constantly, but asking for the Holy Spirit through prayer is placing yourself in the position to listen for His leading. God promises to give us His Spirit so we can know Him better (Ephesians 1:17) and give us power to overcome sin, that same power that raised Jesus from the dead (Ephesians 1:19-20).

When we are led by the Spirit we will not want to fulfill our natural desires (Galatians 5:16). For instance, we can choose to replace the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit. Instead of bitterness and wrath, we can replace them with joy. We can replace anger with kindness and patience. We can choose self-control, gentleness, and goodness instead of malice. Instead of our natural responses, we can respond in the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:16, 22-23).

When we think properly about God, we can replace all the other sinful feelings that creep into our lives by submitting to the Spirit. How are you living for God in your emotional responses?

Conclusion

Every day we face unfair, unpleasant, and uncontrollable situations that will provoke an emotional response. We are constantly in this war between having negative or positive responses, but we need help. The Bible is an amazing book that speaks to us with understanding.

When our confidence is in the Father's control, our victory is through the Son, and the power we have to do this is in the Holy Spirit, we find that He begins a work in helping us control our emotions.

Which list will you choose to live by this week? The fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23 or the sinful feelings listed in Ephesians 4:31?

Write out the fruit of the Spirit on a note card and carry it with you this week, asking God to help you develop these godly responses.



A. Godly Feelings –
Galatians 5:22-23

B. Sinful Feelings –
Ephesians 4:31

C. The Proper Perspective –
Romans 12:2

1. The Father is in Control.
2. Jesus is our Focus.
3. The Holy Spirit is our Power to change.

LIVEN IT UP!



TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- Walking according to the Spirit's desire will not allow the sinful responses of the flesh to overtake us (Galatians 5:16).
- In order to truly change, our thinking must be changed (Romans 12:2).
- Our confidence in God comes from remembering that He is God and is a rewarder of those who seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).
- If we want to be fruitful, we need to spend time abiding in him (John 15:5).
- When we are led by the Spirit we will not want to fulfill our natural desires (Galatians 5:16).



LIVE IT!

Throughout life you will face many unfair, unpleasant, and uncontrollable circumstances that negatively affect your emotions. God knows this! He has given you a help by showing you Who He is in the Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. When you learn to trust God's control, the victory that Jesus is working, and the power you have in the Holy Spirit, you will see God work in your understanding and change your emotions to reflect Him.

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Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. Which part of the Trinity do you struggle understanding the most?
2. What emotion(s) do you struggle with the most?
3. How does understanding the Trinity help you work through your emotions?

Try This Week...

Visitation Work: Encourage someone with the fact that every aspect of the Trinity can help them.

Power-Aid

Lesson Objective

The students will rely on the names of God for strength to obey.



LOOK IT UP!

Proverbs 18:10

In what name are the righteous safe?



LISTEN UP!

Have you ever had a task or faced a circumstance that was too big for you? Maybe you got the news that your parents are getting a divorce and they want you to decide which one you are going to live with. A decision like that can be overwhelming. The stress can be so immense that you just want it to be over; you just want to disappear.

Sometimes we see a command that God has for us in His Word, like “Be holy as I am Holy,” and it is so huge that the pressure can cause us to want to quit. This week we are going to learn that when God calls us to change, His names are a source for strength to carry us through! We can run to one of the names of the Lord and we will find safety (Proverbs 18:10). So when you are overwhelmed, look to the names of God and see how He is the strength you need to stand strong!



LEARN IT!

Reverence: To adore, to be in awe of, to respect.

Sin: The lack of conformity to, or transgression of, the law of God.

Checklist

1. TV/projector and computer/DVD player
2. Video: “What Do You Depend On?” from Bluefishtv.com
3. Two 16 oz. paper cups
4. Plaster of paris or spackling compound
5. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Teacher’s Note: You may want to begin with the humorous video “What Do You Depend On?” to grab the students’ attention.

Have you ever faced situations that make you feel out of control, weighed down, or like you have lost your strength? How many of you have ever felt that way? Is anyone willing to share your story?

Where did you get strength?

Teacher's Note: This would be a good place to share your own story or a story about someone that felt overwhelmed and how God's name gave them strength. For instance, "When I'm overwhelmed, God knows and He sees me (El-Roi). He knows where I am, and more importantly, where I'm headed. Genesis 16:13 is such a great reminder to me that when I'm going through my own private darkness, God is with me, comforting my spirit."

Isn't it amazing how God reveals Himself to us through the different circumstances we face? Oftentimes we don't realize the lessons we have learned until after the fact. That is often the purpose of the situation we're in, to help us develop a proper perspective of who God is and to learn to rely on Him for our power. That is what we are going to talk about—developing the proper perspective of the names of God and how each of God's names provides us with a unique source of power for each situation we face. When we see that His names reveal Who He is, His nature and character then we will begin to see how special His names are. We will learn that we can depend upon His name for strength every day.

Content

It is so easy to think that we have everything figured out and know what is best. Have you ever told your friend or sibling something that you knew they didn't know and their response was "I know"? Isn't that annoying? Many times we come to God and say "I know" when we really don't know. We may not realize this is what we are doing by refusing to seek answers from the Word of God, or not praying to ask God for His wisdom and discernment. Another way we do this is by not going to godly examples in our lives, like our youth leaders or small group leader, to seek biblical counsel. That is why it is so important that we learn the proper perspective as it allows us to put things in focus.

1. Developing a Proper Perspective (Psalm 34:3; Philippians 2:10)

The proper perspective starts with placing the names of God in the proper place. This means giving them proper reverence. To revere the names of God simply means to adore, to be in awe of, and to respect them. The psalmist is so excited about how good God is he calls us to worship and honor God's name with him. He does this by using the words "magnify" and "exalt" His name. This simply means to bring God's name into proper focus and tell others about Him. When we focus our eyes on how amazing God is, we will magnify and exalt His name (Psalm 34:3).

The name of God's Son, Jesus, is commonly used in our culture as a swear word. The apostle Paul tells us how God views the name of Jesus. The name of Jesus is exalted above every name and upon hearing His name we should worship Him (Philippians 2:9-11). The proper response to the name of Jesus should be a humbled heart and a bowed knee. How often that precious name is mentioned with disgust and shame. The Bible clearly teaches us that it is by the name of Jesus that we must be saved (Acts 4:12). When we see Who Jesus is and what He has done we will see how precious His name is and bow down and worship Him.

When we have gained the proper perspective we will then be equipped to draw from our source of power.

2. Drawing From the Source of Power (Genesis 22:14; Proverbs 18:10; Exodus 17:15; Judges 6:24; Psalm 23:1; Ezekiel 48:35)

What do you do if your cell phone battery is about to die? You plug into the power source to recharge. If your phone goes long enough without a recharge it will die. In the same way, if you refuse to draw from the power that God has made available to you, your spiritual walk will become lifeless. Once we have focused our eyes and begin to see the glory of God's names we will begin to change (Hebrews 12:1-2). The wonderful thing is that the various names of God provide strength for us to change. His names point us to Him and He is our power source! Don't forget to recharge every day!

When your cell phone is about to die, it gives you indicators to tell you to recharge. We are going to learn from that concept by looking at three behaviors that are indicators we need to plug into the source of power. Each of these has crippling effects on our lives if we don't deal with them properly by running to God for overcoming strength. They will result in sin, which is the lack of conformity to, or transgression of the law of God. These three behaviors are when we desire our own way, struggle with worry, and are overcome with fear. When these take hold of our life they drain our energy and cause us to be ineffective. Let's look at how we can find strength from the names of God to overcome three very common sins in life.

A. When We Desire **Our Own Way**

God's Word tells us not to live life according to our own understanding or way of thinking, but to trust God's way (Proverbs 3:5-6). Instead we want to rely on ourselves, which is sin (Isaiah 53:6). However, God has given us a source of power over sin in His name. Consider Abraham. He was called by God to sacrifice his son, Isaac, as a test of faith. If we try to put ourselves in Abraham's shoes, we may wonder if he would have thought about sacrificing a lamb instead. However, Abraham obeyed God. Abraham and Isaac climbed up the mountain, prepared the altar, and got ready. Just when Abraham was about to thrust the knife into his son, God stopped him and provided a ram in place of Isaac. We see that Abraham gained strength from God's name: **Jehovah-Jireh** (*je-ho-vah-ji-rah*) – **the LORD Who provides** (Genesis 22:14). When we see that God is the source of provision, we can endure any trial knowing that He will give us whatever we need to get through it.

One of the toughest times to stand firm against sin is when we are alone. Sometimes we are lonely or bored and the thought that we can do whatever we want and nobody would know comes to our mind. It is in this time that we should remember the name the prophet Ezekiel uses, one of the most significant names that can bring great strength no matter what the circumstances in life are: **Jehovah-Shammah** (*je-ho-vah-shawm-ah*) – **the LORD is there** (Ezekiel 48:35). This is the name that speaks of the presence of God in your life now and always. It is so easy to desire our own way. In our sinfulness we don't even have to try to want our own way; it is simply instinctive. However, these two names of God provide strength to overcome the desire to indulge in self-gratification and remember that the Lord will provide help in testing times like He did for Abraham, and God is always there like in Ezekiel's case.

What have you done this past week to get your own way? Maybe you looked up something inappropriate on the computer, sent a really nasty text message, or lied to your parents. How can God's name give you victory?

B. When We Struggle With **Worry**

Worry is a sin that we all struggle with at certain times. For some, worry is their favorite pastime. They worry about everything from going to school, to exams, or just talking to someone they don't know. What types of things do you worry about? Jesus tells us very simply and to the point, don't worry (Matthew 6:25-34). Worry happens when we don't take God at His Word and we don't believe God is in control. One wise man said "Worry is like a rocking chair, it will give you something to do, but you won't get anywhere!" If you really want to make a difference... instead of worrying, trust in the name of God.

King Solomon wrote in Proverbs 18:10, that "The name of the LORD is a strong tower," a mighty fortress where we can run to safety. If we learn to focus our eyes on the name and character of God then we will see how safe He is. This verse is a good reminder to stop worrying and trust God. When we understand that the character of God is a source of safety we know that we can rest in Him.

In the Old Testament Gideon was a judge and leader of the people of Israel. Gideon served during one of the darkest times of Jewish history. God was calling him to deliver Israel from a great oppressor. Gideon was not a trained general of an army, but a farm boy. He was found hiding from the enemy; yet he found strength in the name: **Jehovah-Shalom** (*je-ho-vah-sha-lom*) – **the LORD is peace**. This gave him strength because he knew that God is the only one who could bring him and his people peace (Judges 6:24).

God may not be calling you to fight a battle, but you are facing battles with worry every day. Perhaps you worry about your grades, your future school or career, or perhaps there are huge family struggles, like potential or recent divorce. Why do you worry about it? How can the names of God give you strength?

C. When We Are Overcome By **Fear**

Lastly we want to look at fear. Have you ever been afraid? Would anyone like to share a story of when you were afraid? Fear can strike us at any moment. The Bible tells us that fear is not from God; but instead He has given power to overcome (2 Timothy 1:7). We are to have a spirit of power, love, and a clear mind. God's name is a source of strength to overcome fear.

Moses was called to lead God's people out of Egypt into the Promised Land. There were plenty of opportunities for Moses to fear, and yet he gained strength in the names of God. Moses said: **Jehovah-Nissi** (*je-ho-vah-nis-see*) – **the LORD is my banner**, after a victory over the Amalekites in Exodus 17:15. In Moses' time, a banner was the rallying point in battle. If you got lost, you would look for your banner to regroup. We can get distracted and fearful, but God has provided His name as a rallying point to run back to, to regroup and refocus.

One of the most loved and quoted psalms of all time is Psalm 23. The very first verse gives us a name of God that provides great strength and comfort in a time of need: **Jehovah-Rohi** (*je-ho-vah-ro-ee*) – **the LORD is my shepherd** and it speaks of God's gentle and loving care for His people.

Shepherding was a unique occupation. He spent a lot of time alone with his sheep leading them to greener grass and still waters. Sheep are very fearful animals and get spooked very easily. One of the ways a shepherd would calm his sheep was to talk to his sheep in a calm, soothing voice, or to sing to them. Sheep would become familiar with their shepherd's voice and learn to trust it. An amazing truth about God being our shepherd is that we learn that He sings over us (Zephaniah 3:17). If we listen to His voice in times of distress or discouragement, we will know that God's name of shepherd is a source of power going before us, providing all we will need to overcome fear. When we are afraid, we can gain strength from knowing that the Lord is our shepherd. In what ways can we listen to His voice? We listen to the Shepherd by spending time in His Word, in His creation, with His people, and in prayer.

So what causes you to fear? How can God's name give you strength over fear?

Object Lesson: Paper Cup Support

Teacher's Note: Mix some plaster of paris or spackling compound and fill one 16 oz. paper cup several days in advance so it has adequate time to dry and harden. Put both paper cups upside down on the floor with about two feet between them, be careful to not let the hardened compound fall out. Try not to let the youth know there is anything in the one cup.

When we face these sins such as wanting our own way, worry, and fear, we often try to overcome them in our own strength. It's like trying to get this cup to hold my weight. (Step on the empty cup and watch it get crushed). Why didn't this cup hold my weight?

The cup is made of paper and wasn't designed to hold that kind of weight. It will always be crushed under the pressure. It's just like we weren't created to be able to handle sin on our own. We need God's strength to overcome sin.

So let's try this again, I am going to stand on this cup. (Step on the cup with the hardened mix in it and let all your weight remain on it as you finish the illustration.) Why did this cup hold my weight? Did I do anything different? Did I change my technique?

Teacher's Note: Get off the cup and pick it up, show the students the hardened compound.

No, the difference is this cup has been reinforced with a hardening compound. The paper cup proved to be strong enough when something stronger than paper and air filled it. Just like this cup needed to be filled with plaster of paris to be strong enough to hold the pressure, you too need the strength of God to stand firm in your battles.

Conclusion

When we want to stand strong in life, when we are overwhelmed or distracted, we need to remember there is strength available for every believer. As we get into the Word of God and see the names of God we learn that we can depend upon Him for strength. It begins with getting the proper perspective on who He is, as revealed in His names. Only then can we learn to draw from His name as a source of power over sin in our life. Have you tapped into the power source? How can you plug into the power source this week? When you are tempted to get your own way this week, what can you do to rely on Jehovah-Jireh's (the Lord Who provides) strength? What are you worried about right now that you can surrender to Jehovah-Rohi (the Lord is my shepherd) and trust Him to lead you to overcome? What causes you to fear? Fix your eyes on Jehovah-Nissi (the Lord is my banner).



Power-Aid

LIVEN IT UP!

Jehovah-
Jireh
the LORD
Who
provides

Jehovah-
Shammah
the LORD
is there

Jehovah-
Shalom
the LORD
is peace

Jehovah-
Nissi
the LORD
is my
banner

Jehovah-
Rohi
the LORD
is my
shepherd

I. Developing a Proper Perspective (Psalm 34:3; Philippians 2:10)

II. Drawing From the Source of Power

- A. When We Desire Our Own Way (Genesis 22:14; Ezekiel 48:35)
- B. When We Struggle With Worry (Proverbs 18:10; Judges 6:24)
- C. When We Are Overcome By Fear (Exodus 17:15; Psalm 23:1)



TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- When we focus our eyes on how amazing God is, we will magnify and exalt His name (Psalm 34:3).
- The name of Jesus is exalted above every name and upon hearing His name we should worship Him (Philippians 2:11).
- God's Word tells us not to live life according to our own understanding or way of thinking, but to trust God's way (Proverbs 3:5-6).
- The Bible tells us that fear is not from God; but instead He has given power to overcome (2 Timothy 1:7).



LIVE IT!

Every day you struggle with the sins of wanting your own way, worry, fear, and others. When you learn to fix your eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-2) and on who God is and His names, you will see that God has provided strength so you can overcome. Learn the names of God by reading the Bible and watch how He wants to equip you to have victory. God's names reveal His power and control, but also His great love and mercy for you. Run to God and you will be safe!

Reference Materials

- Brand, C., Draper, C., England, A., Bond, S., Clendenen, E. R., Butler, T. C., & Latta, B., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003) p. 1174.
- Drane, J. W., *Introducing the Old Testament* (Completely rev. and updated) (Oxford, UK: Lion Publishing Plc., 2000) p. 252.
- Wood, D. R. W., & Marshall, I. H., *New Bible Dictionary* (3rd ed.) (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1996) pp. 801–802.

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. How can God's names give us strength in our battle against sin?
2. Why is it important for us to learn the proper perspective of God's names?
3. What sin do you need help from God's power source to overcome this week?

Try This Week...

Family Devotions: Gather your family around and share what names of God really stand out to you and why.

Video Suggestion: "What do you depend on?"

http://www.bluefishtv.com/Store/Downloadable_Video_Illustrations/1520/What_do_you_depend_on_/f=s1&s=what%20do%20you%20depend%20on



Download

(Module Five)

Stage Décor / Room Environment

- **Plan:**

- Draw/paint giant iPhone on paper or poster board with apps on screen.
- Draw/design giant keyboard and mouse.
- Make squares out of cardboard and draw app logos on them. Tape them to the walls or hang from ceiling.
- Draw or cut out giant arrow to hang on stage (looks like download arrow when getting a program or file online).
- Design download progress bar and continue to fill each week as the series progresses.
- Collect connection cards from teens and put in manila folders taped to the wall.
- Draw binary code on wall (or on paper taped to wall) (01001010 01100101 01110011 01110101 01110011)
- Draw/design giant mouse cursor to hang on wall.
- Use church/youth group logo in app format hanging on stage.
- Put message notes on cds each week and give to teens to take home. They can download the notes onto their computer, then give to a friend.
- Have a texting poll each week, asking questions that teens can answer. (www.polleverywhere.com or similar site)

Promotional Ideas

- Host LAN party/gaming night the week before series launch.
- Give away iPod touch during series.
- Create facebook event for the series and invite teens. Encourage teens to send invites to friends.
- Encourage teens to add series name to their display name on facebook, myspace, etc. to create invitation opportunities.
- Give away Hot Pockets, Pizza Rolls, etc. as easy gamer snacks.
- Have a leader dressed as a Geek Squad employee to promote the series the week before it starts.

Totally Reliable

Lesson Objective

The students will understand that the Bible is authored by God and we should use it daily in all areas of life.



LOOK IT UP!

2 Timothy 3:16

For what is the inspired Word of God profitable?



LISTEN UP!

In September of 1999, NASA's Mars Climate Orbiter was supposed to enter the orbit of Mars at an altitude of 460,000-500,000 feet. However, a navigation error caused the spacecraft to drop as low as 190,000 feet and the spacecraft burned up in Mars' atmosphere. This catastrophe happened because the contractors who made the aircraft's thrusters did not use metric units (kilometers) but rather English units (feet) to give the orbiter its coordinates. Everyone else was using the more common *metric* measurements.

The crash was caused by two problems: Neither the contractors nor their information was perfect. It's possible for imperfect people to occasionally do something perfectly, like a no-hitter or a hole-in-one. However, it is impossible for a perfect person to make a mistake... ever. That would mean the person is not perfect. God is perfect all of the time. His perfection means His words are also perfect. Scripture teaches that God wrote the Bible through the hands of men; therefore, we have a perfect book of answers (2 Peter 1:21).



LEARN IT!

Inerrancy: The teaching that since the Scriptures are given by God they are free from error.

Inspiration: God's oversight and management of the human authors of the Bible so that, using their own personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man.

Checklist

1. Prepare a printout from a few appropriate "fail" stories or pictures. When searching for these, be specific like "driving fails," or "nature fails," or "advertising fails."
2. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Have you ever read about or seen someone's mistake? It seems everyone loves to see people make mistakes. There are stories, pictures, and even videos of people doing exactly the wrong thing.

Teacher's Note: Here would be a good place to play this suggested video:
http://www.bluefishtv.com/Store/Downloadable_Video_Illustrations/1378/Famous_Failures_Lesson_Available_/f=s1&s=famous_failures

If searching the Internet for additional “fail” stories, be aware that there are some with inappropriate content, so use discretion when choosing your illustrations.

In a day of uncertainty and change, is there something... or someone we can rely on to be true? You'll be glad to know that there is, and the reliability has a one hundred percent rating!

Failures like falling, getting hit in the head with a ball, or misspelling on signs are funny to us because we can all relate to the person who “messed up.” We've all been that person; however, there are certain areas of life where we simply cannot tolerate error. Take brain surgery for instance; a mistake here would be tragic. Or at the bank when you are getting a check cashed, no one laughs when they have been shorted money. The truth is that all of us mess up. However, some of our mistakes are more serious than others. When we make a mistake on a test and get one answer wrong, that doesn't carry with it extreme consequences. However, if you are driving your car and forget to look both ways and pull out in front of a semi the consequences can be fatal.

More important than getting your health right, or even your money right, is answering the question, “Where will I spend eternity?” What if we couldn't be sure of God's stance on serious issues like murder or stealing? Life on this earth would be full of chaos and uncertainty. That's why the inerrancy of Scripture is important. It simply means to tell the truth without error in all parts and with all its words. Have you ever thought about how important it is that the Bible has zero mistakes? Truth by its very definition is without error. There is nothing more foundational than truth. We can't *know* anything, unless truth exists. In fact, knowing that all of the thoughts of men through the centuries needed a framework of truth, Jesus Himself gave a straightforward definition of truth. Jesus told us that He actually *is* Truth (John 14:6). We need to live based on what is true. Do you trust that the Bible is completely true? What if your life answered that question? Does your life say that it believes the Bible is true? Do you use the Word of God to evaluate your life?

Content

Inspiration

We use the word “inspire” a lot in our culture. We say things like, “This film is inspired by a true story” or “That person's life inspires me.” We are going to look here at a different use for the word “inspire.” When we say that God inspired the Bible, what we really mean is that He gave and authored the thoughts and words to the men who penned it. The words they used were inspired, which means God spoke and managed them. In 2 Timothy 3:16, Paul uses the word “inspiration” as he speaks of God's Word. Being inspired means that God had oversight and management of the human authors of the Bible so that, using their own personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man. In short, it means **God-breathed**. So the Bible is the result of God speaking. That same passage also implies that the Bible doesn't *contain* the Word of God, but indeed *is* the inspired Word of God.

When we talk about inspiration, we use two very important terms: **plenary** and **verbal**. Almost all Christians agree that the overall concepts in the Bible are

inspired. The inspiration of *overall concepts* is called “plenary” inspiration. Some Christians, usually those who do not take the Bible literally, do not believe that *every word* of the Bible is inspired. The belief in the inspiration of *every word* is called “verbal” inspiration. This is held primarily by Christians who take the Bible literally.

Nothing is inspired unless God originated it. God puts a very high value on words all through history. First, God spoke (with words) creation into existence (Genesis 1). Many times in the Old Testament God spoke (with words) to prophets and His words were accurate every single time. Jesus spoke (with words) throughout His time on the cross, to guide us through the process of His death for our sins. He said things like “Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing” and “Father into your hands I commit my Spirit.” So we can have confidence that the Bible (God’s Words to us) is accurate.

Brainstorm

Share some instances where friends were going through more “drama” than necessary because they were not living their lives according to the authority of the Bible.

If they would have listened and obeyed the Bible, how would they have handled those instances and saved some of the “drama” in their life from happening?

Inerrancy

There are many ways to know that the Bible is accurate in such fields as historical, archeological, and scientific discoveries, to name a few. This study will specifically cover **eyewitness** testimony, the martyrdom of the disciples, and the character of the author as pointers to inerrancy. Eyewitness accounts are crucial in validating truth. The more people that witness the same account and give testimony of it the easier it is to believe. After Jesus was resurrected, He appeared to over five hundred people. That means that five hundred people saw the risen Christ (1 Corinthians 15:6). It would be hard to believe one person who claimed to see Jesus after he died; it would probably be hard to believe two or three; however, when five hundred people are saying the same thing it makes the claim that much more believable. We see almost no disagreement with the testimony of witnesses from the Bible. There are times when one person focuses their testimony on the number of people and another person focuses theirs on the time of day, but they are not in conflict.

Many times after Jesus performed a miracle He would tell the people watching to go and tell others what they had seen. When hundreds of people see the same thing it is easier to find the truth. The reports of events mentioned by the authors of the Bible had to match the reports of others who witnessed the same events. Now multiply that times thousands of eyewitnesses who all saw the same events.

There are the death stories of the disciples. It is commonly thought that all of the disciples except for the apostle John died violent deaths because of their association with Jesus. It is inconceivable that the disciples would have **died** for something they knew was a lie. They would have simply renounced their belief that Jesus was God. They must have had more than belief, but rather knowledge that God and His Word are true. The Word of God is not only inspired and without error but was written to change your life (2 Timothy 3:17).

Finally, the Bible calls for us to trust the Lord rather than our own knowledge for decision-making. (Proverbs 3:5-6). If God who authored the Bible never makes mistakes, then the Bible cannot contain mistakes. All standards for accuracy are based upon God's **character**, which is revealed to us through His Word.

What Bible passage or story are you most glad to know is without error?

How do you believe God wants your faith to be impacted by your new knowledge of the inerrancy of the Bible?

Conclusion

Having a firm foundation that the Bible is written by God and completely without error, we have the perfect tool to test whether our actions are right. Most of us don't mind being the brunt of a little laughter when we "fail" like in our introduction. However, none of us want to base our life on failures or make decisions based on failure. Will you commit today to living your life and interacting in your relationships in such a way that reflects the character of God and follows the perfect guidance His Word gives?

If you are going to live according to the Bible you need to know the Bible. There is no other way to know the Bible than by either reading it or hearing it. Each week you have an opportunity to be in Student Ministries and hear the Word of God being taught. Will you commit to faithful attendance in order to learn the Word of God? Each day you have the opportunity to read your Bible on your own and learn what it says. Will you commit to reading the Bible a few days this week in order to get a better understanding of God's inspired, inerrant Word? God desires that you trust and obey His perfect Word; however, the choice is up to you.



LIVEN IT UP!

THE WORD OF GOD

God's Viewpoint

1. The word "inspiration" literally means **God-breathed**.
2. The inspiration of *overall concepts* is called **plenary** inspiration.
3. The belief in the inspiration of *every word* is called **verbal** inspiration.

Man's Viewpoint

1. **Eyewitness** accounts are crucial in validating truth.
2. The disciples would not have **died** for something they knew was a lie.
3. All standards for accuracy are based upon God's **character**.



TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- God does not want us to be ignorant (Romans 11:25).
- Jesus told us that He actually *is* the Truth (John 14:6).
- The Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16).
- The Word of God is not only inspired and without error but was written to equip you for life (2 Timothy 3:17).
- The Bible calls for us to trust the Lord rather than our own knowledge for decision-making. (Proverbs 3:5-6).



LIVE IT!

In life, so many friends (adults too) can give you bad advice, or don't follow their own good advice. There is one source of wisdom that has no error because its author has no error. When God became a man, He followed His own advice and lived perfectly. Because the Bible is so reliable, developing a deep personal relationship with God and His Word will always be the best guide for making decisions. Commit now to a close relationship of relying on the wisdom of God's Word each day.

Reference Materials

Charles C Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1986) pp. 51–59; 76–96.

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. Describe a time when you were frustrated by a mistake in instructions you were given.
2. What are some things you daily put your trust in? Have any of these things ever failed you?
3. How do we know we can trust the Bible and how will you go about trusting the Bible this week?

Try This Week...

Family Devotions: Share with your family what God has taught you from His perfect Word.

Error – Keep Out!

Lesson Objective

The students will understand how the Bible came into existence and that it is the book that we should allow to shape our beliefs and behaviors.



LOOK IT UP!

Matthew 22:29

What happens when we don't know the Scriptures?



LISTEN UP!

Air Force Combat Controllers are special operations forces and certified air traffic controllers. Their motto "First There" reaffirms their commitment to lead the way for other forces to follow. Imagine if they chose someone who could not perform this important task. It would harm the team along with the people they are protecting. These people are the best of the best. To assure excellence they must go through an extreme amount of testing. The test looks like this: forty meter underwater swim; five hundred meter surface swim in under fourteen minutes, one and a half mile run in under ten minutes forty five seconds, six minutes of pull-ups, ninety minutes of sit-ups, ninety minutes of push-ups, and ninety minutes of flutter kicks. This seemingly impossible test is to screen individuals so that no one's inadequacies harm others on the team.

The composition of the Word of God is similar. Each book went through a rigorous process to make sure it was from God. Every book we have in our Bibles is trustworthy because God preserves His Word (Matthew 5:18).



LEARN IT!

Canon: A term used to refer to the complete list of the sixty-six books recognized as the genuine, inspired, authoritative Word of God.

Apocrypha: Books, writings, or reports that are not regarded as inspired and canonical.

Checklist

1. A copy of the introduction "drama" for the leader
2. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Teacher's Note: Begin the lesson with the following "Emotion-Evoking Drama," but do not introduce the drama. Just have the selected leader enter the room in a bit of a "discouraged" manner. He should not read directly from the script, but merely use it as a guide. The more straight-faced his presentation, the more effective the drama will be. When he mentions the criteria for choosing students, it is important for him to emphasize that the students don't get to change it, the criteria has been chosen by the leadership of the church. This will eventually be a reminder that the criteria of choosing the books to be included in the Bible came from God.

Content

Emotion-Evoking Drama

What if I came in here today and announced to you that the leadership of the church met this week and made a decision that has a pretty big impact on our group? There is possibly going to be another adult (whom I can't name) in the church that has been asked to teach a teen group. It would mean that some of you next week will come in here with me and the others will begin meeting with this new teacher in a different room. I would imagine that students would begin to complain or ask who it is. I would respond by telling you to remain calm and that I can't reveal that information until next week. Now the leadership of the church has given us some criteria to use to determine who is staying in here and who is going to go into that new group. I would read these criteria and if they pertain to you, I'd like you to move over to this part of the room (pointing to a specific area but not telling them if that group stays or goes).

- First, if your last name starts with S-Z, please move over here.
- Ok, the next one here is if you have ever attended a Christian school, go ahead and move over here.
- Finally, if you have a sibling who has already graduated from high school, go ahead and move here as well.

Ok, you that are in the larger group would be meeting with the other leader next week. (Wait for the group's reaction or ask them what their reaction would be.)

Lecture

Did I get your attention? It looked like I had you wondering if it were true and how the church leadership came up with the questions for determining which person was to be in each group. Why would we even have a process? Why not just let you guys choose? Actually, the church leadership had nothing to do with it. I came up with this hypothetical situation to get you guys thinking.

Have you ever wondered how the Word of God came together? Unlike the criteria that I said was set up by the church leadership (which was all made up), God has set up criteria for choosing which books would be included in the Bible and which ones would not. However, you can rest assured that His reasoning is correct, even if we don't understand it. How do we know that the books we have are the ones from God? Were there others books that should be in there? Are there some in there that shouldn't be?

This is a topic called canonicity. How were these books that would be in the Bible selected? Your Bibles are trustworthy and accurate. God has preserved His Word

throughout time to make sure we have access to everything He wrote and inspired (Matthew 5:18).

Let's begin by defining the word canon.

1. The Meaning of Canon

First of all we are not talking about a big gun that shoots a huge metal ball across a battlefield. That is a C-A-N-N-O-N. We are using the word C-A-N-O-N, a term used to refer to the complete list of the sixty-six books recognized as the genuine, inspired, authoritative Word of God.

A very important point to remember is that the early church leaders did not research and compile a list of religious writings to be included in the Bible. They did not decide which books were inspired and belonged in the Bible. God had already done that. For the church it was an act of recognition of the Bible not of formation of the Bible. They simply recognized what was already true, that God inspired the sixty-six books that make up our Bible—the books He inspired to guide us as to how we should live our lives.

How did they do this? How were they able to recognize a book (or letter) as inspired Scripture? What tests did they use, if any?

2. The Old Testament Canon

First, let's look at how the books of the Old Testament were collected.

Those who wrote books of the Old Testament included a lawgiver (Moses), many prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Minor Prophets, and even Samuel—1 Samuel 3:20), as well as leaders in Israel who spoke or wrote for the Lord (David, Solomon, Ezra, and others).

When Moses finished writing the Law, he commanded the Levites to put it in the tabernacle with the Ark of the Covenant (Deuteronomy 31:24-26). Later, they were kept in the temple following its construction in Jerusalem by Solomon. That is where Hilkiah the high priest found the book of the law during the reign of Josiah, king of Judah (2 Kings 22:8). These books, or copies of them, were available to be read. Daniel writes that he understood that the captivity of Judah would last for seventy years (Daniel 9:2). He came to this knowledge by reading the book of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 25:11-12). Jewish scholars believe that all of the Old Testament books were collected and recognized by Ezra who lived more than four hundred years before Christ was born.

A. Testimony of Christ

Jesus often referred to the Old Testament as Scripture, either to individual books or to all thirty-nine books. He refers to Psalm 118:22 as Scripture when He tells the Pharisees that the "stone" which was rejected would become the foundation stone, a prophecy referring to Himself (Matthew 21:42). Jesus read Isaiah 61:1-2 in the synagogue and called it "Scripture" (Luke 4:17-21). Jesus validated the entire Old Testament as the Word of God with a reference to what was written in the Law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms as the Scriptures.

B. Testimony of New Testament Writers

More than 250 quotes of the Old Testament can be found in the New Testament.

Two examples: Paul quotes 1 Kings 19:18 in Romans 11:4 and again in 1 Corinthians 3:19 he quotes Job 5:13. Each time an author in the New Testament quotes the Old Testament it validates its divine authorship.

The New Testament church used the Old Testament as its Bible.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter spoke to those around him using the Book of Joel as his text (Acts 2). Before he was martyred, Stephen spoke from six different early Old Testament books (Acts 7). Philip witnessed to the Ethiopian eunuch about Jesus Christ from Isaiah 53.

C. Testimony of Silence

So what about the Apocrypha? Many of you don't know what the Apocrypha is. It is a collection of books, writings, or reports that are not regarded as inspired and canonical. They are books that are similar to the Old Testament and were written around the same time. However, they don't fulfill the standards required to make the cut. Some of the books have really good historical information but they are not always consistent historically. It is also interesting to note that neither Jesus nor the New Testament writers ever once quoted the Apocrypha or referred to it as Scripture as they did hundreds of times to almost all the other books of the Old Testament. Their silence on the Apocrypha speaks volumes on the reliability of the Old Testament.

3. New Testament Canon

Teacher's Note: Teach this portion of the lesson as the students fill in the **Liven It Up** section of their Student Lifelines.

The Gospels and Epistles that make up the New Testament canon were written over half a century. Unlike the Old Testament canon, these twenty-seven books were not collected in a central location like the temple. When they and many other letters and epistles were written, they were scattered over a wide area. The early church recognized that some of these writings were the inspired Word of God. They used several tests to identify them. These tests are in the form of questions concerning the book:

A. Who Authored It?

Was the book written by an apostle? If not, did the writer have a close relationship with an apostle? Eighty percent of the New Testament books were written by the apostles. Luke, who wrote both Acts and the Gospel of Luke, was a close associate of Paul, and Mark was an associate of Peter.

B. Is It Authoritative?

Did it give internal evidence of being inspired by God? To be included in the canon, a book had to possess unmistakable evidence of being God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16). It had to have a divine quality of "thus says the Lord" about it.

C. Is It Authentic?

Does it communicate truth about God? To be included in the canon, a book's subject matter had to be different from an ordinary book. The contents must be of sufficient spiritual character to measure up to the standard set by the rest of Scripture.

D. Was It Accepted?

Was it widely received by the churches? To be included in the canon, a book had to be received, read, and used as a guide in their walk with God. There was much agreement among the earliest churches as to which books belonged in the canon. The Word of God was widely accepted by the people of God.

One hundred years after John wrote the Book of Revelation, the New Testament contained essentially the same books that we have today. However, the formal process of assembling the New Testament canon was not completed until the Council of Carthage in 397 A.D.

The New Testament writers claimed divine origin and authority for their writings as well as quoting one another. Peter called Paul's epistles scripture (2 Peter 3:15-16), a term used during New Testament times for the Old Testament canon.

The Word of God can be trusted. God has made sure the Bible you hold in your hand is accurate and from Him. Jesus said, you commit error because you don't know the Scriptures (Matthew 22:29). If you do not believe the Word of God you will find your life in error at some point.

Conclusion

The Bible was not created centuries ago by church leaders; they simply recognized it for what it was, the inspired, infallible, Word of God. They acknowledged it as their only directive for faith and practice. The Bible we have with us now is the Word of God, nothing more nothing less. So, what does that mean for you today? Does the Bible dictate your beliefs and direct your behavior? When it comes to the Bible let's be sure to look (read), listen (hear), learn (memorize), and live (practice) it. Do you trust that the Bible is true?

- If the Bible is true, there is a God.
- If the Bible is true, you were created by that God and are a sinner.
- If the Bible is true Jesus came and died for your sin.
- If the Bible is true you have a choice to make whether you will trust Him as Savior or reject Him.
- If the Bible is true, a day of judgment is coming.
- If the Bible is true, those that have rejected God will be separated from Him in Hell forever.
- If the Bible is true, God loves you beyond what you can imagine.
- If the Bible is true God holds out His loving arms and invites you to come and have rest in Him.

It is fact that the Bible is true. Do you trust it to shape your beliefs and actions?

TESTS OF NEW TESTAMENT CANONICITY

1. Who **Authored** It?

*Was the book written by an **apostle**?*

2. Is It **Authoritative**?

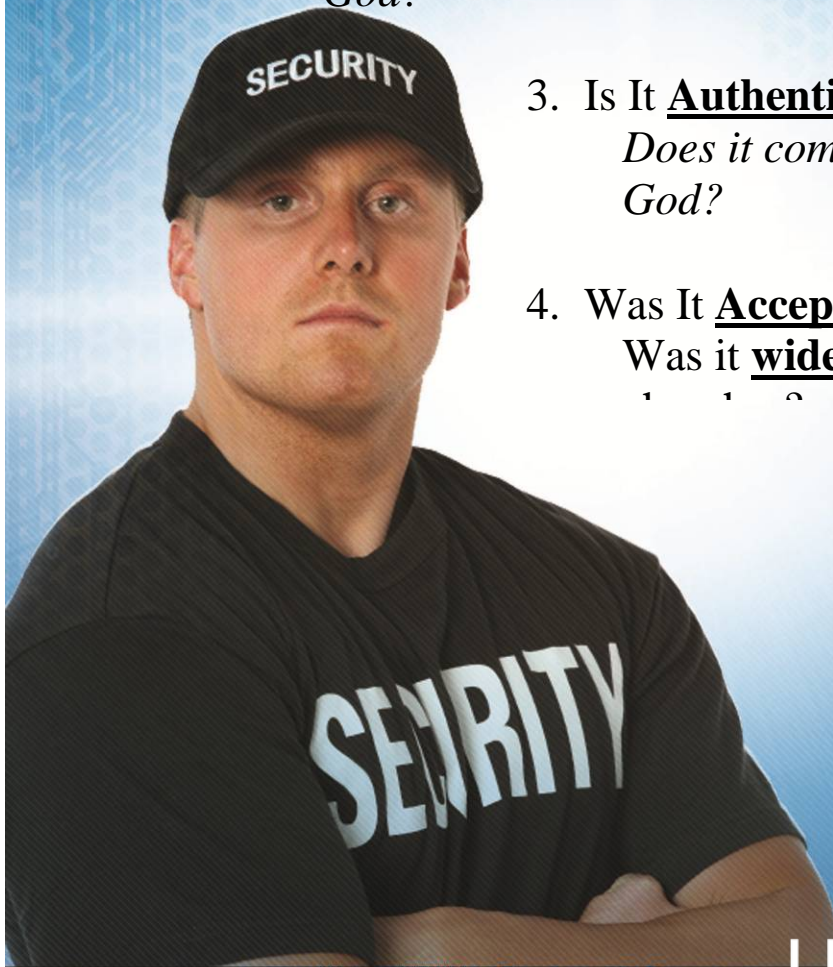
*Did it give internal evidence of being **inspired** by God?*

3. Is It **Authentic**?

*Does it communicate **truth** about God?*

4. Was It **Accepted**?

*Was it **widely received** by the*



LIVEN IT UP!



TRUTH FOR LIFE!



LIVE IT!

- God has preserved His Word throughout time to make sure we have access to everything He wrote and inspired (Matthew 5:18).
- Jesus read Isaiah 61:1-2 in the synagogue and called it “Scripture” (Luke 4:17-21).
- To be included in the canon, a book had to possess unmistakable evidence of being God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16).
- Jesus said, you commit error because you don’t know the Scriptures (Matthew 22:29).

You have all you need in the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. It’s all there in those sixty-six books because that is all there is... and error is kept out! There are no missing books. Since it is God’s Word to you, it would be a smart move to decide right now to allow it to dictate your beliefs and direct your behavior. Look at it (daily), listen to it (regularly), learn it (faithfully), and live it (always). Trust the Bible.

Reference Materials

Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago Illinois: Moody Press, 1986) p. 724.

Henry H. Halley, *Halley’s Bible Handbook* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing, 1927)

Charles C Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1986)

Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (San Bernardino, California: Campus Crusade for Christ, 1972) p. 392.

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. Do you trust the Bible?
2. What do we mean when we apply the word *canon* to Scripture?
3. In what ways can the Bible dictate your beliefs and direct your behavior?

Try This Week...

Letter Writing Ministry: Write a letter to a friend sharing what you learned about the *canonization* of Scripture.

TTYN

(Talk To You Now)

Lesson Objective

The students will learn how to use the **SPECT** method to allow the Word of God to impact their daily living through personal Bible study.



LOOK IT UP!

2 Timothy 2:15

How can we show ourselves approved unto God?



LISTEN UP!

An elderly couple was riding down a dusty country road. They were in an old Chevy pickup with one of those long bench seats. The husband opened her door for her and... he *always* drove. At the opposite end of the seat, by the window, was his life-long love. She was soft-spoken and very gracious.

As they pulled to a stop sign, they were behind a young dating couple in an antique convertible. These teenagers were in the prime of their lives and enjoying each other's company as he drove. Unlike the older couple, she was sitting right next to him with his arm around her.

When she saw this, the older woman said to her husband, "Why don't we sit that close anymore?"

Her husband responded, "Who do you think moved?"

In our relationship with God, we continually move away from His holiness as we move toward our selfishness. When you have your quiet time, God desires that you enter into the very place of His presence where there is fullness of joy (Psalm 16:11).



LEARN IT!

Discipline: God's formative and corrective teaching in the lives of believers to conform them to the image of Christ.

Checklist

A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

A sixteen-year-old Arkansas boy is suing his mother for hacking into his Facebook account. Denise New is the mom that faced harassment charges and was convicted. Her son, who lives with his grandmother, also requested a no-contact order. Prior to this issue, New and her son reportedly had a "great relationship," despite their living

arrangements. According to the boy, his mother hacked into his Facebook and e-mail accounts, and then changed both passwords. She also allegedly posted remarks that involved slander and information about his personal life. New admits to changing the passwords, but denies hacking. She claims he left his account logged in on her computer. She reportedly “hacked” her son’s Facebook account because she was disturbed with the things he was posting, including a post that suggested he had driven home one night at 95 mph because he had been upset with a girl.

There was obviously an extreme breakdown in this relationship long before a lawsuit was filed. Issues that often break down relationships are lack of communication, lack of time spent together, and not seeing things from the other’s perspective. We are given a chance for a close relationship with God; however, we must choose to put the effort forward to foster this relationship. If we neglect that relationship, we will not only miss out on major blessings, but we will displease our Creator.

Content

Dynamic

Teacher’s Note: In this lesson, students will work in groups to learn to use the **SPECT** acronym from the Word of Life Quiet Time for their personal Bible study. You will divide the students into two groups, with each of the groups using the assigned portion of 2 Chronicles 34 listed below. The latter part of the passage has been done for you below as an example. If you go to the section just below Group #2, you will see a demonstration section. Note that in this demonstration, there is not something written in every section of the acronym. This is alright; we want to accurately represent the text, not stuff phrases into the outline.

Instruct the Students

You are going to learn a model of interpreting Scripture that will help you get at the meaning and the application of the text. We are going to use the model called **SPECT**. The **SPECT** acronym, which is used in the Word of Life Quiet Time, helps students know what to look for as they read the Bible. The acronym stands for *Sins* to forsake or avoid, *Promises* to claim, *Examples* to follow, *Commands* to obey, and *Truth to embrace*. This will provide a tool to help you understand the Word of God better. We are called to handle the Word of God correctly and accurately (2 Timothy 2:15).

You are going to take ten minutes in groups using this model to practice. First, I want you to read the passage; then work through the **SPECT** tool. For time’s sake, you will report on one of the five areas; be thorough because you don’t know which one I will ask for.

Demonstration: 2 Chronicles 34:31-33

SIN TO AVOID – As you read this passage, look for any sins that are mentioned. Each time you find one, underline it, and put the letter “S” in the margin beside the verse. List each sin you find in the space below.

PROMISE TO CLAIM – As you read, underline any promise you find. Each time you find one, underline it and put a “P” in the margin beside the verse. List all the promises you find in the space below.

EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW – As you read, underline any part of a verse that is a good example for you to follow in your life. Put an “E” in the margin beside that verse. List all these in the space below.

- Make a covenant before the Lord to follow the Lord and keep His commandments (v. 31)
- Perform the words of the covenant that are written in the Book (v. 31)
- Remove all abominations (v. 33)
- Do not depart from following the Lord God of your fathers (v. 33)

COMMAND TO OBEY – As you read, underline each command you find and put a “C” in the margin beside that verse. List all the commands you find in the space below.

THANKS TO GIVE – As you read, look for something for which you should be thankful. Maybe someone in the story is thankful for something and you should be too. Underline that part of the verse and put the letter “T” in the margin beside the verse. List those things you are thankful for in the space below.

Group #1 – Read and record your findings on 2 Chronicles 34:1-7.

SIN TO AVOID – As you read this passage, look for any sins that are mentioned.

Each time you find one, underline it and put the letter “S” in the margin beside the verse. List each sin you find in the space below.

PROMISE TO CLAIM – As you read, underline any promise you find. Each time you find one, underline it and put a “P” in the margin beside the verse. List all the promises you find in the space below.

EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW – As you read, underline any part of a verse that is a good example for you to follow in your life. Put an “E” in the margin beside that verse. List all these in the space below.

COMMAND TO OBEY – As you read, underline each command you find and put a “C” in the margin beside that verse. List all the commands you find in the space below.

THANKS TO GIVE – As you read, look for something for which you should be thankful. Maybe someone in the story is thankful for something, and you should be, too. Underline that part of the verse and put the letter “T” in the margin beside the verse. List those things you are thankful for in the space below.

Group #2 – Read and record your findings on 2 Chronicles 34:14-21.

SIN TO AVOID – As you read this passage, look for any sins that are mentioned.

Each time you find one, underline it and put the letter “S” in the margin beside the verse. List each sin you find in the space below.

PROMISE TO CLAIM – As you read, underline any promise you find. Each time you find one, underline it and put a “P” in the margin beside the verse. List all the promises you find in the space below.

EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW – As you read, underline any part of a verse that is a good example for you to follow in your life. Put an “E” in the margin beside that verse. List all these in the space below.

COMMAND TO OBEY – As you read, underline each command you find and put a “C” in the margin beside that verse. List all the commands you find in the space below.

THANKS TO GIVE – As you read, look for something for which you should be thankful. Maybe someone in the story is thankful for something and you should be, too. Underline that part of the verse and put the letter “T” in the margin beside the verse. List those things you are thankful for in the space below.

Teacher’s Note: As you transition into the Lecture portion, share a personal testimony about how your quiet time has been going. Be transparent with the students. If you struggle with consistency, certainly let that be known, but emphasize why you keep struggling and don’t give up. Let them know why you keep at it and strive for consistency. After your story, move into the lecture below. You will be lecturing directly to the groups.

Lecture

What were you into when you were eight years old? Did you have a favorite pastime, television show, or video game? Could you imagine if you were a king when you were eight like Josiah? Turn in your Bibles to 2 Chronicles 34. In this passage we see an eight-year-old boy named Josiah becoming the King of Jerusalem. The problem is Josiah’s father, Amon. He did evil in the eyes of God (2 Chronicles 33:22). So, you have an eight-year-old child and the only thing he remembers about his dad is how much he did not honor God. Some of you might be able to relate. What was different about Josiah? Why did he end up honoring God even though his father did not? What was it that God used in Josiah to turn Jerusalem around spiritually?

We are going to take a summary look at the passages you just read using the **SPECT** tool.

1. Josiah sought the Lord and purged the land (2 Chronicles 34:1-7). You are blessed to have people in your life, even if it is just your youth leaders, who are pointing your life and your decisions back to Christ. Josiah was sixteen when he decided to begin searching to find the faith of his ancestors. The Old Testament portion of the Bible in its original language (Hebrew) didn’t have a word for “grandfather” or “great-grandfather,” so Ezra (the author) used the word “father” when speaking of David. Josiah had likely heard of the testimony of what God had done through David.

Josiah did not know what to expect when he would finally discover the faith of his fathers, but he was committed to finding truth, no matter what it required of him. The process took him four years. Perhaps the spiritual carnage his father left helped to drive him. We can’t be sure but one thing we know is that Josiah was a great example for us to follow. We, too, should show reckless abandon in relationship to being fully engaged in the process of seeking after the God of our fathers.

After four years of learning and growing, Josiah at twelve years old recognized that the situation in the land was disgusting to God because of the sin and idolatry that was so casually engaged in and accepted. Josiah saw that these things would not please God and began to completely destroy anything that was representative of the sin that had been so prevalent in Judah and Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 34:2). This process began to purify the areas surrounding the temple, so that the temple

would be in surroundings that would help keep it from being defiled again. This process took Josiah four years. As the people of the lands began to see the renewal in the worship of the one true God, they began to respect the presence of God in the temple and give Him the glory they were created to give Him.

If we are to begin to please the Lord with our lives, we are going to have to purge the area around our lives. This is our part of the cleansing process. We choose our friends and our entertainment, and these things affect the Glory of God in the temple of our bodies and lives. Who or what do you need to cut loose from your life because you know it is keeping you from bringing glory to God?

Teacher's Note: This next portion is the heart of the passage. We have focused thus far primarily on things that will help to prepare our hearts for the Word of God (basically removing distractions). This is the portion of the process where God moves the work from just removing the negative aspects of the circumstances, to really moving in the heart of Josiah. Share a brief story here of a time when you began trying to become more like Christ in an area of your life and you saw God follow through on His promise of grace, forgiveness, and the cleansing from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). It might also be helpful to explain to the students before you begin this section that the "Book of the Law" is primarily the book of Deuteronomy. This book could also include other portions of writings from Moses. In general, it was God's Word given to tell people what was right and what was wrong.

2. Josiah found the Book of the Law (2 Chronicles 34:14-21). The Book of the Law was discovered during the renovations. Imagine, they had been all this time without God's Word when it came to knowing how to live right, and now... they have it. As soon as Josiah heard the Word of God, he tore his clothes. This was a cultural sign of mourning and repenting. The Word of God is powerful and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of a person's heart (Hebrews 4:12). It would be sort of like someone pulling on their hair in misery, or wearing black to a funeral. This time it was mixed with a new understanding of just how bad things had gotten. The light of God's Word shines a light on our path and illuminates that which leads us away from God. We all have Bibles, or at least access to one, but *having* a Bible does not impact your life if you don't put it to use. Josiah put his newly found copy to good use in four ways:

A. He valued the book (2 Chronicles 34:14-16). The Bible keeps us from wasting years on things that don't matter and won't last (Matthew 7:24-27). This book had been tossed about and collecting dust for so long that it had almost no cultural value in that place. Yet, when Josiah's workers found the book, they knew right away that Josiah would want to see it. He must have given the Word of God value even in its absence.

Do you value your copy of God's Word or do you throw it around? Does it get lost at church for weeks at a time? Do you know where it is right now? Did you bring it with you to study tonight?

B. He read the book (2 Chronicles 34:19, 27). This is the pivotal spot in this passage. Reading the Bible equips us for doing what is right (2 Timothy 3:16-17). There was no radical change in Josiah until this point. He had been making external changes throughout his surroundings. He purged the land, repaired the temple, and found the Book of the Law. It wasn't until he engaged

with the Word of God that he was directly impacted. The Word of God changes people. The more we engage the Word, the more it changes who we are, how we understand God, and how we relate to God. Are you reading God's Word? Are you studying God's Word? Are you growing in your relationship with God?

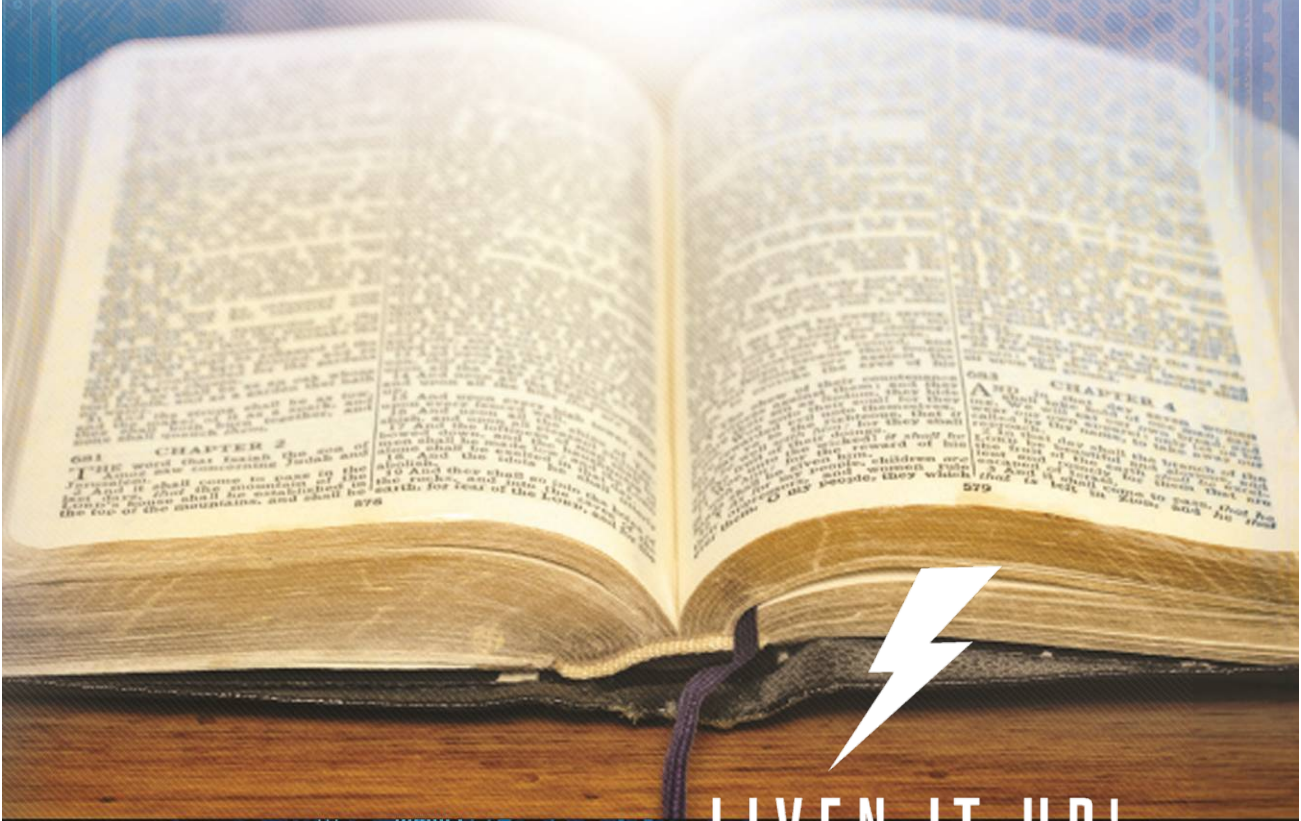
- C. He responded to the book (2 Chronicles 34:19, 27). Josiah's mourning was not because someone died or because he lost something valuable; he was mourning over something that we simply don't see people mourning over nowadays. Josiah was grieving because he recognized his own sin. His sin caused him such shame (because it caused God shame) that he was moved to respond as though a family member had died. Have you ever been so sorrowful because of your sin that you cried over it? Not because someone caught you, but because of your guilt. Josiah's immediate response was grief, but, as often happens after conviction, a heart that is tender is heard by God because of its humility (2 Chronicles 34:27).
- D. He committed his leadership position to following the Word of the Law (2 Chronicles 34:31-33). Josiah the King "stood in his place." This is likely his kingly throne. So, Josiah goes formal with God here. He has been changed and has externally changed his kingdom. Now he is ready to address the future of his reign and commit it all to the glory of God. His commitment goes deeper than just doing right. He commits to following the commandments of the Lord, His testimonies, and His statutes.

Conclusion

We want to be close to God, but that requires discipline. This is best described as: God's formative and corrective teaching in the lives of believers to conform them to the image of Christ. Proper discipline will enable us to spend more time with God and help us nurture our relationship with Him. Just like the dissolving of the relationship with the kid who is suing his mom, when it comes to our relationship with God, we need to have communication, time spent together, and a clear view from the other's perspective. The way that we gain these things is through personal Bible Study. God has communicated His love and will to us through His Word and the working of the Holy Spirit, but we must study the Word and respond accordingly. How many days in this last week did you read your Bible? Did you have a hard time understanding what you read? This week try this method to understand the Bible and apply it. Use this method at least one time and see what God does.

“I AM WAITING...” – (SIGNED) GOD

This week, try **SPECT**
Sin to Avoid
Promise to Claim
Example to Follow
Command to Obey
Truth to Embrace



LIVEN IT UP!



TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- We are called to handle the word of God correctly and accurately (2 Timothy 2:15).
- The Word of God is powerful and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of a person's heart (Hebrews 4:12).
- The Bible keeps us from wasting years on things that don't matter and won't last (Matthew 7:24-27).
- Reading the Bible equips us for doing what is right (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- A heart that is tender is heard by God because of its humility (2 Chronicles 34:27).



LIVE IT!

It is ridiculous to think you can have relationships with people without spending time with them, communicating with them, and listening to them. If you desire a strong relationship with God, it is no different. You must be in His Word and it must be affecting you. Commit to allowing God to have full access to your thoughts and your actions. Ask Him to give you a view and concern about your sins that matches His.

Reference Materials

Ric Garland's **SPECT** acronym for structured personal Bible Study; can be found at the front of the Word of Life Quiet Time
John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: an Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor, 1983)

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. What are the benefits of having your quiet time in the morning? How about in the evening?
2. What part of **SPECT** do you find the most helpful?
3. What is the most current thing you have attempted to change in your life and how is it going?

Try This Week...

Family Devotions: Lead your family devotions once this week using the **SPECT** method to explore a passage in the Bible.

Divine App Store

Lesson Objective

The students will be equipped to use the available resources to interpret and apply the Scriptures.



LOOK IT UP!

Acts 17:11

When should we search the Scriptures?



LISTEN UP!

In 1988, Edgar C. Whisenant, a former NASA engineer, wrote the book *88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be In 1988*. He was so sure of his prediction happening between September 11-13, 1988 that he said “Only if the Bible is in error am I wrong.” When nothing happened by the end of September 13, he revised his prediction several times. After a couple of months, Whisenant said he had made a “slight miscalculation” and Jesus was actually going to return in 1989! He wrote a new book called *The Rapture Report 1989*, and authored a new book the following five years.

One of Whisenant’s major flaws was that he interpreted the Bible in a vacuum. Perhaps if he had compared his understanding to a commentary or two from respectable theologians or used a concordance to cross-reference his date-setting idea with some of the passages that warn against it, he might not have headed down such a theologically destructive path. Even the writers of Scripture studied the current literature to validate truth and create certainty (Luke 1:1-4).



LEARN IT!

Commentary: A book written to illustrate and explain Bible books or passages.

Concordance: An alphabetical index of every Bible word and the verses where they occur.

Checklist

1. Four copies of each of the following (borrow from church members and pastors ahead of time if necessary):
 - a. Bible Dictionary and Encyclopedia
 - b. Bible Concordance
 - c. Bible Atlas and Maps
 - d. Bible Commentaries (that includes the section on Micah)
 - e. supply of *Back to the Future with Micah* worksheets
 - f. station signs for tables (listing materials at that table)
 - g. tables and chairs to set up at each station
2. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Video

Start your lesson off with this Teen Stunt Man (Bible) video.

http://www.bluefishtv.com/Store/Downloadable_Video_Illustrations/1994/Teen_Stunt_Man_Bible/f=s1&s=bible%20study

Teacher's Note: This lesson is going to be a lesson inside of a lesson. You are going to use the workshop/discovery learning method along with a lesson from the teachings of Micah to teach students how to use various Bible study tools. Students will consult numerous Bible study tools to find the answers they need to fill in the worksheets. You will need to set up four learning stations with two tables each (use more or less tables depending upon the size of your group). There should be 1) a station with Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias, 2) a station with Bible concordances, 3) a station with Bible atlases and maps, and 4) a station with Bible commentaries. The fifth and final station will be called **Get the Picture?** It will be the place everyone meets to conclude the lesson. This could be your regular meeting space. Students can do stations 1-4 in any order, but they must save station 5 for the end. It is best to use at least two different tables for each of the stations in case two different groups end up at the same station at the same time. Divide your groups into 4-8 people per group. Remember, the Bible content gained is important, but the process of learning how to use the tools is our main point. It will be helpful to post an adult leader at each of the stations to help students learn how to use the tools.

Introduction

If you were called beautiful by a super model, wouldn't that be encouraging? Or what if a famous musician told you that you sing remarkably well and you could probably land a recording deal worth millions? Now imagine that God says that you have high moral principles and are noble by knowing right from wrong because you refer to the Scriptures daily. Wouldn't that be encouraging? God calls people noble if they listen carefully to the Bible when it is taught and study it daily to know what is true (Acts 17:11).

Begin to divide the students into groups. Explain to them that we often miss out on some of the deeper meaning in the Scriptures by simply reading over the surface of the text. Take Jonah for example. Many people read the story of Jonah and never realize that God called him to go to Nineveh, but he bolted in the exact *opposite* direction. In fact, he was headed toward the edge of the known world. Most Christians miss out on the awesome fact of the extent to which Jonah was willing to travel away from God's will because they never pull out a map and consider where these places are. When you look on a map for Nineveh (where he was supposed to go) and Tarshish (where he was headed) it is amazing how desperate Jonah was to NOT go where God had called him, a fact that you would miss by simply reading the words on the page without the help of a map.

This lesson is going to be a fun "detective style" lesson to help us get a better feel for how to use different tools to help read our Bible for deeper meaning. We will use a concordance, a Bible dictionary, Bible encyclopedias, maps, as well as Bible commentaries. I have set the room up into different stations. Each station has a different kind of Bible study tool. You will need to use all of these tools in order to fill in the details on your worksheets. This is not meant to be a race, but rather a thorough investigation. There are leaders at each station who will help you learn how to use the Bible study tools.

Content

Taken from *Back to the Future with Micah* Worksheet

STATION 1 – Bible Dictionaries and Bible Encyclopedias

Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias are used in the same way that their secular counterparts are. Have you ever come across a name or object in the Bible and you didn't know what it meant or how to pronounce it? Bible dictionaries help us understand the full meaning of a passage rather than skipping over words we don't understand and losing some of the value of what God has said.

1. Find the book of Micah in your Bible. What book is located immediately *before* Micah? What book is located immediately *after*? **Jonah (before) Nahum (after)**
2. In what century (B.C.) did Micah live? Circle the correct one.
a. 6th century b. 7th century **c. 8th century** d. 9th century
3. Micah lived in what country? (Check one)
 Israel Judah
4. List the Kings who reigned during the life and prophecy of Micah (Micah 1:1).
Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah
5. What is the meaning of the word "Ephrathah"? (Micah 5:2) **a small town outside of the city**
6. Who was the emperor of Rome at the time of Jesus' birth? (Luke 2:1) **Caesar Augustus**
7. In a few sentences, describe what kind of man this emperor was.
He was a greedy, prideful, and a power-hungry man of war.

STATION 2 – Bible Concordances

The reason we are learning how to use these tools is because **Christians are commanded by God to study to show themselves approved by God (2 Timothy 2:15)**. Unlike Bible dictionaries, there isn't a commonly used secular counterpart for concordances. This simply means that this tool may not be entirely familiar to many of you. A concordance is the tool you use when you want to look up a word and find out where that word is used in the Bible. It is an alphabetical index of every Bible word and the verses where they occur. This can be very beneficial if you are doing a topical study on a particular word. The instance below uses the word "Bethlehem." By looking up the word, a person can find all of the verses in which that word is used and decide what information they need for their study. Hint: many concordances in the back of your Bible are not exhaustive, meaning that they have only the more commonly used passages listed and may not have every occurrence of a word.

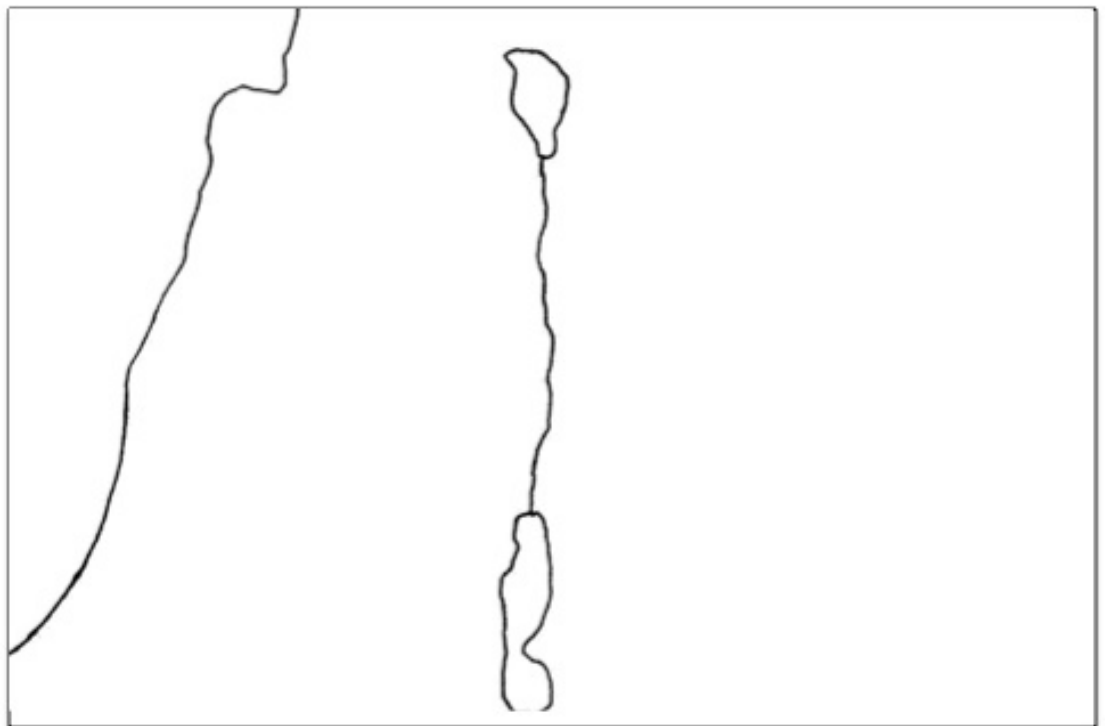
Look up the word "Bethlehem" in the concordance. For each clue in the left column below, locate any verse that contains that clue and fill in the information in the last two columns.

CLUE	Book	Chapter	Verse
Rachel was buried in the way to Ephrath, or Bethlehem.	Genesis	35	19
Boaz came from Bethlehem.	Ruth	2	4
David fed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.	1 Samuel	17	15
The Philistines' garrison was at Bethlehem.	1 Chronicles	11	16
Joseph went to the city called Bethlehem.	Luke	2	4

STATION 3 – Bible Atlases and Maps

Bible Atlases and Maps are used in the same way that their secular counterparts are. These tools can be very beneficial in showing where different places are in relation to each other. It also makes mapping a Bible character's journey very easy to do. In this example, students will map the journey Mary and Joseph took from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

8. Using the map below, show the locations of the following places:
 - a. Region of JUDAH
 - b. Town of Nazareth
 - c. Town of Bethlehem



9. On your map, draw a line connecting Nazareth and Bethlehem.
10. What is the approximate number of miles between Bethlehem and Nazareth? (Use the scale on one of the Bible maps at this station.) Approximately 80 miles.

STATION 4 – Bible Commentaries

Unlike Bible dictionaries, there isn't a commonly used secular counterpart for commentaries. A commentary is a book written to illustrate and explain Bible books or passages. It is also a tool with which you may not be entirely familiar.

A commentary is the tool you use when you want to check and see if your understanding of a passage is on the right track. It also lets you know if someone has understood that passage differently. This can be very beneficial if you are reading a particular portion of Scripture and need help "getting it." This helps you see questions and perspectives that you may have missed. It is also helpful if you are looking for further background information. The instance below uses the "ruler in Israel" phrase from Micah 5:2, which does not directly come out and say Jesus' name in the passage.

Teachers Note: It is important to let students know two things. First, commentaries are written by men and do contain error and personal insight; these books should not be read with the authority that the Bible has.

Commentaries can be written by anyone (including unlearned men and even false teachers), so have a conversation with your pastor or youth pastor and they can help point you in the right direction when choosing a commentary.

11. Who is the "ruler in Israel" that Micah mentions in Micah 5:2? **Jesus the Messiah**
12. Where does Micah say this "ruler" will be born? **Bethlehem Ephrathah**
13. How many years (approximately) were there between Micah's prophecy and Jesus' birth? Micah 5:2 – **(approximately 680-745 years)** – Jesus' birth
14. Where were Joseph and Mary (now pregnant) living before they made the trip to Bethlehem? (Luke 2:4) **Nazareth**
15. How did God get Joseph and Mary to make the trip to Bethlehem? (Luke 2:1-2) **a census**
16. Do you think the Roman emperor was trying to help fulfill the prophecy in Micah 5:2? **No, he was more likely trying to get more money and perhaps prevent the birth of a new rival king.**

Get the Picture?

Teacher's Note: Bring the students back together to wrap up the lesson.

It is amazing how we can grasp such a deeper understanding of a passage simply by using the research others have done. In this, we are actually doing our own research. You students just did biblical research! That is very serious, and very pleasing to God. **Like Ezra, we are to prepare our hearts to learn the Word of God and to do it (Ezra 7:10).**

Micah is practically an unknown prophet; yet God showed him the exact town where Jesus was going to be born approximately seven hundred years before His birth. Then, to guarantee that prophecy being fulfilled, He used Caesar Augustus, a pagan

Roman emperor, to set the whole known Roman world in motion just to get Mary and Joseph down to Bethlehem. This is just one of the many incredible prophecies in the Bible, and the Bible has scores of prophecies just like this one. Many people miss out on these amazing biblical accounts because they don't use tools like concordances, dictionaries, encyclopedias, atlases, maps, and commentaries to help them study God's Word. God has given us His Word so we can grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18).

Conclusion

Many people throughout history have misinterpreted the Word of God. There are many reasons that this happens. One of the major reasons is because people don't do their homework and use the tools available to understand the Bible better. It is very dangerous to make a decision about what the Bible means without consulting literature and counselors to check your work. I urge you to not only read the Bible, but use the available tools (commentaries, Bible dictionaries, encyclopedias, concordances, and maps) to gain a better understanding of the Bible. This week I challenge you to use some of these tools during your quiet time and see how your understanding of the passage changes. Will you commit to using these tools at least once in the upcoming week?



1. Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopedias

2. Bible Concordances

3. Bible Atlases and Maps

4. Bible Commentaries

LIVEN IT UP!



TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- God calls people noble if they listen carefully to the Bible when it is taught and study it daily to know what is true (Acts 17:11).
- Christians are commanded by God to study to show themselves approved by God (2 Timothy 2:15).
- Like Ezra, we are to prepare our hearts to learn the Word of God and to do it (Ezra 7:10).
- God has given us His Word so we can grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18).



LIVE IT!

There comes a time when walking in the faith of your parents or leaders is not enough. Being spiritual preschoolers is no longer acceptable! Growth is expected. This is your time to grow... to stand... to walk... to run... to compete... and to make this faith YOUR OWN! The depth of your Bible knowledge is no longer dependent on others. This journey is YOURS. Will you make a decision to use one of these tools this week with your quiet time?

Reference Materials

The Bible Knowledge Commentary
Davis Dictionary of the Bible – Illustrated
Holman Book of Biblical Charts, Maps, and Reconstructions
Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

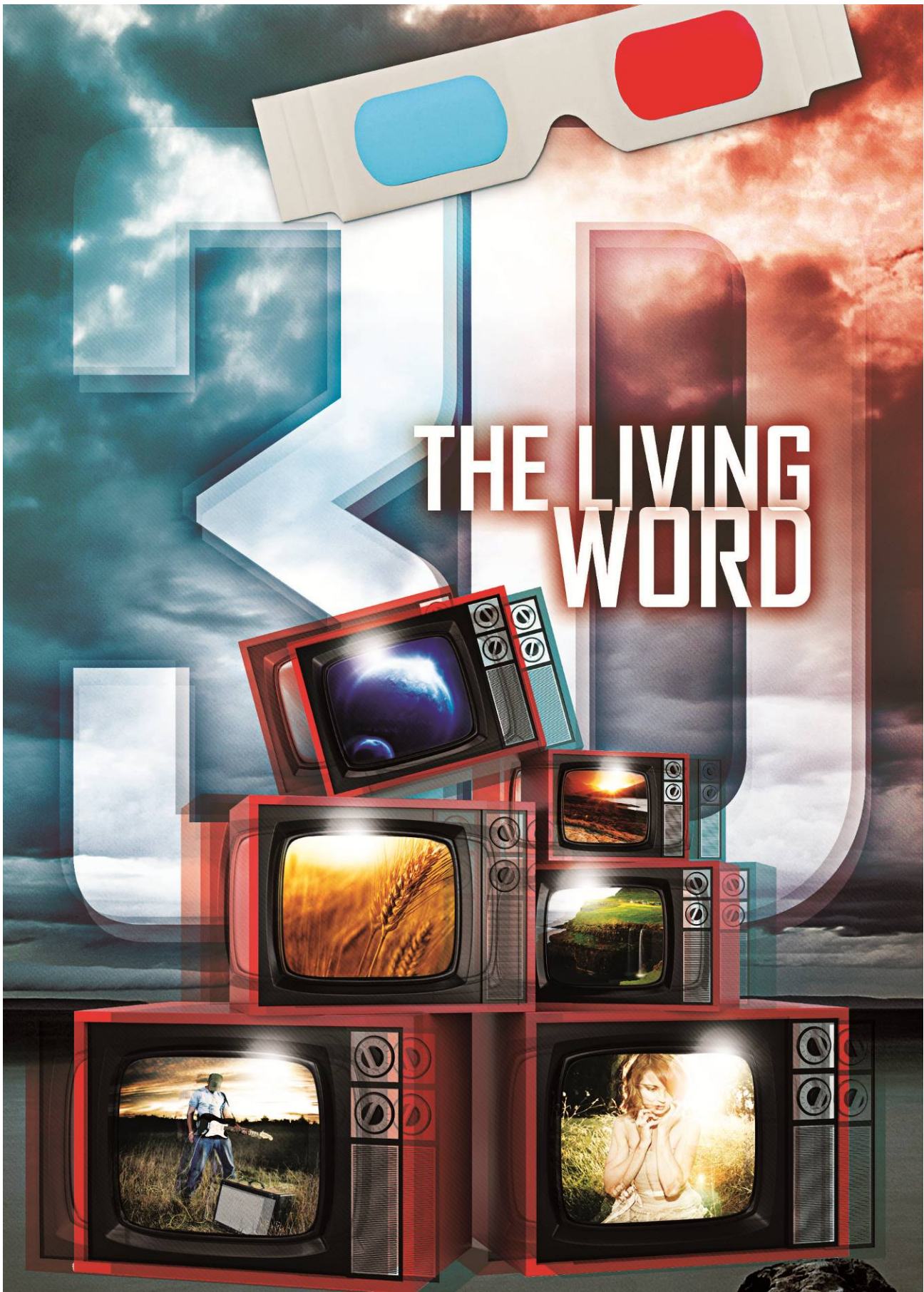
1. What should you do when you come to a word or phrase in the Bible that you don't understand?
2. Which tool was most helpful in this study? What new information did you learn?
3. Which of these tools will you choose to use this week to help you understand God or the Bible better?

Try This Week...

Teaching Children: Select and teach a familiar Bible story. Do the additional research to add new meaning to the story.

Video Illustration

http://www.bluefishtv.com/Store/Downloadable_Video_Illustrations/1994/Teen_Student_Man_Bible/f=s1&s=bible%20study



3-D

(Module Six)

Stage Décor / Room Environment

- **Plan:**
 - Make giant 3D glasses to put on stage.
 - Place red carpet and velvet ropes leading into youth room/church.
 - Have popcorn stand inside youth room to give away popcorn before and/or after youth group.
 - Put spot lights and different lighting effects on the speaker.
 - Set up room like movie theatre with seating, etc.
 - Make “3D” in box letters and place on stage.
 - Put movie posters on walls around room.

Promotional Ideas

- Design, print and handout movie tickets to give to teens the week before hand with series and youth group info printed on them.
- Mail/give away 3D glasses to teens with youth group info on sides. (possible site for purchase: www.3dmarket.com)
- Buy and give away bags of microwave popcorn with stickers attached. Stickers should have series logo and info, and youth group info.
- Do a poll on 3D movies to watch, then watch one each week of the series after youth group.
- Have leaders or teens dressed as movie theatre ushers showing people to their seats with flashlights.
- Plan one 3D movie night before series starts to launch the series.
- Give away movie theatre style candy.

Dr. Seuss, Dr. Phil, and God

Lesson Objective

The students will believe the Word of God is unique and useful for all of life.



LOOK IT UP!

1 Peter 1:25

Will God's Word last forever?



LISTEN UP!

Someone once said, "You are unique just like everyone else!" Everybody wants to be known for their distinct personality and individual worth. Within us all is the desire to be appreciated for the content of our character. As Dr. Martin Luther King once noted, "People are, by nature very responsive to praise and recognition for the things that make them unique." Every person has value because God is their Creator and He has made them in His image.

The same God who created you, created a book containing the truth that you need to live, love, and serve Him throughout all eternity. Not only does He want you to have a full life, He wants you to have a life full of truth.

In this study you will learn to appreciate the unique and unchanging truth contained in the Bible and you will understand how lives can be impacted forever as a result of time spent with God through study of His Word (2 Timothy 2:15).



LEARN IT!

Inspiration: God's oversight and management of the human authors of the Bible so that, using their own personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man.

Truth: Actual fact rather than appearance or claim.

Unique: Being the only one of its kind.

Checklist

1. Bible, phonebook, and a children's book for the object lesson
2. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Books are everywhere. From Dr. Seuss to Dr. Phil, everybody seems to have something to say in words printed on a page. Though the way words have been written has changed from ancient scrolls to high-tech e-books, written text is still the main way information is exchanged between people.

The Bible is thousands of years old, and yet it is by far the bestselling book of all time. Have you ever wondered why the Bible has remained so relevant and captivating to billions of people throughout history?

Despite the fact that some criticize the Bible as being, “outdated,” “confusing,” and “too long,” there is simply something unique and powerful about the Truth of God’s Word. The difference lies both in the message and its source. Unlike all other books, God is the author of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16) and His Word will always be with us (Matthew 5:18; Isaiah 40:8).

Content

Object Lesson – Not all books are equal.

Teacher’s Note: Show the students the three books you have collected and explain that they will be the focus of the following group discussion. For each question have the students first answer for the phone book, move next to the children’s book, and lastly the Bible. After they answer for the Bible, explain that the Bible is a unique book, since it is the only one of its kind. It doesn’t just contain truth, it is the truth. Truth, that is, actual fact rather than appearance or claim. You can go on and include the related lecture for each question. Allow time for the students to really unpack the value and uses of each book. The goal is to help the students see that all books have differing purposes and levels of value to the reader. Display the Bible last and use each of the questions as discussion and teaching points about the uniqueness of the Bible.

Questions:

1. What is this book about?
2. Do you trust that the information in this book is true? Why?
3. What makes this book useful?
4. Would you object to the destruction of this book? Why?

Lecture/Discussion – The Uniqueness of the Bible

Question 1: What is this book about?

There are many themes and subjects covered in the sixty-six books of the Bible. It is unique because it is inspired. Inspiration means that God had oversight and management of the human authors of the Bible so that, using their own personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man. Ultimately, the central theme of the entire Bible is the revelation of Jesus Christ to humanity. This revelation is called the Gospel and is the heart of God’s Word. Through the message of the Gospel we understand that mankind is sinful (Romans 3:23), sin brings spiritual death and eternal separation from God (Romans 6:23), and that God desires all of humanity to trust Jesus Christ as their personal Savior (2 Peter 3:9). He even demonstrated His love by dying for us (Romans 5:8) and if we call on Him for forgiveness, He will save us (Romans 10:9). The information

regarding how mankind can be reconciled to God and have a relationship with Him is unique to the Bible. Only God's revealed Word can provide the Truth that one needs to be saved.

Follow-up discussion questions:

Teacher's Note: Choose one of the following questions that best suits your group:

- What are some themes and subjects that the Bible deals with that have had a special impact on your life?
- Are there any specific Bible stories or characters that you strongly identify with? Why?
- Are there any specific Bible stories or characters that you struggle to understand? Why?

Question 2: Do you trust that the information in this book is true? Why?

Teacher's Note: Have a student read aloud Proverbs 30:5.

Trust is not something that should be taken lightly. When we choose to trust someone or something, we are giving power over part or all of our lives to the person or thing we are trusting. When you sit in a chair, you trust that it has been constructed in such a way that it is strong enough to support your weight. When you fasten your car seatbelt, you are trusting that it is strong enough to hold you secure and hopefully save your life in the event of a crash. The trustworthiness of the Bible is rooted in something far deeper than a skilled carpenter or reputable auto manufacturer; it is rooted in the very nature of God.

Because God is trustworthy, so is His Word. The Bible is unchanging and can be trusted, for it is settled in Heaven (Psalm 119:89). It is like a shield to those who take refuge in God and trust in Him (Proverbs 30:5) When we take refuge in God's Word, we are not merely trusting in words written on a page, we are placing our hope and security in the most powerful Being in the universe.

God is unlike any other author in history. The credibility and knowledge of a book's author is a critical component in its overall value. If an author is not actually informed or experienced with the material they are producing, the chance that their writing will mislead or confuse its audience is high. When an author is knowledgeable and trustworthy, there is a greater chance the reader will be able to trust their information and identify with them. Readers are much more likely to consider and possibly accept the ideas of an author they can relate to and trust.

Teacher's Note: Have a student read aloud 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

All Scripture has been given by God for the benefit of His people. This means that God is the origin of the truth recorded in His Word. Because God is in control of the entire universe, we can trust everything He says and does. He cannot lie because it is against His nature to do so. Furthermore, we know the Bible came from God because man is not capable of producing anything like it. The Bible is a perfect document that was written over the course of hundreds and hundreds of years by dozens of God-inspired writers. The evidence for divine authorship of the Scripture is overwhelming and undeniable.

Follow-up discussion questions:

Teacher's Note: The goal here is to be transparent and let the students see that all of us have passages that we struggle to understand and that this is normal in the life of a growing follower of Christ. Do not feel as if you need to know every question that is brought up. Choose one of the following questions that best suits your group:

- Are there any verses in the Bible that you struggle to understand?
- Can you think of a passage that teaches something different than what popular culture teaches?
- What are some ways in which you can check/verify the trustworthiness of a source?
- Does whether we “agree” with or “like” something make it true or not true?
- How should believers deal with the doubts that come along from time to time?
- How can we keep our guard up when it comes to spotting less-than-credible information?

Examples would include: look for contradictions, pray for Godly discernment, and allow God to transform us daily by the renewing of our mind (Romans 12:2). The only way to insulate yourself from deception is to wrap yourself with truth. Learn what the Bible teaches, not just what people claim the Bible says.

Question 3: What makes the Bible useful?

Teacher's Note: Have a student again read aloud 2 Timothy 3:16. Explain that God's Word is described as having four valuable purposes in the daily lives of His people. These profitable purposes are:

- 1. Doctrine** – This tells us what is right.
Doctrine is organized, revealed truth. We live in a world that desperately needs the truth of God's Word. Without it, humanity is left to rely on feelings and opinions to guide our lives. This is a dangerous position to be in because people have differing views on what is right and what is wrong and are incapable of knowing God without instructions from God. When those views come into opposition it is necessary to have an unchanging standard to appeal to as the final authority. God's Word is this standard.
- 2. Reproof** – This tells us what is wrong.
Reproof is the identification of behavior or ideas that are morally or factually “wrong.” When a preacher or teacher “calls out” sinful behavior by making an appeal to the standard that is found in God's Word, he is offering reproof to the hearers of the message. Reproof should be given in love and with godly wisdom.
- 3. Correction** – This tells us how to make it right.
Correction is the changing of “wrong” behavior to “right.” Just as a parent corrects their children when they misbehave, God also corrects His children when they sin. The goal of all correction is repentance for sin and restoration of the relationship between the sinner and God.
- 4. Training in Righteousness** – This tells us how to keep it right.
Training in righteousness is the equipping of God's people to continue in the good and godly ways they are living. When the Bible is used to train people in righteousness, the truth is being given to those who desire to continue walking with the Lord and doing His will. Only those who have willfully chosen to follow Christ will submit to training in righteousness.

Follow-up discussion questions:

Teacher's Note: Choose one of the following questions that best suits your group:

- How has your life been impacted by teaching or preaching that included the elements found in 2 Timothy 3:16?
- What are some specific life situations in which students could benefit from knowing and putting into practice truths from the Bible?
- What are some ways you could use the Bible as a tool for these four purposes in your family, school, and church?

Question 4: Would you object to the destruction of this book?

Have students read Isaiah 40:8, Matthew 5:18, 1 Peter 1:25, and Luke 16:17 aloud. Throughout history, people have tried to destroy the Bible for various reasons. Much of the hatred for the Word of God is rooted in the fact that it reveals man's accountability to God for sin. In addition, many people have taken issue with the exclusive claim that Jesus makes in John 14:6 that He alone is "the way, the truth, and the life."

Regardless how offended or annoyed people are by the Bible, God has promised that His Word will always be with us as no effort of man can totally remove God's Word from this world. As Christians, we can rest assured that God has secured access to the truth we need to carry out His will for our lives.

Follow-up discussion questions:

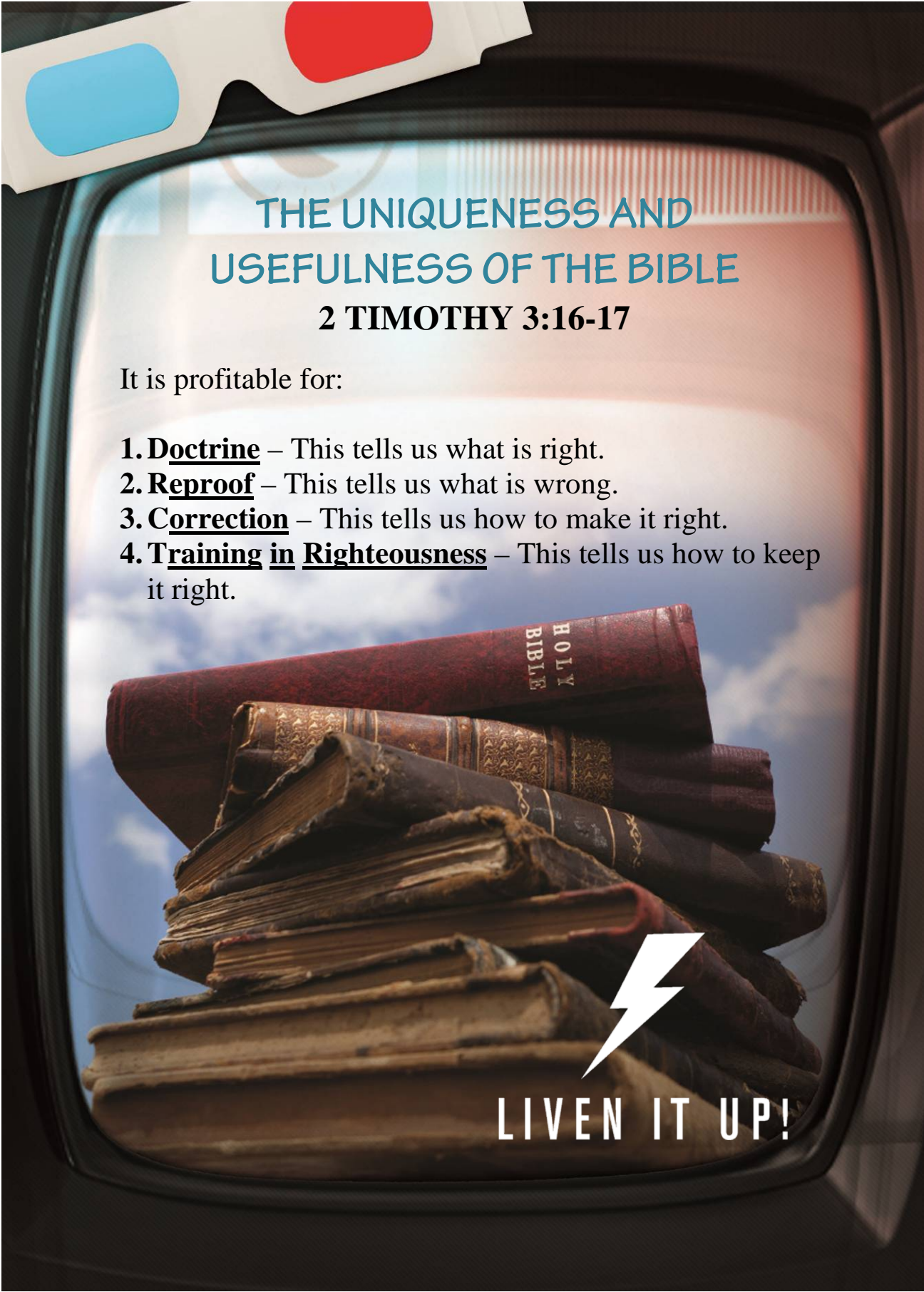
Teacher's Note: Choose one of the following questions that best suits your group:

Think for a moment about the friends and acquaintances you have that are not Christians.

- What are some reasons they reject or are not interested in the Bible? Some may say, "fear of accountability to God," or "do not trust the Bible as being authentic."
- Do you think Satan puts much effort in trying to undermine the credibility and accessibility of the Bible to lost people? Why? How?
- What can we do to resist these efforts?

Conclusion

God has invested great resources and effort in the presentation and preservation of His Word for humanity. Each one of us is a miraculous testimony to God's grace and mercy, because He designed each one of us in love. He wants us to succeed and grow each day as we walk with Him and study His Word. Because the Bible is such a valuable gift, we have a responsibility to handle it correctly. We need to take seriously the truth for living that the Bible contains. How will you, as a follower of Christ, apply the truth of God's Word in your life and share that truth with others? We live in a world that desperately needs the truth of God's Word. Commit today to be a student who is intentional in living out the truth God has given in the Bible.



THE UNIQUENESS AND USEFULNESS OF THE BIBLE

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

It is profitable for:

1. **Doctrine** – This tells us what is right.
2. **Reproof** – This tells us what is wrong.
3. **Correction** – This tells us how to make it right.
4. **Training in Righteousness** – This tells us how to keep it right.

LIVEN IT UP!



TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- God desires all of humanity to trust Jesus Christ as their personal Savior (2 Peter 3:9).
- The Bible is unchanging and can be trusted, for it is settled in heaven (Psalm 119:89).
- It is like a shield to those who take refuge in God and trust in Him (Proverbs 30:5).
- All Scripture has been given by God for the benefit of His people (2 Timothy 3:17).
- God has promised that His Word will always be with us as no effort of man can totally remove God's Word from this world (Matthew 5:18).



LIVE IT!

Regardless of how you have viewed the Bible up to this point, you now have a choice to make. How will you treat and use God's Word? Will your Bible be a dusty keepsake or a valuable tool to live by? Now that you have been equipped with the truth regarding the uniqueness of the Bible, are you willing to share this truth with others so that they, too, can know the Savior? Commit to making Bible study and living out biblical truth a top priority in your life.

Reference Materials

Chad Brand, Charles Draper, Archie England, *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, Tennessee: 2003) pp. 201-211.
Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1999) pp. 119; 206-215.
Paul Enns, *Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1989) pp. 153-182.

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. What are some things about the Bible that you don't understand or that fascinate you?
2. What are some examples of how we should use the Bible differently from other books?
3. How do you anticipate the Word of God will impact your life in the coming week?

Try This Week...

One-on-One Evangelism: Commit to engage an unsaved friend or family member in a discussion about the uniqueness of the Bible.

Wiki-Life

Lesson Objective

The students will learn some of the Bible's answers to life's questions in respect to origins, meaning, morality, and destiny.



LOOK IT UP!



LISTEN UP!

Hebrews 4:12

What can judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart?

We all have seen commercials that feature some well-dressed guy with a cheesy grin who is selling a book that will supposedly revolutionize our lives, make us wealthy beyond our wildest dreams, and help us live happily ever after. In reality, that guy is oftentimes the only one that really stands to benefit from the sale of the book he is pushing.

This is not to say, however, that all books are incapable of helping us be healthier and happier people; but trusting in the words of others to somehow make our lives have meaning is a foolish endeavor at best. With the exception of the Bible, all other books are merely tools, which may or may not be useful in providing truth for living.

It may seem odd that such an ancient book can be so full of power, but the Bible has been changing lives for thousands of years. If you let Him, God will reach into your life through His Word and reveal the very motives of your heart (Hebrews 4:12).



LEARN IT!

Judgment Seat of Christ: The event where all believers and only believers will be judged by Christ to determine the worth or worthlessness of the works they did while on earth and to reward them accordingly.

Bible: The Word of God to mankind consisting of the 66 books of the Old Testament and New Testament.

Checklist

1. Have four 3×5 cards, each having one of the Key Life Questions and references.
2. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Teacher's Note: Begin the lesson by asking for a cell phone from a student or leader. Give the cell phone to a student who is unfamiliar with that particular cell phone's operation and functionality. Ask the student to perform a few tasks such as setting an alarm, taking a picture, or changing the ringer. The idea is to demonstrate that it is difficult to use an object that your students do not understand.

Think for a moment about how the problem you just witnessed could be helped. One obvious way would be to ask the owner of the phone who is familiar with its operation to teach you how to perform the desired functions. Another equally helpful solution would be to study the owner's manual that came with the phone.

Owner's manuals and instructions are great because they guide the user in the proper operation and care of an object. Most people can probably think of a time when they tossed aside an owner's manual and dove right into a new device. When we are in a hurry like this it is easy to miss out on some of the features and benefits of the things we have.

Life can be this way as well. If we are not careful, we can miss out on much of what it is truly supposed to be all about. Too few people today take the initiative to step back, look at the big picture, and ask the most important questions regarding how to live and what to live for.

Wouldn't life be so much simpler if it came with an owner's manual, a cleverly organized and indexed guide to all of the situations and decisions we will need to make? Even though we do not have individualized scripts for our lives, God has provided a manual that has everything we need to both live and thrive in this gifted life we have received.

In this study you will learn how God's Word has the power to guide our lives in truth and lead us into an eternal and personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Content

Key Truth # 1 – The Word of God is a light to guide our lives (Psalm 119:105).

Raise your hand if you have ever been lost.

Does anyone have a story about when you got lost?

Teacher's Note: You will want to have a short personal story to share. Give details regarding how you felt, the circumstances that led you into the situation and what you would like to have done differently.

Nobody likes feeling out of control and without direction. Life can change in a very short period of time. These unexpected changes can either be opportunities to learn and grow, or times in which we struggle and suffer. The difference between the two possibilities often is found in how prepared we are for these changes. Thankfully, God has given us a guidebook to steer us through the good times and bad times that will inevitably arise.

Teacher's Note: Have students read aloud Ephesians 5:13; 2 Peter 1:19; Psalm 119:105.

These verses describe God's Word as a light shining in a dark place. Think for a minute about how helpful it is to have a flashlight when the power is out. This is especially true when navigating an unfamiliar place. Having a tool such as a flashlight not only illuminates the path that is immediately in front of you, it also can reveal potential, unseen danger.

God's Word works just like a flashlight in a dark and unfamiliar place. In it we learn about the dangers of sin (Proverbs 5:22, Hebrews 12:1, James 1:15), the threat of

Satan (Luke 22:31, 1 Peter 5:8), and most importantly how we can walk on the narrow road that leads to Heaven (Matthew 7:13-14).

This information is vital in the Christian life because as we apply truth to our lives, we increasingly show the love of Christ to a lost and dying world. In addition, when we take God's Word seriously and use it as a true guidebook for our lives, we are made ready to stand before God at the Judgment Seat of Christ (Romans 14:10). This is also known as the bema seat, which is where contestants would stand at the end of an ancient Olympic race to receive their reward for running well. For the believer today, the only way to prepare for this judgment is to use the Word of God like a manual and live according to what it says.

We have access to the manual for life that God has provided. A helpful tool in remembering the purpose of the Bible in our life for the preparation for His return is the popular acrostic for B.I.B.L.E., which means **Basis Instructions Before Leaving Earth**.

Key Truth #2 – God equips His followers to understand His Word.

Teacher's Note: Select students to read aloud: 2 Corinthians 3:13-18; John 7:17; Proverbs 2:3-6. The goal of the discussion questions is to get the students thinking about how effective communication makes for clear understanding.

Discussion

1. Can anyone share a story when you were in a place in which English was not primarily spoken?
2. How hard was it for you to understand those around you?
3. Did you feel unsure about how to act and how to relate to others due to customs and traditions?

We can all see the importance of having good communications so we can come to a mutual understanding of things.

Lecture

In these situations, what is desperately needed is a translator, someone who can effectively communicate your ideas to others and relate their ideas back to you. To most people, the Bible is a book unlike any other they have ever encountered. This is especially true of those who did not grow up in a church-going family. Thankfully God has promised to help people find Him when they seek Him with all their heart (Jeremiah 29:13).

Teacher's Note: Have a student read aloud 2 Corinthians 3:13-18.

Paul is referencing the story from Exodus chapter 34 in which Moses appeared to the people after his mountaintop encounter with God. Because of his time in the presence of God's holiness, Moses' face shone with the glory of the Lord. This radiance overwhelmed the people around him, making it difficult for Moses to relate with and serve them.

Paul uses this imagery to point out a very important fact about the truth of God's Word and the need for God to reveal truth to sinful and distracted people. God will reach into your life through His Word and reveal the very motives of your heart (Hebrews 4:12). Only God has the ability to know the thoughts and intents of our

hearts. There is no misunderstanding with Him. In 2 Corinthians 13-18 God explains that there is a spiritual veil over the hearts and minds of those who do not have God as their personal translator, explaining His Word through the Holy Spirit (John 16:13).

Key Truth #3 – God’s Word Answers the Four Key Life Questions.

The Bible is special because it alone comprehensively answers the four key questions of life.

1. How did we get here? (Origins)
2. Why are we here? (Meaning)
3. How should we live? (Morality)
4. Where are we going? (Destiny)

Teacher’s Note: Have the students break into four groups of equal size. Assign each group one of the four life questions and have them look up the related Scripture for each. Provide the groups with the critical thinking questions for each of the verses listed below. Give the groups a brief time to summarize the way in which the Scripture answers the key life question. When they are ready, each group should appoint a reporter to state the key question, read the Scripture, and give the answer to their questions. After each reporter shares, clarify their answers with the brief lectures below.

Group # 1

Origin – Genesis 1:1

Critical Thinking Questions:

- What explanation has God given in regards to how everything began?
- Which makes more sense to you regarding the origin of the universe: “Everything came from nothing” or “Everything was created by God”? Why?

Teacher Comments: Someone once said, “You can’t know where you are going until you know where you have been.” It is normal for people to wrestle with the question of origins because the answer has so much impact on how we live and understand our world. Thankfully, the Bible provides the best and most comprehensive answer to this question that can be found anywhere.

We believe that God is the uncaused-first-cause of all things. This means that everything that has ever existed, currently exists, or will ever exist has a beginning. God alone is the One Who has always been and is therefore, the originator of the entire universe. Humanity is the masterpiece of God’s creative plan and as a believer you have a place in that plan (Ephesians 2:10).

Group #2

Meaning – Isaiah 43:7; Matthew 22:37-39

Critical Thinking Questions:

- According to these verses, what are the reasons we were created?
- Do you think that living the way these verses say would make the world a better place? How?

Teacher Comments: Many people believe that the meaning of life is happiness. To achieve this unreachable goal of permanent happiness, people spend their lives pursuing pleasure, power, and fame. The Bible offers a much different perspective on why we are here. These passages explain that glorifying God

with our lives, loving Him with all our heart, and loving our fellow man in like manner is the heart of what life is all about. Yes, there are other secondary reasons we have been given the gift of life, but the heart of the matter is that our hearts be tuned in to God.

Group #3

Morality – Matthew 22:37-39; Micah 6:8; Isaiah 59:2

Critical Thinking Questions:

- How are people supposed to live?
- What stops people from living this way?

Teacher Comments: Morality is a concept that is increasingly under attack by those who do not want to be accountable to anything or anyone other than themselves. The problem with the absence of accountability is that it is in opposition to the holiness of God. In addition, society will break down if everybody lives by their own laws with no regard for their neighbor.

In Matthew 22:37-39 we learn that love is not only a core reason for our meaning but it is also supposed to be at the heart of how we live. We are to love both God and our fellow man. The outworking of love-centered morality is in part explained by the virtues in Micah 6:8. This passage concisely explains how God intends for us to practice mercy, uphold justice, and submit to His authority. To do this we need to lay down our selfish pride and ignorance, and love God first and then people. Yet we learn that it is sin that separates us from God and the ability to live right.

Group #4

Destiny – Revelation 21:1-6

Critical Thinking Questions:

- What does God ultimately have in store for all who trust in Jesus as their personal Savior?
- Are these truths available to humanity in any other place outside of God's Word?
- How does this fact increase the value of the Bible above that of any other book?

Teacher Comments: It is a sad reality that people spend hard-earned money on astrologers, horoscopes, and palm readers, all in an effort to know their destiny. It is not abnormal to want to know our future. Knowing enables us to be prepared and feel secure. God has not left us without any insight into the future; but He has limited our knowledge to the things that matter most and the things that we can handle and understand. When it all comes down to it, the destiny of a Christ-follower is eternal life with God in the New Heaven and the New Earth. This destiny is secure and better than anything we could plan or imagine on our own.

Conclusion

You are so blessed! Just stop and think about it. You are not alone in this world and you have access to the ultimate source of truth, your Bible. It is so much more than a mere religious book. It is literally a manual for living, growing, and learning. In the Bible, God has given you the answers to the deepest questions of life, warning about dangers that can hurt or destroy you, and encouragement to persevere and rest in His sustaining love. Your life is full of choices and decisions. Who will you choose as friends? How will you respond to your parents when you disagree with them? Will

you cheat on a test that you didn't study for? It would be a tragedy if we had no help to respond in these types of situations. These are the types of questions that the Bible can answer. When it comes to the Bible, the only real question is "What will you do with it?" Will you treat this revealed truth as advice, or will you take hold of the "Manual for Life" and be led by God into an everlasting, obedient relationship with Him?



FOUR KEY QUESTIONS OF LIFE

1. How did we get here (Genesis 1:1)? – **Origins**
2. Why are we here (Isaiah 43:7)? – **Meaning**
3. How should we live (Micah 6:8)? – **Morality**
4. Where are we going (Revelation 21:3)? – **Destiny**

LIVEN IT UP!



TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- The Word of God is a light to guide our lives (Psalm 119:105).
- God has promised to help people find Him when they seek Him with all their heart (Jeremiah 29:13).
- God will reach into your life through His Word and reveal the very motives of your heart (Hebrews 4:12).
- Humanity is the masterpiece of God’s creative plan and as a believer you have a place in that plan (Ephesians 2:10).
- We are to love both God and our fellow man (Matthew 22:37-39).



LIVE IT!

As students it is easy to become overwhelmed with all of life’s pressures. Through the Bible, God has provided you with a means of knowing who you are, Who He is, and how you should live. Whether you benefit from this truth is a matter of choice. Just because the majority of your peers choose to “feel” their way through life does not mean that you have to do the same. Dare to live by convictions that are rooted in truth and based on a personal relationship with Christ!

Reference Materials

Chad Brand, Charles Draper, Archie England, *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, Tennessee: 2003) pp. 200-210.
Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1999) pp. 71-125.
Paul Enns, *Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1989) pp. 3-122.

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. In the introduction to this lesson we considered how many people spend time just trying to “make it through.” Why is this a tragic waste of life?
2. In this lesson we learned how the Bible answers the four key questions of life. Which question is most important to you? Why?
3. What are areas of your life where you don’t use the Bible like a guidebook but rather do what you want?

Try This Week...

Teaching Sunday School: Use the manual for life and teach others how to view it the same way.

Man vs. Will

Lesson Objective

The students will gain godly perspective through daily surrender to His will.



LOOK IT UP!

Romans 12:2

How can I prove the will of God?



LISTEN UP!

Planning is an important part of life. Homework, family vacations, and managing a busy social schedule all are examples of how being able to organize time is vital. Some people are naturals at multitasking and others struggle to handle more than one thing at a time. Regardless of how well you handle multiple responsibilities, it is essential that every person who desires to have a growing personal relationship with God allows time to seek His will and be shaped by His Word.

God wants us to know His plan for our lives. It is revealed as we spend time with Him in prayer, worship, and Bible study. As we do this we oftentimes realize how small and insignificant our plans are in comparison with His. Time spent with God transforms us from the inside out, changing our perspective (Romans 12:2). When we surrender to His will, we begin to see what it means to be a true follower of Christ.



LEARN IT!

Surrender: To give up, yield, submit, or relinquish control in favor of another.

Transform: To change in character or condition.

Checklist

1. A copy of the lyrics and audio track to “LeCrae’s” song *Don’t Waste Your Life* to be used for the Discipleship Group Time.
2. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

What do you think of when you hear the word *surrender*?

Surrender is not a word that people generally think of in a positive light. It means to give up, yield, submit, or relinquish control in favor of another. The word usually brings to mind imagery of a worn-out, demoralized army that has been crushed in defeat by a more powerful opponent. This type of surrender taps into one of the greatest human fears, the fear of not being in control of one’s own fate. In the worldly sense, surrender usually means a loss of personal security.

There are ways, however, in which surrender can not only be a good thing, but also a desirable thing in a person’s life. Examples such as marriage, obeying one’s parents, and going to the mission field all bring with them a certain amount of letting go and

trust. In these cases, surrender brings with it benefits and blessings that are worth the risk of getting hurt.

Surrender to God however, is an entirely different experience. With God, surrender brings about necessary personal loss, but it also brings limitless eternal gain (Philippians 1:21). Unlike humans, God has the best interest in mind for the weak and broken that surrender to Him and accept His will for their lives. The prophet Isaiah spoke truth when He said that God's ways are better than ours (Isaiah 55:9). God knows of blessings and dangers lying in our path that we cannot even begin to comprehend. He is **unchanging (immutable), all-knowing, (omniscient), all-powerful (omnipotent) and everywhere (omnipresent)**. We are not.

The choice of who should guide your life is a bit like allowing a person with perfect vision to take the steering wheel of your car because you are near-sighted. When a person is unable to see, the destination is practically unreachable. It is no different with our lives. As sinful and self-serving people, we are unable to make it to the ultimate destination of Heaven on our own because God does not allow sin into Heaven. Our only alternative is to let God lead. Surrendering to God means to let Him take the steering wheel of your life. He controls the destination and speed at which you travel. Because the outcome is certain, there is a freedom and joy in this surrender that goes beyond description.

In this study we will learn how God alone can give life real meaning and purpose. Furthermore, we will discover how God's Word reveals His will and how His plan strengthens and sustains us through life's joys and sorrows.

Content

During the American Civil War, intelligence-gathering balloons were used to scan the battlefield and record enemy troop movements in preparation for battles. This technological wonder gave significant advantages to those that employed them. Being elevated five hundred feet in the air provided a much different perspective for those carefully planning the next strategic move.

A change in perspective is a powerful thing. God is a master at changing a human's limited, self-centered perspectives. He has been doing it since Adam and Eve walked in the Garden. We all can benefit from a change in perspective from time to time. Our natural tendency is to be consumed with our own interests, well-being and needs. God wants to break us out of this selfish life and free us to walk with Him in grace and mercy. This surrender, and the freedom that comes with it, is key to knowing and walking in the will of God.

I. God's Word transforms our lives and renews our minds (Romans 12:2).

Teacher's Note: Have a student read aloud Romans 12:1-2.
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The beginning of a true change in perspective is an encounter with the living God. In this passage the Apostle Paul challenges Christians to offer themselves in service as living sacrifices to the Lord. The personal loss that comes with this offering is real and must be considered. Salvation is a free gift enabled by God's grace; but following Jesus will cost us everything. There is a great difference between being a fan of a sports team and actually being a member of that team. The role of "fan" only requires basic knowledge of the team and maybe

possessing a t-shirt or some other identifying mark. The role of “member and follower” brings with it a much greater level of commitment, sacrifice, and risk.

Likewise, there is a great difference between being a fan of Christ and being a Spirit-filled follower of Jesus Christ. The difference is ultimately a matter of commitment and obedience. God, speaking through the pen of a man who knew a great deal about the costs associated with following Christ, calls us to be transformed or made over by time spent with God in fellowship and study of His Word.

Notice that the text mentions the mercies of God. God’s mercies—attributes such as His unmatched love, understanding, and patience—enable us to practice the surrender that making our lives a living sacrifice requires. The result of this sacrifice is a dramatic change in our lives. As we grow in our relationship with Christ, the way we think and feel and look at the world around us shifts from our perspective to that of God’s. This process is sometimes referred to as “sanctification.” Sanctification means to be molded and changed over time in the loving hands of God. God’s Word transforms our lives and renews our minds, thus enabling us to gain a new perspective.

Discussion (Allow for response.)

- How could your life benefit from being more committed to God?
- What roadblocks stand in the way of you being more committed to Christ?

II. God’s Word transforms our perspective.

Teacher’s Note: Have a student read aloud Psalm 119:30-32, and 45 and allow for a few minutes of discussion as these are good questions for probing the depth of your students’ worldviews.

- What choice does the psalmist say he has made? (the way of truth)
- What do you think this means?

The psalmist says here that he has set the judgments of the Lord before Him and that he is holding onto the testimonies of God. One way of visualizing this is to imagine an explorer carefully studying a map spread out on a table before him. If you think about it for a minute, you will realize just how much is “set before us” every day. Whenever you encounter an advertisement or commercial it is as if that company or corporation is setting before you the information they hope will influence you to make a purchase or use a service. Everywhere we turn today we are bombarded by advertisements, entertainment, immorality, and violence. We may not realize it but these encounters greatly influence our thoughts and behavior. By choosing to set the judgments of the Lord before himself, the psalmist is refocusing his heart on the unchanging standard of right and wrong that God has established.

In addition, the writer testifies that he is holding on to the testimonies of God. This is another way of saying that he trusts that what God said happened in the past, is happening in the present, and will happen in the future, are all true. He is basing his way of living and thinking on the fact that God is trustworthy. The psalmist is not merely *hoping* that God is real and presenting the truth, He *knows* these things deep within his heart.

Throughout the Bible is the recorded history of men and women who either walked with God or ran from God. The Lord has recorded this history in part so that we can learn from those whose successes and failures are recorded in Scripture. Through the comparison and contrast between their lives and our own, we can learn more about how to have a relationship with God. The words that are expressed in these passages from Psalms are such an example. They are the words of one who has been inspired and transformed by God. Through the Bible we have access to unchanging truth (Psalm 119:160) upon which we can build our lives.

George Santayana was a Spanish-American philosopher, essayist, and poet in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He is famous for the idea that “those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

Discussion (Allow for response.)

- Do you agree with this idea? Why or why not?
- Does knowing the past give us a better understanding of the present? How about the future?

The psalmist makes a point in these verses that he is committed to run the course for God. His plan is to trust God and fully commit to following Him. Furthermore, the writer says that God will enlarge his heart. This means that God will increase his capacity to love and his determination to follow through in his commitment. This increase in love and determination also has freed him to walk in liberty with God. He has been freed to enjoy the good things of life because he has a godly perspective on what is right and holy.

The first critical truth regarding knowing and doing the will of God is that we need to be transformed from the inside out. Transformed means to change in character or condition. We need to let God invade our lives so we can surrender to His goodness and mercy. Secondly, we must realize that human perception alone is not enough. Jesus came to earth to give us abundant life (John 10:10). The psalmist reminds us that through meditation on God’s Word, commitment, and clinging to truth we can find meaning and purpose in life. The new sense of meaning and purpose brings with it a variety of blessings and opportunities.

Conclusion

Think about how much time you spend plugged into sources of entertainment. Has it ever occurred to you that by taking in hours upon hours of media throughout the week you are essentially “studying” the world? We need to be mindful of what we look at and make an agreement with God that what we watch will be glorifying to Him (Job 31:1). It has a way of influencing our thoughts and eventually our behavior. Without a steady frame of reference and standard of truth to compare to, the lies of the world are quite convincing. Every day we are told that the meaning of life is to acquire possessions, gain power, exalt in pleasure, and pursue fame. These goals are all empty and unfulfilling in the long run. A life lived in selfish pursuit is destined to end in ruin because our passions are not consistent. What makes us happy and gives our lives meaning one day can quickly become boring the next.

Only God has the power to break us out of this endless cycle of futility. With the Bible, we learn how to enter into an eternal, saving relationship with Him through the Lord Jesus Christ. If you genuinely are looking for the meaning of life and direction as to how you should live, look no further than the One who created you and loves

you more than you can comprehend. God wants to lead you to places beyond your ability to imagine. When tempted to sin, God's desire is that you surrender your will to His, that you obey His Word rather than your feelings. God has a will and plan for your life; the question is will you trust what He has written in the Word of God or will you consult your desires and feelings? God's will for you is that you find joy in His blessings. God has gifted you a certain way, placed you in a certain position, connected you with certain people, and has you in a certain church because He is seeking to do something with your life. Are you responding with joy to God's plan or are you trying to run from it? Are you using your gifts for the Lord? Are you seeking to reach the people you know for Christ? Are you serving in the church in which God has placed you? These things are God's will!

GOD - THE ULTIMATE GUIDE

(Match the term with the definition.)

God is all-powerful.	Immutable
God is all-knowing.	Omnipresent
God is everywhere.	Omnipotence
God does not change.	Omniscient



LIVEN IT UP!



TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- With God, surrender brings about necessary personal loss, but it also brings limitless eternal gain (Philippians 1:21).
- God’s Word transforms our lives and renews our minds (Romans 12:2).
- Through the Bible we have access to unchanging truth upon which we can build our lives (Psalm 119:160).
- Jesus came to earth to give us abundant life (John 10:10).
- We need to be mindful of what we look at and make an agreement with God that what we watch will be glorifying to Him (Job 31:1).



LIVE IT!

Choosing whom you will follow throughout life is the most important decision you can make. Most people never really make choices, they just live on autopilot. Some have never been presented with an alternative. You however, have been given compelling evidence as to why the Lord Jesus is worthy of your devotion. What will you do with this evidence? Now that you know, you cannot simply live in ignorance or denial. Choose today to follow Christ; the blessings that await you along the way are greater than you can imagine.

Reference Materials

Chad Brand, Charles Draper, Archie England, *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, Tennessee: 2003) p. 1673.
Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1999) pp. 27-58.
Paul Enns, *Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1989) p. 225.

Discipleship Groups

Optional Group Activity: Distribute copies of the lyrics to the LeCrae song *Don’t Waste Your Life*. As you play the song, have the students write down their feelings and responses to the lyrics on their sheets. Allow time for discussion and interaction afterwards. The goal of this activity is to engage the students in a discussion about the struggle between our will and God’s will that goes on in our day-to-day lives.

Discussion Starters

1. What are some things that usually change in a person’s life when they make a serious commitment to follow Christ?
2. What are some Scriptures that have special application or meaning in your life?
3. What are some of the mysteries or questions of life to which you would like to know God’s answers?

Try This Week...

Family Devotions: Lead family devotions that focus on the theme of being Christ-followers and letting God lead in our lives.

Fool House

Lesson Objective

The students will learn to make correct decisions in a subjective world based on the objective truth of the Bible.



LOOK IT UP!



LISTEN UP!

James 1:17-18

Can God change or vary?

A friend invites you to a party. He mentions it will be unsupervised and that alcohol will be available. Does this sound like a good time or a recipe for disaster? How do you respond to your friend? Will you go so that you will not be left out, or will you pass knowing that you may be tempted to sin? For many students the only question when it comes to decision-making is: “Can I get away with it?” This approach to decision-making is called situational ethics. Situational ethics asserts that everything is relative. Right and wrong are determined by feelings. This way of thinking is inconsistent and contradictory from person to person.

The power to choose should not be taken lightly because all decisions have consequences. This power is a gift from God called “free will.” When you are caught between two choices how do you choose which is right and wrong? The Bible tells us that to be able to choose right we must first change our thinking (Romans 12:2).



LEARN IT!

Immutable: Not capable of, or susceptible to change.

Trust: Depend on and put one’s confidence in a person or thing.

Truth: Actual fact rather than appearance or claim.

Checklist

1. Gather a whiteboard and markers.
2. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Discussion

What are some freedoms that all citizens are guaranteed under the law?

Teacher’s note: It will be helpful to list the student’s answers on a whiteboard. Answers that should be included on the list include: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom to assemble peaceably, right to own property, right to due process, even the right to bear arms.

Freedom is something that is universally valued by all people. Regardless of one's nationality, religion, or financial situation, all humans value the right to exercise their free will and choose the course of their lives. Have you ever imagined what life would be like if you did not live in a country in which these freedoms have been protected?

Brainstorm

Teacher's Note: Break the students into small groups of four or five and have them brainstorm a list of examples from the past week in which they made decisions relating to the list of freedoms they came up with. After the groups have had sufficient time to compile their lists, have a student from each group share their findings.

In each of these examples you had to exercise judgment based upon your perception of what was appropriate and right. Hopefully, your relationship with God and knowledge of His Word were helpful in making those decisions. It is likely, however, that each of us has some regrets over past decisions. Those decisions are behind us now; there are no "do-overs" when it comes to the way we live our lives. This truth is the reason it is so important we be intentional and consistent when we choose what is appropriate and right.

As Americans there are many activities and ways of living that we are legally free to practice, but this does not mean that all of the options before us are safe, healthy, or morally right (1 Corinthians 6:12). Thankfully, God has not left us on our own when it comes to applying the free will He has given us. God has given us a vital tool in knowing what is right and wrong. Chances are, you have had this tool at your disposal for your entire life but have not used it to the fullest.

Content

Truth #1 – The Word is the Foundation.

The tool that we are referring to is the Bible—God's revealed truth for all of humanity. Truth is an actual fact rather than appearance or claim. So how does one practically apply the truths in the Bible to every day decisions such as how to dress, whom to date, and how to spend free time? The key lies in knowing where to look and how to begin.

To help illustrate what exactly this means, consider for a moment something that we all are familiar with and oftentimes take for granted... your home. Though your home is undoubtedly unique in many ways such as decoration, location, etc., the place that you live has some fundamental similarities to most other homes. For instance, it did not just miraculously pop into existence out of thin air. Somebody had to plan where to build it and they had to draw up the blueprints for the construction team to follow. In addition, they had to apply for the proper permits from local government and acquire all of the necessary supplies and tools needed during the actual construction. All of these important tasks are just preliminary to the actual construction of a home.

Think for a moment about the actual parts of a home—for example the walls, roof, doors, windows, pipes, and wiring.

What is the very first thing that must be built before anything else can be added? (the foundation)

Why is a foundation important? (It is the base that everything else will rest on.)

Did you know that the Lord Jesus used the imagery of building a house to help people understand how we can build our lives on a foundation of truth?

Teacher's note: Have a student read aloud Matthew 7:24-27.

- What was the important difference between the two houses?
- What did Jesus say was the difference between the two builders?

In this story the foundation made all the difference. Both men heard the Lord, but only one acted on what he heard. Only one of the men built his house on a solid foundation. Your life is like a house. Every decision reflects the strengths or weaknesses in your structure. When you make wise, God-directed decisions, your life will prosper in accordance with His plans. When you make decisions based on human understanding and feelings, you risk the possibility of sin and operating outside the will of God. Most people base their lives on a foundation of what people think, rather than allowing God's Word to be the foundation for their decision-making.

We should be committed to hiding God's Word in our heart so we don't sin against God (Psalm 119:11). In our day-to-day lives we need to consistently be considering how the Bible addresses the decisions and circumstances we are facing. The Bible has much to say regarding life decisions for students. Examples include: how we should dress since man looks on the outward appearance and judges what he sees (1 Samuel 16:7; 1 Timothy 2:8-10; Romans 14:13), the kind of person we should pursue as a mate (1 Corinthians 15:33), how to spend our free time (Philippians 4:8), and how to get along with friends and family (Exodus 20:12-17; Matthew 5:9; John 15:13; Philemon 4-9).

Not only does the Bible offer specific insight into many of the situations we find ourselves in every day, it also includes wisdom regarding the overall attitude of a serious Christ-follower.

Teacher's Note: Have students read aloud Psalm 37:31 and Psalm 40:7-8.

- Where have the writers hidden the truths that God has revealed to them?

The psalmists say that they have hidden God's Word in their hearts. This is important! There is a profound difference between reading the Bible and hiding its words in our heart. Reading the Bible alone brings with it no commitment to do anything that it says. Readers of God's Word who do not act on it are exactly the kind of people the Lord spoke of in the parable of the builders. God's desire for your life is that you would delight to do His will because His Word is in your heart (Psalm 40:7-8).

Teacher's Note: Read aloud Romans 12:2.

In this passage Paul tells us that if we resist conformity to the world and treat God's Word as a foundation for building our lives, we will be transformed by the renewing of our minds so we can prove what is the good and acceptable will of God. If your desire is to grow into a mature, successful leader in your community and be a servant of the Lord, you will need to memorize or hide His Word in your heart. That will

enable you to have the proper foundation for wise decision-making. So you can see, it is of the utmost importance.

Truth #2 – The Word does not change.

Somebody share some examples of how your life has changed in the last five years. (Allow for responses.)

Lecture

Change makes life both interesting and challenging at times. We live in a fast-paced world that is constantly changing. New technology, new opportunities, and creative ways of learning are all unfolding before our eyes every day. In this advanced modern age, little stays the same for very long.

One of the challenges that comes with decision-making is dealing with things that change. Studying a certain way for a science test tomorrow may not work very well for the math test next week. Every day our situation is shifting and developing.

One week our life goal may be to become a skilled athlete and the next we may find ourselves dreaming of being a successful businessperson. When it comes to making the “big” decisions in our lives such as what to believe, where to live, who to marry, and how to use the resources entrusted to us by God, we can quickly get mixed up as to which way to go. Our own tendency to change can be an obstacle to our success and happiness if we are not being guided by something deeper than our feelings and desires.

A few minutes ago we considered how important it is to have the Bible as our foundation for decision-making. In the world of construction, buildings are only as reliable as their foundations. Thankfully, the God we serve is perfect and unchanging (Malachi 3:6). This characteristic of God is called immutability. He is not capable of, or susceptible to change.

God is the only unchanging being in existence. He never has to change because He never second guesses His decisions or judgments. Numbers 23:19 illustrates this truth beautifully.

Teacher’s Note: Have a student read aloud Numbers 23:19

- According to this verse, what are two things humans do that God will not and cannot do? (lie, repent)
- What does this verse also say about what God always will do? (God always does what He says.)

You can trust God to keep His promises because He cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

Teacher’s note: Have a student read aloud James 1:17

- What are some of the gifts God has given you that maybe you have not considered before? (Allow a few students to share some of their experiences and testimonies. Be prepared to share a recent blessing from your life that can help the students understand how God does, in fact, take care of His children.)

We have been shown from Scripture that God is perfect and does not change; but how do these truths relate to trusting in His Word as the foundation for our decision-

making? When we talk about trust, we mean to depend on and put one's confidence in a person or thing. The answer is security. We can trust God and rely on His Word because neither will ever change. We never have to worry about God rewriting or changing the truth in the Bible. He has spoken it and intends for us to live by it... forever! God's Word is just as unchanging as He is in nature and character; therefore, the Bible is a rock-solid surface on which to build our lives. There is no other person or thing in life in which you can totally place your trust without possibility of change or betrayal. When it comes to making decisions and looking for truth and meaning in life, look no further than the One who made you! Any other choice will be building on sand and the results will be a Fool House. Not a good choice to make.

Truth #3 – Living by the Word

Knowing the Bible is our foundation for truth, and knowing that it does not change does nothing to impact a person's life if these principles are not applied and lived out. So how does one actually go about making decisions based on the foundation of God's Word?

Just like an athlete, you have to train your body and mind to behave differently. Your training begins with time spent fellowshiping with God through prayer and study of His Word. These activities need to become daily parts of your life so that you can begin the transformation that Paul spoke of in Romans 12:2. Learn to abide, or walk closely with Him by spending time with Him reading His Word. Pray that talking to Him becomes more natural. As you spend time in God's Word you become equipped with the tools to use when you face difficult decisions. One helpful tool that is easy to remember and apply is the acrostic: **S.M.A.R.T. Living**. Here's the acrostic:

Search – Take the time to search for truth that speaks directly to your situation.

Morality – Ask the question: Is this decision a matter of sin?

Accountability – Seek out wise counsel.

Recall – Reflect on times in the past in which you dealt with similar circumstances.

Think – Take time to think about all of the ins and outs of the decision.

S.M.A.R.T. Living is a tool to help you make wise decisions.

- What are some decisions you will likely have to make in the coming week?

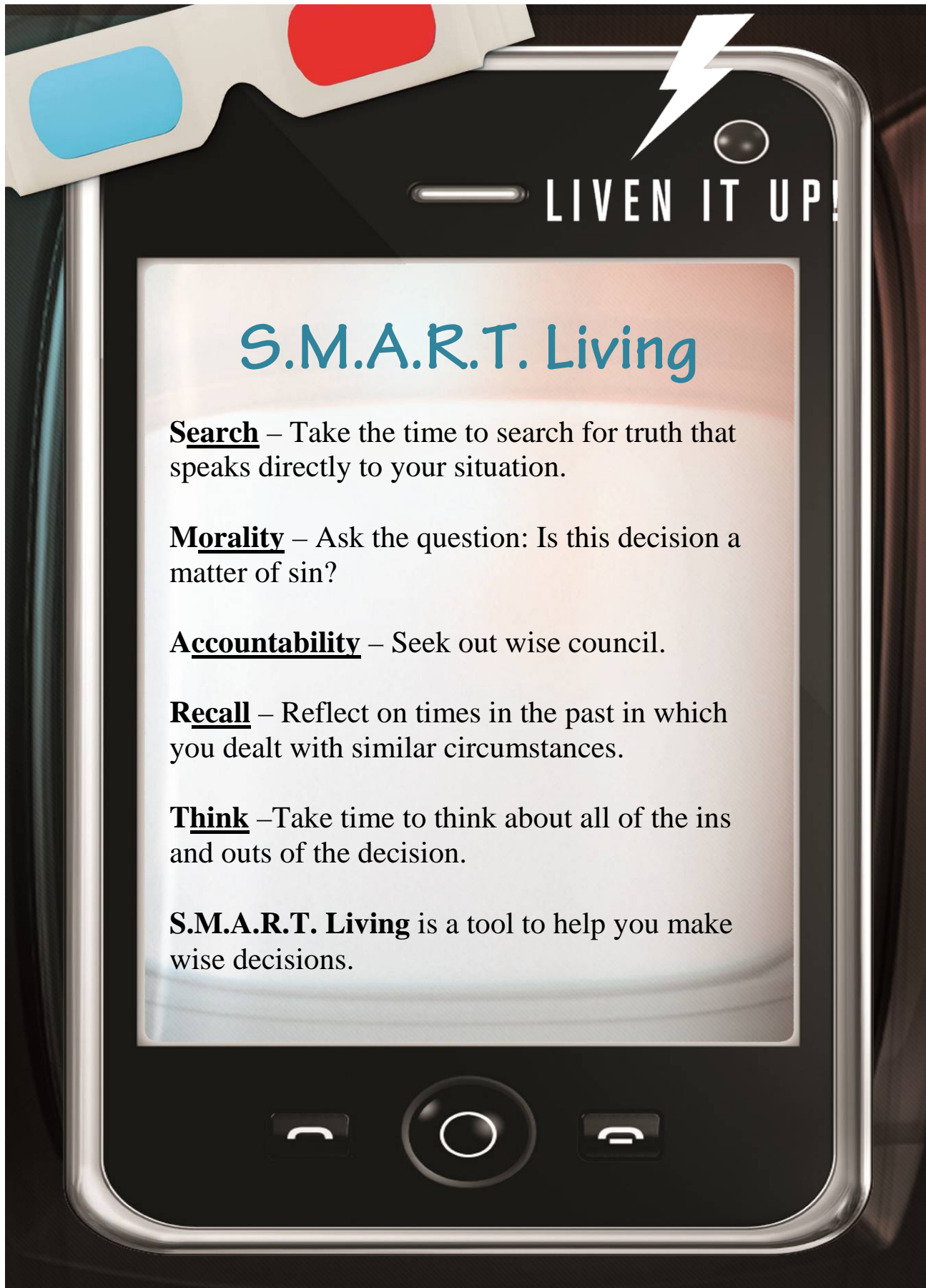
Chances are you will have to make many of these decisions this week and many more that you did not think of. Tonight, however, you have an opportunity to let God begin to transform your life and equip you so you will be ready for all of the decisions that life may bring your way. Choose to be both a hearer and a doer of the Word of God, for He calls that person wise (Matthew 7:24).

Conclusion

Each of you has a choice to make. It is a *choice* so important that it influences you when it comes to making every other choice in your life. On one hand, you have the choice of "trusting your gut." On the other you have the choice of relying on God to reveal what is right through His Word, wise counsel, and prayer. Nobody can make this choice for you; it is a result of God's gift of free will. Understand, however, that

the choice you make will set your life on a path that brings with it potential blessings or judgments. Choose wisely.

Choose to follow the One Who chose to die on a cross for your sin so that you may have life, and have it to the full. Tomorrow morning when you wake up you will have choices to make. Will you snooze the alarm clock one more time giving you nine more minutes of sleep... but be so rushed that you will not have time to spend with God in your quiet time? Tomorrow when you are at lunch and your friends are talking about the teacher and ripping him apart, are you going to join in or choose to use uplifting words? These are choices that you will have to make. Which will you choose... to please God or please yourself?



LIVEN IT UP!

S.M.A.R.T. Living

Search – Take the time to search for truth that speaks directly to your situation.

Morality – Ask the question: Is this decision a matter of sin?

Accountability – Seek out wise council.

Recall – Reflect on times in the past in which you dealt with similar circumstances.

Think – Take time to think about all of the ins and outs of the decision.

S.M.A.R.T. Living is a tool to help you make wise decisions.



TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- We should be committed to hiding God's word in our heart so we don't sin against God (Psalm 119:11).
- God's desire for your life is that you would delight to do His will because His Word is in your heart (Psalm 40:7-8).
- Thankfully, the God we serve is perfect and unchanging (Malachi 3:6).
- You can trust God to keep His promises because He cannot lie (Titus 1:2).
- Choose to be both a hearer and a doer of the Word of God, for He calls that person wise (Matthew 7:24).



LIVE IT!

Applying the Word of God to your daily life is what separates a real Christ-follower from a typical church-going Christian. This week begin each day in prayer by asking God to guide your decisions and bring to mind Scriptures that relate to the choices you will face that day. Throughout the week engage your friends and family in discussions about how they make their own life decisions and share with them the commitment you have made to let God's Word be the foundation of your decision-making from now on.

Reference Materials

Chad Brand, Charles Draper, Archie England, *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, Tennessee: 2003) pp. 201-211

Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1999)

Josh McDowell, *Right from Wrong* (Word Publishing, 1994)

Paul Enns, *Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1989)

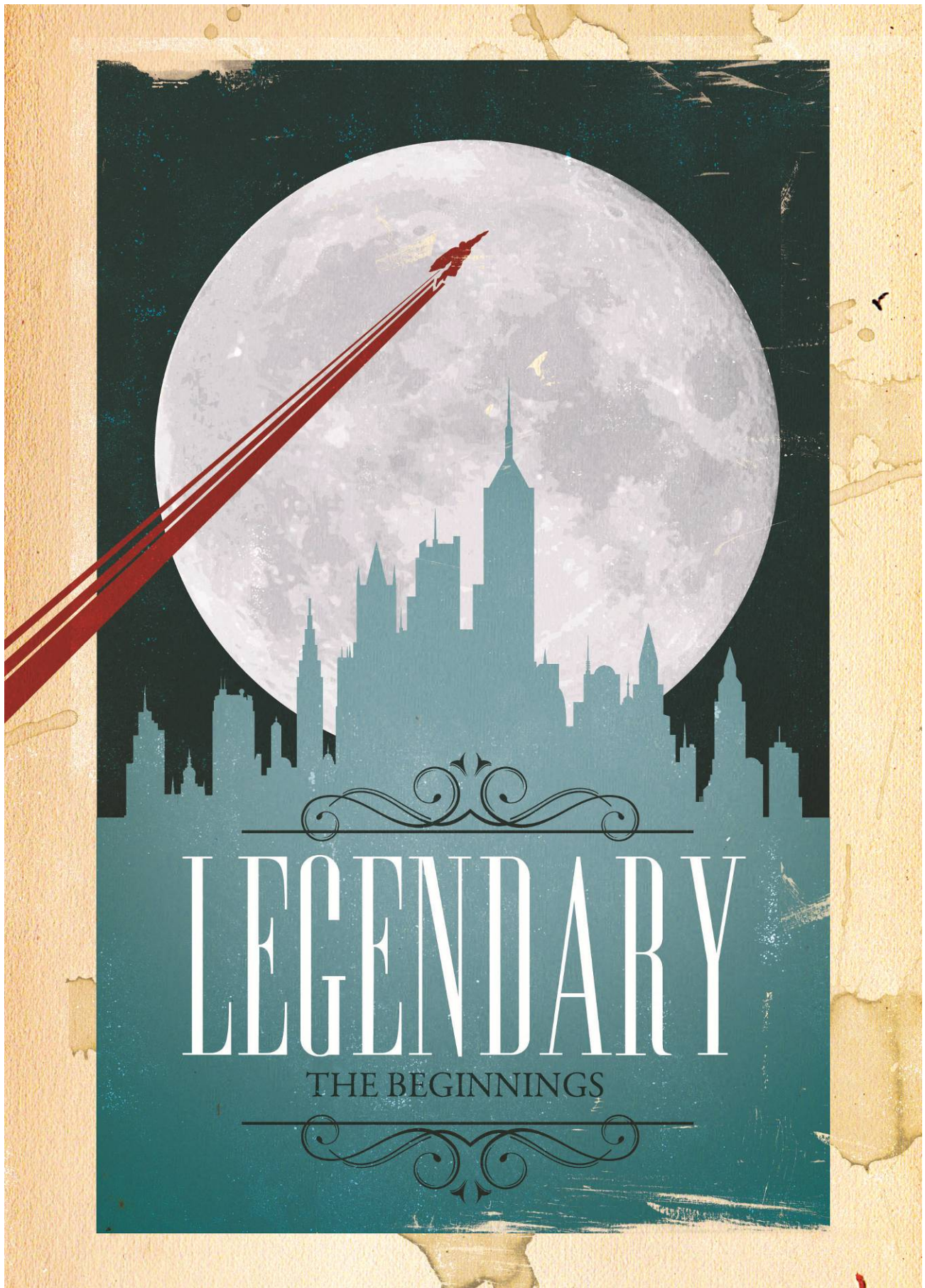
Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. What kind of changes will you have to make in order to get into the habit of relying on the Bible as the foundation of your decision-making?
2. Who are some people in your life that can help you in this pursuit?
3. What are some obstacles you need to identify and be ready for as you commit to do this?

Try This Week...

School Bible Club: Get your friends together and assist one another in using the Bible to make some difficult decisions.



Legendary

(Module Seven)

Stage Décor / Room Environment

- **Plan:**

- Use poster board or construct a city background/skyline (buildings, skyscrapers, etc.) and set as backdrop on the stage.
- Blow up comic strips and put up on the wall.
- Design message notes as comic strips.
- Buy mannequins and dress them as superheroes (like a superhero museum) and put a spotlight on each one.
- Buy or borrow comic books and scatter around the room (on floor, on tables, etc.)
- Pick a specific superhero (Batman, Spider Man, Superman) to put around the room.
- Draw/cutout words from old comics (POW, BAM, ZAP, etc.) and hang from ceiling. Have picture station under words where teens can take pictures, looking like the sound effect is happening to them.
- Play city sounds as teens are walking in (cars passing, horns, people talking, people walking, etc.)
- Show old superhero cartoons before and/or after youth group in the background.

Promotional Ideas

- Have leaders dress as superheroes the week before series launch.
- Design series flyer and tape to actual comic book pages and hand out to teens as invites.
- Plan superhero dress up day for teens and invite them to create their own superhero.
- Have two adults dress as a villain and a superhero and break into a fight the week before the series launch.
- Have a villain come the week before the series and challenge the students to come the following week to stop his evil plan.

God's Word Art

Lesson Objective

The students will learn that faith is needed to believe that God created everything by the power of His spoken word.



LOOK IT UP!

Hebrews 11:3

How were the worlds created?



LISTEN UP!

As mankind “evolves,” many seek power through technology, politics, and position. Computer engineers, scientists, and inventors of the last decade have continued to push the envelope with the way we communicate and live. We have portable devices that can give information, do work, organize, and make some aspects of life easier. However, even with all the technology and advances that we have today, no one is able to create something out of nothing by the power of their words. There is no app for that!

No one can adequately explain the creation of the world apart from God. He is the only intelligent being to claim to be witness to creation (Genesis 1:1). Even many secular scientists agree that how the universe came into existence is a matter of faith – either faith in the theory of evolution or faith in the Bible’s explanation. God spoke and all things came into being—that’s power. Our Creator has given us the ability to communicate, but only He can create something by simply speaking. Let’s look at what the Bible has to say about the power of God’s word to create the universe.



LEARN IT!

Creation: The act of God bringing the world into ordered existence.

Evolution: The theory that living organisms gradually change by themselves from one “kind” into another.

Ex Nihilo: Made out of nothing.

Checklist

1. Leader—purchase candy bar and have receipt.
2. Collect an inexpensive watch and plastic bag.
3. Prepare the board for the Jeopardy game.
4. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Object Lesson

Clue Game

Teacher's Note: The object of this introduction is to see if the students make choices on facts or their own ideas.

Before the lesson, have one leader buy a candy bar (have receipt). Have another leader bring the candy bar in the youth room and announce to all that it is a prize tonight. Have yet another leader place the same candy bar in the front of the room while everyone is being seated. Finally, have the Bible teacher take the candy bar and tell the students that the first person who can figure out which of the leaders bought the candy bar can receive it. The proof is the receipt, so have the leader who bought it hold the receipt. You can have the students ask one question each of the leaders. If they don't ask for the receipt don't reveal it, but no one will win unless they produce the receipt or witnessed the person buying the candy at the store. The first one to ask the right leader for the receipt and prove the purchase gets the candy bar.

Tonight I have a candy bar and one of you can win it if you follow these instructions. One of the leaders here purchased it and the first one that can tell me who, will win. But no guesses will be accepted without proof. There is a clue in the room, so you must ask the leaders and find proof before you can reveal the person. Begin!

The reason for this object lesson is to show the difference between facts and theory. Just like you could guess at where the candy bar came from, evolution is a guess at where mankind came from because some refuse to believe the power of God, the Bible, and the truth about creation.

Content

Study Groups

Teacher's Note: We suggest that you view the video clip listed at the end of the lesson here; then divide into small groups with an adult leader in each. Copy the following information titled "Study Sheet" so each group has the answer for the Jeopardy Quiz at the end of the lesson. Instruct all the groups to read the verses and then review the quiz content over the next five to seven minutes.

Study Sheet

Read Hebrews 11:3 and Psalm 33:6. Discuss briefly.

Scientists are convinced that time has miraculous powers. Here are some other theories or opinions evolutionists would like you to believe are true:

- Out of nothing, raw material exploded and eventually formed living cells (Big Bang Theory).
- We will continue to develop into higher life forms because of Natural Selection.
- This process has taken and will take millions of years.

The Bible teaches that creation is different than random chance or even mutations that move man forward. God did not leave creation to chance. He personally

exercised His will and power in creation. Let's be sure to understand what the Bible teaches and how it differs from evolution:

- God created everything “Ex Nihilo,” meaning out of nothing, but simply by his spoken word.
- Creation was finished in six literal, twenty-four hour days and then God rested on the seventh.
 - Day 1 – light and darkness
 - Day 2 – Heaven
 - Day 3 – sea, land, and vegetation
 - Day 4 – sun, moon, and stars
 - Day 5 – fish and birds
 - Day 6 – man and animals
- All objective calculations come up with the same answer; there had to be an Intelligent Designer.
- The Second Law of Thermodynamics states that everything in the universe is continually running down. (Things do not get better, but worse because of sin.)

The bottom line is that whether a person believes in creation or the evolutionary point of view, it is a matter of faith. We have to choose either man's theories or God's Word.

Lecture

Creation or evolution? Have you ever thought that this whole discussion is meaningless for a student today? What's the difference anyway! What you believe about creation will affect everything you believe about God and the truth of His Word. After all, if we don't believe God's account of how we got here, then how can we trust Him on other matters of faith? Instead of doubt and the fear that comes from a philosophy of chaos, we can have the peace of God and know with confidence that He is in control. In fact, we can have confidence in creation because of:

- God's Powerful Word
- The Bible's Account
- The Creator's Design

Confidence In God's Powerful Word

His Word Created the **Heavens** (Psalm 33:6).

While the idea of evolution is based on random chance, the Bible teaches that God created everything supernaturally through the power of His word. The psalmist said, “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made.” God literally had the power to speak the heavens into existence (Psalm 33:6). In the first chapter of Genesis the phrase “And God said, Let...” is used eight times (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, and 26). Each time a new aspect of creation is mentioned it is followed by the words that were spoken by God. Creation was a miraculous, supernatural act of God.

His Word Created the **World** and **Everything** In It (Genesis 1:1-31).

As you read through the first two chapters of Genesis, you discover God spoke the world into existence. God created the world out of nothing into something (Ex Nihilo). One moment there was darkness, the next moment there was light. One moment there was no vegetation, the next moment grass and trees appeared. No pre-existing materials were used in creation except for the creation of Adam and Eve. Evolution requires something to exist already in order for it to evolve to a different state of existence. Some evolutionists say the world started from a “big bang.” But then where did the substance that exploded come from? Only God has

the power to create the world and everything in it. John gives testimony to this truth in the first three verses of his gospel (John 1:1-3, have a student read). All things were made by God, and without Him nothing was made. Not one thing came into existence without God (John 1:3).

Confidence In the Bible's Account

Real **Witness** (Genesis 1:1)

It is hard for us to comprehend, but the God we worship has no beginning and no end. He, as the Creator, by definition witnessed that which He made. The first four words of the Bible say it best, "In the beginning God" (Genesis 1:1). In evolution there is no witness to the "Big Bang Theory," but we can have confidence in God's Word and the creation account.

Real **Days** (Exodus 20:11)

Scripture makes it clear that God created everything in six literal days. The theory of evolution requires billions and billions of years and replaces God with time. That's right! The evolutionist believes that given enough time even the impossible becomes reality. However, without those billions of years the theory of evolution falls apart. In Genesis chapter 1, we discover that the billions of years needed by the evolutionist for our world to evolve did not exist. Genesis 1:5 states that the evening and the morning were the first day. In the Bible when the word *day* is qualified by a number it always refers to a literal twenty-four hour day (Exodus 20:11). According to the Bible dates and timelines, we have a world of several thousand years, not millions and billions. The timing for evolution just is not there!

Real **Science**

In support of the biblical account, there are natural laws of physics that every scientist knows and can verify. These laws back the fact of creation (what God created perfect is deteriorating because of sin) rather than evolution (things are evolving from nothing into man). The second law of thermodynamics implies, "The universe is continually and progressively running down." That means things do not improve by themselves. Everything and everyone in the universe is in a progressive state of deterioration or decay unless there is intervention by an external source of energy and design such as God.

Confidence In the Creator's Design

Designed with **Purpose**

The principle of Intelligent Design states, "For every design, there must be a designer." That means things do not just appear. Every car, watch, or TV set had someone design and build it. The world we live in is an awesome creation. It is full of majesty, wonder, and order. Such a creation demands purpose and intelligent design.

Object Lesson

Teacher's Note: Take an inexpensive watch and take it apart, placing all the pieces into a clear plastic bag. Have a student volunteer shake the bag and see if the watch will fall back into working condition.

Just as one would not expect to look at a watch for the first time and believe that all those tiny pieces just fell together to make a watch, so one cannot look at the world

and expect that it just exploded into existence. As a watch demands a watchmaker, so the world demands a Creator.

Designed for God's **Glory** (Psalm 19:1)

The heavens declare the glory of God and so should we (Psalm 19:1). Man did not evolve to simply work, eat, and die. Rather we are made in the image of God and exist to bring honor to Him.

Let's review by playing the Jeopardy Challenge:

The Jeopardy Challenge

Teacher's Note: This game will provide a review of the lesson, test the students on what they know, and should be fun. There are three questions in each of five categories. To add excitement, make a jeopardy board. You can play this like Jeopardy and provide the answer (this is the way it is written), or you can use it as a regular quiz. Divide the students into three teams. Have one person from each team attempt to be the first to answer the first question. For the following questions have another group of three until you run out of questions. (The material for some of the questions may not have been covered in the lesson. That will make it an even greater challenge.) The team scoring the most correct answers wins.

Categories:

"That's So Not true" (False statements about evolution)

Scientific Definitions (Definitions)

Universal Contractor (Days of creation)

Bible Quotes (Scripture-based questions)

As Time Goes By (Numbers in creation)

"That's So Not true" (False statements about evolution)

Answer: Fish to reptiles, to birds, to animals, to man

Question: What is evolution?

Answer: The amount of time needed to even consider the theory of evolution.

Question: What are millions of years? (or billions)

Answer: This theory states that the origin of the universe came about by a catastrophic explosion.

Question: What is the "Big Bang Theory"?

Scientific Definitions (Definitions)

Answer: The process of species adapting and improving to survive.

Question: What is the Law of Natural Selection?

Answer: For every design, there must be a designer.

Question: What is the principle of Intelligent Design?

Answer: The universe is continually and progressively running down.

Question: What is the Second Law of Thermodynamics?

Universal Contractor (Days of creation)

Answer: God created these on the third day.

Question: What are seas, land, and vegetation?

Answer: God created these on the first day.

Question: What are light and darkness?

Answer: God created these on the sixth day

Question: What are man and animals?

Bible Quotes: (Scripture-based questions)

Answer: Is living and powerful according to Hebrews 4:12.

Question: What is the Word of God?

Answer: The Word of God was used to make this real place according to Psalm 33:6.

Question: What are the heavens?

Answer: The first four words of the Bible.

Question: What is “In the beginning God”?

As Time Goes By (Numbers in creation)

Answer: The length of time it took God to create the world and everything in it.

Question: What is six literal days?

Answer: The day God rested following creation.

Question: What is the seventh day?

Answer: The number of hours in one day of creation

Question: What is twenty-four?

Conclusion

Evolution is a modern concept compared to the time-tested truth of God’s Word. But since mankind wants to be self-reliant, we have invented the godless theory of evolution to explain the origin of the universe. At the heart of this argument is the sinful heart of man. We naturally fight against authority and seek for the answers within ourselves. The bottom line is that we are selfish. Next week we will take a look at .the consequences of disobedience.

So, how does faith in creation affect your life today?

- Without faith it is impossible to please God and have a secure relationship with Him. It is not a question of “Do you understand how God made the world?” but “Do you trust the Creator?” If so, you can have peace in your faith that God is in control.
- Take the opportunity to be a witness. Do not be intimidated by those who teach or believe in evolution. They have chosen to place their faith in the ideas of man and not the power of God. You can be confident in God’s Word, the biblical account, and the Creator’s design. The alternative is to base your life on man-made ideas and believe in nothing more than chance.
- Pray for those that are stuck in the lie of evolution because it affects more than where they came from—it determines where they are going.
- Take this time right now and praise Him for the plan He is working in your life. Continue to strive to grow closer to God by the power of His Word!

Teacher’s Note: Close in prayer or invitation on one of the decision points of the lesson.
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GOD'S WORD ART

Everything was created from nothing by
the power of His spoken word!!!

Confidence In God's Powerful Word

His Word Created the Heavens
His Word Created the World and Everything In It

Confidence In the Bible's Account

Real Witness
Real Days
Real Science

Confidence In the Creator's Design

Designed With Purpose
Designed for God's Glory

LIVEN IT UP!



TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- God literally had the power to speak the heavens into existence (Psalm 33:6).
- Not one thing came into existence without God (John 1:3).
- The first four words of the Bible say it best, “In the beginning God” (Genesis 1:1).
- The heavens declare the glory of God and so should we (Psalm 19:1).



LIVE IT!

God cannot be found in evolution. Although both are a matter of faith, one leads to self-reliance while the other leads to faith in Christ. You can't believe in God and evolution. If you're unsure, you cannot rightly and confidently believe what the Bible says about sin, salvation, life, death, Heaven, or Hell. Make your decision by faith and live in victory through the power of His Word. Evolution claims to be positive change, but true change comes by accepting Christ.

Reference Materials

John C. Whitcomb and Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Flood* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1961) p. 518
Ken Ham, *Six Days or Millions of Years*, Answers in Genesis, 1-12
www.answersingenesis.org

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. What have you learned about creation or evolution in school?
2. What is it in the heart of man that fights against creation?
3. What is a practical way to show your faith in biblical creation with your friends?

Try This Week...

Public School Biblical Expression: Take a stand and if the opportunity allows write a paper to defend your view of creation.

Video Suggestion

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFIngdF6ND0&feature=related>

In the Beginning God created heaven and earth. Apollo 8 Message

The Domino Effect of Disobedience

Lesson Objective

The students will learn that there are consequences for sinful choices as well as forgiveness for sin.



LOOK IT UP!

James 1:14-15

What are the consequences of choosing sin?



LISTEN UP!

Dominoes have been around a long time. The earliest evidence of this game was pictured on an ancient Egyptian tomb. History also tells us that the modern domino can be traced back hundreds of years to China. Dominoes are known for their ability to be set on end and then knocked down, causing a chain reaction. Regardless of whether you play, you may have heard the phrase “domino effect” in reference to an event that triggers a series of events you can’t stop. All it takes is one.

The consequences of sin are very much like the falling of dominoes. In fact, the first one fell with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Since then, all of mankind experiences the spiritual domino effect of sin (Romans 5:12). Sin then leads to spiritual death. Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is death.” Let’s look at the consequences of sin and the solution of stopping the domino effect of sin in our lives.



LEARN IT!

Sin: The lack of conformity to, or transgression of, the law of God.

Temptation: An enticement to do evil.

Checklist

(Consider an Ice Breaker) – Two small sets of Dominoes

1. Select five individuals to participate in a Readers’ Theater and give them copies of the script one week in advance.
2. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Lecture

Teacher’s Note: Show this video as part of the introduction.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yeF7yLkEECs>

Domino World Record

Show suggested video listed at the end here.

If starting out the lesson with the Dominoes Ice Breaker, have two teams create a domino train using an entire small set of dominoes. First team to have all of their dominoes in place wins; however, the entire train must fall when the first domino is toppled. If it fails to completely tumble, use it as an illustration of breaking the domino effect.

Just think of living in a perfect world and being able to have anything in that world, anything that is but one item. That was the situation with Adam and Eve. Following the creation of the world and the pronouncement that everything created was good, God created Adam from the dust of the ground. He breathed into him the breath of life, and Adam became a living soul (Genesis 2:7). God then created Eve from one of Adam's ribs (Genesis 2:21-23).

Their life was simple. They were to be fruitful and multiply. They were to rule over the creation of God (Genesis 1:28). Their responsibilities included taking care of the garden and having dominion over the animals.

Adam and Eve were free to do whatever they chose to do in the garden and eat everything they wanted. Everything, that is, except from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Have student read Genesis 2:16-17). What would you do? Would you desire the one thing that was off limits? Let's listen in and see what happened to Adam and Eve.

Readers' Theater:

Narrator
Serpent
Eve
Adam
God

Teacher's Note: Encourage participants (especially those representing the serpent and God) to use their voice to convey their character. The one representing God should be out of sight, just a voice projected from a different position. Props are not needed, but you can use simple props if you like.

Narrator: The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made.

Serpent: Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?

Eve: Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden. It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'

Serpent: You won't die! God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be as gods, knowing both good and evil.

Narrator: That was enough to convince the woman. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it too. At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

When the cool evening breezes were blowing, Adam and his wife heard the Lord God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the Lord God among the trees.

God: Where are you?

Adam: I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.

God: Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded that you should not eat?

Adam: It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it.

God: What is this you have done?

Eve: The serpent deceived me; that's why I ate it.

God: And you serpent, because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field. On your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.

God: To you Eve, I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception. In pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you.

God: (to Adam) Now Adam, because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, "You shall not eat of it," cursed is the ground for your sake. In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.

Narrator: Then Adam named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all who live. And the Lord God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.

God: Behold, man has the ability to know good and evil. He must leave the garden before he takes also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever in his sinful, fallen condition.

Narrator: So the Lord God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. After sending them out, the Lord God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

The END – Let's thank our volunteers or drama team members.

Content

Teacher's Note: Please read the Listen Up! section for better understanding of the illustration of the dominoes as it relates to sin and its consequences.

In Genesis 3 the concept of sin is brought on the scene by Adam and Eve. They were created to worship God and enjoy a perfect environment free from sin. Instead, they choose to go against the law of God, which is sin by definition. Adam's decision to sin started a spiritual domino effect that impacts all of mankind to this day (Romans 5:12). James 1:14 tells us we sin because we follow our own desires, followed by verse 15 that shows death is the chain reaction of sin. The account of this first sin can provide some instruction on how to avoid that type of end. For believers, the temptation to sin can be stopped at any point along the way. Those who are in Christ have freedom from sin—they are not helpless to sin. The sooner the progression is stopped, the better. Let's review the account of Adam and Eve and see if we can learn how to avoid the domino effect of sin when facing temptation.

The Dominoes of Disobedience:

Domino 1: Listening to the Wrong Source (Genesis 3:1)

At the start of chapter 3 we find Eve in a conversation with the devil. We must realize that he is real and according to this verse he is more cunning than any other beast. He is the enemy of God, so whatever he had to say was not going to be in Eve's best interest. Her first mistake was being too close to the serpent. Today he is more appealing than we might think. Satan often disguises himself as an angel of light to make sin seem more appealing (2 Corinthians 11:14). He is a master of magnifying the appeal and disguising the consequences.

Who are the wrong people or influences in your life? Do you know people that question God and try to get you to violate God's Word? Are there media choices that cause you to be tempted? Stay away! Don't listen to people and influences that could tempt you to start the domino effect of sin in your life.

Domino 2: Misquoting God's Word and Entertaining Doubt (Genesis 3:2-5)

At first, it looked like Eve was going to stop the serpent with the very words of God. She answered him with God's command not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. However, she then added to what God said by saying she was not supposed to touch it. God never said that. Eve expanded on what God said and began to doubt God's Word, instead of doubting Satan. Do you think that Eve may have begun to wonder why God would withhold just one tree? Once the domino effect is started, she could have questioned God's motives, His generosity, and even His goodness.

The same thing will happen when you question the reliability of God's Word. Our challenge is to know God's Word so we will not fall when tempted to sin. We need to follow the example of Jesus and apply the principles of Scripture to have victory over the devil (Matthew 4:1-11).

Domino 3: Taking the Bait (Genesis 3:6a)

Eve may have had the fruit already in her hand and the weight of the temptation may have been just too much. She gave in to the desire of her heart to eat the forbidden fruit. This perfectly illustrates 1 John 2:16, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." The fruit she ate appealed to her at three levels: 1) It was "good for food" – lust of the flesh, 2) "pleasant to the eyes" – lust of the eyes, and 3) "desirable to make one wise" – pride of life. She saw, she wanted, and she took. When you look long enough at what you do not have, you will eventually be tempted to take it.

Satan is still tempting us with the same bait and appealing to our weaknesses in the same areas of life. The good news is that God is able to deliver us from whatever sin we are facing. However, at this final stage of disobedience it is very difficult to make the right choice. The time to stop the domino effect is much earlier.

Domino 4: Spreading Sin (Genesis 3:6b)

Once Eve disobeyed God's instruction, she immediately gave the fruit to Adam as well. He had a chance to take a stand and stop the domino effect for all mankind, but he failed and was a willing participant. The challenge here is to impact the sinner with truth, and not to have them pull you down into sin. It is a fact that sin loves company, so be a friend to the sinner but share Christ.

Are you spreading the message of hope through Jesus or are you spreading sin? People are watching our lives, in person or on the Web, so what content are you known for?

Domino 5: Hiding and Blaming (Genesis 3:7-13)

Adam and Eve's sin destroyed their innocence and they saw their nakedness and were ashamed. The only solution was to make coverings. Solomon wrote that the man who covers his sins will not prosper (Proverbs 28:13). The attempt of Adam and Eve to cover their sin did not work and it never will. Instead of running to God they hid. Can you believe it? They tried to hide from God! Then Adam blamed God for giving him Eve. He also blamed Eve and she blamed the serpent. Mankind from day one was looking to blame others. The bottom line is that we are the ones to blame, not God. He is not the One who tempts us. Our temptation comes from wrong desires in us (James 1:13-14).

Solution for the Domino Effect of Disobedience:

The Cross: Consequences Forgiven By Receiving God's Provision (Genesis 3:15)

The only way to resist temptation and avoid the consequences of sin is to accept Jesus Christ. In fact, the cross was foreshadowed by the shedding of blood to make the animal skins that Adam and Eve wore to hide their nakedness. Genesis 3:15 is the first mention of the Gospel message that was fulfilled in Christ.

This message of hope for Adam and Eve is for all of us. Genesis 3:15 tells of ongoing hostility between Satan and God for the souls of man. Two blows will be delivered in this fight. One was temporary and in the past, while the other is a knockout in the future. Christ was bruised (Isaiah 53:5), but He rose again and will someday cast Satan down forever.

We have looked at the effect sin had on Adam and Eve, then the solution that is referred to in verse 15; but what are the consequences from the fall of man?

Consequences of the Domino Effect of Disobedience:

We are only a few pages into the Word of God and man has already fallen into sin. The whole account has four players and yet the fate of every man and woman is affected by the first days of man having breath. Due to the role each played in the introduction of sin, there is a specific consequence addressed to that person. Satan received the first consequence which was that he and all after his kind would crawl on their belly. It is hard to imagine how snakes could be beautiful or what they would look like with legs. We don't know, but we do know he was given his death sentence as well. The next consequences are the ones that affect all of mankind:

Addressed to Eve: **Consequence 1: Pain** (Genesis 3:16)

One of the first stated consequences of the fall was that women would experience pain in childbearing. Girls, that may not be something you care about now. But if God ever blesses you with a husband and the joy of having a child, you will remember this consequence. Please understand that this is not to scare you. It is a consequence of the fall, but mothers say the rewards of having a child are worth the temporary pain.

Addressed to Adam: **Consequence 2: Thorns** (Genesis 3:18)

The next consequence of the fall was directed to Adam and those that live off the land. God intended the earth to be a perfect environment for growing vegetation to eat, but due to his disobedience God cursed the ground. Now we tend to get thorns, thistles, and weeds; but the real punishment is the labor and sweat that it takes to live. Guys, next time you soak your shirt while mowing the grass or pulling weeds, remember that is a consequence of Adams's sin.

Addressed to All: **Consequence 3: Death** (Genesis 3:19, James 1:14-15)

God is still speaking to Adam, but the message applies to all of us. Because of sin your body will die and return to the ground from which mankind came. The greater consequence to sin is found in James 1:15 where we see that sin leads to death. Unfortunately sin results in both physical and spiritual death.

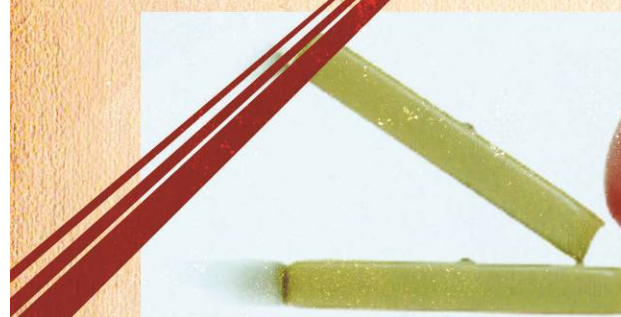
These consequences are real. You can ask a mother, a farmer, a doctor or a pastor; they will readily agree that sin negatively affects everything it comes in contact with. It has affected you! The question is what are you going to do about it?

Conclusion

Romans 5:12 states, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." The consequences of that day in the Garden of Eden affect you and me still today. More importantly, they affect our eternal destination. Without the provision of Christ we will have to suffer the consequence of sin which is death, both physically and spiritually, spending eternity separated from God in a place called Hell. God tells us that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). God says we all have sinned (Romans 3:23). We cannot be saved by our own righteousness (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5). That is the truth; however, you can have eternal life by receiving the free gift of God (Romans 6:23). Choose Christ instead of the consequences!

Teacher's Note: Give an invitation to let students respond.

DOMINO EFFECT OF DISOBEDIENCE




Listening to the **Wrong**
Source (Genesis 3:1)

Misquoting and
Entertaining **Doubt**
(Genesis 3:2-5)
Taking the **Bait** (Genesis
3:6a)

Spreading Sin (Genesis
3:6b)

Hiding and **Blaming**
(Genesis 3:7-13)



The Cross:
Consequences
Forgiven By
Receiving God's
Provision (Genesis
3:15)

Consequences:
Pain
Thorns
Death



LIVEN IT UP!



TRUTH FOR LIFE!



LIVE IT!

- Adam's decision to sin started a spiritual domino effect that impacts all of mankind to this day (Romans 5:12).
- Satan often disguises himself as an angel of light to make sin seem more appealing (2 Corinthians 11:14).
- Solomon wrote that the man who covers his sins will not prosper (Proverbs 28:13).
- Our temptation comes from wrong desires in us (James 1:13-14).
- You can have eternal life by receiving the free gift of God (Romans 6:23).

You are probably familiar with pain, hard work, and death. You see reminders of the hardship of life more and more each day. You often experience hurts, and these things are the realities of sin. It was not God's design, but sin always destroys and leads to death. There is hope. The good news is that Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty of your sin. He conquered sin and death to stop the domino effect of sin in your life.

Reference Materials

C. H. Mackintosh, *Genesis to Deuteronomy* (Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1972) p. 927

Joseph M. Stowell, *Kingdom Conflict* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1996) p. 160

<http://www.worlddomino.com/history.htm> by Dominic C. Armanino

<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%203&version=NLT>

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. Who are the individuals or influences that tempt you to disobey God's principles?
2. Have you experienced the domino effect in your life? Are there some areas you can share?
3. What steps can you take to keep the dominoes from falling?

Try This Week...

Rescue Mission Ministry: We can help those that have fallen spiritually and need the forgiveness of God.

Hall of Faith Life

Lesson Objective

The students will be challenged to grow in their faith and trust God in all situations as they examine Abraham's life and testing.



LOOK IT UP!



LISTEN UP!

Hebrews 11:17

What did Abraham do when he was tried or tested?

You can go to almost any playground and find parents stretching out their hands to help young toddlers down from objects they are too scared to climb down from. Children love to climb and be adventurous. However, they soon realize that they need their parent's help to get down safely, so they call. The parent will ask the child to jump and their initial reaction is as if to say, "You want me to do what?" Finally, the scared child will look into their parent's eyes and jump, knowing they will catch them.

In today's lesson we are going to look at Abraham who jumped, as it were, into the arms of God and obeyed even in the most extreme of circumstances. Abraham was far from perfect, but according to Hebrews 11:17, Abraham trusted God so much that he was willing to sacrifice his only son at God's request. Let's take a look at Abraham's life and learn how to be a person with this kind of faith.



LEARN IT!

Faith: Trusting, believing, or taking God at His Word; having a confident assurance of unseen things.

Checklist

1. Slips of paper, pens, and a ballot box
2. Small prize for the "Youth Leader of the Year" object lesson
3. Copies of each research group's references and questions
4. Bibles for the research groups if needed
5. PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Object Lesson

Teacher's Note: As the students enter the meeting area, have a small table set up with some slips of blank paper, pens, and a ballot box. Have a sheet of paper taped on the table to explain what they are to do by simply writing: "Vote for the Leader of the Year. Please write the name of one leader on a slip of paper and place in the box—one vote per student." Have everyone participate including leaders. At the start of Club count and award the leader with the most votes a small prize.

As you entered the room, you had the opportunity to vote for the “Leader of the Year.” Has everyone had an opportunity to vote? All right, if we have all the votes I will announce the winner. (Announce and give prize.)

Lecture

The life of Abraham is well documented starting around Genesis chapter 12 and scattered among the historical references of the Israelites in the Old and New Testaments of the Scriptures. So how can we summarize this man’s life? In Hebrews chapter 11 we find God’s perspective of Abraham in light of his faith. Faith is highlighted in this chapter and God lists various individuals with this common bond of having a “Hall of Faith” character.

Unlike our votes for the “Leader of the Year,” God casts the only vote when it comes to choosing people for the *Hall of Faith*. Abraham is an example of faith that we need to study because in Genesis 15:6 it says, “And he (Abraham) believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.” His faith was the type of belief that included trusting, believing, or taking God at His Word and it gave him the confidence and assurance of unseen things. Abraham believed that God rewards the diligent seeker (Hebrews 11:6). He was a clear choice for the list of people with great faith in Hebrews 11. Abraham had his ups and downs in life, but he passed one of the greatest tests of faith that anyone has ever faced. What prepared him for his ultimate test of faith? Do we have a “Hall of Faith” life like Abraham? Let’s look at three statements about Abraham found in Chapter 11 and see what steps it takes to get this kind of faith.

Content

Research Groups

Teacher’s Note: Divide the students into three research groups and give each group their questions. Have them find the answers from the passages given. When the teams reassemble and a representative from each research group reports, follow up and lead the interaction with the provided teacher’s comments.

Research Group One Assignment:

Read Hebrews 11:8 and Genesis 12:1-4 and answer the following questions:

- What was God’s command? (get out of the country)
- What were God’s promises? (a land, a great nation, a great name, and God’s blessing on them and their friends)
- What was Abram’s response? (He departed, which shows he had faith and obeyed God’s command and trusted in God’s promises.)

Select a student to report your answers to these four questions.

Research Group One Report

Teacher’s Comments

Turn to Hebrews 11:8 and we will find the first step to living a *Hall of Faith* life. The first step is to exercise faith and **obey**. You may have noticed that Abraham was still Abram when this event happened in Genesis 12; but regardless, the lesson God wants us to learn is obedience and total trust.

- How would you respond if asked to pick up and leave your home? Not only that, but how would you feel about leaving all you had ever known without a clear plan of where you were going? Many would ask the same question

the child asked when the parent told the child to trust them and jump...
“You want me to do what?”

- According to both accounts, Abram’s response was obedience in departing, and total faith in God’s promise. Nothing is said of him questioning God or hesitating in his actions. No debate on the plan, schedule, or destination—God promised and Abraham obeyed. “By faith Abraham obeyed.” Faith is obeying God even when you don’t know where you’re going or where you will end up (Hebrews 11:8).

Application

Have you obeyed the Lord’s call in your life? Are you willing to trust Him no matter how bad the circumstances? God has a plan and promises to bless you when you are obedient and willing to trust His will.

Teacher’s Note: Show the suggested video listed at the end of the lesson and comment on how these two missionaries were willing to trust both the operator and the harness.

Question

Can we all obey? Yes – let’s write *obey* in your “*Liven It Up!*” section and let’s hear from Research Group Two and the second step.

Research Group Two Assignment:

Read Hebrews 11:9-10 and Revelation 21:2-3:

- Where did they dwell or live? (in tents in the Promised Land)
- What were they focused on? (a city whose builder and maker is God)
- What is the best thing about this “holy city?” (God Himself will be with them and be their God.)

Select a student to report your answers to these four questions.

Research Group Two Report

Teacher’s Comments

The second statement about Abraham has a lot to do with his perspective and focus. Verse 9 of chapter 11 says that Abraham showed great faith to wait in temporary housing while remaining focused on his people’s permanent home in Heaven. It was his faith that allowed him to dwell on earth and not get distracted from their promised future home. The second step in the visual is to **wait** with a focused faith on Heaven while living for Him right now on earth.

You may be wondering how this fits together with the topic of faith. If you go to the next chapter in Hebrews, verse 1 encourages us to lay aside every weight and sin so that we can run with endurance the race of life (Hebrews 12:1). Abraham was a perfect example of a focused runner with his goal on the holy city of God. In order to run and finish well we must not allow the love of the world to live in us (1 John 2:15). Abraham had a focused faith that allowed him to live wherever God led him, knowing that his real home was awaiting him in that city (the New Jerusalem) whose builder and maker is God (Hebrews 11:10).

Application

Can a proper focus on Heaven help you live in this sinful world? Do you really live as if this world is a pit stop on your journey home? If we are honest, we all get too

attached to the world and the things in it. The second step to a *Hall of Faith* life is the right perspective on where our true home is. Now let's have Group Three's response to their questions.

Research Group Three Assignment:

Read Hebrews 11:17-19 and Genesis 22:7-8 (optional note about Genesis 22 below) and answer the following questions:

- What was the ultimate test for Abraham? (to sacrifice his only son)
- What was Abraham's response to Isaac's question about a lamb? (God will provide Himself a lamb.)
- What lesson did Abraham learn? (his willingness to sacrifice his only son, which allowed God to bless and use him to impact the world)

Select a student to report your answers to these four questions.

Research Group Three Report

Optional Object Lesson

Teacher's Note: Ask for a volunteer who has the newest Smartphone. Have them come up and tell everyone why they love their phone. Have a table set up in the front of the room. Then pull a hammer out from below the table and ask the student if they would be willing to sacrifice their phone. Obviously, they will object. So make the point that as much as they love their phone, Abraham loved Isaac much, much more. Continue with the Teacher's Comments for Group Three.

Optional Teacher's Note: The account in Genesis chapter 22 tells the result of Abraham's great faith.

- God stops Abraham and has a ram prepared to be sacrificed instead.
- Isaac is delivered and restored as the promised heir to a nation.
- Abraham is blessed of God and promised that his descendants would be as the stars of the heavens. In fact; verse 18 says, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

Teacher's Comments

As we look at this ultimate test of faith we must understand that Abraham's faith was the result of a life filled with obedience, heartache, and focus. He started with simply learning to obey God, which led to passing a test in which he was asked to sacrifice his son. The third step in a *Hall of Faith* life is to **sacrifice**. Just as an athlete has to start with the basics and develop his skills in order to compete at the highest levels, the process of maturing in our faith is vital for spiritual victory (2 Peter 3:18). God had a special plan for mankind and needed a special person to accomplish it; so an ultimate test of faith was given to Abraham.

- God spoke to Abraham and told him to take his only son, whom he greatly loved, and offer him as a burnt offering (Genesis 22:2). Again, Abraham's response is obedience instead of questioning God. He obviously had such a relationship with God that even the request of offering his son was not unreasonable. That commitment and mindset of trust can only come by knowing that God will keep His promises. Hebrews 11:17-19 gives us a window into the heart and soul of Abraham (read or have read aloud those verses). Earlier God had promised Abraham the following: "And I will make thy seed (Isaac's descendants) as the dust of the earth: so that if a

man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered” (Genesis 13:16). Abraham believed that even if he were to sacrifice his son, God would bring him back to life again in order to fulfill His promise (Hebrews 11:19).

- A true test of our faith may cost us something, but it invariably has its reward (Hebrews 11:17).

Application

Do you trust God that much? Are you willing to sacrifice the things you love for whatever God asks you to do? We may not be to this point in our journey of faith yet, and our faith needs to be strengthened. Abraham made the *Hall of Faith*, but he is a real person with failures and pain just like us. Here’s a backstage pass to the man.

Backstage Pass

We see the awards and accomplishments in Hebrews 11, but did you know that there was a time when Abraham was impatient? In fact, his sin still affects people today. You may remember the situation. God had promised Abraham that he would be a great nation. The only problem was that he and his wife, Sarah, could not have children. Instead of trusting God, Abraham became impatient and tried to fix the problem himself (Genesis 16). His plan of having multiple wives gave him children, but it also gave the world its most bitter rivalry—the Arab-Israeli Conflict.

He also lied to protect himself from King Abimelech (Genesis 20). Abraham feared that the King would take his possessions, including his wife, and he would be killed since they were married. So he tells the King they are brother and sister hoping to save his life. How could this man be in the *Hall of Faith*? He was an impatient liar; he had the same struggles we have.

The reality is that Abraham is no different than you or me. There is hope for us. It’s possible for our names to be on a similar list in Heaven. It takes being obedient one day at a time and if and when the ultimate test arises, we will know that we can trust God.

Conclusion

We are back to where we started—obedience! Abraham had a *trusting faith* through obedience, a *focused faith* on the promise of a city, and an *ultimate faith* through his willingness to offer his son as a sacrifice in obedience to God. Despite his faults we can see why Abraham is recorded in the *Hall of Faith*.

In whom have you placed your saving faith? Have you surrendered yourself, your will, and your ways to Christ? The Lord Himself said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man comes to the Father but by Me” (John 14:6). In this lesson we see a beautiful Old Testament picture of Christ as the substitute for Isaac. The entire Bible points to or reflects the cross where Jesus died for us so we would not have to pay the penalty of sin and death. What do you need to surrender to Him? Have you placed your faith in His finished work to save you? If not, you can do that right now.

For those that have received the Lord’s saving faith, how is your serving faith? Once you surrender you need to obey. It sounds simple, but the steps to a *Hall of Faith* life are lined with failure. Just ask Abraham. The key is getting up and trying each day to respond in faith. In what area do you need your faith strengthened today?

STEPS TO A HALL OF FAITH LIFE



Ultimate Faith
– To Sacrifice
Focused Faith
– To Wait
Trusting Faith
– To Obey

LIVEN IT UP!



TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- God rewards the diligent seeker (Hebrews 11:6).
- Faith is obeying God even when you don't know where you're going or where you will end up (Hebrews 11:8).
- To run and finish well we must not allow the love of the world to live in us (1 John 2:15).
- The process of maturing in our faith is vital for spiritual victory (2 Peter 3:18).
- A true test of our faith may cost us something (Hebrews 11:17).



LIVE IT!

Abraham's *Hall of Faith* life was a growing process of trust and focus on the promises of God. What could God do if He had all of you? As a believer you must choose to be a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God (Romans 12:1). Those listed in Hebrews 11 were not perfect, but were willing to surrender and obey. Just as a *Hall of Faith* career begins with a mastery of the basics, so too a *Hall of Faith* life begins with simply obeying God and His Word.

Research Materials

Dr. Jay Strack, *Impact Student Leadership Bible* (Nashville, Tennessee: Nelson Publishing, 1982)
Life Application Bible, Tyndale House Publishing

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. What do you need to be strengthened in—obedience, focus, or sacrifice on your journey to the *Hall of Faith*?
2. What hinders your focus or faith in God?
3. What person (relationship), possession, or pleasure would you not be willing to sacrifice to be used of God?

Try This Week...

One-on-One Witnessing: Tell someone about your reason for hope in difficult times.

Suggested Video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXrBEHCgets>

Missionaries Steve Gledhill and Josh Ely on the Sky Coaster

Off-Road, But On Course

Lesson Objective

The students will learn from the life of Joseph that God's will may include hardships, but it develops character.



LOOK IT UP!

Genesis 50:20

For what purpose did God allow evil to happen to Joseph?



LISTEN UP!

Don't you just love it when everything is going right? Life is good. No problems. No frustrations. You're getting along with your parents and everyone else. You must be in God's will, right? Not necessarily. There are those who teach that if you have problems you must not be in God's will. The other extreme is to think that God's will is always smooth sailing—sort of like cruising down a spiritual superhighway. Sounds good, but it is unbiblical.

God's will doesn't mean the absence of hardship. The life of Joseph demonstrates the truth that God's will is often a path full of potholes, obstacles, and detours. These things can cause frustration and discouragement in striving to follow God's will. However, Joseph did all the right things and God made him successful even in adversity. Even through all of the difficulties and detours in life, God can use them for our good (Romans 8:28). Let's see how Joseph navigated the detours of being misunderstood, misrepresented, and mistreated by others, all while remaining in God's will.



LEARN IT!

God's Will: His desired plan for our lives and His creation.

God's Sovereignty: God's supreme authority and rule over His creation

Checklist

1. Have video of off-road travel (see Teacher's Note).
2. Copy the Press Core Questions.
3. Select the individuals to be the Press Core who will ask the assigned questions.
4. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Video

How many of you have heard of “off-road racing” or the recreational adventure some would call “off-roading?” Some of you that have lived in the city all your life may not be as familiar with the term as those that live in the country, so here is a clip of a Land Rover driving up a rock formation called Lion’s Back.

Teacher’s note: Play the following link

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ti65qL4DPZ0&NR=1> or if you want to find others you can find them on YouTube by searching “off-roading.” There are two other videos we have listed that are more extreme, if you think your group would prefer them.

Application

Not every road is easy. How do you respond to the unexpected obstacles and detours along the way? Do you get angry or get stuck? It is God’s desire that we keep on the right road until we reach our destination. Some of you may be wondering why God allows detours in life if His will is good and true. Sometimes God’s will doesn’t seem very good to us. However, if we push on and remain obedient to His will, it will be the perfect path for us.

Content

Press Conference

Teacher’s Note: Have the stage set up as if it is a press conference. Give a leader the following introduction so that they can introduce a male teacher as modern-day Joseph. Have a copy of each question printed out and assign to seven different students and leaders. Have them planted among the group like a press core. All of the content is paraphrased and based on Genesis chapters 37-50.

Press Conference Introduction

Welcome. Thank you for attending this press conference. I have just one announcement as to the format of this event. We have preselected members of the press core and due to our time constraints we will be taking just those questions and in the appropriate order. Thanks for your understanding.

It is my privilege to introduce our special guest. His life and story have been written about in the bestselling book of all time. He has agreed to field questions about his life, which is highlighted by an incredible journey from a pit, to a prison, to the palace. This individual can relate to being unwanted and literally sold into slavery, to being lied about, mistreated, and imprisoned. Despite all of the obstacles he encountered, his life was marked by an incredible faith and trust in God. I could go on and on about how he has maintained a fantastic testimony in the community, but instead of hearing from me it is my pleasure to introduce Joe. Let’s give him a round of applause!

Press Conference

Joe: Thank you for this opportunity and for allowing me to share my story. I want to open it up for questions in just a minute but first let me tell you why I am so burdened for students. I see young people all around the world that are frustrated with their Christian life and God’s will for them. I believe one of the reasons is that they

think, “If I surrender to God, then I should have a life of peace and blessing.” Has anyone had that thought? You can raise your hand. Thanks for your honesty. But unfortunately it doesn’t work that way. Not because God isn’t good, but because we live in a sinful, unfair world. God’s will is sometimes hard to find because it’s God’s desired plan for my life—not mine. Let’s start with the first question and see how God was in control even in my tough times.

Press Core – Question #1:

My question is about your childhood. Can you tell me about your family and your relationship with your father and brothers?

Joe: Certainly I can share about my family. Some would say it was a little dysfunctional, maybe *very* dysfunctional. But my father is Jacob, one of two boys of my grandfather Isaac. I am sure you have heard about the falling out between my dad and his brother Esau. The family inheritance was “given” to my dad under some unusual circumstances and trouble followed. In our travel to Canaan, my mother died while delivering my younger brother Ben. Growing up we heard stories about a promised nation that would come out of our family, but I had no idea what that meant. It seems I was good at irritating my ten older step-brothers. They didn’t like me and in some ways were jealous mainly because of my mother Rachel. She was the special love of my father. My brothers perceived that I was bragging when I revealed some dreams I had as a teenager. I might have been, but do you have ten older brothers? Well you know what happened. I got a special coat for my seventeenth birthday and my brothers lost it... not the coat, their cool! They wanted to kill me but decided to sell me instead. So I would have to say that my dad and I were very close—not so with my brothers. I felt **misunderstood** by my family but refused to blame God. He was all that I had and I knew he loved me, even if no one else did. How about another question?

Press Core – Question #2:

Another setback or detour in your life was the situation in Potiphar’s house. Would you be able to share your side of the story?

Joe: Actually, my side of the story is pretty simple—I said “NO” to sin and went to jail. But here is what led up to that. When I arrived in Egypt I was bought and placed under the ownership of Potiphar. He was a wealthy business man and the work environment for me was not that bad. I actually worked on my management skills and eventually was placed over the running of the household. The promotion was great, except it meant crossing paths with Potiphar’s wife. Unfortunately she was spoiled and accustomed to getting her way, which she thought included getting her way with me. She was very persistent. It started out as flirting, but it got so bad that she would try to trap me in the house alone. The final straw was the day she grabbed me and I tried to explain, “How could I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” She was focused on me and I was focused on God. This made her so mad I just had to leave my coat and run. That’s what happened but it’s not what was reported. I was **misrepresented** and accused of trying to harm and violate her. I was put in jail.

Press Core – Question #3:

Since you ended up in jail, do you look back and think you should have done something differently? And what, if anything, did you learn from this?

Joe: That’s a good question. As you can imagine, a lot of time and soul-searching took place between contacts with my brothers. An easy way for you to remember my

journey is that I went from the *pit* where my brothers put me before they sold me, to the *prison*, to the *palace*. It was a long time ago and after the initial shock I could have said, “Why me?” I believe it’s not wrong to ask why if you’re seeking His will and not your own comfort. Years later when I was used of God to interpret the dreams of Pharaoh and rose to the number two position of leadership in all Egypt, I realized my purpose and saw how the dreams of my childhood came true. God had placed me in a position to save lives, including my own family. I knew God was in control, so no matter how disappointed I was with my brothers I found the strength to **forgive**. I still gave them a little bit of a hard time just to see if they were sorry for what they had done. I also wanted to see Ben and my dad.

Press Core – Question #4:

I would like to ask – did you have any regrets when you were in jail for not just going with the flow and giving in to your natural desires?

Joe: I would have to say that I have no regrets and would not have changed a thing. I did what was right and one benefit of obedience is a clear conscience between me and God. It is not easy to resist constant temptation. My situation was sexual in nature, but whatever issues you face know that it is worth doing right in the long run.

And that brings me to the second question. What did I learn? Two things come to mind. One is that you can’t reason with sin, so **flee** (2 Timothy 2:22). Do you understand the danger? We are all flesh and in weak times we can fail. Do all you can to foresee traps in life and stay away; but once confronted with sin, just get out of there. Sin is always the easy route and I believe it is so appealing because we also want to satisfy the flesh and do what we want. It may seem fun and enjoyable for that instant, but in the long run it will only bring guilt and shame. Obedience sometimes means we have to delay our fleshly gratification. If we are honest, that’s really hard.

The second thing I learned is that the outcome of obedience is not about blessing, but character. Remember I asked if you thought obedience equals blessing? Obedience equals growing more like the character of God. We all want happiness and a good life, but God’s will for me was to be in jail. Without that detour I may have never had the opportunity to help some of the men in jail or meet Pharaoh and be used of God. Remember that the path He leads us on may not be smooth, but it can still be His will. I now know that it was His desired plan for my life.

Press Core – Question #5:

We all know that you ended up like a Prince in Egypt, but how did you get that position if you were in prison?

Joe: I am glad you asked that question because I see many people trying to make it to the top their own way instead of God’s way. I would have been content to be free, but prince I never could have imagined. God’s way and will are unlocked by the key of obedience. Here is what happened with me. While in prison I interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh’s butler and chief baker, both of which came true. The chief baker was hanged; the butler was restored to his position. He promised to put in a good word for me with the authorities but once released, forgot all about it. Imprisoned and **mistreated**, two long years had passed when Pharaoh had a dream that no one could interpret. It was then that the butler remembered me and told the king of my ability to interpret dreams. I was brought before Pharaoh and God not only used me to interrupt the dream but also allowed me to get the job as Famine Project Manager with full pay and benefits!

Press Core – Question #6:

Joe, to what do you credit your success?

Joe: I would have to say the sovereignty of God. That means God’s supreme authority and rule over everything. I firmly believe that. If I was asked to summarize my mindset in life, it would be that God is in control. Even when betrayed, sold, falsely accused, and in prison, God was with me and I became who I am because of the detours and obstacles, not the smooth roads of life. There may be someone here with a similar testimony. Let me encourage you that God knows your pain and He can work all things together for your good and His glory. I have time for one more question.

Press Core – Question #7:

In closing, can you share some words of wisdom with us and for the next generation of students?

Joe: Well, coming from me I don’t know if they will be that wise, but God has some words to live by so I will close with my take on those. My first point of advice is do not get even or take revenge when others mistreat you. God does a much better job at that than we do. Stay out of the way and remain **faithful**. Remember that God is the Judge, not you or me. My closing thought comes from a phrase I said when I was reunited with my brothers. I told them what they meant as harm, God used for good. In a way that is the best description of my life. I encountered several obstacles that could have stopped me dead in my tracks; instead I trusted that being obedient in the detours of life was all right since God is in control. Thanks again for allowing me to spend this time with you. (Round of applause)

Teacher’s Note: At the end of the questions and applause have the leader that introduced Joe return to make sure they have the **Liven It Up!** section fill-ins below and then give the conclusion/invitation.

Review of the Press Conference:

Joe’s responses to the Detours of Life: (Liven It Up!)
He was misunderstood, but forgave.
He was misrepresented, but fled.
He was mistreated, but remained faithful.

Key principles that Joseph (Joe) dealt with:

- You can’t reason with sin, so flee (2 Timothy 2:22).
- Sin is so horrible because it’s always directed against God (Genesis 39:9).
- Joseph had accepted the fact that God had sent him to Egypt to save lives (Genesis 45:6-7).
- Joseph could look back at his life and see that the harm others had planned for him was being used by God for his good (Genesis 50:20).
- Even through all of the difficulties and detours in life, God can use them for our good (Romans 8:28).

Conclusion

God's will does not guarantee a smooth path; He only guarantees that He will be with us on the detour.

Have you ever been mistreated by others? Have you done right and were still hurt? Are you tempted to seek revenge instead of allowing God to work? If so, you and Joseph have a lot in common. He continued to face obstacles, yet remained faithful to God. He did not complain, give in to sin, or seek revenge because of the mistreatment of others. He faithfully continued to follow God through it all.

What about you? Have you fallen for the lie that God's will is the path of a good and easy life? If so, you need to examine your life and take a look at the paths of opportunities you may have missed because it looked too difficult. God is in control. Will you choose to obey Him and flee temptation as Joseph did? When life seems unfair, we can be especially vulnerable or tempted to sin. When life seems unfair we must choose to keep trusting. God is in control. Will we choose to obey Him and flee temptation as Joseph did when life seems unfair?

⚡ JOSEPH'S LIFE: OFF-ROAD, BUT ON TARGET

Draw lines to connect the three sentences that describe the
LIVEN IT UP! unusual path on which God led Joseph.

Joseph was
misunderstood

which led to a
prison

because God is
faithful.

Joseph was
misrepresented

which led to a pit
which led to the
palace

but he was willing
to **flee** sin.

Joseph was
mistreated

but he was willing
to **forgive.**

*“... ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good...” —
Genesis 50:20*



TRUTH FOR LIFE!



LIVE IT!

- You can't reason with sin, so flee (2 Timothy 2:22).
- Sin is so horrible because it's always directed against God (Genesis 39:9).
- Joseph had accepted the fact that God had sent him to Egypt to save lives (Genesis 45:6-7).
- Joseph could look back at his life and see that the harm others had planned for him was being used by God for his good (Genesis 50:20).
- Even through all of the difficulties and detours in life, God can use them for our good (Romans 8:28).

The defining truth of Joseph's life was in the statement he made to his brothers, *What you meant for harm, God meant for good* (Genesis 50:20). Even if God has detours of difficulty for you, remain faithful. God is working for your good in spite of circumstances or the intention of others. Do what Joseph did. He purposed to do what was right regardless of being misunderstood and mistreated. He faced difficulty without complaint and believed that God would use him no matter where he was.

Reference Materials

John C. Butler, *Joseph: The Patriarch of Character* (Regular Baptist Press, 1993) p. 209.

Charles R. Swindoll, *Joseph: A Man of Integrity and Forgiveness* (Nashville, Tennessee: Word Publishing, 1998) p. 218.

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. What difficulties are you facing in your life?
2. Do you struggle with forgiving, avoiding sin, or remaining faithful?
3. When you feel life is unfair, how will you choose to trust God?

Try This Week...

Support Ministry: Help serve and encourage those that are struggling with the difficulties of life.

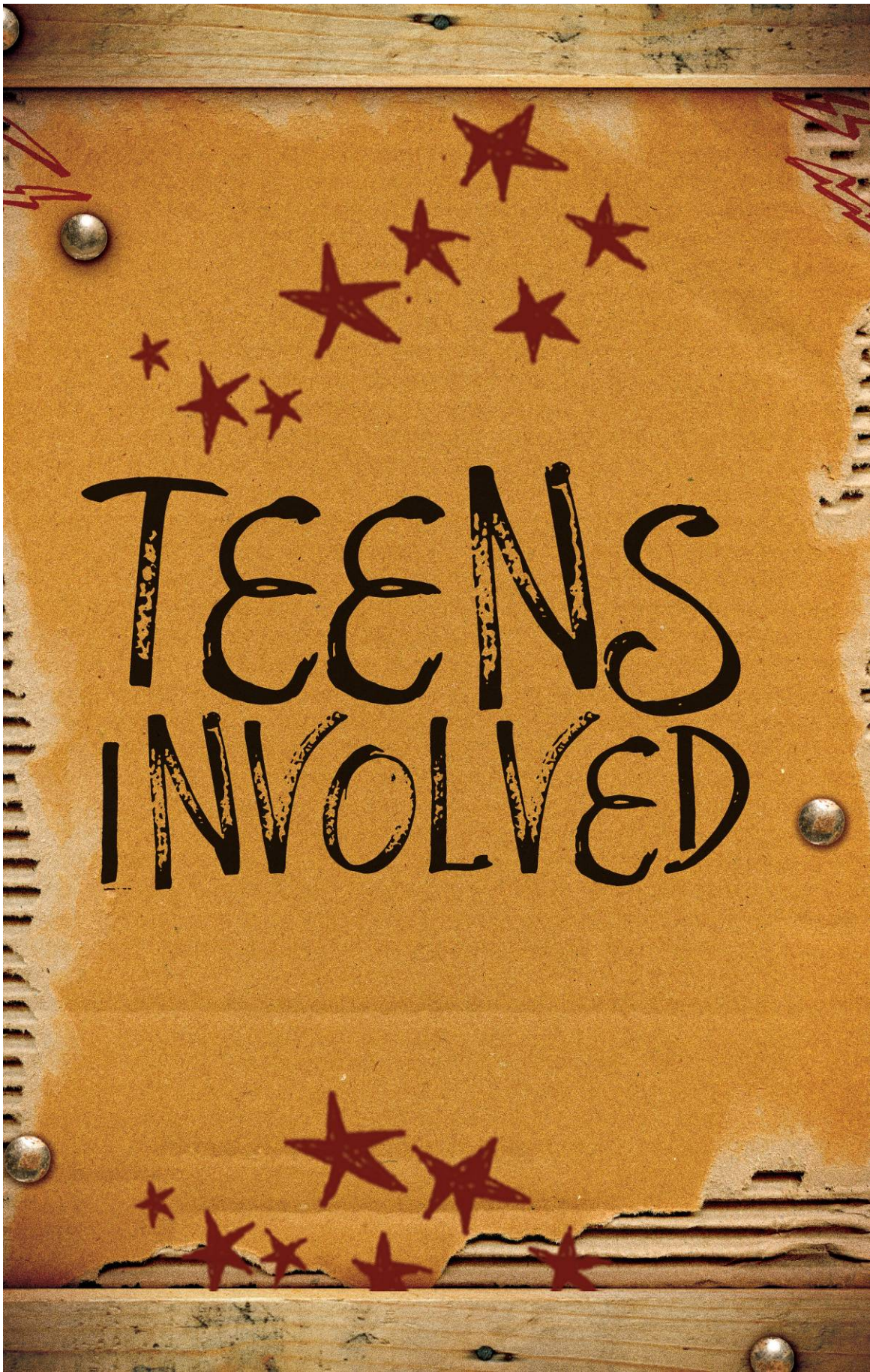
Suggested Videos

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ti65qL4DPZ0&NR=1>

Land Rover off road driving at Lions Back

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NpPoaN6HQM>

Extreme off road climbing



The Ride of Your Life

Lesson Objective

The student will understand how God has blessed him or her with talents and abilities that can be discovered and developed through Teens Involved.



LOOK IT UP!

James 1:17

Where do all good gifts come from?



LISTEN UP!

Do you remember your first roller coaster ride? You stand in line anticipating your turn. You watch the cars ahead of you climb into the clouds and then disappear into the abyss. You hear those ahead of you scream for their lives. Then you hear the words that you have been dreading, “Please keep your hands and feet inside the car at all times.” It’s your turn; the seat lurches and you hear that mechanical clanging as you click your way to the top. Your stomach is in your throat. For the next few seconds your life is transformed into a heart-pounding, bigger-than-life experience. Then it’s over, and you can’t wait to do it again.

Teens Involved is a lot like that—the sights, the sounds, the anticipation. Your heart is pounding as you step up and do something totally impossible in your own strength and ability. God has given you talents, but you know it’s only His strength that brings you here today. Then it’s over, and you can’t wait to do it again.



LEARN IT!

Talent: A God-given natural ability that one is born with.

Teens Involved: An event through which teens gain experience in presenting their gifts and abilities to God for His honor, glory, and service.

Checklist

1. Copies of each of the three group assignments in the lesson.
2. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Icebreaker

Use wrapped gifts to play “Let’s Make a Deal.” Randomly pick students and give them a gift. They may keep the gift or trade it for another gift. When they have done this, have them open the gift. Repeat with another student and continue until all the gifts are gone. Make sure there are some *good* gifts and some *not-so-good* gifts in the mix. Try to wrap them so as not to give away whether a gift is good or not-so-good.

Introduction

Lecture

In our icebreaker, you could not tell what a gift was while it was still wrapped. The gift package had to be opened first to see what was inside. Until then it was a mystery. Our natural talents and abilities are like the wrapped gift packages. They are gifts from God that He has entrusted to us to use for His honor and glory. However, we can't do that until we open them up and use them. Until then they are a mystery.

I love a mystery story! I enjoy the challenge of trying to figure out *whodunit* before the author reveals all the twists and turns of the story. One of the greatest joys in our spiritual life is determining exactly what God wants us to do for Him. A great place to start is to build upon the talents and abilities that God has given each of us. You may think, "What talent? I'm not good at anything." If that's the way you feel you probably haven't tried to discover your abilities in the right way. When we submit our lives to Jesus Christ and give Him complete control of the skills and abilities we possess, an amazing adventure begins. Regrettably, some people choose to live a very cautious and controlled life, never allowing new challenges to stretch them. This is not the way God intended life to be lived! In John 10:10 Jesus tells us that He came to give us life, and life more abundantly. Teens Involved provides you with the opportunity to discover and develop your talents and abilities. Let's look into God's Word and see what He has told us about some ordinary people who used their gifts to bring glory to God.

Content

Study Groups

Teacher's Note: Divide your students into three study groups and give each group an assignment. Allow the groups to work for five to seven minutes and then bring them back together to report their findings. The expected student responses (in italics) follow each assignment and may be used to supplement their reports.

Group One Assignment – Study Exodus 4:14-16 and determine: 1) who is involved in the passage, 2) what talents and abilities are mentioned in the passage, and 3) how God used the talented person in the passage. Select a student to report your group's findings when we reassemble.

Who is involved: God, Aaron, and Moses.

What talents and abilities: Aaron was eloquent in speech.

How he was used by God: Aaron became the spokesman for Moses.

Group Two Assignment – Study 1 Samuel 16:19-23 and determine: 1) who is involved in the passage, 2) what talents and abilities are mentioned in the passage, and 3) how God used the talented person in the passage. Select a student to report your group's findings when we reassemble.

Who is involved: King Saul, messengers, Jesse, David, and an evil spirit.

What talents and abilities: David played the harp and was an armor bearer.

How he was used by God: God used David's harp to calm King Saul and to introduce David to Saul's court.

Group Three Assignment – Study Luke 10:38-42 and determine: 1) who is involved in the passage, 2) what talents and abilities are mentioned in the passage, and 3)

how God used the talented person in the passage. Select a student to report your group's findings when we reassemble.

Who is involved: Jesus, Mary, and her sister Martha.

What talents and abilities: Martha had the gift of hospitality.

How she was used by God: God used Martha's gift to meet the needs of Jesus and the disciples.

Discussion

God used each of the people mentioned through the abilities He had given them. In each case, what would the person who possessed the talent have missed if they hadn't been willing to serve?

Possible Responses:

- They would have missed the blessings of serving God.
- They would have missed out on being a help to others.
- They would not be an example to us today if they had not served then.

Remember, the talents and abilities that God gives are all special gifts to us from Him. They are not to be taken for granted or neglected. God will not force us to serve Him. However, He loves us so much that He continues to give us opportunities to obey as His Spirit prompts us to use the gifts He has given us.

Teacher's Note: Use the Liven It Up page, either before or after the conclusion, to challenge the students to consider which Teens Involved categories they may be interested in participating.

Conclusion

God has given abilities to every believer that we can and should use to honor Him and to help others. We know from James 1:17 (read) that all good gifts come from God. As with many things, you may not realize what you can do until you try. Teens Involved is a great place to try new areas of ministry and to improve in areas you have already tried. Most of all, Teens Involved takes you to a deeper level of understanding of who you are and who God wants you to be. Just like a roller coaster, it doesn't begin until you get on board. So decide today to get involved and let the adventure begin!

Start Your Ride

Teens Involved Checklist

Rate your area of interest. Place a number from 1 to 5 next to each category that represents how strong or weak you feel you would be in that area of participation. 1=strongest; 5=weakest

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| _____ Preaching | _____ Teaching Children |
| _____ Special Presentation | _____ Drama |
| _____ Puppets | _____ Vocal Solo |
| _____ Vocal Groups | _____ Vocal and Instrumental Group |
| _____ Praise Team | _____ Instrumental Solo |
| _____ Instrumental Group | _____ Specialty Instrumental |
| _____ Piano Solo | _____ Creative Writing (Prose) |
| | _____ Creative Writing (Poetry) |
| | _____ Creative Writing (Gospel Tract) |
| | _____ Video Introduction |
| | _____ Web-Based Gospel Presentation |
| | _____ Quizzing |

LIVEN IT UP!



TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- When we submit our lives to Jesus Christ and give Him complete control of the skills and abilities we possess, an amazing adventure begins.
- In John 10:10, Jesus tells us that He came to give us life and life more abundantly.
- We know from James 1:17 that all good gifts come from God.
- Teens Involved takes you to a deeper level of understanding of who you are and who God wants you to be.



LIVE IT!

Many times we stand by and watch other people do things that we don't think we can do. At amusement parks there are those who ride and those who watch others ride. In the spiritual realm, as believers in Jesus Christ, we need to get involved. Sometimes we allow our fears to paralyze us and we end up watching others do what we know God really wants *us* to do. Paul said in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Try it! If God is in it, you'll be glad you did.

Reference Materials

Teens Involved Leaders' Handbook

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. What talents or abilities do you have?
2. In what ways do you think you can use your talents and abilities to serve the Lord?
3. What will you commit to try in Teens Involved this year?

Try This Week...

Family Devotions: Read James 1:17 and have all your family members point out natural talents and abilities that they have observed in you and in each other.

Do Something Special for God

Lesson Objective

The students will discover the opportunities for service in the Teens Involved categories of Special Presentations and Drama and learn how to develop a presentation.



LOOK IT UP!

1 Timothy 4:12

What kind of an example are we to be?



LISTEN UP!

Most people make an effort to find things that entertain them. They may choose from many types of live or recorded entertainment. Many times movies, videos, or live dramas promote a message or make a point. Sometimes that message can influence a life. When entertainment is good, it becomes popular and people will talk about it.

Some Christians are gifted to promote the Christian message through drama and other visible and entertaining presentations. You may not know it yet, but you may be gifted with the talent to capture the attention of people for the cause of Christ. It may be through acting, drama, or other types of presentations. God will use that talent to promote the Gospel or challenge believers to grow in their faith in God. You are responsible to use your talent to serve God and others (1 Timothy 4:12). Word of Life Teens Involved is a way to discover and develop your talent.



LEARN IT!

Drama: A performance intended to tell a story through action and dialogue.

Special Presentations: A Teens Involved category for individuals, using creative props and methods to present and illustrate a spiritual truth.

Checklist

1. Copies of the Teens Involved Rules for Drama and Special Presentations from either Teacher Source or the BOOK OF STUFF
2. Emotion instructions printed on slips of paper for the Introduction demonstration
3. List of possible coaches
4. List of resources
5. Literature from various short-term missionary ministries (WOL's Student Fusion or Group Ignite) www.go.wol.org
6. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Role-Play

Teacher's Note: Have three students or leaders sitting in chairs facing the students in the meeting. Give each of these three an emotion to portray: Happiness/laughing, sadness/crying, and nervousness/biting their nails. Ask them to pretend that they are watching a performance that triggers that emotion. Have them do this for about thirty seconds. After thirty seconds ask the group: What were they doing?

These students were pretending to watch performances that provoke the emotion they acted out. That's what drama and other drama-type entertainment does to people. They make people think. Thinking produces feelings. Feelings produce actions. God used drama in Scripture to capture our attention, communicate truth, and call us to respond.

If the drama promotes a special message like the Gospel and is performed well, it has the potential to change lives. Some people are gifted with the talent to perform in front of an audience. Some of you may be gifted with this talent. We want you to consider trying something to determine if you possess this talent. In our Teens Involved ministry we have two categories designed specifically to help you find this talent. They are Drama and Special Presentations.

Content

Drama presentations include role-play, pantomime, puppets with live teen interaction, Gospel illusions, and more like these. They are intended to tell a story through action and dialogue. **Special Presentations** could include ventriloquism, puppets, chalk art, drama, Gospel illusions, teaching stories, which may be in the first person, that illustrate biblical principles. It is for individuals who will use creative props and methods to present and illustrate a spiritual truth.

Suggested video: A Special Presentation –

<http://www.youtube.com/raydeck3#p/u/12/p0KdTakpkLo>

Getting Engaged in Teens Involved Drama and/or Special Presentations

Determine Your Topic. God's Word is powerful and will impact lives (Hebrews 4:12); therefore, be thoughtful with your message. Choose a topic and establish what Bible story or Scripture passage to teach through your presentation and ask God for direction. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Is there a Bible story that I want to retell?
- Is there a passage of Scripture that I want to make "visual" and come alive to an audience?
- Is there a life issue that I want to address?

Brainstorm

Teacher's Note: Ask the students to give some suitable topics that would be good for a drama or special presentation.

Recruit Your Coach. – It is good to have an adviser to help coach you through the Teens Involved process. Ask your leaders, your Teens Involved coach, or your pastor

what they feel would be a good topic. You could plan ahead of time to work with your Pastor's series of messages, or with the upcoming lessons in your youth meetings.

Appreciate the Process. – Know the process and requirements of Teens Involved. The process allows you to prepare well, organize your presentation, and make it effective. Ask your adviser to help you with ideas and hold you accountable when it comes to preparation.

Make up the Presentation. – Select, adapt, or write an original drama script. Use this as an opportunity to employ your imagination and creativity. It's possible someone in your church is waiting to be used to write your script or you and your drama team can write the script together. Approach it like a research paper and assign it to your whole youth group for a contest. Utilize resources such as your Bible, Student Book, Bible commentaries, or drama/skit books. Make certain that your presentation is biblical as that is what will influence and change lives. After the facts are carefully researched and laid out in a narrative form, it is time to add personality to your script. Are you writing this in first person, from the perspective of someone who was actually there, or is there a fictitious character retelling the story? Or maybe you are using inanimate objects like the five loaves and two fish to tell the story of the feeding of the five thousand. The tone and setting of the story are ways in which you can uniquely tell a familiar story to ignite new interest.

Arrange your Application. – You should make your presentation relevant to the audience so they can act on the truths being taught. Even if all the rest of your presentation is dynamic, when the application is not clear, it can leave the audience without an opportunity to apply the message of the presentation to their life. The application helps the listeners respond to the claims of the Word of God. The application usually leads the listener to make a decision concerning: (1) an attitude that needs to be changed, (2) a decision or choice to act upon, or (3) a strong reminder/acceptance of truths already known. It is the process of bringing truth directly to the listener to elicit a personal response as to what God wants to do in their life.

Teens Involved Work Groups:

Teacher's Note: Divide into two groups. Give each group one of the following outlines. Tell them to make up a two minute drama using the outline. Give them eight minutes to come up with their presentation. If your group is small use one of the suggested videos on Teacher Source to demonstrate a Drama Presentation.

Group One: The Parable of the Sower – Luke 8:4-15

- There was the trampled soil—birds ate the seed. The ways and philosophy of the world got in the way.
- There was the rocky, withered soil—no moisture. Religiously shallow.
- There was the thorn-choked soil—the distraction of worries, riches, and lusts.
- There was the good soil—it produced one hundred times. Produces spiritual believers.

Group Two: The Feeding of the Five Thousand – John 6:1-14

- Jesus asks Philip: “Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” Philip replies: “Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little” (vv. 5-7).

- Andrew, one of his disciples, suggests: “There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?” (vv. 8-9)
- Jesus orders: “Make the people sit down.” And about five thousand men sit down on the grass (v. 10).
- Jesus takes the loaves, gives thanks, and distributes them... (v. 11a).
- Those who are seated eat as much as they want (v. 11b).
- Jesus tells His disciples to collect the fragments; they fill twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves (vv. 12-13a).

Teacher’s Note: Word of Life’s Student Fusion or Group Ignite and other short-term missionary ministries such as Child Evangelism Fellowship use these types of presentations. There could be other opportunities where your students might use their gifts and talents. Invite those who have participated in one of these ministries to share how God used them and their presentation. Also, plan to attend the area Teens Involved event near you. Take a core group of your students to observe the presentations. They will be encouraged to participate.

Conclusion

Teacher’s Note: Pass out the rules for Drama and Special Presentations as you challenge the students to get involved in these categories.

Developing an effective Drama or Special Presentation requires more than talent. It will require a purposeful commitment to do it well. Commit to the process. Practice makes perfect. Develop an understanding of the category. Discover as much as you can about it. Find someone with experience to help you develop a presentation. Look for Dramas and Special Presentations from the Internet and other resources that your church and leaders have. Once you have a direction and a purpose, determine the response you want from the audience. Work diligently to bring your presentation to a personal and Biblical application.

If you are gifted for drama or another drama-like ministry, recognize your responsibility to use that gift. God will use you to reach people with your talent. You can be used to get God’s Word into the lives of others. You can make a difference in those lives. Take a step of faith and make a firm commitment to use your talent for the Lord. Make a decision to use Teens Involved as the vehicle to develop a ministry that can change lives. Consult with one of your leaders and ask for help to get involved.

Getting Engaged in D.R.A.M.A. ⚡

LIVEN IT UP!

D R A M A

Determine
Your
Topic

Recruit
Your
Coach

Appreciate
the
Process

Make Up
the
Presentation

Arrange
Your
Application



TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- If the drama promotes a special message like the Gospel and is performed well, it has the potential to change lives.
- God's Word is powerful and will impact lives; therefore, be thoughtful with your message (Hebrews 4:12).
- It is good to have an adviser to help coach you through the Teens Involved process.
- Make certain that your presentation is biblical, as that is what will influence and change lives.
- You should make your presentation relevant to the audience so they can act on the truths being taught.



LIVE IT!

If you are gifted to perform drama or entertain others, God can use you to reach people with the Gospel and encourage Christians to grow in their walk with God. You can touch their lives on both a spiritual and emotional level; but it will require a step of faith and a firm commitment. Make a decision to use your talent and Teens Involved as a vehicle to develop a ministry that can change lives. Talk with one of your small group leaders and ask for help to get involved.

Reference Materials

Word of Life Teens Involved Manual
Word of Life Teens Involved web site
<http://www.dramashare.com>

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. What types of dramas are you familiar with?
2. What movie, video, or drama has affected your life and why?
3. What would stop you from making an attempt at doing a drama?

Try This Week...

Ministry Teams: Recruit a Drama Team and perform a ministry for a children's Sunday School class or group.

Musical Sensation

Lesson Objective

The students will discover musical opportunities to serve God and the resources to develop their musical talent.



LOOK IT UP!

Psalm 33:3

How are we to praise the Lord?



LISTEN UP!

Music is ancient. In the very first book of the Bible, Jubal was noted as the inventor of wind and stringed instruments (Genesis 4:21). There have been musicians since then. Since its discovery, music has played an important part in the lives of people. Some are calmed by it and others are motivated by it. After a hard day at school, an argument with a friend, or the discovery of bad news, many will turn on their favorite music for encouragement or comfort.

Music is a powerful medium that is able to provoke the emotions and stir the soul. You may possess a musical skill, or maybe you would like to find out if you have the aptitude for music. Would you like to improve your musical gift and use it in ministry to encourage others in their walk with God? Or would you like to find out if you possess a talent for music? There is a way to make it happen. The talent development ministry of Teens Involved can help you.



LEARN IT!

Teens Involved: An event through which teens gain experience in presenting their gifts and abilities to God for His honor, glory, and service.

Checklist

1. A collection of musical instruments or pictures of them
2. Make enough copies of the Presentation Information Sheet for each student. (They can be found on Teacher Source.)
3. Teens Involved Evaluation Criteria found in the BOOK OF STUFF
4. Fifteen Post-It Notes with a different instrument written on each slip
5. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Teacher's Note: Display an array of musical instruments for the students to see. Pictures can be used in lieu of the actual instruments.

God provides examples in Scripture of how instrumental music is used in people's lives. It is used for worship (Psalm 33:2). It is used to mark special occasions (1

Chronicles 15:28). God used David's musical abilities with a harp to soothe the anxious spirit of King Saul (1 Samuel 16:16).

Music is important in our culture. It is used in ministry to enhance our worship experience and encourage believers. Right now, we will explore a special opportunity that you can use to discover and develop your musical abilities. You may already play an instrument at school or you may be in a band. We want you to consider using your ability with that instrument to glorify God. But first let's have a little fun.

Content

Game: What's What?

Teacher's Note: Display the three categories of typical musical instruments in three columns. Do not list the instruments under each category. Then distribute to your group the names of the instruments on individual slips of paper or Post-It Notes. Once all the students have a slip of paper, instruct them to stick their instrument under the correct category.

Symphonic Musical Instrument

Woodwinds	Brass	Strings
flute	trumpet	violin
saxophone	cornet	viola
piccolo	trombone	cello
clarinet	tuba	string bass
bassoon	piccolo trumpet	double bass

We have a special ministry designed to help you use one of these instruments in service to God and to His people. It's called Teens Involved and is an event through which teens gain experience in presenting their gifts and abilities to God for His honor, glory, and service. In the ministry of Teens Involved there are many categories of opportunities to discover your gifts and talents; but we are exploring the Instrumental Music category right now.

Teacher's Note: If you are new to Word of Life or need more explanation about Teens Involved, refer to the Word of Life Teens Involved Lesson (1TI-1) that explains it in more detail.

The Teens Involved Instrumental categories include: Solo Musical Presentation, Group Musical Presentation, Piano Solo, and Vocal and Instrumental Groups using traditional symphonic instruments. It also includes specialty instruments such as bagpipes, kazoos, steel drum, or anything different.

The instruments you see in this room placed in the hands of talented Christians can be used to bring attention to the Gospel and influence people for Christ. Those who have the desire to develop their musical talent can advance through consistent work in the Teens Involved ministry. Let's look into this interesting category of Teens Involved to learn how to be involved in it.

Lecture/Visual

Suggested Video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_-ABBzuAo

There is an opportunity for you to develop your talent through this youth group with Teens Involved; but it will take some intentional actions by you. To develop your God-given musical gifts and a musical sensation, follow these guidelines:

A Musical Sensation

Be Determined. First you must make a commitment to be involved. This may be the most meaningful step in your involvement. When God gives you something to do, give it your all (Ecclesiastes 9:10). Once you decide to be involved, be determined to do your best. Your personal discipline will be a key factor in how well and at what rate you advance. Anything you do in life is a process and takes time to develop. Don't give up when it gets difficult and don't be fooled by how easy others make it look. All music, if done well, will take a lot of time in preparation and discipline. It's called PRACTICE!

Be Teachable. Realize your skill with an instrument is incomplete and that you need to be taught by someone that can help you learn. Ask for help. Being teachable means that you say things like, "Tell me more. I want to understand how I can be a better musician." Being teachable means that you truly believe that God isn't finished with you yet and He wants you to learn. Find someone who can teach you how to play your instrument better. Reasonable people take the good advice of others and learn from them (Proverbs 13:10). Be willing to take coaching from others and learn from them. Get their advice, ask questions, and look for ways to improve.

Be Perceptive. Learn appropriate music for different occasions. Learn to know what kind of music is appropriate for a worship service, youth meeting, nursing home, and other types of ministry. Some types of music will be more effective than others depending on the ministry environment and audience. Choose music based upon a thoughtful consideration of the setting you will be in. If you are planning to be in a contemporary band or a symphonic orchestra it will make a difference what music you choose. Choose wisely.

Be Effective. Learn to communicate effectively. Do not strictly perform, but determine to make it a ministry by expressing the message of your presentation. Be creative in getting the message of your music to the listeners; it could change their lives. Explain succinctly the message of your music in a short introduction. You can refer to the Presentation Information Sheet to prepare your remarks. (Refer to this form and give a copy to each student.) Communicate what the message means to you by the way you play it. Also communicate a loving concern and the meaningful message you want the audience to receive and respond to. Work for excellence in your presentation.

Be Ready. Know what to expect by reviewing the Teens Involved Evaluation Criteria as seen in your BOOK OF STUFF. And then learn to function under pressure. Being well-prepared will help you be effective for God and help you overcome nervousness. Be ready for the nervousness that may accompany playing in front of others. The better prepared you are the more confident you will be.

Brainstorm

Audience Participation: Ask students to share about times they were nervous while doing something in public.

Be a Follower. If you are part of a group presentation, learn to follow the director. It takes discipline to be led by someone, but it is vital to the group. Musical groups need to learn to function as one unit or body. A member of a group doing his own

thing will make the group sound bad and will spoil the presentation. Everyone is needed and everyone is important to the presentation, but they need to work together as a team.

Be Encouraged. When you are willing to exercise your talent for God, you will experience being used by Him to minister to others. God is able to touch the hearts of the audience through the ministry of your music. Your presentation will be important. Grasp the vision of how God will use you now and in the future.

Be Resourceful. If you do not already have a musical instrument you can find used ones for about half the cost of a new one. There are many resources online to help you find good deals on them. There are also limitless resources for musical ideas. Use the Internet and its search engines to find some good Christian music or check with those in charge of music in the church.

Those who use instruments are always a welcomed addition to any ministry program (children's program, jail ministry, rest homes, etc.). They can help make up a Praise Team or church orchestra. An accomplished instrumentalist conveys a message of discipline and practice. Just think of all the Christian bands and groups that need good instrumentalists. You could be preparing for a future career.



Conclusion



If you already play one of these instruments you should consider the opportunity to develop your musical skill for ministry in Word of Life Teens Involved. Your musical ability and hard work can be used to represent God in ministry and make an impact on lives. Plus you can earn scholarships for Word of Life Bible Institute. If you do not currently play one of them, you may possess the ability to learn and use one of these instruments. Why not check it out?





LIVEN IT UP!

Musical Sensation

 Be Determined  Be Teachable

 Be Perceptive  Be Effective

 Be Ready  Be a Follower

 Be Encouraged  Be Resourceful





TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- When God gives you something to do, give it your all (Ecclesiastes 9:10).
- Reasonable people take the good advice of others and learn from them (Proverbs 13:10).
- Be creative in getting the message of your music to the listeners; it could change their lives.
- Being well-prepared will help you be effective for God and help you overcome nervousness.
- Grasp the vision of how God will use you now and in the future.



LIVE IT!

If you already play a musical instrument, why not get involved in ministry using your talent to impact others? God uses people just like you who are willing to practice and become skilled to encourage others with music. When you determine to use your music to make a difference, you will be doing what God gifted you to do. If you have never been involved in music and you desire to try it, ask for help to get involved.

Reference Materials

Word of Life's BOOK OF STUFF
Teens Involved Manual on Teacher Source

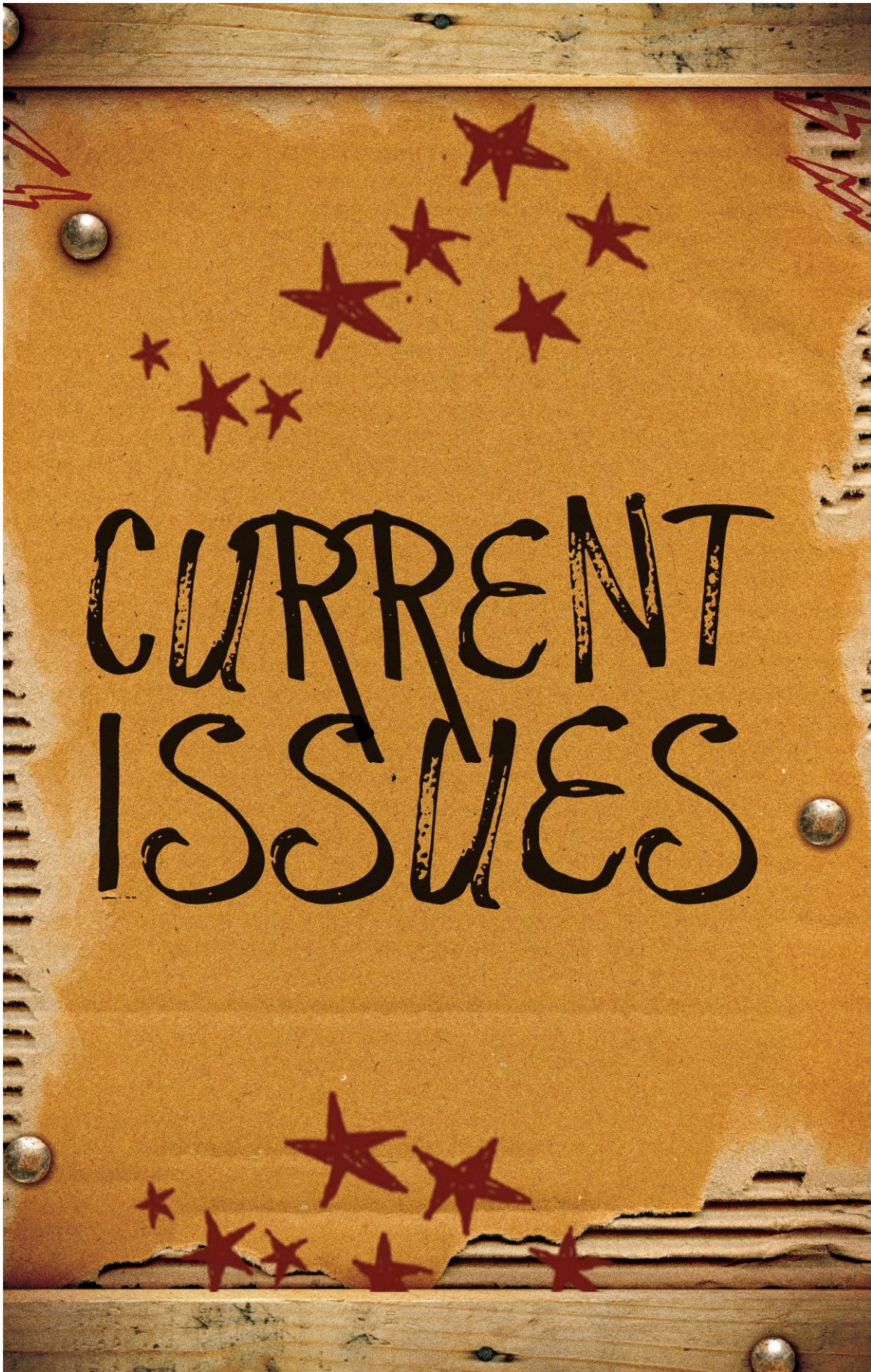
Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. Name someone who is making a difference with musical instruments for God's glory and how.
2. How do you think it would feel for you to make a difference with music?
3. What disciplines are necessary for you to become a skilled instrumentalist?

Try This Week...

Special Music: Prepare a musical presentation for your youth group, children's ministry, or ministry presentation.



The Golden Ticket

Lesson Objective

That the students will learn that true contentment is found only in Christ and trust Him to meet their deepest needs.



LOOK IT UP!

Colossians 2:9-10

Who makes us complete?



LISTEN UP!

In *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, the owner of the factory, Willie Wonka, decides to have a contest and give five children the opportunity to win an amazing undisclosed prize. He conceals five golden tickets in five of his chocolate bars and distributes them around the world. The reaction is startling, but not surprising, as people young and old fight for one of these tickets. They don't even know what the ultimate prize is; all they know is they must have it... even if they must cheat or steal in order to get it! The bizarre thing is this—prior to the contest everyone seemed content with their lives just the way they were. Four of the contestants left empty-handed because they believed the golden ticket entitled them to take things from the factory. Charlie found contentment just by being with this candy genius and he was rewarded with the Chocolate Factory! When we find our contentment in God, we are rewarded with the treasure of knowing Christ (Colossians 2:3).



LEARN IT!

Contentment: Being satisfied with the situation in which the Lord has put you.

Checklist

1. Enough two-part, perforated, carnival-style raffle tickets with numbers printed on both portions so the students have a corresponding number for use during the General Lesson teaching time
2. A bucket or bowl large enough to hold the raffle tickets for use during the teaching time
3. Five identical king-size chocolate candy bars each with a label: Acceptance, Wealth, Appearance, Knowledge, and Influence
4. Prepare five gray or silver colored papers large enough to fit on the back of the candy bars. On the front side of each paper should be the following word and the corresponding verse written on the back:
 - a. ACCEPTANCE – Proverbs 29:25, John 12:43
 - b. WEALTH – Ecclesiastes 5:10
 - c. APPEARANCE – Philippians 3:21
 - d. KNOWLEDGE – 1 Corinthians 1:18-21
 - e. INFLUENCE – Jeremiah 9:23-24
5. Enough index cards and pens or pencils for each student to use during the Introduction
6. A whiteboard and marker for use during the Introduction
7. PowerPoint presentation for this lesson available at www.wolstore.org.

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Game – Prize Drawing

As the students arrive, give them each one-half of a raffle ticket and place the other half in the bowl for a later drawing. Tell them they have the chance to win a delicious prize during the lesson.

Fact-Finder

Teacher's Note: To begin the lesson, give each student an index card and pen or pencil. Have them write down five things that they believe they need, which they don't currently have, in order to be content. Using a whiteboard record their findings, noting duplicate answers as needed. Lead the students in a brief discussion as to why they believe they need the things they chose in order to be content. After preparing the silver papers with the words and corresponding verses (listed in the Checklist), attach one to each of the backs of the five candy bars and arrange them face up in order from left to right on a table large enough to hold them. The words and verses on the candy bars are the main teaching points.

Content

If you've ever seen *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* then you know about the five children who win the five precious golden tickets, giving them the privilege of visiting Willie Wonka. As the story progresses we get to see what each of the children wanted most by the choices they made. By the time the story ends, only Charlie Bucket remains at Willie Wonka's side, winning the ultimate golden ticket... the factory itself!

There are things each of us wants just because the world and this culture tells us we must have them in order to be successful or happy. The question is, will having them bring you contentment?

On the table in front of you are five king-size candy bars and on the back of each bar is a silver ticket. On the front of the ticket is one of the things we're told we need in order to be content and on the back is written a biblical principle that helps us see how God's Word answers it.

Each of you was given a raffle ticket with a number printed on it. In this bucket is the other half of the ticket that has the same corresponding number. As we cover the lesson, I will draw a number from the bucket. If your number is drawn, you will win the candy bar and reveal the word. Then you are to look up the verse(s) and be prepared to read them aloud when called upon.

Teacher's Note: These points can be taught in any sequence except the last one (Influence). Plan to keep that aside to be taught last; otherwise, let the student draw a ticket and read the word written on the slip of paper. You will then need to find the appropriate "ticket" and teach covering the points listed.

1. The Silver Ticket of **Acceptance** (John 12:43; Proverbs 29:25) – A recent survey found that fifty-one percent of high school students say their ultimate goal is to become famous... to win the acceptance and approval of their peers. For many the need for these two things is huge and they will do almost anything to get it—

including doing some harmful and embarrassing things that end up being broadcasted worldwide via Web sites like YouTube!

Reality TV shows like *American Idol*, *Biggest Loser*, and *Jersey Shore* prove that people will do anything to get their five minutes of fame. The truth is that famous people are four times more likely to commit suicide than the average person. Why? It could be because they can't handle the pressure that comes with continually competing for the approval of their fans.

You may not have any desire or have any intention of becoming a YouTube celebrity, but that doesn't mean you don't want the approval of others. It's something every one of us faces daily. Why? To be approved of is to be believed in—to belong.

There is nothing inherently wrong with wanting to belong, but when it controls and consumes you there's a problem. The Bible has a term for this need for acceptance and approval from others: fear of man. It's when the opinions of others are of greater concern to us than what God thinks. It's what causes us to compromise. It's a symptom of the fear of man.

The need for acceptance is not wrong either; you just need to look to the right person in order to truly find it. Until you fully trust the Lord you will never be free from the fear of man. (Have student read Proverbs 29:25.)

Rather than constantly worrying if you are doing or saying the right things in order to win the acceptance of other people, you can rest in the knowledge that you are accepted in the beloved, Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:6). How is this acceptance by God possible? God's Word teaches that it's not based on what we do but according to His mercy and grace (Titus 3:4-5). Isn't it great to know you can be accepted by God? His acceptance is the only one that really matters, right?

Teacher's Note: Draw a second raffle ticket number and award the candy bar to the winning student. Have him read the word written on the slip of paper.

2. The Silver Ticket of **Wealth** (Ecclesiastes 5:10) – The next silver ticket reveals another thing people are seeking. It's wealth or financial security. How much money would it take to make you feel financially secure? Ten grand? How about two hundred million or one billion? Perhaps you've heard the story of the reporter asking John D. Rockefeller, one of the wealthiest men in the world, how much money would it take for him to be truly happy. His response was, "Just a little bit more!"

Contentment is a very elusive thing. It's being satisfied with the situation in which the Lord has put us.

We are a money-driven culture; but money can't buy happiness. Recently, a scientific international organization took a survey to discover which country had the happiest people living in it. Here are their findings:

- a. If you guessed America or England or even China, you would be wrong! The correct answer is Nigeria, Africa!
- b. The average Nigerian makes about \$300 per year, about a hundredth of what the average American makes.

- c. Americans rank sixteenth! It seems the more money we make the less happy we are!

King Solomon accumulated great wealth but understood the deception of seeking contentment through it. (Have student read Ecclesiastes 5:10.) He also understood that just when you think you're financially secure, it seems to vanish and fly away right before your eyes (Proverbs 23:5). In today's financial world, people sometimes go from financial princes to floundering paupers literally overnight!

So if financial security is so unstable and elusive, why do we keep seeking it for our contentment? Wealth serves to bring value to our lives. Seems foolish doesn't it? The only place you can find lasting security is in Jesus Christ. Consider these rock-solid truths from God's Word concerning the value and security He offers those who trust in Him:

- John 10:28 – If you are one of His own, your eternal life is safe in the clutches of God's hand and He will never let you go!
- Hebrews 13:5-6 – If you are His child there's never a moment when you are abandoned by God! True security is not found in *what* you have but in whom you have!

Teacher's Note: Draw a third raffle ticket number and award the candy bar to the winning student. Have him read the word written on the slip of paper.

3. The Silver Ticket of Appearance (Philippians 3:21)

Brainstorm

Ask the students the following questions:

- a. If there was one thing you could change about your body, what would it be? (Answers could be: hair, height, weight, size of their nose, ears, mouth, etc.)
- b. Why is it so important to you?
- c. How does your inability to change that thing affect your life now?
- d. What impact would making that change have on your life? Why?
- e. How often do you think about how different your life would be if you had the ability to make those changes?

Have you ever noticed how pictures of fashion models are flawlessly perfect? The fact is that Photoshop has much to do with them looking as they do, hiding blemishes and instantly erasing extra pounds in all the wrong places. In real life no one is perfect, not even models.

So why are so many people obsessed with looking like them? Maybe it's because we've cultivated a culture where beauty equals acceptance. Plastic surgeons make millions by helping people in their never-ending pursuit of beauty. Ironically, this pursuit results in depletion of their wealth.

The message being shouted daily is that unless you look a certain way or fit a certain profile, you will not be accepted. Every time we look in the mirror, watch television, jump on the Internet, or see a magazine cover, this message is reinforced: Look a certain way or... no one will care about you! Have you ever stopped to consider where that message comes from or who gave them the right to dictate what is acceptable and what is not?

There is nothing wrong with looking your best and keeping your body in good condition; but it can quickly become an obsession! How can you tell? Does it consume your time? Examples: excessive exercising, counting calories, studying and researching ways to change your appearance. How much money do you spend on trying to change your appearance with such things as: gym membership fees, diet books, surgery, diet pills and purchase of exercise and beauty magazines?

The fact is that all of us—regardless of our gender—struggle with the notion that (at least to some degree) securing the silver ticket of appearance is essential to being content. To the degree that you are willing to accept the way the Lord has formed you, is the degree to which you will struggle with contentment. What this struggle actually reveals is a heart that is not content with God’s design and assumes your design is better than His!

Lasting contentment only comes as a result of accepting that you are created in God’s image, individually crafted by His masterful hands. (Have a student read Psalm 139:13.) Having perfection here on earth is not possible; but isn’t it great to know that if you know Him, one day He will exchange your body for one like His own (Philippians 3:21)!

Teacher’s Note: Draw a fourth raffle ticket number and award the candy bar to the winning student. Have him read the word written on the slip of paper.

4. The Silver Ticket of **Knowledge** (1 Corinthians 1:20) – According to this world’s philosophy, the silver ticket of knowledge is required in order to succeed. This thinking says that knowledge is not only power, it’s money. The more education you have, the more successful you can be, the more money you can demand, and theoretically, the more contentment you will have! The reality is it’s an endless cycle of trying to stay ahead of the curve in your field of expertise, which demands you continually acquire more and more knowledge, which is exhausting (Ecclesiastes 12:12). The truth is that the wiser we become in our own eyes the more foolish we become (Proverbs 26:12)! Those who count on knowledge often are consumed with arrogance and get caught up in their own craftiness (1 Corinthians 3:19).

Does this mean that this is your ticket out of going to school tomorrow? Of course not! Learning is a lifelong process. But God does care about where you are looking for your wisdom. Chasing after the knowledge of this world is a trivial pursuit that will never lead you to the Truth (2 Timothy 3:7). In God’s opinion the wisdom of this world is foolishness. (Have a student read 1 Corinthians 1:20.) True wisdom is found only in Christ. Since He is the creator, originator, and source of all wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3), wouldn’t it be wiser to pursue knowing Him and learning all we can about God from His Word? What kind of knowledge are you pursuing?

Teacher’s Note: Draw the last raffle ticket number and award the candy bar to the winning student. Have him read the word written on the slip of paper.

5. The Silver Ticket of **Influence** (Jeremiah 9:23-24) – This final silver ticket for many is the most prized ticket of all because of its powerful potential! The desire to be able to influence others is what motivates us to pursue the other four tickets

with such intensity! Imagine the influence you could have with each of them. Think about it:

- You wouldn't have to worry about being accepted by others; it would just happen.
- You would be admired and respected by all because of the amount of money you have. You could potentially influence the world by announcing what you will do—or not do—with your wealth!
- You could look the way you always wanted and would be the poster image of perfection that people would want to be like!
- Your wisdom and knowledge would cause heads of state from around the world to seek you out for counsel.

In reality owning the silver ticket of influence will give you only one thing... pride, something God hates! Actually, pride is at the root of desire for each one of the five silver tickets we've discussed today. Pride carries the idea of self-glory. God's Word warns us that there is only one thing you ought to glory in and it is understanding and knowing God (Have student read Jeremiah 9:23-24).

Conclusion

Look at the list of things we compiled at the beginning of this lesson. These are the things you said would make you truly content. You are looking for all these things to make you content, but the truth is that you can have them all and still not be content.

- Contentment is not found in the acceptance of others; it is found in the acceptance only Christ offers.
- Contentment is not found in accumulating wealth and living comfortably; it's found in knowing your salvation is safe and secure because of the grace and kindness of God in Christ.
- Contentment is not found in having a perfect body now; it's found in knowing one day we will be like Him.
- Contentment isn't found in earthly wisdom; it's found in knowing Christ.

The truth is that everything we need to be content is found in Christ alone! We are complete in Him alone according to Colossians 2:9-10 (read). Notice the words used (fullness, complete). Both describe not being in need of anything else, filled to full measure. But there is a significant difference in the intent of the words. The first one indicates a state of being filled or complete. Christ is completely God and is in need of nothing. The second word (complete) describes something that is made full by something or someone else. It indicates a need existing in the thing needing to be filled. Putting these thoughts together, we have an incredible Savior in Christ, Who is complete in Himself. When we become one of His children, we are made complete by Him (He fills us with Himself). We are no longer in need of anything else to make us any more valuable to Him.

Don't settle for any of the silver tickets the world has to offer and what we've discussed tonight because none of them will bring you contentment. Instead, seek after the imperishable golden ticket of knowing you are complete in Christ.



LIVEN IT UP!

The Silver Ticket of Contentment

<p>ACCEPTANCE (Proverbs 29:25 John 12:43)</p>	<p>WEALTH (Ecclesiastes 5:10)</p>	<p>APPEARANCE (Philippians 3:21)</p>	<p>KNOWLEDGE (1 Corinthians 1:18-21)</p>	<p>INFLUENCE (Jeremiah 9:23-24)</p>
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The Golden Ticket of Knowing

God



TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- Solomon accumulated great wealth but understood the deception of seeking contentment through it (Ecclesiastes 5:10).
- If you are His child there's never a moment when you are abandoned by God (Hebrews 13:5-6)!
- The wiser we become in our own eyes the more foolish we become (Proverbs 26:12)!
- Chasing after the knowledge of this world is a trivial pursuit that will never lead you to the Truth (2 Timothy 3:7).
- There is only one thing you ought to glory in and it is understanding and knowing God (Jeremiah 9:23-24).



LIVE IT!

Just because you now know that true contentment can only be found in knowing Christ doesn't mean you'll never have the desire for one of the silver tickets of the acceptance of others, wealth, appearance, knowledge, or influence. Just remember that each of them is just a trivial pursuit compared to knowing God! Getting to know Him will be like opening a bottomless treasure chest filled with unspeakable riches! Why not spend some time this week reviewing what you learned and storing these truths in your heart and mind?

Reference Materials

Jerry Bridges, *Respectable Sins* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, 2007) pp. 71-77.

Lydia Brownback, *Contentment* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2008) pp. 73-76; 90-92; 99-101.

<http://www.raystedman.org/new-testament/philippians/to-be-content>

Report on survey finding Nigerians happiest –

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/3157570.stm>

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. Which of the five silver tickets do you find yourself regularly pursuing and why?
2. What can you do tomorrow that can help you know and understand God better?
3. How does it make you feel knowing that God has promised never to leave you nor forsake you?

Try This Week...

Family Devotions: Take the principles you've learned and help your family examine which of the silver tickets each of you are pursuing.

Just Sayin...!

Lesson Objective

The students will understand that the same biblical principles that apply to our verbal communication apply to how we communicate online.



LOOK IT UP!

Proverbs 18:21

Why should I be careful with my words?



LISTEN UP!

Are you familiar with the expression “Be careful of the words you speak because one day you may have to eat them”? We have all spoken things we have regretted the moment the words left our lips. Perhaps you’ve been the subject of someone’s verbal vomit. Disgusting, right? Hopefully, you’ve never been through such a painful experience.

Joining an online social network allows you to connect with an unlimited number of people. While you may not be using your physical tongue to speak with any of them, the fact is when you are talking online you are exercising a different type of tongue to communicate—a digital one! The same biblical principles that apply to our verbal communication apply to its digital counterpart. Your communication, whether spoken verbally or written, are powerful... so powerful that God’s Word says they bring death or life (Proverbs 18:21), so you ought to watch your words! Just sayin...



LEARN IT!

Gossip (noun): One who is neither part of the problem nor the solution, but who repeats idle chatter or rumors.

Online Social Network: A community of people who meet via the Internet, connected through mutual associations with family, friends, or interests.

Checklist

A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Group Dynamic – One-Minute Survey

Teacher’s Note: Conduct a one-minute survey asking the students the following questions to discover their Internet and online social network usage. Begin by having them all stand up. Instruct them to remain standing if the statement that is read is true of them. If it is not true, have them sit down. Read each statement quickly, giving them time to respond.

1. I use the Internet at least once a day.
2. I belong to an online social network such as Facebook.

3. I check my online social network page at least once a day.
4. There are some “friends” in my online social network that I have never met personally.
5. You can find out much about who I am by reading my profile page.
6. I can connect to the Internet with my cell phone.
7. I like to regularly update my status on my homepage.
8. I have sometimes posted exaggerated facts about myself or others.
9. I have posted comments on my homepage that some would consider inappropriate or vulgar.
10. I have shared my testimony and/or witnessed to others on my social network.

A 2010 Pew Research Center study discovered the following:

- Ninety-three percent of students ages twelve to seventeen connect to the Internet on a daily basis.
- Close to ninety percent of all students ages twelve to seventeen use online social networks; many visit them more than once a day.
- The average student spends twenty-seven to thirty-three hours per week staying digitally connected either through a computer or mobile web-enabled cell phone.

It seems that we have reached the point where we can stay connected whenever and wherever we are. Ironically, although we are making more connections via cyberspace than ever dreamed possible, we are becoming increasingly more isolated from each other. There are probably some here today who have had a conversation via texting with a person sitting across from you in the same room instead of having actual verbal communication.

Online social networks are communities of people who meet via the Internet, connected through mutual associations with family, friends, or interests. Part of the attraction of joining social networks like Facebook and MySpace is the ability to stay connected with friends and family as well as to be part of an extended, much larger networked community. How large is that community? Rather than tell you, let me show you.

Teacher’s Note: It is strongly recommended that you download and show your students the video that is suggested at the end of the lesson.

Content

Have you ever heard the expression, “The pen is mightier than the sword”? What this truism, penned by English author Edward Bulwer-Lytton in 1839, tells us is what you write has more power to affect change—for either good or evil—than the sharpest weapon on earth!

We live in a time when most of our communication takes place through the written word. For instance, did you know that the average high school student sends an average of four thousand texts per month? That’s a lot of talking! What is being communicated? Is it worthy of being said at all?

Have you ever considered that the same biblical principles about how we are to use our literal tongues apply to our online communication as well?

In Luke 6:45, Jesus taught that the words we use reveal what we are treasuring in our hearts. (Have student read.) If it's filled with good things, then good things will come out; if it's filled with evil things then that also will be evident.

There is a key verse to help us understand and apply this principle as we communicate with others. According to Proverbs 18:21, (read) each time we communicate we have the choice to use words that kill or words that bring life to others. There is also a warning that the type of words you sow (death or life) is what you will reap as well. Let's look at some scriptural examples of both. As we do, let's evaluate whether our online communications are sowing death or life. In order to do this, we are going to be completing a crossword puzzle containing various descriptive words that begin with each letter in the words "DEATH" and "LIFE."

Teacher's Note: As you are teaching this lesson, allow the students to look up and try to discover the word you are looking for from the verses given in the clues. Where the word should be placed in the puzzle is included in your lesson notes. Some words are specifically from the King James Version or New King James Versions. Other translations may not have the exact same word for the puzzle.

D – Discord – 5-Down – *The last of the seven things God hates is another word for dissension or strife* (Proverbs 6:19). Online social networks can provide a great way of keeping in touch with distant friends, but they can also cause or perpetuate interpersonal problems when careless or hurtful comments are posted. How many know of someone that has been the focus of a slanderous or venomous comment that caused trouble in a relationship? Stirring up problems between others is called discord, dissension, or strife and is one of the seven things God hates (Proverbs 6:16-19)! When the Bible says that God hates this, it must be very serious. A person guilty of creating discord is displaying the corruption (perversion) inside his or her heart. God's Word warns us in Psalm 101:5 that the one who slanders another will not go unpunished. Have you been the cause of problems between others by something you've posted online?

E – Evil Speaking – 6-Down – *Another name for talking trash about another, similar to slander – 2 words* (Ephesians 4:31). While these verses describe evil speaking with the tongue, it is easy to apply these same truths to our written communications. Often the false security we find from behind a computer keyboard emboldens us to write things we would be too embarrassed to speak aloud. Bitterness toward another person begins in our heart when we choose not to forgive an offence done to us. The longer we refuse to deal with the problem (according to the biblical principles of reconciling found in Matthew 18), the nastier our words become about that person.

A – Anger – 2-Across – *What rests within a fool* (Ecclesiastes 7:9)? Many people view their online journals as the place to vent their frustrations about life and other people. Sometimes in a moment of anger we say or write things that are foolish. The Bible warns us against being quick-tempered. The next time you are thinking about posting how angry you are, ask yourself, what will it accomplish in the long run (James 1:20)? Will it promote righteousness in yourself or those reading it or just the opposite (Ephesians 4:29)? Are your words edifying and helpful? If not, perhaps you shouldn't post them.

T – Talebearer – 8-Across – *A synonym for someone who whispers and spreads rumors and gossip* (Proverbs 26:22). One of the most harmful things happening

on online social networks is the spreading of gossip. It is done by someone who is neither part of the problem nor the solution, but who repeats idle chatter or rumors. Gossip may seem harmless to you but it can cause irreparable damage to one being gossiped about!

However, we now have an even more harmful form of gossip! *It's like gossip on steroids!* Homemade, personal videos posted and distributed non-discriminately online without the prior consent of those involved! It's what is commonly referred to as a video "going viral" and it can be lethal! For example, in September, 2010, a NJ college freshman committed suicide after his roommate posted an embarrassing, sexually explicit video of him online.

H – Haughty – 1-Down – *To be boastful and proud, causing dissension and strife.*

The word *haughty*, used in Proverbs 16:18, conveys the idea of you being overly self-confident or exhibiting boastful pride in yourself. One of the main intents of online social networks is to give you a venue to promote yourself to the world! Think about the names of the two most popular networks (Facebook and MySpace). Whose *face* and whose *space* are you most interested in? Of course it's your own. And who doesn't like the power of being in control of who has access to your site? As your network of "friends" enlarges, so can the prideful attitudes of self-importance. Celebrities Ashton Kutcher and Britney Spears are jockeying for the bragging rights of having the most followers on Twitter; so far, each has more followers than the entire population of Ireland, Israel, Norway, Panama, Sweden, and Switzerland combined! You can see why it's easy to begin thinking you are the center of the universe and easy to be prideful in your attitudes toward others when dealing with online social networking.

We've looked at what the words of **DEATH** communicate, and now we will discover what God's Word says about words of **LIFE**.

L – Live – 7-Down – *What we should do with all men, if it is possible, to _____ at peace* (Romans 12:18). Sometimes, the comments people write on your online wall can hurt worse than being attacked with flaming arrows, can't they (Proverbs 26:18-19)? The fact is that all of us have been on both sides of the weapon—whether the launcher or the recipient of a verbal attack! What do you do when you are maligned without cause? How *do* you respond and more importantly how *should* you respond? Are you aware that if you are a Christian, payback is not just encouraged, but it is commanded! Now before you start plotting your revenge, read Romans 12:17-21. (Have student read.) Instead of paying back evil with evil we are to overcome (payback) evil with good (v. 21)! Believers are called to live at peace with all men (Romans 12:18). The first part of the verse "if it be possible," actually means He has already given you the power to do it! Imagine the impact your life will have on others who don't know Christ!

I – Instruct – 9-Across – *Another word meaning to teach or impart knowledge* (Psalm 51:13). Once you've experienced the forgiveness and grace of God, you will want to teach others what He's done for you (Psalm 51:13). Your desire will no longer be on promoting yourself because you understand that He alone deserves the preeminence (Colossians 1:18). Your desire will be to help others know the way of righteousness.

F – Focused – 4-Across – *To be single-minded as in being laser-_____* (2 Corinthians 5:9; Colossians 3:17). Once we are redeemed, the focus or aim of our lives is no longer to bring glory to ourselves; instead we are to glorify Him in

every aspect of our lives. As you grow in God's grace and knowledge of His Word, it will revolutionize your life down to its very core, affecting even the words you use.

Of course it will not go unnoticed by your unsaved friends and they most likely won't understand the reasons for the changes. In fact, they may at first slander you and it may cost you their friendship. However, if you maintain a good testimony they will glorify God on the day of visitation/judgment (1 Peter 2:12). Instead of being ashamed of your faith in Christ, focus on glorifying Him (1 Peter 4:16).

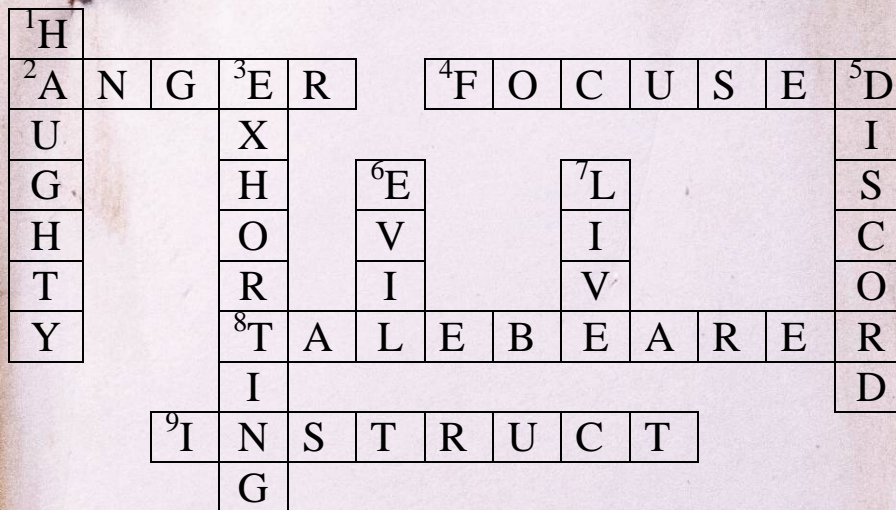
E – Exhorting – 3-Down – What believers should do for each other as they see the Day approaching, another means of encouraging (Hebrews 10:25). One reason so many are drawn to online social networks is the sense of community they experience. That is exactly one of the benefits of being part of a body of believers in a local church. Church is meant to be a place for mutual edification and exhortation amongst believers (Hebrews 10:25), but it doesn't need to stop when the service is over on Sunday morning. When you're meeting online with other believers use the time to exhort them toward godliness. Instead of stirring discord among others, those who speak words of life seek to build others up, promoting peace and unity (Romans 14:19). In his letter to the Philippians the Apostle Paul exhorted the believers there to live in harmony with each other. Self-seeking and prideful attitudes are unity-killers. Online social networks like Facebook don't need to be hotbeds for divisions or promoting personal agendas. Instead you can use them to help other believers grow in their love for Christ and others.

Conclusion

Our focus in this lesson has been on the first part of Proverbs 18:21 (death and life); however, we must take a few minutes to consider the implications of the second half of the verse (read). The next time you log on to whatever social network you belong to, imagine yourself being a waiter in a fine restaurant. What you serve to your guests is completely up to you. You can present excellent, praise worthy, and inviting words of LIFE or deadly, venomous, poisonous words of DEATH. Whatever you choose to serve is what your online guests will have to "eat"!

In view of what's been taught tonight, can you be honest with yourself and the Lord concerning times when you've been guilty of serving words of death? Ask for God's forgiveness and help the next time you're online to serve words of life instead.

Just Sayin...!



Across

2. (**Anger**) / What rests within a fool (Ecclesiastes 7:9)?
4. (**Focused**) / To be single-minded as in being laser-_____ (2 Corinthians 5:9; Colossians 3:17).
8. (**Talebearer**) / A synonym for someone who whispers and spreads rumors and gossip (Proverbs 26:22).
9. (**Instruct**) / Another word meaning to teach or impart knowledge (Psalm 51:13).

Down

1. (**Haughty**) / To be boastful and proud, causing dissension and strife (Proverbs 6:1).
3. (**Exhorting**) / What believers should do for each other as they see the Day approaching, another means of encouraging (Hebrews 10:25).
5. (**Discord**) / The last of the seven things God hates, another word for dissension or strife (Proverbs 6:19).
6. (**Evil**) Speaking / Another name for talking trash about another, similar to slander (Ephesians 4:31).
7. (**Live**) / What we should do with all men, if it is possible, to _____ at peace (Romans 12:18).



LIVEN IT UP!



TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- Jesus taught that the words we use reveal what we are treasuring in our hearts (Luke 6:45).
- We have the choice to use words that kill or words that bring life to others (Proverbs 18:21).
- Stirring up problems between others is called discord (dissension, or strife) and is one of the seven things God hates (Proverbs 6:19)!
- Believers are called to live at peace with all men (Romans 12:18).
- Once you've experienced the forgiveness and grace of God, you will want to teach others what He's done for you (Psalm 51:13).



LIVE IT!

The Internet and online social networks have opened up a whole new world of opportunities to connect with people! With great privilege comes the incredible responsibility to use each opportunity to communicate the love of Christ through your words. To help you, why not print a copy of Proverbs 18:21 and tape it to your computer monitor so you can read it each time you go online? How can you communicate the words of life you learned about in this lesson to your online friends?

Reference Materials

<http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>- Get updated statistics about Facebook usage.

John Palfrey and Urs Gasser, *Born Digital* (New York, New York: Basic Books, 2008) pp. 17-52.

Internet Article – The Enslavement of Seeking Man's Approval

http://www.relevantbibleteaching.com/site/cpage.asp?cpage_id=140011546&sec_id=140001239

Internet Article – Virtual Friendship and the New Narcissism, Rosen, Christine, available at www.TheNewAtlantis.com

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. What do you do when you see trash talk happening online?
2. How can you make your online conversations more Christ-centered?
3. What is one change you will make concerning future online social network interaction as a result of what we've learned in this lesson?

Try This Week...

Public School Biblical Expression: Take the principles you've learned and write an article to be used for a school assignment.

Suggested Videos:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0eUeL3n7fDs&feature=related>

This video demonstrates the impact social media is having on our culture.

Do You Mind God?

Lesson Objective

The students will learn that having the mind of Christ enables them to learn and use biblical discernment when making decisions.



LOOK IT UP!



LISTEN UP!



LEARN IT!

1 Corinthians 2:16

What are believers privileged to have?

Our culture seems to be obsessed with vampires, although they have changed drastically since they were first introduced into literature in 1819 by John Polidori in a short story called, “The Vampyre.” His character was loosely based on an actual man, Vlad Dracula III, Prince of Wallachia, who was born in Transylvania and whose reign of terror against his enemies in the mid 1400s earned him the name Vlad, the Impaler. Modern vampires no longer wear black capes, have pointy ears, or sharp fangs. Recent novels have given us gentler, kinder vampires who are misunderstood social outcasts in search of acceptance in a world desperate for a hero! What is it that makes dark, mysterious characters like vampires so attractive to so many readers? Are novels like these forbidden? Some things are not as easily discernable as black and white or night and day. In those areas, we are commanded to bring them into the light of God’s Word and allow it to guide our judgment (Ephesians 5:13).

Discernment: The ability to distinguish between truth and error through the truth of God’s Word.

Checklist

1. Room-darkening material to cover windows and doors
2. A clip-on style utility light
3. Four small tables
4. Six large candles and four medium candles
5. A butane lighter
6. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Teacher’s Note: Place four small tables around the room. One should be at the front and the others scattered on both sides and near the back of the room. Each table should be large enough to hold the groupings of candles described below. Four groupings of candles are to be used during the lesson. The groupings should be as follows:

- a. At the front, a single large candle.
- b. On the right side of the room, two medium candles.

- c. At the back of the room, two medium and one large candles.
- d. On the left side, four large candles.

Before the students arrive, try to darken your meeting room as much as you can by covering the windows and blocking out any light from hallways, etc. Hang a single bulb clip-on light fixture from the corner ceiling to give the impression of a full moon. Place the four groupings of unlit candles on small tables around the room in a safe area away from where the students are sitting. These areas will become the various spots where you will teach the lesson. Invite a student to light each grouping of candles when you transition to a new point in the lesson. You may need to use a personal clip-on book light while you are teaching in order to read your notes.

Introduction

Discussion

- We're going to begin this evening by asking a few questions:
- How many of you are or have ever been scared of the dark?
- How were you able to overcome your fear?
- What is it about darkness that makes you uncomfortable?
- What strikes more terror in you: the absence of light or not knowing what could be lurking in the shadows?

Content

While some people are afraid of the dark, others are unusually fascinated with dark things. It seems that our culture has been experiencing somewhat of a gravitational pull toward subjects that have a dark undertone. Bookstores are filled with novels that feature supernatural and paranormal activity. What is it that is causing this fascination? Should we consider *all* such subject matter as being forbidden? Should we be fearful about even discussing such subjects?

You can look forever but you will never find a Biblical command that specifically says, "Thou shalt not read books about vampires, monsters, aliens, or evil villains!" Why?

- First of all, how large of a Bible would you like to carry around? Can you imagine if every possible subject was covered in minute detail, how thick a book that would need to be?
- Secondly, we have all we need to make godly decisions on issues not specifically addressed in Scripture right now. God's Word gives us principles and guidelines we can use in every area of our lives.

As human beings we have minds that allow us the capacity to think and reason things through. If we are believers in Jesus Christ, we have the privilege of having the mind of Christ available to us (1 Corinthians 2:16), and His Word gives us discernment in all things. We don't just have access to it (as in plugging in or logging on); the word *have* in the verse means we possess it! Since this is true, we have not only the capability but also the biblical responsibility to use it for discernment when making decisions. Discernment is the ability to distinguish between truth and error through the truth of God's Word.

His Word transforms our thinking so that we are able to know what is acceptable to Him in all areas of life (Romans 12:2).

In this lesson we are going to study His Word in order to learn how we should think when it comes to questionable things. This is a four-step process that you can use and apply in any decision where there are no clear scriptural commands.

As we begin thinking biblically about questionable things we may feel like we are sitting in a very dark room, very much like the one we are in currently. But as we walk through the steps of learning what His will is in the matter, the lights will start coming on and we will be able to see more clearly what to do. So where should we begin?

Move to the first table and light the first large pillar candle.

- **Direction** (read James 1:5) – Pray and ask the Lord to give us guidance as we walk through each step in this process. (Stop and pray for this specifically right now!)

Teacher's Note: Move to the second table and light the two medium candles.

- **Discovery** (read James 4:7-8) – This is the discovery process that involves learning as much information about the topic as we can.

Information can come from a variety of sources. The Internet has given you access to an almost unlimited amount of information and resources about any subject we can imagine.

For example there's a lot of talk about vampires since the recent popularity in the culture; but do we know any of the history about where the character originated? Did you know that the very first vampire story was based on the life of an actual man who lived in Transylvania? (See the **Listen Up!** section for more information.)

Ask yourself the following questions:

- 1) How did the legend and folklore evolve over the years?
- 2) Why are people so fascinated by such characters?
- 3) What messages or themes are being communicated through the story?
- 4) What problems or issues were going on in the culture that motivated the writers to write such dark and villainous characters?
- 5) What have other Christian authors written about these vampire concepts?
- 6) Are there valid concerns?

It may be that what we learn at this stage may discourage us from completing the process. Sometimes the more we know the less we need to know. Remember what we prayed at the first stop? Prayer is something that ought to be occurring continually through this process (1 Thessalonians 5:17.) Don't doubt that He just may be answering our prayers by the lack of peace from the Holy Spirit. If we continue ignoring the Holy Spirit's prompting, it will cause Him to be grieved—don't do it (Ephesians 4:30).

If at any time during this discovery process, what we are learning tempts us to sin, STOP what we're doing, DROP the process, and RUN to God (James 4:7-8!) Don't take the seriousness of sin lightly; humble yourself and ask God for His help (James 4:9-10).

Teacher's Note: Move to the third table and light the one large and two medium candles.

- **Discernment** (read Ephesians 5:11-13) – Taking the information we discover on a topic and learning to think biblically about it is what is known as discernment. This is the most critical part of the process because of our sinful desire to get our way.

The truth is we are willing to do anything to get what we want, including stretching or twisting God's Word to make it justify our decisions. A person whose only concern is meeting his own selfish desires can find ways to make God's Word say anything.

Discernment is essential especially if our discovery phase has not been stopped by the Spirit's leading. What are the biblical principles of discernment?

1. First, remember 1 Corinthians 2:16 teaches that us that we have the mind of Christ! We have the privilege of the Holy Spirit's help in using it! Use it accordingly!
2. Secondly, we need to understand that for believers, using discernment is a requirement, not an option (Philippians 4:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:21).
3. Next, according to Ephesians 5:11-13, we must bring all things into the light of God's Word for examination and be willing to abandon anything that does not match up.

We will use our subject: vampires, as an example.

- **What do you generally know about vampires?**
 - They love darkness and they hate light.
 - Blood sacrifice is needed for their existence.
 - They are usually selfish, taking the lives of innocent people.
- **What do you know about the particular book or movie?**
 - It's popular.
 - It sounds exciting and thrilling.
 - You've heard there are some "questionable" or offensive parts.
- **What does God's Word have to say about these things?**

Teacher's Note: Invite student volunteers to come near the candle and read the verses.

- John 3:19 – Men love darkness because their deeds are evil.
- Hebrews 9:22 – Blood sacrifice is required for our existence.
- Titus 2:14 – Christ selflessly gave Himself in order to redeem us.
- Ephesians 5:11-12 – Believers are commanded to reprove the deeds of darkness, not have fellowship with or even speak about the works of darkness. God's Word says it's shameful!

Here is where true discernment kicks in! At this point we need to move to the next and final step in the process. Did you notice what has been happening as we have been walking through this process? We started without much light in the room; similar to the knowledge we had about our subject, vampires, and how to learn

biblical discernment. At each step of the way, as we gathered information and learned more of God's Word and mind on the matter, the light in our own minds and hearts has increased as well, and the room itself is also brighter.

Now we are at the last step in the process. It should be the easiest because at this point we now have the most amount of information and God's light illuminating our mind. It is, however, the most difficult step in the process because it involves every ounce of obedience and willpower within us. This step will be discussed at the next table. It is the step of...

Teacher's Note: Move to the fourth table and light the four large candles.
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- **Decision** (Proverbs 13:20) – As I've said, this is the moment where we have all the information we need to make not just the right choice or the best choice; but if we're committed to biblical discernment, it's the only choice!
 - Take a minute and pray again, only this time, ask God for His help in obeying what His Word has taught you and that by His power you will stay committed to the truth!
 - Review again all the information against the truth of God's Word.
 - Apply these principles to the information.
 - Ask other godly people for their biblical input in making decisions like these. Walking with wise people will make you wise as well (Proverbs 13:20).
 - Act on it.

There may be times when, even after walking through these four steps, there are no clear cut biblical principles. What do you do then?

If there are still concerns about the subject's viability, examine broader passages of God's Word for direction, such as:

- Philippians 4:8 – Does the subject cause me to think more about the Lord and His goodness?
- 1 Corinthians 6:12 – What kind of control or influence is it having over me personally? Am I becoming obsessed with it, spending so much time that I am neglecting learning about God's Word? Does it keep me from completing my responsibilities... like homework assignments?
- 1 Corinthians 10:23 – Is it helpful in building up my faith in the Lord? Some subjects are not necessarily evil in and of themselves; they simply may not be necessary at all!
- 1 Corinthians 8:11 – Will knowledge of my participation in a certain activity cause a weaker Christian brother to stumble in their faith? What is the loving thing to do?

Conclusion

The process we have studied tonight applies to every area of our life. We have a biblical responsibility to learn to engage the mind God has given us in order to make God-honoring decisions. Tonight we've used the example of vampires as we learned the process. Will you engage the mind of Christ tomorrow when you're out with your friends, sitting in front of your television, or when you are alone in front of your computer screen? The hardest part of making decisions based on biblical principles is sticking with it. Once you've asked for God's power and you've made your decision, you need God's people to help keep you faithfully walking in His Word! This is called accountability. Whom will you choose?





TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- If we are believers in Jesus Christ, we have the privilege of having the mind of Christ available to us (1 Corinthians 2:16).
- His Word transforms our thinking so that we are able to know what is acceptable to Him in all areas of life (Romans 12:2).
- If we continue ignoring the Holy Spirit's prompting, it will cause Him to be grieved (Ephesians 4:30).
- Don't take the seriousness of sin lightly; humble yourself and ask God for His help (James 4:9-10).
- Walking with wise people will make you wise as well (Proverbs 13:20).



LIVE IT!

Can you wrap your mind around the fact that you have been given the mind of Christ? Once you learn the process of biblical discernment, you have a responsibility to begin thinking through how God's Word impacts the way you think! It will take practice before it becomes habit, but don't stop! This week, ask God to help you find a wise person who is willing to walk with you so you, too, can be wise. Review the process you've learned and start walking! What are you waiting for?

Reference Materials

The Trouble with Twilight, Web article found at:

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/februaryweb-only/17.51.0.html>

Powers, Kimberly, *Escaping the Vampire: Desperate for the Immortal Hero*, David C. Cook (Colorado Springs, Colorado: 2009)

Web article, "Darkness Falls After Twilight" by Steven Isaacs August 25, 2008
<http://www.pluggedin.com/upfront/2009/darknessfallsaftertwilight.aspx>

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. What is the most helpful thing you learned tonight about making God-honoring decisions?
2. What do you think will be the most difficult part of the decision-making process to apply this week?
3. Who would you consider to be that wise person who can help you become wise?

Try This Week...

Teaching Children: Develop a lesson based on what you learned this week and teach a middle school group of students.

Can Curiosity Actually Kill?

Lesson Objective

The students will understand that curiosity is common and potentially dangerous and they will be encouraged to look at their curiosity through the perspective of God's Word.



LOOK IT UP!



LISTEN UP!



LEARN IT!

John 10:10

What has Christ come to give?

We have all heard that curiosity killed the cat. That seems to be a little bit of an extreme statement, doesn't it? But can curiosity actually be dangerous? We are all curious about something! We can be curious about things that are good for us or about things that are unhealthy for us. Have you ever stopped and wondered what God thinks about the things that you are curious about?

John 10:10 states that the thief, Satan, comes to steal, kill, and destroy; Christ comes to give life abundantly. In our curiosity, we must consider what God says. Every time we act on our curiosity, we are either choosing Satan's plan or the life that God offers. So, curiosity really can be dangerous if you don't consult God's Word! There will be times when you are curious and God says, "Yes!" But there are times when God says, "no" or "no, not now" according to principles in His Word. At those times, will you choose to take "no" for an answer and still obey?

Curiosity: The desire to know or to experience.

Checklist

1. Large refrigerator box
2. Water bottle or squirt gun
3. 3x5 cards
4. A PowerPoint presentation for this module is available for purchase on the [Word of Life Online Store](#).

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Teacher's Note: Cut one hole in the side of the refrigerator box big enough for someone on the outside to look in the box, but small enough so that you cannot see what is in it unless you look in the hole. Decorate the box with question marks cut from colored paper. Put someone in the box who can say or memorize the phrase "curiosity killed the cat" in Spanish.

Put the finished box and person in the box with water spray bottle in the meeting room. Put it in a location where it is near where people walk in, but a little off to the side so that they don't pass it and naturally have to look inside the box. Have the person in the box saying in Spanish "**la curiosidad mató al gato.**" The intent is to make people curious about what is in the box and to draw them toward the box, hoping they will look inside. The person in the box can shake the box, make it move, etc. in order to get people curious about who or what is inside. When a person looks in the hole, they get sprayed with water. This is a practical joke-style game that illustrates how curiosity works.

Did you notice the different responses of people who walked into the room? There were three levels of curiosity.

1. Some were curious about what was going on in the box.
2. Some were curious and really considered looking in the box.
3. Some were curious and actually looked in the box!

Curiosity is neutral. Everybody has it and it can be a good thing or a terrible thing. Curiosity is nothing more than the desire to know or to experience. We have heard the phrase, "curiosity killed the cat." Can curiosity actually be dangerous? While curiosity is not always bad, it can be deadly.

Content

Teacher's Note: Prepare 3×5 cards with the references of verses students are to find and read during the lesson. Hand out prior to the lesson as students arrive.

In John 10:10 (have a student read) how many path options are there? There are only two! Satan comes to steal, kill, and destroy; Christ comes to give life abundantly! Let's draw this out in the context of curiosity (see diagram on PPT). On this diagram, the dot represents you... just like on a map in the mall. Then comes curiosity represented by the question mark. We all have it and curiosity is a part of our everyday life. We are curious about a girl or boy; we are curious about the new movie that's out. We are curious about what Japanese pizza tastes like. But then we can also be curious about other things. For instance, we can be curious about what pot might be like or what sex is like.

At the moment of your curiosity is when you must stop and consider what God says about what you are curious about. You can choose to move past this part on the diagram and head to the next step, or you can stop and consider what He says. Once you see what God says concerning what you are curious about, that is when you are at the fork in the road. It is the John 10:10 fork in the road... the path that is real life or the path based on death. Listening to God will take you to life abundant; but acting on your curiosity regardless of what God says will take you to a path where Satan's desire is to destroy you. There are some things that you are curious about that God will say, "Go for it!" And there are other things that you are curious about that God says "No" or "No, not now." Will you choose to act however you want with your curiosity and head down the death path or will you listen to God's Word? This will mean taking "no" for an answer at times.

Let's turn to Proverbs 7 and see what the path option for life is and what the path option for death can look like

(read Proverbs 7:1-5). This is what it takes to choose the life abundant option of John 10:10. To choose life abundant one must keep, treasure, and live out the Word of God.

How do we correctly handle curiosity?

Keep! (vv. 1-2) Keep the teaching of the Word of God as the apple of your eye.

- We must guard and protect the Word of God in our lives as we would protect our own eye! When something is flying at us, like when playing sports or even in an accident, the things that we seek to protect from getting hurt are our eyes.
- The apple of the eye is the thing that we treat as very valuable and precious to us. A little speck of dirt can hurt the eyes, so we guard them. The Word of God in the heart can act as the eye of the soul. Meaning that we can have perspective and values that line up with the Word of God.
- Do you see your curiosity through the perspective of God's Word? Or do you only look at it through your own natural eye?

Treasure! (v. 3) You can treasure the Word of God by:

- Making God's Word seen on your fingers. Your hands are the body parts you see most throughout your day. You can't see your face or heart during the day, but you see your hands. What you do with your hands can help you live out the Word of God. Consider what you type on a computer, text on your phone, and write in school. Consider how you serve others with your hands. What sins do you commit with your hands? Do you treasure the Word of God with your hands?
- Write the Word on the tablet of your heart. This means that you internalize the Word. A practical way of doing this is scripture memory. It can become who you are inside, not just what you do. It becomes your character. It affects how you think and feel. This is how you can treasure the Word.

Live! (v. 4) Shows how our life can be characterized by the Word.

- Just as we are often characterized by our family and those we hang out with, you can be characterized as wise and understanding by living out the Word of God.
- We can choose to be as closely associated with wisdom as we are to a relative (Proverbs 7:4).

Be curious about the right things! Be curious about God and what He says in His Word. Keep, treasure, and live the Word so that it will keep us from the things that God forbids us to be a part of (Proverbs 7:5)! Be curious about the right things and it will keep you from acting on your curiosity about the wrong things. These are the principles to direct our curiosity.

The rest of Proverbs 7 shows us what happens if a person chooses to disregard what God says and acts on their curiosity as they wish. It describes a young man who is curious about a woman just as we can be curious about many things. It is the option or path that leads to death and destruction. Remember, Satan comes to steal, kill, and destroy according to John 10:10.

Steals! (Proverbs 7:7-9 – have student read) Satan loves to steal; that's his character. The picture of Satan stealing (v. 8) is told.

- The young man is drawn to her. He passes "near" her street. He deliberately chooses to get as close to the line as possible, spurred on by curiosity. He is flirting with disaster.

- The young man then directly goes to her house (v. 8b).

Kills! (Proverbs 7:10-11 – have student read) Satan also wants to kill.

Sin looks like fun! The young man in this passage saw the woman and the sin looked exciting and fun! Sin:

- Is appealing (v.10)
- Is loud and seems to call for you (v. 11a)
- Takes you to the wrong places (v. 11b)

Next we have the young man acting on his curiosity (vv. 12-13 – have student read). It seemed that he could not get away from it and sin seemed to grab him. As you act on your curiosity it may grab hold of you and not let go.

- Sin is waiting for you everywhere you look and turn (v. 12).
- Sin will seize you and grab you (v. 13).

The woman tried to make the young man feel special with expensive and fine things (vv. 15-17 – have student read). Sin will try to make you feel special, like you belong and are accepted. It seeks you and is eager to welcome you. It brings a false sense of security.

Sin also seems to be delightful, desirable, and pleasurable (v. 18 – have student read).

Sin looks like it's safe to play with and will have no harmful consequences and no one will ever know (Proverbs 7:19-20 – have student read). But acting on curiosity in disregard to what God says has serious and harmful consequences!

Sin is persuasive and smooth and can compel one to make impulsive choices (Proverbs 7:21-22 – have student read).

Destroys (vv. 21-23 – read) Satan loves to destroy.

The young man was curious and flirted with what God says to avoid. He just didn't believe that there would be a cost. He had taken small steps but got himself in deep! Unchecked curiosity catches you unaware, and you start doing things you never thought you would (v. 23). As an ox goes to the slaughter, this young man met his destruction. An ox isn't aware that he's going to his death. This man wasn't either when he began to act on his sinful curiosity. Curiosity really can kill!

Conclusion

John 10:10 shows us that there are two options – life or death. Proverbs 7 tells us the key to life is the Word of God, and we must keep, treasure, and live the Word. Proverbs 7 also shows us what happens when we disregard what God says and act on our sinful curiosities. We will all be curious about different things. But when we are, we must stop and consider what God says about it in His Word. At times we will be able to act on our curiosity as God wants us to know and experience good things. But there are other times when we will have to take “no” for an answer. We must be willing to yield to His Word and realize that everything we do is either on the path to life or the path to death.

John 10:10 Crossroad

DEATH

LIFE



Steals

Kills

Destroys

Proverbs
7:1-5, 24-25

GOD

Proverbs
7:6-23, 26-27

Keep

Treasure

Live



LIVEN IT UP!





TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- Keep the teaching of the Word of God as the apple of your eye (Proverbs 7:1-2).
- We can choose to be as closely associated with wisdom as we are to a relative (Proverbs 7:4).
- Sin looks like it's safe to play with and will have no harmful consequences and no one will ever know (Proverbs 7:19-20)
- Sin is persuasive and smooth and can compel one to make impulsive choices (Proverbs 7:21).
- Unchecked curiosity catches you unaware, and you start doing things you never thought you would (Proverbs 7:23).



LIVE IT!

Are there some things you are curious about? God wants to satisfy your curiosity, and His answers are in His Word. When it comes to curiosity will you take “no” for an answer if that’s what God says? Identify some things that you are curious about and talk about them with your small group leader or parent. It’s ok to be curious. We all are! Be sure to ask them for their help so you can keep, treasure, and live according to the Word of God in those areas.

Reference Materials

Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume. Proverbs chapter 7:1-5.

Discipleship Groups

Discussion Starters

1. What is something you are curious about right now?
2. In what ways does sin look fun at times?
3. How can you treasure the Word of God even when sin looks like so much fun?

Try This Week...

Family Devotions: Share with your family what God taught you about curiosity and how it helped you.

Suggested Videos:

Curiosity Pie Prank

<http://www.funnyhub.com/videos/pages/curiosity-pie-prank.html>

Or google “Curiosity pie prank” to find the video.



What Are You Doing With My Kids?

Lesson Objective

The parents will understand the principles, philosophy, purpose, and program Word of Life Student Ministries uses to develop godly young people.



LOOK IT UP!

Colossians 1:9-10

What is a way that discipleship is accomplished?



LISTEN UP!

On behalf of our Leadership Team, “Welcome!” We want to let you know our objective is to answer the question that many of you might be having tonight, namely: “*What are you doing with my kids?*” Our church has partnered with Word of Life Local Church Ministries in providing more than just a curriculum or a program in a box.

As leaders, we are endeavoring to role model a lifestyle that will help teach your young person ways they can experience personal growth and victory in their daily lives. We want to work with you as parents to go from having goals and hopes for your young people into seeing real changes in their lives. It starts with blending two key words—discipleship and evangelism—and then passing them on to your young people (2 Timothy 2:2-3).

We will try to stretch your students in spiritual matters so that they will never be the same. Lives can and will be changed. We will endeavor to keep you informed every step of the way. Will you help us?



LEARN IT!

Principle: A basic truth that is true for all people, for all times, and all places.

Philosophy: An overall vision of, or attitude toward, life and the purpose of life.

Checklist

1. 1-2-3 Cre8ive Discipleship Sheet and the Cre8ive Discipleship Reward Sheet (In THE BOOK OF STUFF)
2. Cre8ive Discipleship PowerPoint presentation available in the Word of Life Teacher Source
3. Sufficient copies of bingo cards
4. Marking pens/highlighters
5. Student testimonies
6. LCM Ministry Overview brochures for each parent
7. Student Packs

General Lesson Format

Introduction

Welcome to our Parent Meeting. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to work with your students. We realize that you have the most impact on your children and it is our privilege to come alongside of you and help you with their spiritual growth and walk with God.

Now I would like to introduce our Leadership Team. (Introduce your leaders.)

Teacher's Note: Secure testimonies from students who have grown in their walk with God through your ministry. Make sure you have prepared them to answer the questions so that they have good and thoughtful answers. The following types of testimonies will help introduce the lesson: Students who have developed good habits in one or more of the following areas: Quiet Time; Scripture Memory; Christian Service, Teens Involved, and Evangelism (reaching out to their friends).

Now let's hear from a few of our students. (Introduce selected students and either interview them or let them give their testimony.)

- What does your Quiet Time mean to you?
- How has your walk with God improved since you have been in God's Word?
- How have you been helped by memorizing Scripture?
- What have you learned from the Bible study?
- How have Christian Service projects helped you grow in your faith?

Teacher's Note: Select one of the Transfer Life videos on discipleship at the Web site listed at the end of the lesson and show it here.

The ministry offered to your student has been tried and proven frequently in thousands of lives. It has been developed and deliberately planned with students in mind. It is built from the Word of God and established to promote life change. It is a biblical ministry.

Content

Lecture Bingo

Teacher's Note: Distribute the bingo cards to the parents. Also provide pens or markers to check off (X) their cards for each statement that you mention. Participants cross off four vertical, horizontal, or diagonal statements in a row and then call out "bingo!" Complete the lecture. Each participant should obtain a bingo two different ways. Each time someone calls out "bingo" reward them with a piece of candy or other reward of your choice. Read the material a little slower than usual emphasizing the bold underscored words or statements in the lecture. These words or statements are on the bingo cards.

If you're ready, let's begin.

A biblical ministry begins by developing **Biblical Principles** or convictions that are well-established in **God's Word**. A principle is a basic truth that is true for all people, for all times, and all places. This is the foundation of the ministry offered to your students. It is a principle-driven youth ministry. What does the Word of God

have to say to our young people? That is what we will build our ministry on. **Matthew 28:19-20; Colossians 1:9-10.** (Have a leader read these verses.)

A biblical ministry is moved forward by forming a **Biblical Philosophy**. Our philosophy must be based on Scripture. What do we mean by philosophy? A group of **Biblical Truths** combined with the knowledge of a particular subject that form **Life Values**.

When we speak of philosophy we are simply describing an overall vision or attitude toward life and the purpose of life. That means what we believe we value. And what we value we put into practice. People often say they believe in and base their ministry on Scripture, but in reality, their actions show that their philosophy is shallow and even at times self-centered. The truth is, the Word of God doesn't change and God knows what students need the most. We believe we can reach youth whose culture is constantly changing with biblical truth that **Never Changes!** When our philosophy is based on Scripture, then we are ready to move on to purpose!

A biblical ministry is fueled by having a **Biblical Purpose**. This includes our goals and dreams. It is our goal to evangelize young people and disciple them to a vibrant Christian life by mature leadership through our local church. Our goals and dreams include reaching our community for Jesus Christ. One way this can be accomplished is through students who are growing and changing in their walk with God. Their walk with God will motivate them to share their faith. **Students Can Reach Other Students**.

A biblical ministry is accomplished by internalizing a **Biblical Program**. This is the **Game Plan**. When we talk about our game plan, we are thinking simply of "how" we are going to get from "point A" to "point B." Any program is simply a vehicle to get us where we want to go. That is the key to accomplishing our goals. Everyone has a program/vehicle, even if it is their own. That vehicle needs to be a well-oiled machine. We have a game plan. We desire to see godly students developed in this church and community.

Thank you for playing the bingo game.

But let me continue to encourage you with what we have to offer. We have a game plan to help your students grow. We want to help you take them from where they are right now in their faith to another level of growth. Godly students are growing students. We have a vehicle that can measure their spiritual growth. If we cannot measure it, how will we know when we are there? Therefore we have chosen to use tools that help us measure their growth.

Teacher's Note: Use the 1-2-3 Cre8ive Discipleship Sheet and the Cre8ive Discipleship Reward Sheet in the BOOK OF STUFF as a visual to refer to the different aspects of discipleship disciplines. Explain the reward system of Creative Discipleship and display the Student Packs for the parents.
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We have chosen to focus on specific areas of ministry to help students grow in their faith based on biblical principles.

- **Bible Study** – We know that getting your students into God's Word regularly will change their lives. We teach Bible doctrine with practical application so that your students will know what they believe and why they believe it.

- **Quiet Time Diary** – That’s why daily devotions are vital to the process. We use the Quiet Time Diary as the tool to encourage a daily time with God.
- **Scripture Memory** – They are encouraged to memorize Scripture, which reinforces what they learn. It also strengthens them by enabling them to live victorious lives as they daily recall God’s Word that is hidden in their hearts.
- **Christian Service** – Students find real fulfillment when serving others; that’s why we schedule periodic Christian Service.
- **Christian Books** – By reading good books students learn what other great leaders have learned from God. This biblical approach to ministry is the vehicle we use to help your students develop a strong, secure, and active faith.
- **Faithfulness to the Local Church** – God wants each of us to be faithful when it comes to our church attendance.
- **Evangelism** – We want others to learn of God’s love and will endeavor to teach your students how to be effective witnesses for the Lord. Their participation in Word of Life’s all-nighter known as Superbowl is one way of reaching out to their friends.
- **Discipleship/Teens Involved** – We work toward helping them discover and develop their God-given abilities. Then we promote opportunities to practice their growing faith by demonstrating it through Teens Involved.

Conclusion

A biblical ministry will produce biblical people. That is why we build a biblical ministry! Our desire is to build biblical people—people who live in victory over sin. It is not just a vision; it can become reality. This does not happen without deliberate planning and execution. Godly leaders produce godly young people. We have leaders that are willing to pay the price. It will not be easy, but it does work and it is worth the price. Our leaders are working at being examples for your students and they desire to help each one grow in their walk with God. But we cannot fulfill our desire for student discipleship without your help. As leaders we are willing to set an example for your students. Your commitment to be an example is appreciated. Your regular encouragement at home will be huge in this process. Together we can help your students grow in their love and faith in God.

LECTURE BINGO

NAME _____

LIFE VALUES	TEENS INVOLVED	BIBLICAL PROGRAM	MEMORY VERSES
BIBLICAL TRUTHS	CHRISTIAN SERVICE	NEVER CHANGES	GAME PLAN
GOD'S WORD	STUDENTS CAN REACH OTHER STUDENTS	SUPERBOWL	QUIET TIME
MATTHEW 28:19-20, COLOSSIANS 1:9-10	BIBLICAL PURPOSE	BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES	BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY

CREW TIME
DISCIPLESHIP

CARD 1

LECTURE BINGO

NAME _____

LIFE VALUES	TEENS INVOLVED	BIBLICAL PROGRAM	MEMORY VERSES
BIBLICAL TRUTHS	BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY	NEVER CHANGES	GAME PLAN
SUPERBOWL	STUDENTS CAN REACH OTHER STUDENTS	GOD'S WORD	QUIET TIME
MATTHEW 28:19-20, COLOSSIANS 1:9-10	BIBLICAL PURPOSE	BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES	CHRISTIAN SERVICE

CREW TIME
DISCIPLESHIP

CARD 2

LECTURE BINGO

NAME _____

LIFE VALUES	MATTHEW 28:19-20; COLOSSIANS 1:9-10	BIBLICAL PROGRAM	BIBLICAL PURPOSE
NEVER CHANGES	CHRISTIAN SERVICE	BIBLICAL TRUTHS	GAME PLAN
GOD'S WORD	QUIET TIME	SUPERBOWL	STUDENTS CAN REACH OTHER STUDENTS
TEENS INVOLVED	MEMORY VERSES	BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES	BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY

CREOME
DISCIPLESHIP

CARD 3

LECTURE BINGO

NAME _____

SUPERBOWL	TEENS INVOLVED	BIBLICAL PROGRAM	MEMORY VERSES
BIBLICAL TRUTHS	CHRISTIAN SERVICE	NEVER CHANGES	GAME PLAN
GOD'S WORD	STUDENTS CAN REACH OTHER STUDENTS	LIFE VALUES	MATTHEW 28:19-20; COLOSSIANS 1:9-10
QUIET TIME	BIBLICAL PURPOSE	BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES	BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY

CREOME
DISCIPLESHIP

CARD 4

LECTURE BINGO

NAME _____

BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY	TEENS INVOLVED	BIBLICAL PROGRAM	MEMORY VERSES
BIBLICAL TRUTHS	CHRISTIAN SERVICE	NEVER CHANGES	GAME PLAN
SUPEROWL	STUDENTS CAN REACH OTHER STUDENTS	GOD'S WORD	QUIET TIME
MATTHEW 28:19-20 COLOSSIANS 1:9-10	BIBLICAL PURPOSE	BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES	LIFE VALUES

CREW TIME
DISCIPLESHIP

CARD 5

LECTURE BINGO

NAME _____

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES	TEENS INVOLVED	BIBLICAL PROGRAM	MATTHEW 28:19-20 COLOSSIANS 1:9-10
QUIET TIME	CHRISTIAN SERVICE	SUPEROWL	GAME PLAN
GOD'S WORD	STUDENTS CAN REACH OTHER STUDENTS	NEVER CHANGES	BIBLICAL TRUTHS
MEMORY VERSES	BIBLICAL PURPOSE	LIFE VALUES	BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY

CREW TIME
DISCIPLESHIP

CARD 6

LECTURE BINGO

NAME _____

NEVER CHANGES	TEENS INVOLVED	BIBLICAL PROGRAM	STUDENTS CAN REACH OTHER STUDENTS
BIBLICAL TRUTHS	BIBLICAL PURPOSE	LIFE VALUES	GAME PLAN
QUIET TIME	MEMORY VERSES	SUPERBOWL	GOD'S WORD
MATTHEW 28:19-20 COLOSSIANS 1:9-10	CHRISTIAN SERVICE	BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES	BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY

CREATIVE DISCIPLESHIP

CARD 7

LECTURE BINGO

NAME _____

LIFE VALUES	TEENS INVOLVED	BIBLICAL PROGRAM	MEMORY VERSES
BIBLICAL TRUTHS	STUDENTS CAN REACH OTHER STUDENTS	SUPERBOWL	GAME PLAN
GOD'S WORD	CHRISTIAN SERVICE	NEVER CHANGES	MATTHEW 28:19-20 COLOSSIANS 1:9-10
QUIET TIME	BIBLICAL PURPOSE	BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES	BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY

CREATIVE DISCIPLESHIP

CARD 8

LECTURE BINGO

NAME _____

LIFE VALUES	BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY	BIBLICAL PROGRAM	GAME PLAN
BIBLICAL TRUTHS	CHRISTIAN SERVICE	SUPERBOWL	MEMORY VERSES
GOD'S WORD	STUDENTS CAN REACH OTHER STUDENTS	NEVER CHANGES	QUIET TIME
MATTHEW 28:19-20 COLOSSIANS 1:9-10	BIBLICAL PURPOSE	BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES	TEENS INVOLVED

CREATIVE DISCIPLESHIP

CARD 9

LECTURE BINGO

NAME _____

STUDENTS CAN REACH OTHER STUDENTS	MATTHEW 28:19-20 COLOSSIANS 1:9-10	BIBLICAL PROGRAM	GOD'S WORD
BIBLICAL TRUTHS	LIFE VALUES	NEVER CHANGES	GAME PLAN
MEMORY VERSES	CHRISTIAN SERVICE	SUPERBOWL	QUIET TIME
TEENS INVOLVED	BIBLICAL PURPOSE	BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES	BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY

CREATIVE DISCIPLESHIP

CARD 10

Reference Materials

Student Resource Manual

The PI Factor

Lesson Objective

The parents of your students will be challenged to use the Creative Discipleship tools available through your ministry along with their children.



LOOK IT UP!



LISTEN UP!

Ephesians 6:4

We say we want our children to grow spiritually, but do we really? The PI Factor will reveal how serious we are about their spiritual growth. The formula is really easy:

Your son or daughter + spiritual disciplines + the PI Factor = spiritual growth

You have the children, and as a church, we have the program and tools to help with spiritual disciplines. The other ingredient is the PI Factor—we really need **P**arental **I**nvolvement in order to be effective in our ministry to your children.

Every Christian looking to please God pursues personal spiritual growth through Bible study, daily Bible reading, Scripture memory, and Christian service. Second Peter 3:18 tells us we are to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” In 1 Timothy 4:7, we read, “Exercise yourself toward godliness.” Word of Life Local Church Ministries provides practical tools to help individuals in their spiritual growth. As parents, we should be willing to use such tools along with the PI Factor to help our children grow in the knowledge of Christ.

Checklist

1. Invite your Area Missionary to be with you.
2. Have materials available for display and purchase.
3. Instruct all Discipleship Leaders to prepare for discipleship groups with parents.
4. Have copies of the *Spiritual Growth Formula* on 3x5 cards for each parent.
5. Have copies of *Implementing the PI Factor* for each parent.
6. Recruit a few students to give testimonies as to what participating in the Creative Discipleship process has meant in their lives.
7. Have copies of the incentive details of the Creative Discipleship process for each parent.

Special Considerations

The ministry you are having with your young people will be significantly improved when the parents are involved in the discipleship process. It would be worth your effort to diligently promote this meeting. Here are some suggestions:

Promotion

1. Send a postcard or letter with all the details.
2. Have your pastor announce the meeting from the pulpit.
3. Place the details in the church newsletter.
4. Ask the pastor to show public support for the meeting.
5. Call all the parents the week before the meeting.

6. Ask some parents to be involved in an aspect of the meeting.
7. Take door hangers with the details to their homes.

Remove obstacles

1. “We need childcare.” — Offer nursery for children.
2. “My students need to do school homework.” — Have someone to help them during the meeting.
3. “We have not eaten dinner.” — Offer a meal.

General Lesson Format

Introduction

It is the responsibility of parents to teach their children to love God and live for Him (Deuteronomy 6:6-9). In the New Testament, we learn that Timothy was greatly influenced by his mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15). (There is no mention of his dad’s involvement—hope is here for single-parent families.) Parents today have the same responsibility—to raise their children to love and serve God. Knowing of our responsibility is one thing, but knowing how to carry it out is quite another. We want to help you accomplish your God-given responsibility to your children. To do that, we have chosen to use the practical tools that Word of Life Local Church Ministries has developed. We want you to know what is available for your son or daughter and how you can use it in your home.

Young people are often more open to personal discipleship when dad and mom are participating and encouraging the process. This provides an example for them to follow. This is the PI (Parental Involvement) Factor.

Content

Teacher’s Note: Show the parents the various tools used by the students and highlight their various components.

We should think of discipleship as teaching others to be what we already are. The Bible teaches we are examples, and we should be able to say, “Follow me.” Students need to see us live what they hear us teach (Philippians 3:17; 4:9; 1 Corinthians 4:15-16; 2 Timothy 2:1-2). They do not need more messages as much as they need more models!

The discipleship process in Local Church Ministries is known as Creative Discipleship. It includes developing and maintaining spiritual disciplines. The faithful disciplines we want to help instill in the life of your son or daughter are:

1. Quiet Time with God (daily)

This daily time in the Word allows a student to think upon the Word of God (Joshua 1:8), to spend time in prayer (Psalm 5:3), and to feed on the “sincere milk of the Word,” which is the God-given means of spiritual growth (1 Peter 2:2). This regular time in the Word will develop a very real closeness between your student and God. Our *Quiet Time* is designed to cause your student to think about what is being said in the passage of Scripture they are reading, and then to respond to that truth with a written personal application. The strength of this approach is its simplicity and its flexibility in that each student begins and works at their own level.

2. Scripture Memory (weekly)

This discipline is a good way to equip our sons and daughters to avoid sin (Psalm 119:11). Memory verses give the Holy Spirit more of God's Word to use in the Christian's life for fighting temptation and making wise decisions. Since neither you nor I can always be with our children, it is good to know that we can encourage them to commit verses to memory that will always be with them! The verses we learn each year tie in with the Bible study that we are teaching, making it practical and understandable to your children.

3. Bible Study along with the reading of good books (weekly)

Word of Life has a six-year Bible study program. You can have great confidence in knowing that your son or daughter will be taught the practical doctrines of the Bible throughout the program. We also cover a number of topical issues, study one book of the Bible, and deal with specific pressures that young people face in our society. Our teaching is biblical and practical. We believe it is important for young people to know and understand the Word of God (2 Timothy 2:15; 3:15).

Along with the Bible study we provide, we also want to encourage students to read good Christian books. Each year we recommend two books that speak to issues your children face. Along with those two books, we would like to see them read some Christian biographies or autobiographies. This exposure to men and women of God will provide them with some good and godly role models (Proverbs 13:20). Who wouldn't benefit from that in this day and age? Bible study is used to give the student the knowledge of God's will and to teach them what and why they believe (2 Timothy 2:15).

4. Christian Service (weekly)

This is a great opportunity for our students to use what God has been teaching them (James 1:22). Many students can become apathetic because they think they know far more than they do. James says we "deceive ourselves" if we only hear and don't do! We want our students to grow and mature, and Christian Service is vital to that growth. We have a resource manual that recommends many exciting Christian Service activities. Also, you will notice that a Christian service project is suggested in each week's Bible study. Let's work together to see that our students have a taste of the joy there is in serving the King of kings!

5. Faithfulness to Church (weekly)

Sunday school and worship services provide more Bible instruction. It is through the church and its biblical teachings that we are provoked and exhorted to serve God (Hebrews 10:24-25), and we all need that ministry in our lives!

We use a portion of our weekly time together to teach and establish these disciplines. We have Creative Discipleship group leaders that meet with their assigned students for 20 to 30 minutes each week during the youth meeting. Our discipleship group leaders are setting an example for the students (1 Thessalonians 1:6-7; 2:11-12; Philippians 3:17). They are doing the daily disciplines (quiet time, Scripture memory, Bible study, Christian service, and faithfulness to church). Each leader is also encouraged to make contact with the students in their discipleship group during the week to encourage them in their faithfulness.

Conclusion

Of the five spiritual disciplines we covered, quiet time is the only one suggested to be done on a *daily* basis. Of course, it would also be good if they studied and reviewed their Scripture memory verses each day, too. They would typically need to work on only one verse a week if they start at the beginning of the year. Their Bible study, Christian service, and faithfulness to church are all habits that we encourage them to be faithful to on a *weekly* basis. We ask nothing beyond their ability, but do keep in mind that the flesh often resists that which helps us to “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). That’s why it takes personal discipline to do the things God expects of us! As we work together, we can raise up a generation of young people who will make a difference for God!

Teacher’s Note: Have some students who have been faithful in the disciplines of the Creative Discipleship process give testimonies as to its tangible benefits to their lives.
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Now that we know what it takes to get this kind of result, we are going to break out into our discipleship groups and discover how we do it. Each parent will be with your student’s discipleship group leader.



Implementing the PI Factor

1. Be an Example

Students don't need more *messages*; they need more *models*

___ Bible Study ___ Quiet Time ___ Scripture Memory
___ Christian Service ___ Faithfulness to Church

In which area are you the best example? (X) In which area do you need to be a better example? (O)

2. Use the Quiet Time Diary for your entire family.

When can you have a family quiet time?

- Before school
- After supper
- Prior to bed

What do we do?

- Establish a set time and stick with it.
- Allow each family member to share a quiet time highlight.
- Discuss areas of practical application.
- Discuss passages that are difficult to understand.
- Conclude by sharing specific prayer requests and praying together.

3. Encourage Scripture Memory.

- Set a time: after breakfast, after supper, prior to bed.
- Set a goal of ___ verse cards per year.
- Set one day to review the verses you have learned.
- Quote verses to each other.

4. Use *Student Lifelines* one day a week for family devotions.

5. Read the required reading books together.

6. Encourage them to be active in the Christian Service activities of the youth ministry.

Stay informed on these by asking their Creative Discipleship leader about upcoming projects.

7. PRAY

Devote a page of your *Quiet Time* prayer guide to each of your children.

Pray for their faithfulness.

Pray for their spiritual growth.

Pray for their individual needs.

Pray for their Local Church Ministries leaders.

Discipleship Groups

Discipleship Leader Information

1. Share with the parents that when it comes to business or sports, many seek to live out their dreams through the lives of their children, which may be a questionable practice. However, when it comes to spiritual things, it would be a very noble cause.
2. Use this time to give the parents a report on his or her student. Provide a copy of their Creative Discipleship Record Sheet and a 3x5 card with the yearly goals for the student. Be sure to write at least one encouraging statement about the student on the card.
3. Share that some parents say their students are too involved and not at home very much. Let them know that Creative Discipleship lets you know where your students are and what they are doing.
4. Hand out and explain to the parents copies of the *Spiritual Growth Formula* card.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH FORMULA

TB (Tom Brown – Student’s initials)
+ SD (Spiritual Disciplines – QT, SM, CS, etc.)
+ BB (PI Factor – Parent – Bill or Betty Brown)
It all adds up to:= **SG** (Spiritual Growth)

Students do not need more messages as much as they need more models!

5. Pass out copies of the Creative Discipleship incentive process and explain it.
6. Ask what goals they would like for you to help them reach in the life of their son or daughter.

Discipleship Group Conclusion

We believe you, mom and dad, are key to your student’s involvement in the Creative Discipleship process of our Word of Life student ministry. It is our desire to help you in this important task of discipling your son or daughter. We appreciate you entrusting your students to us each week. It is our prayer that you will benefit and be blessed, as we get involved together in the spiritual growth of your student.

First Things First

Lesson Objective

To communicate to parents the importance of defining biblical priorities in a busy world, and to explain how they should apply those priorities to their lives and the lives of their children.



LOOK IT UP!



LEARN IT!

Deuteronomy 6:5-12

Priority: Precedence, especially established by order of importance or urgency.

Checklist

1. Babysitting for parents who need it.
2. Food (either refreshments or perhaps a potluck dinner with parents each bringing a dish).
3. Sample Creative Discipleship material.
4. A supply of the *Quiet Time with Commentary* available for sale to parents.
5. A copy of the “Top Ten List—Priorities for My Family!” for each parent.
6. Large-mouth jar, just enough golf balls to fill the jar, and just enough sand in a separate container to fill the remaining space in the jar.

Special Considerations

1. Promote, promote, promote! Be sure to pick a date that is convenient for parents. Give them plenty of notice and many reminders about the time. Your ministry will be much more successful if the parents are involved.
2. Encourage your pastor to be there. His presence shows his support for your ministry.

General Lesson Format

Icebreaker

Read several top ten lists. The website www.octanecreative.com/ducttape/topten/index.html has some good ones about duct tape.

Teacher’s Note: This lesson is designed to be taught with the option of having both students and parents present, or just the parents.

Introduction

Brainstorm

Teacher’s Note: Pass out the “Top Ten List—Priorities for My Family!” to each parent and have them fill out only the “current rank” column by identifying what their children’s top ten priorities would be on an average busy week. Allow the parents a few minutes to complete the task. Once they are finished, ask for some of them to share their answers.

Lecture

As you look at your list of priorities and time demands for your children, how many of those top-ranking priorities are really of any eternal value? For example, sports practice takes the place of church, hanging out with friends takes the place of homework, and then homework takes the place of Sunday school. We are very busy nowadays. Being extremely busy seems to have become the norm. As a result, we have let the less obvious priorities suffer. But our lives as parents are the most powerful teaching tools we have for our children. If we are going to raise our children wisely, we must take the time to define our priorities and then adjust our lives to fit within those priorities. Deuteronomy 6:5-12 tells us that we carry the awesome responsibility of raising our children to honor and obey God. Several key points are mentioned in this passage for us to consider as we raise our children and evaluate our priorities.

Content

1. We were **created** to **worship** – Deuteronomy 6:5-6.

We are told to love God with all of our hearts, souls, and might. This command is the essence of our existence. We are here to worship God. He created us so He could have a relationship with us and so we could freely choose to worship Him (Psalm 95:6). There are many different ways to worship God, and all of them are important, but our first priority should be our relationship with Him (Matthew 6:33). The temptation today is to put our relationship with God on the back burner when we get busy, and when we do that, we slip farther away from Him. There is no greater need for each of us than to be in a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. The Creative Discipleship ministry we use has several tools specifically created to foster a life of worship. These tools are:

Teacher's Note: Spend a few moments showcasing each of the following tools so the parents can see them and associate them with their name and purpose.

Quiet Time – Designed to allow us to daily communicate with God through Bible reading and prayer.

Scripture Memory – So we can hide God's Word in our hearts.

Bible Study – Designed to teach us what the Bible says so we can rightly divide the Word of Truth.

Reading Books – Exposing us to godly men and women how they serve God.

Christian Service – A tool to help us serve God faithfully and effectively.

Church Attendance – A tool to help us encourage each other in the Word of God.

These tools are designed to drive us back to the Word of God and provide opportunities to faithfully serve God. When we are using these tools, we are fulfilling our purpose in life by giving God the glory He deserves.

The second point to consider as we evaluate our priorities is:

2. We must intentionally **teach** proper **priorities** – Deuteronomy 6:7-9.

Many church-going students abandon church when they get to college. This is a byproduct of our failure to teach them the truth while they were young and moldable. We must focus on helping students make their faith just that: *their faith*. The way we accomplish this is by teaching through their experiences as well as by our example. Our biblical example as parents is vital to their spiritual growth. If church is not a priority for us, it will not be a priority for them. If quiet time is not a daily habit for us, then how can we expect it to be a daily habit in their lives?

Deuteronomy 6:7-9 tells us to teach our children passionately, because their lives depend on it, and fervently, because every moment is a teachable moment. We cannot expect our young people to grow spiritually by accident; we must make it our priority to faithfully show them and teach them.

We have discussed that we were created to worship and that we must intentionally teach proper priorities. The third point to consider is:

3. Our priorities as parents **today** affect their **tomorrow** – Deuteronomy 6:10-12. We all can tell stories about how our children imitated our actions when they were young. We thought it was cute. Sometimes they even repeated the things we said, which was sometimes worrisome to us! This continues when our children grow up—they repeat what we do. They see our lives, and they learn from the repetition of it. They simply follow our example. Often they follow our example even when they know it is contrary to the Word of God.

In these verses, we are warned to beware of becoming forgetful of God when we are accustomed to His work in our lives. The nation of Israel did not heed the warning of God from Deuteronomy 6. In Judges 2, the people paid the price for forgetting and worshipping some other god. God became angry with them and finally, in verse 23, He left them to their sin and no longer protected them.

The moment we decide to put a non-essential at the top of our importance list, our children begin to focus on something other than worshipping God. When our lives stop communicating that God is number one, our children begin to forget the essence of their existence. Galatians 6:7-8 tells us that we will reap what we sow. If we do not intentionally sow godly habits (quiet time, etc.) into our lives and those of our children, then we should not be surprised when we reap spiritual apathy in the future.

You can go to any sports field in the country and find overly anxious parents who push their child to make them a sports superstar. Why? Sports are important to those parents. This is an example of how we put so much emphasis on good things (sports) at the sacrifice of the best things (the child, and the real reasons for living). As a result of the pressure parents put on winning, their child will most likely develop a fanatical emphasis on something that is eternally worthless. Many young people today do not spend any time on their relationship with God and, as a result, they do not have anything to do with God when they are on their own. We must look toward the future and determine to show our children what is important.

Object Lessons

Teacher's Note: Fill a large-mouth jar with the container of sand and then as many golf balls as will fit. When you fill the jar with the sand first, all of the golf balls will not fit in. When you put the golf balls in first, and then the sand, both should fit into the jar. Make sure you practice first and then teach the following using the object lesson.

Object Lesson – Part One

This jar represents the time we have in our lives. The sand in this container represents the things in our lives that have little or no eternal value. The golf balls represent the valuable biblical priorities that should be in our lives.

There are many responsibilities that demand our time. You can look at the top ten lists of your children and see that. If we make the things in our lives that have little or no eternal value a priority, then they take up the first part of our planning. This sand represents those things, like TV, video games, telephone calls, hanging out with friends, sports, and a job. Let's pour them into our lives, represented by this jar.

Now let's put the golf balls, which represent the important things like quiet time, Scripture memory, Bible study, church attendance, and family time, into the jar. Notice that the items of little or no eternal value crowd out the items of great eternal value. This is a great example of how the essentials of life get crowded out when we make the wrong priorities. When we live lives like this, we all of a sudden we don't have time for quiet time or Scripture memory. The bottom line is that our priorities are wrong. We are not seeking God first (Matthew 6:33).

Object Lesson – Part Two

Let's empty the jar that represents the time in our lives and start over. First, the golf balls go in the jar. They are the top priority. When we make time for the eternally relevant items like quiet time, Scripture memory, Bible study, church attendance, and family time, they all fit in our lives. What about the other things—those of little or no eternal value? Watch as I pour the sand into the jar. This time, when the priorities are in the right order, everything fits.

It is vital for us to identify priorities that will draw us closer to God, and then to make time for them first and foremost. Then, and only then, will we begin to prepare ourselves and our children for true service to God.

Conclusion

Brainstorm

As we close, I want to go back to the "Top Ten List—Priorities for My Family!" and rank your top ten list by how you think you and your children should prioritize your lives. You can accomplish this by putting the numbers in the spaces marked "desired rank," one being the most important and ten being the least important.

Teacher's Note: Give them a few minutes to finish this task.
--

I want to challenge you now to participate in Creative Discipleship with your children this year. Take the opportunity to lead by example. We have the Word of Life *Quiet Time with Commentary*, which allows you to spend time with God each day in the same passages that your children are. Let me suggest that you start there and then move on to Scripture memory or Bible study. Show them by your example that these biblical principles are a priority in your life.



Top Ten List— Priorities for My Family!

Priorities	Current Rank Desired Rank:
Television or Video Games	_____
Scripture Memory	_____
Time with friends or telephone	_____
School	_____
Church attendance	_____
Family time	_____
Sports	_____
Quiet Time	_____
Job	_____
Bible study	_____
Other: _____	_____

Teaching First Things First!

We were created to worship (Deuteronomy 6:5-6).

We must intentionally teach proper priorities (Deuteronomy 6:7-9).

Our priorities as parents today affect their tomorrow (Deuteronomy 6:10-12).



TRUTH FOR LIFE!

- Deuteronomy 6:5-12 tells us that we carry the awesome responsibility of raising our children to honor and obey God.
- God created us so that He could have a relationship with us and so we could freely choose to worship Him (Psalm 95:6).
- Deuteronomy 6:7-9 tells us to teach our children passionately, because their lives depend on it.
- It is vital for us to identify priorities that will draw us closer to God, and then to make time for them first and foremost.

Discipleship Groups

Have the parents attend the discipleship group of their child. This is a good opportunity to let them catch the heartbeat of their child's youth leader and see the benefit of being in discipleship groups.

Discussion Starters

1. What are some good things that easily cause us to take our eyes off the best things?
2. How can you as a parent help your child learn the best priorities?
3. How can I as a youth leader help your children learn the best priorities?

Glossary

Adoption

Being placed into God's family and regarded as a true son with all the privileges and responsibilities that belong to that new relationship.

God's Perfect Couple

Apocrypha

Books, writings, or reports that are not regarded as inspired and canonical.

Error – Keep Out!

Attribute

A distinguishing characteristic of God that sets Him apart and through which He reveals Himself to mankind.

Hello, My Name Is... / Real Love

Bible

The Word of God to mankind consisting of the 66 books of the Old Testament and New Testament.

Wiki-Life

Canon

A term used to refer to the complete list of the sixty-six books recognized as the genuine, inspired, authoritative Word of God.

Error – Keep Out!

Chasten

To punish, chastise, or rebuke with words in order to correct or mold the character of others.

Divine Doghouse / Who's Your Father?

Christian Liberty

Freedom to do what is scripturally permissible as long as it does not offend a weaker brother.

I Can Do Whatever I Want!

Commentary

A book written to illustrate and explain Bible books or passages.

Divine App Store

Concordance

An alphabetical index of every Bible word and the verses where they occur.

Divine App Store

Contentment

Being satisfied with the situation in which the Lord has put you.

The Golden Ticket

Creation

The act of God bringing the world into ordered existence.

God's Word Art / The Existence of God?

Curiosity

The desire to know or to experience.

Can Curiosity Actually Kill?

Discernment

The ability to distinguish between truth and error through the truth of God's Word.

Do You Mind God?

Discipline

God's formative and corrective teaching in the lives of believers to conform them to the image of Christ.

Divine Doghouse / TTYN (Talk To You Now)

Drama

A performance intended to tell a story through action and dialogue.

Do Something Special for God

Emotions

A natural, instinctive state of mind deriving from one's circumstances, mood, or relationships with others.

I Am, Feeling You Bro

Encounter

To come upon face to face.

All You Had to Do Was Ask!

Eternal

Having no beginning and no end.

It's Under Control

Evolution

The theory that living organisms gradually change by themselves from one "kind" into another.

God's Word Art

Ex nihilo

Made out of nothing.

God's Word Art

Faith

Trusting, believing, or taking God at His Word; having a confident assurance of unseen things.

Always Ready / The Existence of God? / Hall of Faith Life

Fear

A feeling of anxiety and anguish.

Fear Factor

Godhead

God's one divine nature or essence eternally co-existent in three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Divine Relationship in 3-D / I Am, Feeling You Bro

God's Sovereignty

God's supreme authority and rule over His creation.

Off-Road, But On Course

God's Will

His desired plans for our lives and His creation.

Off-Road, But On Course

Gospel

The good news of God's salvation of man made possible by Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

An Urgent Text Message

Gossip (noun)

One who is neither part of the problem nor the solution, but who repeats idle chatter or rumors.

Just Sayin...!

Grace

Undeserved and unmerited favor.

God's Perfect Couple

Hallowed

Set apart, separated from ordinary things, holy.

All You Had to Do Was Ask!

Heavenly Father

The relationship of God to those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior thereby being born anew into His family.

Who's Your Father?

Holiness

Moral and ethical perfection; the absence of any evil.

The Holy Judge

Immutable

Not capable of, or susceptible to change.

Fool House

Inerrancy

The teaching that since the Scriptures are given by God they are free from error.

Totally Reliable

Inspiration

God's oversight and management of the human authors of the Bible so that, using their own personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man.

Dr. Seuss, Dr. Phil, and God / Totally Reliable

Judgment Seat of Christ

The event where all believers and only believers will be judged by Christ to determine the worth or worthlessness of the works they did while on earth and to reward them accordingly.

Wiki-Life

Justice

Upholding what is morally right and fair.

The Holy Judge

Knowledge of God

A correct understanding of God gained through experience with the Scriptures.

Kick It Up a Notch – BAM!

Lake of Fire

A literal Lake of Fire that will be the place of eternal punishment for Satan, his angels, and all who are not found written in the book of life.

Heads Up!

Love

A purposeful act of selfless giving for the good of others.

Real Love

Mercy

The act of withholding punishment or condemnation that is deserved.

God's Perfect Couple

Omnipotence

God's unlimited power and authority to do anything consistent with His own nature.

Be Real – God Is!

Omnipresence

God's ability to be present in all places at all times.

Be Real – God Is!

Omniscience

God's complete knowledge of everything past, present, and future.

Be Real – God Is!

Online Social Network

A community of people who meet via the Internet, connected through mutual associations with family, friends, or interests.

An Urgent Text Message / Just Sayin...!

Reveal

To take off the cover; to disclose; to give understanding.

Hello, My Name Is...

Reverence

To adore, to be in awe of, to respect.

Power-Aid

Salvation

Deliverance from the power and effects of sin through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Heads Up!

Sin

The lack of conformity to, or transgression of, the law of God.

Heads Up! / Power-Aid / The Domino Effect of Disobedience

Sovereign

One who exercises supreme authority or rule.

It's Under Control / Storms Ahead!

Sovereignty

Supreme authority and rule of God.

It's Under Control

Special Presentation

A Teens Involved category for individuals, using creative props and methods to present and illustrate a spiritual truth.

Do Something Special for God

Surrender

To give up, yield, submit, or relinquish control in favor of another.

Man vs. Will

Talent

A God-given natural ability that one is born with.

The Ride of Your Life

Teens Involved

An event through which teens gain experience in presenting their gifts and abilities to God for His honor, glory, and service.

Musical Sensation / The Ride of Your Life

Temptation

An enticement to do evil.

The Domino Effect of Disobedience

Testimony

A declaration of events as witnessed or experienced by an individual.

Always Ready

Transform

To change in character or condition.

Man vs. Will

Transformation

The process by which something is changed in its character or structure.

The Existence of God?

Trinity

The common term used to describe God's one divine nature or essence, eternally co-existent in three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Divine Relationship in 3-D

Trust

Depend on and put one's confidence in a person or thing.

Fool House

Truth

Actual fact rather than appearance or claim.

Dr. Seuss, Dr. Phil and God / Fool House

Unique

Being the only one of its kind.

Dr. Seuss, Dr. Phil and God