

**T:78**

# YOUR **WORD** IS **TRUTH**

LEADER'S EDITION

BY JILL NELSON

A STUDY FOR YOUTH ON SEEING ALL OF LIFE  
THROUGH THE TRUTH OF SCRIPTURE

ENGLISH  
STANDARD  
VERSION



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Rev. 5.22



To Matt and Sarah House  
As you begin life together,  
joined by God's gift of marriage,  
may your minds and hearts be transformed  
through the Word and the Spirit  
so that you and your children might  
see and interpret everything in life  
through the Truth of Scripture.

For God's glory and your lasting joy!



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***Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.—1 Corinthians 12:5-6***

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# Preface

When I was in my 20s, I had an interesting revelation—I couldn't see what other people could see. It happened one day as I was driving on the freeway with my husband, looking for a certain road sign. As we were approaching the sought-after road sign, my husband immediately saw and read it. I was amazed because all I saw was a bunch of fuzzy, indistinguishable letters. "Wow, how did you read that?" I asked. As I soon found out, during a visit to the eye doctor, everything was out of focus for me. I hadn't noticed, because I had just assumed that this was the way everything was supposed to look. What a difference a pair of eyeglasses made. Not only was I able to clearly read road signs, but I found that trees had distinct leaves, books were easier to read, and I could thread a needle. Everything became more focused!

Too often Christians limit the extent to which the Truth of God—the Bible—is able to give clearer focus to everything in life. It is as if, once given sight to see and embrace the glory of the gospel, we take off these lenses before we look at other things in life. We say, "Yes, the Bible is necessary for understanding Jesus, the gospel, and faith issues, but it isn't relevant to non-spiritual things." For some reason, if something isn't explicitly mentioned in Scripture, we go looking for a different set of lenses to help us see and understand it. Unfortunately, the world is more than eager to provide us with different lenses—lenses of Satan's own design. The problem is that Satan is a liar, and the lenses he gives us distort and skew reality instead of making it clear.

We need not, and we must not limit the scope, authority, and relevance of God's truth as revealed in the Bible:

***Isaiah 45:18-19—For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it empty, he formed it to be inhabited!): "I am the LORD, and there is no other. I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, 'Seek me***

***in vain.' I the LORD speak the truth; I declare what is right.***

***2 Timothy 3:16-17—All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.***

Consider a few items in the news at the time this study was being written (July 2010):

- The BP oil company has finally capped off the damaged oil well that has been spewing millions of gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico for more than three months.
- A typhoon struck the Philippines killing at least 39 people.
- A judge in Massachusetts has ruled that the federal law banning same-sex marriages is unconstitutional.
- An estimated 700 million people watched as Spain won the World Cup Soccer Tournament.
- A new iPhone is launched, selling more than 1.7 million units in only three days.
- In the United States, the Republican and Democratic parties are gearing up for midterm elections, which could alter the political balance of power in the U.S. Congress.

Now ask yourself: Does the Bible speak to these issues, too? How does our culture see and understand these issues? Whose glasses am I using in order to interpret these issues? What difference does it make?

As ***Romans 12:2*** states,

***Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.***

God does not want His people to be conformed to how the world sees and understands life, be it the origin of the world, marriage, friends, sports, movies, or the newest digital gadget. God wants His people to clearly see all of life by

testing and discerning what is His will—knowing what is good, acceptable, and perfect. In order for this to happen, we must be progressively transformed by the renewal of our minds. How does God renew our minds? Through the power of the Holy Spirit working in conjunction with His Word.

This truth is especially relevant for our students. Theirs is a generation marked by a major upheaval in understanding truth in general, let alone biblical truth. The “air” of our culture is increasingly postmodern. Unless our students are enlightened by God’s truth, they will adopt what is in the air of this culture. Evidence of this can be found in various research studies, which show that more and more people who claim to be born-again Christians no longer believe that Jesus is the only way to God. Even fewer have what would be called a “biblical worldview.”<sup>1</sup> God’s truth is seen as increasingly irrelevant to the times. What’s the danger? The danger is that we and our students may be taken captive by the lies of Satan, instead of taking every thought captive to Christ.

***Colossians 2:8—See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.***

***2 Corinthians 10:5—We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.***

To be sure, this kind of thinking will run contrary to popular culture. When we rightly embrace the scope and authority of Scripture, when we reject the philosophies and empty deceit of the world, when we destroy arguments against the knowledge of God, we will stand out as being “different,” to say the least. And for most young people, who are already very sensitive about their self-perception, it might seem cruel to encourage them to be even more different than their peers and the contemporary culture. But it is far better to be different than to be taken captive by deceit. Their lasting joy is at stake.

***Psalm 19:7-11—The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.***

When my son was about 12 years old, I noticed that he, too, wasn’t able to view the world clearly, because reading was becoming increasingly difficult for him. The thought of having to wear glasses did not appeal to him. His friends didn’t wear glasses—how “uncool”! What a pain it would be to have to wear glasses! There goes the dream of being a NAVY fighter pilot. He didn’t want glasses, but off to the eye doctor we went. And, after much complaining, he got a pair of eyeglasses. And lo and behold, after putting those glasses on and finally seeing all the wonderful things that he had been missing, he grew to see those glasses as a gift. He feels lost without them now. “Wow, what a difference these glasses have made!” he says. He is 22 years old now. He no longer cares about whether or not his glasses make him look cool or uncool—he can see!

In a similar way, let’s give our students “lenses” to rightly see and understand all of life by presenting them with the wonderful gift of God’s truth.

Let’s encourage them to see the many benefits of God’s Word, and how His truth is meant to transform every aspect of their lives.

Let’s pray that the Holy Spirit would put the truth “on” their hearts so they would really “see” Jesus as their Savior and Lord, so they would truly embrace, love, and walk in the truth.

Let’s come alongside them and help them to stand up against the deceiving voices of the culture, so they might stand firmly footed with unswerving confidence on God’s truth.

1. See The Barna Group for various studies, [www.barna.org](http://www.barna.org).

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# Introduction

## Curriculum Overview

We live in an increasingly postmodern world, in which truth is no longer valued to the degree it once was. People more often than not understand “truth” to be relative and “self-defined,” meaning we each define truth in a way that seems best to us. Furthermore, the acceptance of “absolute truth” has become a thing of the past—an old notion that is considered to be the source of intolerance and arrogance. Every day we are bombarded by a secular worldview, one which is militant to absolute truth. This worldview has become so prevalent in our culture, it has subtly crept into the church.

In her book *Total Truth*, Christian author Nancy Pearcey recalls the following quote from the late Francis Schaeffer:<sup>1</sup>

*Christianity is not a series of truths in the plural, but rather truth spelled with a capital “T.” Truth about total reality, not just about religious things.*

*Biblical Christianity is Truth concerning total reality—the intellectual holding of total Truth and then living in the light of that Truth.”*

Pearcey then goes on to comment:

*Genuine worldview thinking is far more than a mental strategy or a new spin on current events. At the core, it is a deepening of our spiritual character and the character of our lives. It begins with the submission of our minds to the Lord of the universe—a willingness to be taught by Him. The driving force in worldview studies should be a commitment to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind (see Luke 10:27).*

*That’s why the crucial condition for intellectual growth is spiritual growth, asking God for the grace to “take every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5). God is not just the Savior of souls, He is also the Lord of creation. One*

*way we acknowledge His Lordship is by interpreting every aspect of creation in light of His truth. God’s Word becomes a set of glasses offering a new perspective on all our thoughts and actions.*

If we want our students to embrace this essential reality, they must become acquainted with God’s Truth and see its comprehensive scope and weight of authority in every area of life. This **biblical worldview**, when understood, loved, obeyed, and proclaimed will be very much at odds with the world and secular culture. It does not lend itself to popularity. Rather, if our students embrace truth, they will more likely be seen as arrogant and narrow-minded. Just consider the scorn with which many secular scientists look upon people who reject Darwinism and hold to the truth of God creating all things by His infinite wisdom and power. Or consider how people who hold to the truth of God’s definition of marriage are viewed as intolerant and unloving. And if we affirm the truth of both God’s goodness and absolute sovereignty in the midst of great suffering...well, the world will assume that we are out of our minds!

This curriculum is being written with the hope that, through the work of the Holy Spirit, the authoritative Truth of the Bible might be understood and embraced so that our students may see and interpret all of life through the lens of Scripture. We hope that this study will not only encourage them to embrace this life-giving truth, but to also equip them to walk in, defend, and proclaim the truth so that they might shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation (Philippians 2:15).

## The Role of the Bible in the Classroom

Because the goal of this study is to challenge youth to see all of life through the lens of Scrip-

1. Pearcey, Nancy. *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity*. (Crossway Books: Wheaton, Ill., 2004, 2005), 15, 24.



ture, it is of the utmost importance that all teaching flows logically and visibly from the Word. Paul's charge to Timothy in **2 Timothy 2:15** should be our goal, too:

***Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.***

Always use your Bible to look up the passages (unless otherwise noted) and teach with an open Bible before you. Our desire is to constantly point the students to the Scriptures. It is important to demonstrate that the source of truth is in the Word of God. A right view of any topic is not based on a self-derived and subjective opinion. By teaching from an open Bible, we want to repeatedly communicate to youth that God, not the teacher, is the source of truth. All claims to truth must be measured against the perfect standard of the Bible.

Since the Bible is an essential component of the lesson, every student should bring his own Bible to class. They will need to look up the given Scriptures, participate in reading the texts out loud, and answer questions based on the texts. This curriculum was written using the English Standard Version (ESV) translation of the Bible, and that's what we recommend for your students and teachers. However, it is possible to teach this curriculum using other word-for-word Bible translations.

## **A Word about Lesson Order**

The lessons in this study have been designed to have an intentional flow. The following is a summary of the general concepts and their progressive flow:

**Lessons 1-2** establish the nature of God's truth as being objective, absolute, universal, and unchanging. All essential truths have been communicated to us in God's Word, and all people are subject to its authority. The Bible is completely trustworthy and is the final authority by which all other truth claims must be measured.

**Lessons 3-7** present other competing claims, such as postmodernism, atheism, and other false

religions, and show how each is a work of Satan meant to blind sinners to God's truth.

**Lessons 8-9** demonstrates how the gospel of Jesus holds exclusive claim to enabling sinners to see and then embrace the truth. This is done by grace, through faith, in the Person and work of Jesus. This work of God in the heart is then meant to progressively transform a believer so that he views all of life through the truth of Scripture.

**Lessons 10-35** study contemporary topics that we experience in everyday life, and evaluate each in terms of biblical truth, thereby exposing the lies of Satan.

**Lessons 36-38** encourage believers have an unshakable confidence in the ultimate triumph of God's truth as seen in the decisively victory of Jesus in His death on the cross. This will be demonstrated by proclaiming the truth boldly with humility and love for the lost.

**Lessons 39-40** challenge the students to examine whether or not they are walking in the truth, demonstrated by a heartfelt love and trust in Jesus that is inclining them toward a growing obedience and delight in His truth.

As much as possible, it is important that the lessons be taught in the order in which they appear in the curriculum. Some lessons are dependent on truths taught in previous lessons, and some lessons expand the truth taught in a prior lesson. If lessons must be omitted because of time constraints, it is suggested that you remove those from within the range of Lessons 10-35.

## Component Introduction

There are several curriculum components involved in teaching this study. It is important that you understand each one and know how and when to use it.

### Classroom Kit

One Classroom Kit is needed for every classroom using this study. It includes a Teacher's Guide with the curriculum introduction, lesson, and appendix, and the Curriculum Resources (DVD or electronic downloads) with all of the PowerPoint® shows, video clips, printed visuals, classroom handouts, parent memos, and send-home articles. It also comes with one copy of the Student Journal. *It is very important for teaching purposes that each classroom have Curriculum Resources to use.*

The Classroom Kit also contains video clips (on a DVD or in the downloads) that can be played on a DVD player by those who don't have access to a computer and projector for electronic display.

### Using the Teacher's Guide

Each teacher should take time to thoroughly look through the Classroom Kit to understand where everything is located for easy reference.

- Introduction: introductory material to the particular study, the components involved in teaching the study, and a walk through how a typical lesson works in the classroom
- Lessons: all the lessons included in the study, each containing an overview for teachers, the lesson presentation, and application discussion questions for small group.
- Appendices: resources included: helps and tips on how to teach or lead a small group discussion, a list of visuals that aren't provided, recommended resources, etc.

### Curriculum Resources (Part of Classroom Kit)

Curriculum Resources (packaged with the Classroom Kit) are needed for every classroom in order to use this study successfully, including the following:

- 40 PowerPoint® shows (one for each lesson)
- 40 PDFs of those PowerPoint® shows (for those who are not able to use PowerPoint)
- video clips to use for lesson illustrations
- PDFs of printable visual resources
- PDFs of classroom handouts
- PDFs of take-home articles and parent memos

Read the "How to Use" document for information on how to use the various formats of the media files. You will need some of the following free downloads:

- For the PDFs—Adobe Reader® 6 (or a more recent version) available at [adobe.com](http://adobe.com).
- For the video clips—QuickTime® available at [www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com) or Windows Media Player available at [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com).
- For the PowerPoint® shows—PowerPoint® viewer available at [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com) (not needed if you have PowerPoint® 2007).
- For those who can't view the PowerPoint® shows in that format, these shows are also available as PDFs.

As much as possible, we have attempted to provide teaching aids and visuals in the Curriculum Resources included in the Classroom Kit. The printable electronic files are provided as Adobe PDFs. You have permission to print and reproduce these PDFs.

### Teacher's Guide

The Teacher's Guide is also sold as a separate product intended to be used by any additional teachers or small group leaders in your classroom. It contains the curriculum introduction, lessons, and appendix, but does not come with the Curriculum Resources (DVD or electronic downloads).

## Student Journal

Each student is encouraged to use a Student Journal throughout this study, both in class and at home during the week (journals should travel with the students). The Journal contains an entry for each lesson, giving space for notes, activities, and questions to be completed during each lesson and small group discussion, and a personal application section to be prayed through and completed at home.

Because there are components of small group interaction in the Journal, each small group leader should have a Journal to use for the study.

## Optional: Printed Visuals Packet

Churches that aren't equipped to display PowerPoint® shows in the classroom may wish to order a printed Visuals Packet. This professionally printed Packet contains the same printable visual resources provided as PDFs in the Curriculum Resources in full color on high-quality cardstock.

## Walking through a Lesson Roles and Responsibilities in the Classroom

Depending on the class size, the following class structure is recommended. For small classes, these roles can be combined (i.e. a team leader or teacher can also lead worship), or one person may need to function in all the roles.

- **Team Leader:** someone responsible for organizing and administrating the class, communicating with parents, and encouraging the team of volunteer leaders
- **Teacher:** one or two people who teach the lesson presentation to the large group, perhaps alternating weeks of teaching if there is more than one teacher
- **Worship Leader:** if there is a time of worship, a leader or team should lead the class in a prepared worship set
- **Small Group Leader:** a mature adult is needed for every four to eight students to lead small group discussions and mentor students in their

spiritual growth; their job should be to encourage each student both in and out of class

**Note:** We suggest that junior high students should be divided into same gender groups with a mentor of the same gender. These groups should be consistent throughout the study.

See *“Training and Tips for the Classroom”* in the *Appendix* section.

## Lesson Preparation

Teaching and mentoring require a serious time commitment. We make no claims of “Only 5 minutes of preparation!” because we believe the teacher should study and prayerfully apply the lesson to his life before attempting to instruct others. Therefore, the most important preparation for the teacher is spiritual preparation. Good teaching comes from a heart saturated with the Word of God, which treasures and finds its delight in God. Thus, before teaching, the teacher should study the lesson material thoroughly, read all Scripture references, and pray through the lesson material.

A good teacher is a prepared teacher. After reviewing the lesson the first time, the teacher should go through the lesson again asking the Holy Spirit to bring to mind specific ways in which the truths presented apply to his or her group of students. For example, maybe the teacher has noticed a particular way in which a small group encourages one another through their words and manner of speech. When preparing for the lesson on communication, a teacher may want to briefly incorporate that as an example in the lesson. After preparing his heart spiritually, the teacher should gather and prepare visuals, practice each illustration, become familiar with the PowerPoint® show, and go through a trial run of the lesson to check for timing and flow. The Lesson Overview section is designed for teachers, and contains the summary details of the lesson and what will be involved in teaching it.

## Understanding the Lesson Overview Section

The Lesson Overview section is the first page or two of each lesson. It provides summary information about the lesson topic, as well as what Scriptures, visuals, and materials the teachers and small group leaders will need to prepare for class time.

### Main Ideas

The main ideas are the major truths taught in the lesson and should be the concepts the students remember about the lesson.

### Scripture

The Scripture texts are listed in the order they appear in the lesson presentation.

### Curriculum Resources

These are electronic visuals (e.g., PowerPoint® presentations and video clips), and printable classroom visuals, handouts, parent memos, and take-home articles provided with the Classroom Kit for use in your classroom during the lesson presentation.

**Note:** For non-PowerPoint® users, alternative visuals have been provided as Curriculum Resources for printing and use in the classroom. See Appendices for more details.

### Other Visuals

This lists essential teaching visuals that aren't provided. This list always includes a Bible (English Standard Version), and sometimes includes simple objects and videos for the lesson, which the teacher will need to provide. Though the preparation and obtaining of materials and props can be time-consuming, they are extremely important to use in presenting the lesson as they help to clarify abstract concepts and keep the students engaged in the lesson. Please try to use the suggested visuals for each lesson. (A list of visuals that aren't provided is also included in the Appendix of this Teacher's Guide.)

## Discussion Starter

Many lessons begin with a Small Group Discussion—either a small group activity or a large group activity. This is the “hook” of the lesson. The purpose of the activity is to begin introducing the topic of the lesson in an interactive and interesting manner to draw the students into the lesson topic. Both teachers and small group leaders should pay careful attention to this section of the lesson, as some special preparation may be required.

The beginning Small Group Discussion may also reference something to complete in the Student Journal. Encourage students to get into the habit of always bringing their journal to class.

## Lesson Presentation

The Lesson Presentation pages contain the text that should be used for the large group lesson. This text and the Bible passages studied should be the main focus of the classroom time.

**Note:** it is recommended that you begin your lesson with prayer.

### Understanding the Lesson Presentation Format

Formatting cues are used to help guide the teacher through the lesson material.

#### VISUALS AND THUMBNAILS

Visual thumbnails in the side margin give teachers a quick reference to what should be displayed as PowerPoint® slides or printed visuals during certain points in the lesson. Visuals and illustrations should be used to emphasize key biblical themes.

#### FONT

- Sentences in *italics recommend* a specific wording of a concept to make a theological point very clear or to convey a specific tone or touch the heart in a certain way.
- Lesson material not in italics should be conveyed in your own words.
- Key words appear in **bold**.
- Scripture portions are in ***bolded italics***.



While the Scripture portions are usually provided to you in the lesson, you are strongly encouraged to read from your Bible while teaching the lesson so that the authority of the Bible in teaching is emphasized. Note: Sometimes lessons may reference Bible stories that may or may not be familiar to your students. Be aware of the Bible literacy of your classroom, and be prepared to provide additional background information when needed.

#### **PARENTHETICAL TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS**

Each lesson contains teaching instructions and other helpful information in parentheses for the teacher. Read these carefully when preparing to teach the lesson. Although these instructions may be helpful, it is important to think through the lesson yourself and decide how you can most effectively teach the concepts presented.

#### **POWERPOINT® INSTRUCTIONS**

Instructions for the PowerPoint® are included within the lesson text.

- “Display [name of the slide]”—means to click to advance to a new slide, revealing new content (thumbnails of the initial view of each new slide are included in the margin of the lesson to provide a glimpse of the content)
- Computer mouse symbol (☞)—means to click to advance the animation on the current slide, revealing new content on the current slide.

For more instructions about the PowerPoint® shows, please see the PowerPoint® section at the end of this Introduction.

#### **Understanding Student Interaction**

The lessons are designed to encourage involvement and interaction in a variety of ways.

#### **JOURNAL NOTES**

Students should have the journal with them for each class, as journal interaction is built into every lesson. As you prepare the lesson, note when students should be writing in the journal. The lesson text has been written to help you do this.

#### **QUESTIONS**

Rather than telling learners the concepts in the lesson, as much as possible, lead youth to discover the concepts by asking questions and encouraging the learners to think, draw conclusions, look up answers for themselves, etc. Suggested questions are included in the lesson. Possible answers to the questions are included in [brackets]. If a learner's answer does not lead in the right direction, adapt your questions to direct the learner to the points you are trying to make. Do not be discouraged if students have a hard time answering questions. Patiently work with them; it will be worth the effort.

#### **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

Usually the discussion time consists of looking at a text and answering questions about the text or completing an activity. For this reason, it may be best for small groups to sit together throughout the lesson. Small Group Leaders should prepare to lead students through the discussion by studying the passage or topics before class. The discussion time is also a good time to make sure everyone understands what has been taught.

Allow enough time in your lesson planning for the small groups to complete the activity, but be careful to watch the time and call everyone back to the lesson when needed.

#### **ILLUSTRATIONS**

Illustrations emphasize a point or help the students understand spiritual truth. It is very important to directly connect the provided illustrations with the biblical truth being presented, or the teaching value of the illustration is lost. Remember to keep these brief and to the point.

#### **PERSONAL EXPERIENCES**

Occasionally, a reference is made to sharing a personal experience to illustrate a point being made in the lesson. These experiences should clearly illustrate the truth you are teaching. When a teacher shares a real life experience, students see that God is alive and at work in our lives. However, it is important to do this quickly and then return to the lesson content.

### Understanding Gospel Presentation

Within this study, students will be challenged to examine their personal understanding and response to the gospel. Therefore, it is important that your presentation of truth be very clear.

#### GOSPEL CALL

Many lessons will challenge students to respond to the gospel by trusting in Jesus alone for the forgiveness of sins, depending on Him alone for their salvation. If you have youth in your group who have not yet made a profession of faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord, but as a result of God's call on their heart would like to make a commitment of faith in response to God's call, it seems appropriate to recommend they discuss this with their parents. If parents are not believers, you may have the privilege of leading the student in this step. Rather than using confusing terminology such as "ask Jesus into your heart," we suggest using the term "trust in Jesus." This can be explained as "depending completely on the work of Jesus on your behalf."<sup>1</sup>

#### EXPLICIT LANGUAGE

Keep in mind that your class most likely includes unbelievers as well as believers. Be careful not to use "inclusive" language that communicates to unbelievers that they are Christians. Instead, qualify your statements. For example, instead of stating, "After we die, we will go to heaven to be with Jesus," qualify your statement with, "Those of us who are trusting in Jesus as our Savior will go to heaven to be with Him when we die." Other examples include:

Not: God promises to guide us.

But: God promises to guide His children.

Not: God will help you fight the fight of faith.

But: God will help Christians fight the fight of faith.

Although we do not want to deny true saving faith, we also do not want to provide false assurances to those who hear the Word, but do not believe it in their hearts. We want to continually

point to the need to make a personal commitment to Jesus and to trust Him as our Savior.

Note: It is recommended that you end your lesson time with prayer.

### Small Group Application Time

The Small Group Application Time is at the end of the lesson. It is a vital part of the classroom time and should not be omitted. Application Time is designed to help students to discover how God is asking each of them to respond. The goal is to help students see how God might have them respond to the truth they have heard. When they are specifically directed to respond to the truth, it is more likely that head knowledge will become a desired heart response.

#### Understanding Application Format

The curriculum contains discussion options that are linked to specific lesson truth statements. The goal is not to complete all the discussions. Rather, Small Group Leaders should read through this section and select which discussions are most appropriate for the students in their groups. These are recommended questions, but you should adapt them as necessary to meet the needs of your particular group. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you steer the discussion. The responses your learners give may determine succeeding questions. There are many different directions to pursue in each lesson, so small group leaders need to depend on God's guidance and a discerning ear and heart to determine which direction to pursue.

#### TRUTH STATEMENT

A statement reviewing a main truth of the lesson.

#### THINK ABOUT IT

This section explores the students' knowledge and understanding of the stated truth. Do they really see and understand its biblical foundation and grasp its meaning? The small group leader should help his students work through any misunderstanding and, if possible, answer ques-

1. Suggested resource: *A Quest for Joy* by John Piper, [http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Articles/ByDate/1995/1546\\_Quest\\_for\\_Joy/](http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Articles/ByDate/1995/1546_Quest_for_Joy/) (accessed 3/15/18).

tions that may arise. This section is then meant to prepare the students for the next sections.

#### **EXAMINE YOUR HEART**

These questions move students beyond the intellectual conversation and ask them to think through their emotional (heart and attitude) response to the truth. Do they love and embrace it? Or do their hearts reject it? What is their response to God?

#### **LIVE IT**

This section challenges students to tangible application of the truth to their own lives in practical ways. Small group leaders should take time to follow up from week-to-week with students to ask how they are applying the truth to their lives.

#### **A Special Note to Small Group Leaders**

In a study such as this, it is important to keep the focus Christ-centered. Many of the lesson topics and small group application questions that follow the lesson will challenge students to examine personal desires, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. Through this process, rebellious attitudes may be expressed by certain students. Sinful thoughts and desires may be exposed. Other students may give voice to a self-righteous superiority, because they don't go to "those kinds of movies" or "already know the truth about this topic." Or, it may be that this is the first time that a student has been led to see a certain topic biblically, causing them to be somewhat taken off guard. These are all possible outcomes in your small group time and it is important that you as a leader and mentor respond with the truth and with the love of Christ. Pray that your words would be "seasoned with salt"—kind and gracious, meant for building up, and fitting the occasion (Colossians 4:6 and Ephesians 4:29). Our goal should be to continually point the students to Jesus: His all-sufficient work on the cross for sinners; His perfect righteousness given to all who believe; His forgiveness and cleansing work when they confess their sin; His power that enables His children to continually grow in obedience to His truth; and His unshakable promise to complete the work that He began in His children.

Apart from God's grace and power experienced in the redeeming work of Jesus, none of us can embrace and walk in obedience to the truth as we should. This should remove any sense of self-righteousness for those of us—both students and leaders—who seem to demonstrate a greater degree of obedience to biblical truth than others. For others, this truth should remove any sense that unbelievers or even believers can simply "live as I please." Both of these attitudes are sinful, and both have the same cure—by going humbly to the cross. Make sure to always point the students to this important reality. There is hope and forgiveness in Jesus alone. Furthermore, continually remind your students of this: God's truth is not meant burden us, it is meant to point us to true, lasting joy!

Toward this end, it would be very helpful for Small Group Leaders to quickly read through lessons 8, 38, 39, and 40 before beginning the study. These lessons will help to give a greater "gospel context" for the entire study.

#### **Understanding the Student Journal**

The Student Journal contains a section for students to take notes during the lesson and application time, as well as At Home application and activities students may complete on their own during the week. Encourage students to complete this section and talk to their parents about it.

#### **At Home Parent-Student Interaction**

The primary responsibility and privilege of nurturing the faith of youth rests on parents (Deuteronomy 6:5-9). Parents will also have the most opportunities for "teachable moments," situations that arise in everyday life that can be opportunities to apply the truth of God. Faith-nurturing should not be seen primarily as a classroom experience, but rather as a consistent weaving of spiritual truth with everyday life in the context of the home. Real "heart" application of biblical truth, which changes lives, usually takes place in the context of relationship and everyday life. Since this most naturally occurs in the home in the context of loving relationships, teachers

and small group leaders should make significant efforts to connect the classroom teaching with daily parental involvement in the student's life.

### **Use of the Student Journal**

Encourage students and parents to complete the At Home section of the Journal at home together during the week. Make contact with the students during the week by phone, e-mail, or in person to encourage them to use the journal and dialogue about faith issues with their families.

### **Use of the Parent Memos and Take-Home Articles**

For each lesson, there is a concise Parent Memo to help connect parents to the classroom by providing them with a summary of the main ideas and truths from the lesson. Please email this resource to parents weekly and encourage them to interact with their students on the truths being taught. For a number of lessons in this study, there are also articles that will be sent home for further reading and discussion on the lesson topic. These are packaged together with the Parent Memos. Encourage both parents and students to pursue these important at-home interaction opportunities.

## **Using PowerPoint® Shows in Teaching**

PowerPoint® shows have been provided with this curriculum for a number of reasons:

- To help teachers better display important visuals to large groups
- To help teachers by providing them with the visuals they need with minimum preparation involved
- To help students follow the lesson and take better notes

But while PowerPoint® can help with all these things, it can also be a hindrance in the classroom—turning what should be a personal lesson into a prepackaged lecture. Please read the following suggestions for using the provided PowerPoint® shows in your classroom.

## **System Requirements for PowerPoint®**

In order to use the PowerPoint® shows, you will need PowerPoint 2007® (or a more recent version) or a free PowerPoint® viewer (see [microsoft.com](http://microsoft.com) for a free download.)

## **How PowerPoint® is Different from Teaching**

Take care to not allow the PowerPoint® shows to take the place of your vital role as teacher. Teaching happens when the teacher enters into the lesson, owns the truths and concepts outlined in the lesson, and speaks through the lesson using not only the main points provided, but words of personal testimony, conviction, and experience. Teaching and learning happen when a teacher and students have critical interaction. Our hope is that you will teach the biblical truths presented in each lesson from your heart in a manner tailored to the needs of the students in your classroom, and use the PowerPoint® only as it helps you in doing this.

## **How to Prepare with PowerPoint®**

Animations have been added to each slide so that text can be revealed gradually as you talk through the concepts and discuss the lesson with students. As you think through the lesson for your classroom, think about when you would like to display each slide, click through the animation, and think about if they are any slides you would like to click past. Make note of these, and practice running through the lesson that way.

**Note:** Truth78 is not able to offer the PowerPoint® shows in edit-able format due to copyright restrictions on the images and the content.



### **How to Use the PowerPoint® Shows When Teaching**

Arrive at the classroom before the lesson to make sure all your equipment is working properly so you are prepared to begin the lesson.

In order to make room for meaningful interaction to happen in your classroom, it is vital that you do not let the PowerPoint® show dominate the flow of your lesson and discussion. Do not be concerned with displaying and explaining each and every slide. Your teaching and focus should be paced according to the prompting of the Holy Spirit as you perceive the needs of your classroom. As you teach your students through the lesson, advance the slides as it is helpful and as you talk through the concepts. If, due to time or your decision to skip a concept, just advance through the slide to the next point you are going to discuss.

It is not important to display or linger on all the slides for each lesson that you teach. What is important is that you teach the lesson in a way that helps your students learn the truths contained in the lesson. The PowerPoint® shows should be a help, a tool to reinforce the points that you are speaking.

### **How to Use PowerPoint® to Help with the Journal**

Each student should have a journal to use throughout this study. Within this journal are note-taking pages that are to be completed during the lesson presentation by filling in blanks with specific words, answering questions, or completing activities. Many times the answers are points you will be displaying on the screen.

At the beginning of the study, you may need to instruct students when they should be interacting with or writing in their journal. Small group leaders should also complete the journal before the lesson so that they can help their students understand how to complete the pages. You may need to occasionally remind students throughout the year to be listening or looking for answers to questions in the journal.

### **How to Teach Without PowerPoint® Shows**

For instructions on how this study may be taught without the use of PowerPoint®, see appendix on "How to Teach without PowerPoint®."

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this Introduction was to familiarize you with the vision, structure, and classroom practice of this curriculum. Additional helps and tips are included the Appendix.

The goal of Truth78 in every curriculum is that students will come to see Jesus Christ as the only One who saves and satisfies the soul. In this particular curriculum, we pray that the eyes of students will be open to see the Truth, and that their hearts will be changed to embrace, love, and live in truth. May God give you all wisdom as you teach and mentor the eternal souls in your classroom, that they may rejoice in Him.

# What's the Truth?

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > God is the source of truth.
- > God's truth is objective, absolute, universal, unchangeable, and knowable.

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## SCRIPTURE:

1. Isaiah 45:18-19

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## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 1
- > Test Question
- > Rulers A & B (print 2 copies of this sheet, keeping one intact and cutting the rulers from the other sheet, labeling the rulers you cut out as A or B so that you will be able to remember which is which)
- > Parent Memo for Lesson 1 (one per student)
- > Overview for Parents (one per student)

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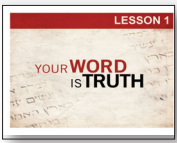
## OTHER VISUALS:

- > Bible (English Standard Version)
- > Tape
- > Whiteboard and markers
- > Your driver's license (or other picture ID with the date of your birth)
- > Current calendar
- > Simple calculator
- > Accurate ruler for measuring inches

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## PREPARATION:

Write two statements on the whiteboard that are true about you, and one statement about you that is false but you would like to be true. One of these statements (true or false) should be your birthdate. Write these statements in any order. You will be directing the students to read these statements about you at the start of the Large Group Lesson.



(DISPLAY **LESSON 1.**)

## Small Group Discussion (5-10 minutes)



(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

Give each student a **Student Journal** and have the students write their names on the inside of the front cover. Explain that these journals will be used throughout the study both in class and at home.

Have them turn to **Three Things about Me** in Lesson 1. Tell the students that they should think of two true, short statements about themselves that will help the other students get

to know them better. Then think of one false statement that they would like to be true about themselves. Next, they should write these three statements in the journal, in any order.

After the students have had a few moments to do this, have them share their statements (the small group leader may want to do this first). Can the other students guess which statements were true or false?

## Large Group Lesson

WHITEBOARD WITH  
THREE STATEMENTS

Point to the statements you have written on the **whiteboard**. Explain that you have done something similar to the activity they have just done in their small groups. You have written three statements about yourself. (If you were a small group for the previous activity, choose three new statements for this.) For example:

1. I am married and have 3 children.
2. I was born on September 20th.
3. I once went skydiving.

Quickly ask the students if they can guess which two statements are true, and which is false. Is there a particular reason they might assume that one statement is more likely to be false than the others? (e.g., Why might they assume that *"I once went skydiving"* is false)?

This activity was meant as an introduction to our main topic for this study:

(DISPLAY **WHAT'S THE TRUTH.**)

*What's the truth?*

- How would you define what is meant by the word "Truth" in the context of this activity? When we are asked to determine or guess which statements are true, what is it that we are trying to determine?

Hand a student your **driver's license**.

*Does any information listed on the license give evidence to the truth of one of your statements? [Yes, the date of your birth] In other words, a true statement must conform to*

DRIVER'S LICENSE



reality. We can often tell what is true because of some kind of credible evidence.

Suppose I asked you, “How many girls are in our classroom right now?” What would be the answer? How would you know this is the truth?

CALENDAR AND  
CALCULATOR

Suppose I asked you, “What is today’s date?” What would be the answer? How would you know this is the truth?

(Display a **calendar** and point to the correct date.)

What if you had a math test and were asked, “What is  $28 \times 14$ ?” and you gave 390 as the answer. Would this be the truth?

(Give a student a **calculator** to do the problem.)

What is the true, correct answer? [392]

In this context, “truth” can be defined as “the way things really are.”

(DISPLAY **THE TRUTH.**)

When we say that something is true, we are saying it conforms to reality or to the facts.

✎ But in order to know this, there must be an external standard to measure whether or not the stated information conforms to reality.

What measure or standard did we use to show what my true date of birth is? My driver’s license.

What measure or standard did we use to show that it is really [day of the week]? A calendar. A calendar tells us what day it really is.

What measure or standard was used to show that 28 times 14 is not 390? We used a calculator.

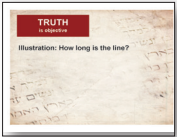
These examples tell us another important thing about truth: Truth is not measured or determined by something inside of me—like my feelings or desires. Something is not true simply because I want it to be true, or think it to be true. My own subjective thoughts, feelings, wishes, desires, and hopes do not determine what is true.

Suppose I had stated that my birthday was September 18th, because that is my best friend’s birthday, and I want my birthday to be the same as hers. Will that change the way things really are? No. The truth about my birthday is not based on my own desires or feelings. It is possible that I could provide false information on my driver’s license—but that will not change the true reality of my birth date. My birth date is the actual date my mother gave birth to me, and can be verified by my birth certificate. Truth is determined by a source outside myself and independent of me. Another way of stating this is that...



## TRUTH IS OBJECTIVE

(DISPLAY **OBJECTIVE.**)



## Illustration

(DISPLAY **ILLUSTRATION.**)

Choose two students to come to the front of the room. Tape the **Test Question** to the wall and read:

**The line is \_ inches in length.**

*Now that you know something about the truth and what makes something true, would it be right for you to, just by looking at this line, decide its true length? If you think that it is 6 inches long, will that **MAKE** it true? If you want it to be 7 inches long, will that make it true? What do you need to make the statement true? [a measure, a ruler] Should it be a ruler you make for yourself, or one that was made independent of you?*

(Give one student **Ruler A** and the other student **Ruler B**. Have the student with Ruler A measure the line and write the answer on the Test Question sheet. Have the student with Ruler B check this answer.

*What was the answer with Ruler B? Why isn't it the same as the answer with Ruler A? So what is the true measure of the line? Have the students return to their seats. Hold the rulers next to each other. They look almost the same. But which is the correct measure? Or are both rulers wrong?*

(Display the **intact sheet with Ruler A & Ruler B**, and comment:)

*The two rulers I gave to the students were cut from a page that looked like this.*

(Display **accurate ruler.**)

*This is a ruler that I bought in a store where they have school supplies. Which of the three rulers would have more authority in measuring the true length of the line? Which would you trust to give you the true answer? Why?*

*If we are to know the true answer, we must have the right measure. In this case, we need a standard ruler—one that is recognized as being the “authority” for the measurement of lines. Where our ruler comes from, its source, is really important. Our measure must be from a reliable source, one that is trustworthy and dependable. This can help us understand something very important about the truth:*

*The truth must come from the right, authoritative source. The right authority for truth provides us with the right measure for what is true.*

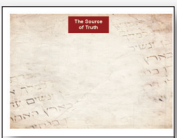
(DISPLAY **SOURCE.**)

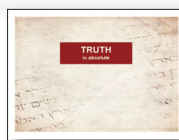
This illustration demonstrates another important thing about the truth:

## TRUTH IS ABSOLUTE

TEST QUESTION,  
AND CUT OUT S OF  
RULERS A AND B

INTACT SHEET WITH  
RULERS A & B, AND  
ACCURATE RULER





(DISPLAY **ABSOLUTE.**)

*Truth is absolute, meaning it does not bend to suit our own personal preferences. It does not change or bend to fit what different people want it to be. Whether you like Ruler A or Ruler B doesn't matter.*

🔗 *The truth of it is absolute—it is fixed and immovable.*

*Now you might be wondering, "So what?" Who cares whether or not Ruler A or Ruler B matches the standard ruler exactly? And who cares whether it is really Sunday or Monday? Who cares if I lied about my age? The truth doesn't really matter that much as long as everyone can get along and "do their own thing."*

### Illustration

*Suppose two men go to the top of a 20-story building. The first man says: "I think I'll float gently down and get that taxi." The second man says: "Wait a minute! You can't do that. Don't you know about gravity? You won't float! You'll fall hard on the sidewalk and die!" The first man says: "That may be your standard, but it isn't mine. Besides, it doesn't really matter. You do your thing, and I'll do mine."*

Tell the students that you are going to have them return to their small groups to read and discuss an excerpt from a transcript of a popular television science series.

## Small Group Discussion

Ask the students to turn to the **Quotes to Consider** in the **Student Journal**. Read one quote at a time, and ask the questions related to that quote (in italics below).

The words of the late astronomer Carl Sagan<sup>1</sup>:

*We are creatures of the cosmos and always hunger to know our origins, to understand our connection with the universe. How did everything come to be?*

*According to Carl Sagan, what is the main question all people ask? Why is this question important?*

*Science...connects us with our origins... Its only sacred truth is that there are no sacred truths. All assumptions must be critically examined...Science is not perfect. It is often misused. It is only a tool, but it is the best tool we have—self-correcting, ever changing, applicable to everything."*

*Would he say that this truth is absolute? Why or why not? Why are his words: "[Science's] only sacred truth is that there are no sacred truths" a contradiction? Why do you think he must make this contradiction?*

*What is meant by: "Science is not perfect. It is often misused. It is only a tool, but it is the best tool we have—self-correcting, ever changing, applicable to everything."?*

*If what he concedes about science is true, can he use science as an objective and absolute standard for truth? Why not? Why should this matter?*

*Does the truth about where we came from really matter, or should we just have the attitude of the fictional man who was going to jump off of a 20-story building?*

1. The Carl Sagan quotes are from a transcript of "Who Speaks for Earth?", an episode of *Cosmos*, produced by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting in 1980.



## Large Group Lesson

There are important questions in life that carry much more significance than your true date of birth, today's date, or the measurement of a particular line. The transcript that was read within small groups was from a very famous scientist. He pointed to questions that had much more weight and significance:



(DISPLAY **GALAXY**)

*Where did we and everything else come from? What is our relationship to everything else in the universe?*

*And he did point out some objective and absolute realities:*

*We exist.*

*The universe exists.*

*There are “laws of nature” that are observable. For example, we all experience the law of gravity on earth. It is objective and comes from a source independent of us.*

*But can science, and its use of man-made instruments, technology, and human reasoning, provide a completely objective and absolute...*

*...measure for determining the true answer to every question? Why not? (Allow students to respond.)*

*Could you suggest a better source for finding the true answer to Carl Sagan's questions? [If the students' response is “The Bible,” ask why it would be a better source for truth. Ask for specific verses, if possible.]*

Have the students find and read **Isaiah 45:18-19**, and then also turn to where it is listed in the **journal**:

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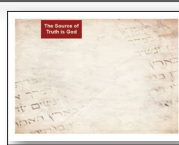
🔗 *Isaiah 45:18-19—For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it empty, he formed it to be inhabited!): “I am the LORD, and there is no other. <sup>19</sup>I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, ‘Seek me in vain.’ I the LORD speak the truth; I declare what is right.”*

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*What is the source of truth about how the universe came into existence? Who absolutely decides and authoritatively knows the way things really are? Is there any other source of truth that trumps God's knowledge of the truth? If God states that something is true, can anything else trump His revelation of the truth? Why not?*

There is a true answer to Mr. Sagan's question. But its source is not found in man-made instruments and technology, and is not derived through human reasoning! And this truth is unique and ultimate, because it is not simply a series or collection of true facts

(e.g., the day of the week, the date of my birth, the correct answer to a math problem, etc.). It is TRUTH itself...



(DISPLAY **SOURCE 2.**)

...as God has created it and knows it, and it alone defines and determines the way things really are. It alone provides the measure and standard for all that is true. It alone states and then answers the most important questions.

☞ It is TRUTH that is defined by five major characteristics.

- ☞ 1. Truth is Objective.
- ☞ 2. Truth is Absolute.
- ☞ 3. Truth is Universal.
- ☞ 4. Truth is Unchanging.
- ☞ 5. Truth is Knowable.

*How can it be all these things?*

(Instruct the students to follow along in the **journal** and make the appropriate notes as indicated.)

Explain that the most important thing to learn about this all-encompassing TRUTH is its ultimate source: God Himself.

*Truth is therefore objective...*

☞ *...because it comes from God, and is independent of us.*

*Truth is absolute...*

☞ *...because God alone is God, and His authority is fixed and immovable.*

*Truth is universal...*

☞ *...because God is God over all His created universe and all things and people in it. It applies to all people everywhere: young and old, men and women, rich and poor, in the United States and in China, etc. (See **1 Timothy 2:3-5.**)*

*Truth is unchanging...*

☞ *...because God will always be God, and His perfections never change. It is something that you can depend on because it won't change over time and with new discoveries. (See **Psalms 33:11; Psalm 119:160.**)*

*Truth is knowable...*

☞ *...because God has communicated His truth to man. He has done this most clearly through His Word, the Bible. It is not hidden, but revealed and communicated to us. (See **John 1:17-18.**)*

In the coming year we will be exploring the realities of this TRUTH—why knowing, understanding, and embracing God's truth is important in all of life, not just “church” things. God's truth relates to everything around us and all we do. God's truth tells us the way things really are as we go about making friends, do our school work, watch movies, participate in sports, and care for the environment. There is no subject that falls beyond the scope of God's truth.

## Small Group Application

*The following are possible discussions for small group application. The goal is not to cover every question, but to select topics most applicable to your group, and to use the questions to serve the group as the Holy Spirit leads. We encourage you to break the time up with prayer as needed. The Truth Statements should help focus your discussion. “Head” questions will help with assessing comprehension, “Heart” questions will help determine where their heart stand in relation to the material, and obedience-oriented questions will help them apply the truth. Include a mix of these in your discussions.*

- **Truth Statement:** The Source of Truth is God.

**Think About It:** Ask the students what first came to mind as they read the transcript from Carl Sagan. Did the Bible come to mind? Why or why not? Did any particular Bible verses come to mind? (e.g., **Genesis 1:1**) Did they use those verses as a measure for deciding if some of Mr. Sagan's statements were true or not?

**Examine Your Heart:** *When you hear explanations for the existence of the universe such as this, do you automatically test them and see if they measure up to the truth of the Bible? Do you do this for other things that are presented as being true as well? Can you give an example? Do you believe there are some things or topics in which the Bible cannot be used as a standard or measure? What are those things? Why do you feel that the Bible doesn't seem to apply to those topics?*

**Live It:** Using one topic that your group felt the Bible didn't seem to address, consider ways that the Bible might (directly or indirectly) address that topic or topics related to that one. [e.g., “friends” is a topic that the book of Proverbs addresses, and issues related to friends (gossip, trust, etc.) are also discussed in Scripture] You may want to have a Bible index or concordance handy for this exercise.

- **Truth Statement:** The truth matters, especially truth about eternity.

**Think About It:** *Why does the truth really matter? Does it really matter whether or not Mr. Sagan or you or I know the truth?* [e.g., **2 Thessalonians 2:9-10, Romans 1:18-21**; Note that **2 Thessalonians 2:10** connects being saved with loving the truth.]

Point out that Carl Sagan is now dead. *Does it ultimately matter whether or not he could get true answers on a math test? Does it ultimately matter if he knew the truth about how the stars were formed? Does it ultimately matter whether or not he knew the truth of the gospel? What is the consequence of rejecting the Bible as God's sacred and absolute truth?*

**Examine Your Heart:** *Are the most important truths you are seeking those that are ultimately the most important truths? Do you care more about getting your math test right, or knowing the truth that can save your soul eternally? If the second is true for you, how will your life demonstrate this?*

**Live It:** Spend some time with your small group thanking God for revealing the truth in His Word to you. *What, specifically, are you thankful for when you think about the important truth of the gospel? Are there any specific opportunities you have this week to live out, or demonstrate, the truth of the gospel?*

- **Truth Statement:** Since the truth of the Bible is objective and absolute, Christians must submit their hearts, minds, and wills to it.

**Think About It:** *Can you think of a real-life situation in which someone has said: “Well, that might be true for you, but I have a different opinion.”? In what context was it said? Does God have different standards for different people? For example, is it okay for some people to believe there is a way to heaven other than Jesus? Why not? Does any verse in the Bible address this? (e.g., **John 14:6**)*

**Examine Your Heart:** *How do you view the truth of the Bible? Do your heart, mind, and life demonstrate the truth being objective and absolute in your life? For example, do you ultimately decide what is true on the basis of your feelings and desires, or on the basis of God’s stated truth? (You might want to give an example of this. God’s Word says: “do not bear false witness”—lie). Are there situations when you have justified lying because, for example, you were helping a friend avoid getting into trouble with his parents?*

**Live It:** *Does your life demonstrate an understanding of God’s Word being universal—applying to all people, even you? Sometimes it’s easy to expect others to live by God’s truth, but then excuse yourself from doing the same. In what areas are you least likely to apply God’s truth to yourself?*

- **Truth Statement:** Christians are called to respond in a godly manner to those who deny the truth.

**Think About It:** One view today’s culture holds is that everyone’s beliefs are valid—so something can be true for one person and not for another. [Give an example of how two contradictory things cannot be true. For example,  $2 + 2 = 4$ . It never equals 3 for one person and 5 for another.] *Why is it popular in our culture to accept all beliefs as True? “Tolerance” is a term used when many people’s differing beliefs coexist without question. Should Christians ever question the beliefs of others? How is tolerance different from loving others biblically? How should Christians respond to another person’s false beliefs? [Prayer, humbly sharing the truth]*

**Examine Your Heart:** *How do you usually respond when someone openly denies the truth? Is it ever tempting to simply keep quiet? Why? What does this reveal about the*

*human heart? [It fears man, or doesn't really believe the truth] How would you like to respond when someone denies the truth?*

**Live It:** Pray for opportunities to share the truth this week.

- **Truth Statement:** Truth comes from God—from a source outside ourselves.

**Think About It:** *Many people today look into themselves to find the truth, rather than outside of themselves to God and His Word. How do you see this expressed in the culture around you?*

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you typically look to God's Word for truth? What or who are the other sources or people shaping your views about life? [Media, parents, friends, a pastor, teachers] Why is it easier to look to other people or things to guide our thinking about what is real or true?*

**Live It:** This week, when you're facing a big decision or problem, try going to God in prayer and in His Word first before seeking outside wisdom.

- **Truth Statement:** The truth is always objective, but people interpret, understand, and apply the truth subjectively.

**Think About It:** *Although truth itself is completely objective, people's interpretations and applications can be somewhat subjective (e.g., people may emphasize different parts of Scripture when deciding whether or not to see a certain movie; evangelical scholars may have slightly differing interpretations regarding minor points in Scripture). What is the difference between the truth and people's understanding of the truth? [Truth doesn't change; people's perspectives differ, because we are not omniscient but have a limited view.]*

*Can you think of a topic in Scripture that Christians sometimes interpret or apply differently? Why might people have differing perspectives on specific applications of God's Word? [e.g., background, history, family context, maturity in faith, leading of the Spirit in our specific context, etc.] Point to **Romans 14:5-6**: What is important to remember when Christians differ on minor points of truth? [We are each accountable to the Lord, and our goal is always to honor the Lord in our decisions or understandings; we must be patient and gracious with others.]*

(If students need reassurance about the Bible's reliability, point to the need for our interpretations to be as close as possible to the author's intention. In other words, we must try to discern the author's intentions as closely as possible to avoid error.)

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do people's different applications and interpretations of the truth affect the way you view the truth? Has God given us His absolute truth on everything essential? [Point to **2 Peter 2:3**.] Do you have an excuse to ignore the truth, because some people understand and apply it differently?*

**Live It:** This week, research one area where Christians sometimes apply Scripture differently. Go to the Bible and, with the help of a parent or mentor if needed, see if you can form your own convictions on that topic based on Scripture. Next week, tell your small group what you find.

***Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week.***

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 1

Overview for Parents





# The Bible: God's Authoritative Truth

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > The Bible is God's Word, and is trustworthy, authoritative, and unchanging.
  - > God communicates the most important truths through His Word.
- 

## SCRIPTURE:

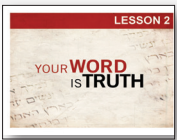
- |                    |                   |                    |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. 2 Timothy 3:16a | 3. John 17:17     | 5. Isaiah 40:8     |
| 2. Isaiah 45:19    | 4. Proverbs 30:5a | 6. 1 Timothy 2:1-6 |
- 

## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 2  | > 911 Transcript (one per small group)       |
| > "Can the Bible be trusted?" video (Note: This video will somewhat pixelated, but the audio quality is good. It's also available on youtube.com by searching for the title and the name "Lee Strobel.") | > Parent Memo for Lesson 2 (one per student) |
- 

## OTHER VISUALS:

- > Bible



(DISPLAY **LESSON 2.**)

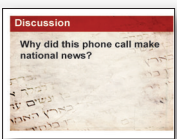
Choose three students to speak the parts of the people in the skit below. Explain that this tran-

script was recorded from an actual call to a 911 operator by a young boy.

## Small Group Discussion (5-7 minutes)

911 TRANSCRIPT

(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)



**Operator:** 911 emergencies.

Boy: Yeah, I need some help.

**Operator:** What's the matter?

Boy: With my math.

**Operator:** With your mouth?

Boy: No, with my math. I have to do it. Will you help me?

**Operator:** Sure. Where do you live?

Boy: No, with my math.

**Operator:** Yeah, I know. Where do you live, though?

Boy: No, I want you to talk to me on the phone.

**Operator:** No, I can't do that. I can send someone else to help you.

Boy: Okay.

**Operator:** What kind of math do you have that you need help with?

Boy: I have take aways.

**Operator:** Oh, you have to do the take aways.

Boy: Yeah.

**Operator:** Alright, what's the problem?

Boy: Um, you have to help me with my math.

**Operator:** Okay. Tell me what the math is.

Boy: Okay. 16 take away 8 is what?

**Operator:** You tell me. How much do you think it is?

Boy: I don't know, 1.

**Operator:** No. How old are you?

Boy: I'm only 4.

**Operator:** 4!

Boy: Yeah.

**Operator:** What's another problem, that was a tough one.

Boy: Um, oh, here's one. 5 take away 5.

**Operator:** 5 take away 5, and how much do you think that is?

Boy: 5.

Woman: Johnny, what do you think you're doing?!

Boy: The policeman is helping me with my math.

Woman: What did I tell you about going on the phone?

**Operator:** It's the mother...

Boy: You said if I need help to call somebody.

Woman: I didn't mean the police.

*Why do you think that this call made the national news and was heard throughout the internet? Did the young boy have some legitimate questions? Do you think that the 911 operator was capable of answering his questions? So, what is so funny about the call?*

## Large Group Lesson

The 911 call illustrates an important point about where to go to find the truth about something. Although the 911 operator was more than able to answer this young boy's questions, that is not the primary role of a 911 operator. He is there to provide a much more important service to people—help in time of life-threatening need.

*In the previous lesson we made the following statements about truth.* (As you review these points, have the students turn to Lesson 2 in their **journal** and complete the **Lesson 1 Review**.)

(DISPLAY **TRUTH**.)

### The Source of Truth is God

The Truth → The Way Things Really Are

1. Truth is Objective.

☞ → It comes from God, and is independent of us.

2. Truth is Absolute.

☞ → God alone is God, and His authority is fixed and immovable.

3. Truth is Universal.

☞ → God is God over all His created universe and all things and all people in it.

4. Truth is Unchanging.

☞ → God will always be God, and His perfections never change.



5. Truth is Knowable.

- ☞ → God has communicated His truth to man, most clearly through His Word, the Bible.

*If this truth is to be knowable, it must be found somewhere—we must be able to go somewhere to find it, just like the boy who went to the 911 operator for the truth about “take away” math problems.*

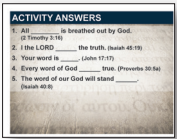


(DISPLAY **TRUTH 2.**)

*If the source of all truth is God, then where must we go to find the truth about everything? God. And His truth has been communicated most clearly through words—words in this book. (Hold up your **Bible**.)*

BIBLE

Have the students turn to **What does the Bible say?** in the **journal**. Listed are incomplete verses. Instruct the students to look up each verse and write the missing words. Give them several minutes to complete this activity.



(WHEN THE STUDENTS ARE DONE WITH THIS, DISPLAY **ANSWERS.**)

The following are the correct words to complete these verses. Read each verse and call on students to give the correct missing word:

- ☞ 2 Timothy 3:16—All **Scripture** is breathed out by God.

Scripture is God's word.

- ☞ Isaiah 45:19—I the LORD **speak** the truth.

God speaks the truth.

- ☞ John 17:17—Your word is **truth**.

The Bible is truth.

- ☞ Proverbs 30:5a—Every word of God **proves** true.

The Bible proves true.

- ☞ Isaiah 40:8—The word of our God will stand **forever**.

The Bible is truth forever.

*How would you summarize what these verses are stating about the Bible? (Allow students to comment.)*

These verses demonstrate a logical flow of thought. Every part of the Bible is breathed out or “inspired” by God Himself. Although human men wrote down the actual words, they only wrote what God divinely inspired them to write. And since God only speaks the truth, His word as communicated in the Bible is truth. Point out that the Bible is “self-attesting,” meaning that the Bible provides its own proof and evidence for its trustworthiness. Something that is self-attesting does not need to be validated by something else, because it **is** the ultimate standard.<sup>1</sup>

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VIDEO CLIP

*But what does it mean that “Every word of God proves true”? (Allow students to respond.)*

Play the short **video** clip, “Can the Bible be trusted?” by Lee Strobel.

*According to Mr. Strobel, is there any outside evidence that supports the Bible’s claim: “Every word of God proves true”? What are three things that he mentions? [eyewitness accounts; archaeological evidence; and large number of manuscripts] Have the students record these in the journal where indicated.*



(DISPLAY **PROVES.**)

Explain why each of these things is significant.

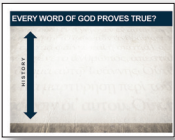
- ☞ *Eyewitness accounts are important because they provide verification that something actually happened—the more eyewitnesses, the better! For example, if I throw the class a pizza party and later a student who’s been absent for awhile questions whether or not I did it, I will have witnesses who can testify to my claim because they were there and saw it happen. And, the more witnesses the better! One person might lie for me, but not a whole classroom of [50] people.*
- ☞ *Archaeological evidence matters, because from it we can find artifacts that match biblical history—the way things were back in Bible times, such as the locations of ancient cities, or items that relate to the cultural customs the Bible mentions. Here’s how this would work today—if I claim that our pizza party was last week in this room, we could probably still find “evidence” of a pizza party that would match that reality. For example, there might be pizza boxes in the trash, or some empty 2-liter bottles on a table, or a receipt for [#] large pizzas on the floor somewhere.*
- ☞ *Large numbers of manuscripts are helpful, because we can compare them to see if they match up with one another and say the same thing. There are only minor differences between the ancient biblical manuscripts. And because there are so many of them, the testimony that these documents provide is made even stronger, just like many eyewitnesses make a stronger case.*

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1. For a helpful discussion of the self-attesting authority of Scripture, see: Bahnsen, Greg L. *Van Til’s Apologetic: Readings & Analysis*. (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 1998), 194-219.



Not only does the Bible itself claim to be true, but every word proves or gives evidence to be true.



(DISPLAY **HISTORY.**)

*For example, in the book of Isaiah...*

- ✎ *...there is a prophecy (prediction) made concerning a man named Cyrus, who would be God's instrument in rebuilding Jerusalem.*

(700 B.C.—Cyrus prophecy made by Isaiah))

- ✎ *It was written at a time before Jerusalem was even destroyed. (See Isaiah 44:28.)*

(586 B.C.—Fall of Jerusalem)

*If you were to read any accurate history book, you would learn that after these words were written by Isaiah the city of Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians. Then, years later a man named Cyrus became king of Persia...*

- ✎ *...and made a proclamation that the temple in Jerusalem should be rebuilt.*

(539 B.C.—Cyrus' reign in Persia begins)

- ✎ *And that is exactly what happened in history.*

(536 B.C.—Rebuilding of Jerusalem temple begins)

- ✎ *God's word proved true!*

(516 B.C.—Rebuilding of Jerusalem temple completed)



(DISPLAY **TRUTH 3.**)

- ✎ There are many other evidences that demonstrate the trustworthiness of the Bible. There is no other book like it. It is totally unique and it alone provides the standard and measure for all that is true. It is the highest authority and applies to all people. It is unchanging in its truth and is knowable since it communicates truth in words that can be read and understood.

*So suppose someone says: "Okay, you say the Bible is truth and provides the measure for everything that is true. You say it is the highest authority and applies to everyone. Well, does it answer the question, "What is  $238 \div 47$ ?" Or does it give the truth about how many dogs live in this city? Or does it provide the truth about how a computer works?"*

*How would you answer them? (Allow students to respond.)*

Remind the students of the 911 call discussed earlier. Was the operator able to provide the young boy with the true answers to the math problems? Yes. But what made the call humorous was that the boy did not understand the purpose of calling 911. In a similar way, we must understand the main or ultimate purpose of the Bible. The Bible is not written as an encyclopedia or dictionary. It is not a calculator for figuring math

problems. It concerns itself with the most important truth that all people must know and respond to and embrace. For example, the Bible includes the answers to life's most important questions, questions like these:

- 🔑 5 Questions
- 🔑 1. How did we get here?
- 🔑 2. Why do we exist?
- 🔑 3. What is wrong with the world?
- 🔑 4. What is the solution?
- 🔑 5. What will happen when we die?

Ask the students to look up the following text, and then turn to the section in the **journal** that has questions to answer based on the following class discussion:



(DISPLAY **1 TIMOTHY 2:1-6.**)

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*1 Timothy 2:1-6—First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, <sup>2</sup>for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. <sup>3</sup>This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup>who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup>For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.*

---

*According to this text, what does God desire that all people do?*

- 🔑 [Verse 4: Be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.]

*Why do you think that the text reads, “knowledge of the truth” and not “knowledge of something true” or “knowledge of a truth”?*

*What is the particular truth that Paul has in mind here? [verses 5-6]*

- 🔑 *Why is this truth more significant than any other that can be communicated to all people?*

Emphasize that the Bible is truth itself—not just a series or collection of many true facts and figures.

- 🔑 And the truth it communicates is the most important truth of all—who God is, what He has done and has promised to do, and how we are to respond to Him.

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the small group application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** Every word of God proves true.

**Think About It:** Have the students reread **John 17:17**. Who is speaking these words? What does Jesus mean by, “Sanctify them in the truth”? [To sanctify someone means to make him more like Christ. The truth is God’s Word, which is the “food” every Christian needs to grow to be more like Jesus.] (See also **Psalms 19:7-11**.)

**Examine Your Heart:** *Can you think of examples in your life or in the life of someone you know when God’s word of truth “revived the soul,” made wise, or rejoiced the heart? Can you think of a verse or verses that served to warn you for your good? When God’s word of truth accomplishes what it promises in your own life or someone else’s life, how does this affirm and give further evidence that “every word of God proves true”?*

**Live It:** Pray with your small group for opportunities for the word of God to prove true in your life this week. If you have a regular time that you spend reading Scripture, share with others in your group what you do during that time. If you don’t usually do this, would you like to start? If so, develop a plan for this.

- **Truth Statement:** The Bible is the written revelation of God’s truth.

**Think About It:** Read **2 Timothy 3:14-17**. Explain that these words were written by the apostle Paul to the young pastor, Timothy. When was Timothy first acquainted with the truth of the Bible (in this case the Old Testament)? For what did it make him wise? According to these verses, is the truth of the Bible only beneficial for “church things” or for character building?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you use and apply the truth of the Bible to be competent and equipped for every good work? What about in how you play sports, use the computer, or what kind of music you choose? Does the truth of the Bible inform you and apply to those kinds of things? If so, how? If you don’t think the Bible has anything to say about these things, what do you use as your standard or measure? Is it a reliable measure?*

**Live It:** What tools or resources could help you to examine what the Bible has to say about a topic? [Bible concordance or index, searchable Bible software, parent or mentor, books by Christian authors who have written about that topic] Make a list of resources available at home or in your church library, and try using some of them this week!

- **Truth Statement:** The world does not want to believe that the Bible is the authoritative truth of God.

**Think About It:** If your group watched the video clip of Lee Strobel, point out that Mr. Strobel was once an atheist and a skeptic of the Bible and Christianity. However, God led him to begin a critical investigation of the truth claims of the Bible and Jesus. He

found that the evidence was overwhelming. If the truth of the Bible is so overwhelming and convincing, why don't more people believe it and embrace it?

**Examine Your Heart:** *What evidence do you see in the world that the Bible is not believed and embraced as God's absolute, authoritative, unchanging, and universal truth? Does this make you doubt the truth claims of the Bible? Why or why not? Can you think of any verses that explain why we should not be surprised that the Bible is rejected as truth?*

**Live It:** Pray with your small group that God will help you in any areas of doubt, and that you will not be afraid to believe the truth of God's Word.

- **Truth Statement:** Knowing the Bible is true isn't enough...Christians need to be taught to walk in God's truth.

**Think About It:** Read ***Psalms 86:11***. Many people acknowledge that the Bible is truth. But what does it mean to "walk in" God's truth? What must first happen if you are to walk in God's truth?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Are you spending time being taught in God's ways? How can this be done on a daily basis? David asked God to unite his heart to fear God's name. Does this happen naturally with us? Why not? When you read the Bible, does it cause your heart to fear God's name? In what ways? If it doesn't cause you to honor and give reverence to God, why do you think that is?*

**Live It:** Along with your small group, turn ***Psalms 86:11*** into a prayer.

- **Truth Statement:** The most important truth that exists is the truth of who God is and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Think About It:** Why does it feel like the Bible doesn't address topics such as the internet, school, sports, movies, etc.? What is the main purpose of the Scriptures? How does knowing the truth of who God is and how Jesus saves people inform these other areas?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Does knowing the truth of the gospel impact the way you see situations in your daily life? Why or why not?*

**Live It:** With your small group, consider how the gospel applies to one issue you are facing this week. Pray about that situation, and try to apply the gospel to it this week. Next week, share with your group what happened.

- **Truth Statement:** The Bible is the source of truth.

**Think About It:** If the Bible is the source of truth, we should seek the Scriptures to see how they deal with the things we deal with in everyday life.

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you look to the Bible to find the answers to your questions? If not, why not? If so, are you surprised at the scope of questions it answers and address-*

*es? For example, read **Proverbs 12:10**. Does the Bible address how you are to treat your pet dog or cat? Are you in the Word regularly? How could you grow in this area?*

**Live It:** Come up with a plan to be in the Word this week, if you do not already have a plan to do this. If your church uses the Fighter Verse or other Bible memory system, make an attempt to memorize this week's verse together as a start.

- **Truth Statement:** Every word of the Bible proves true.

**Think About It:** Summarize why the Bible is a unique book according to outside evidences (such as eyewitnesses, etc.) as presented in the lesson.

**Examine Your Heart:** *If you are a Christian, which outside proofs help to strengthen your faith? What other outside proofs have you heard for the Bible's uniqueness (diversity of authors and books over time yet a single theme, etc.)? Would God's Word be the truth even without those proofs? How does it show the kindness and grace of God that he would give other evidences to support the faith of Christians? If you are not a Christian, did any of these evidences cause you to think a little more about it?*

**Live It:** Pray for the Spirit's work in your life to bring you to belief, or to bring you to faith.

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week. Also, if time permits, ask them about how they applied one thing from last week's lesson.**

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 2

# The “Truth” of this Age

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > God’s truth is objective, absolute, universal, unchangeable, and knowable.
- > We live in an increasingly postmodern culture, in which truth has been redefined as being subjective, relative, individual, changeable, and uncertain.
- > All people are under the authority of God's truth and are accountable to Him.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                    |                   |                    |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Genesis 2:22-24 | 2. Matthew 19:4-5 | 3. Hebrews 4:12-13 |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|

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## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 3 | > Parent Memo for Lesson 3 (one per student) |
|-----------------------------------|--|

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## OTHER VISUALS:

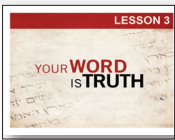
- > Bible

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## PREPARATION:

Note: “Postmodernism” is a term that is hard to define narrowly, because it encompasses a wide variation in thought and philosophy. The five characteristics presented in this lesson should be seen as generalities.



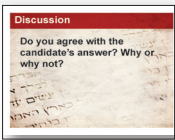


(DISPLAY **LESSON 3.**)

Refer students to the **Transcript from a 2008 Presidential Debate** in Lesson 3 of the **journal**. (Note: This article has been included to identify key elements of postmodern thinking. It's not meant to begin a discussion on homosexuality

or same-sex marriage.) Don't ask the students to read the two Scripture passages next to the transcript in the journal until later in the lesson.

## Small Group Discussion (5-10 minutes)



(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

**Question:** *Last year some parents of second graders in Lexington, Massachusetts, were outraged to learn their children's teacher had read a story about same-sex marriage, about a prince who marries another prince...Would you be comfortable having this story read to your children as part of their school curriculum?*

**Answer from One of the Candidates, Former U.S. Senator John Edwards:** *"Yes, absolutely. What I want is I want my children to understand everything about the difficulties that gay and lesbian couples are faced with every day, the discrimination that they're faced with every single day of their lives. And I suspect my two younger children...will reach the same conclusion that my daughter...who's 25, has reached, which is she doesn't understand why her dad is not in favor of same-sex marriage, and she says her generation will be the generation that brings about the great change in America on that issue. So I don't want to make that decision on behalf of my children. I want my children to be able to make that decision on behalf of themselves, and I want them to be exposed to all the information...to all of those possibilities because I don't want to impose my view. Nobody made me God. I don't get to decide on behalf of my family or my children...I don't get to impose on them what it is that I believe is right..."<sup>1</sup>*

*The Senator felt that he shouldn't tell his children what to believe about same-sex marriage. Why not? What reason did he give? Do you know what type of thinking his view reflects? Do you agree with the Senator? Why or why not?*

## Large Group Lesson



(DISPLAY **POSTMODERNISM.**)

P \_\_\_\_\_

1. Quote from former U.S. Senator John Edwards, as broadcast on msnbc.com, "September 26 Democratic Debate Transcript" (October 16, 2007). <<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21327206>> (accessed June 29, 2010).

Explain that you want the students to guess a key word that describes the kind of view demonstrated in the transcript they just read. Slowly click 12 times to advance the animation to show additional letters, asking the students to guess the word before all of the letters are displayed. (This should take no more than two minutes.)

P O S T M O D E R N I S M

- Ask the students if they are familiar with this key word. Do any of them know what it means? Explain that postmodernism is a term commonly used to describe the way our culture and world increasingly define “truth.” Direct the students to write this key word in the **journal**.



(DISPLAY **CHART 1.**)

Direct the students to fill out the chart provided for them in the **journal**:

God's Truth	Postmodern “Truth”
Objective	

Give a brief definition for each. Have the students name the characteristics of God's truth presented in the previous two lessons.

- Objective**—independent of us and comes from a source outside of us (God)
- Absolute**—fixed and immovable, because God alone is God and there is no higher authority than God
- Universal**—God is over all His created universe and all things and people in it, so His truth applies to all people everywhere.
- Unchanging**—God will always be God, and His perfections will not change over time or with new discoveries.
- Knowable**—God has communicated His truth to man, most clearly through His Word, the Bible.
- Postmodernism does not define truth in this way—*
- ...it rejects this definition of truth and replaces it with a new definition. How?*

*Look at your transcripts again. The question concerned how marriage should be understood and affirmed. According to the Bible, is there objective and absolute truth about how marriage is to be understood and practiced? Who defines marriage? How has God defined it? Why does He have the final say in this? Why did Jesus reaffirm **Genesis 2** thousands of years after the first man and woman were joined as husband and wife?*



(DISPLAY **God's Word.**)

### **Genesis 2:22-24—**

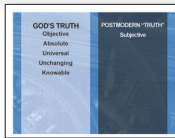
- ☞ *And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup>Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” <sup>24</sup>Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*

### **Matthew 19:4-5—**

- ☞ *[Jesus] answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, <sup>5</sup>and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’?”*

*According to the presidential candidate's answer, does he acknowledge that there is objective truth about how marriage should be defined and understood? What words does he use to show that he does not want his children to use a measure or standard independent of them? [You may need to help direct the students to the phrase: “make that decision on behalf of themselves.”]*

Explain that in contrast to truth being objective and coming from God, postmodernism defines truth as being **Subjective**...



(DISPLAY **CHART 2.**)

...something you determine from within yourself. It says:

- ☞ *I will ultimately determine for myself what is true for me.* (Direct the students to fill in this same chart in the **journal**, plus write down the definitions as you give them for each word that will go in the Postmodern “Truth” category.)

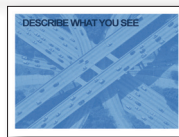
*Let's look at the second way in which postmodernism redefines truth. According to the candidate's response, does he recognize that truth is absolute, and God's Word is the highest authority and is fixed and immovable? What words does he specifically use to show that he is not pointing to one, absolute authority regarding marriage? [Example: “I want them to be exposed to all the information...to all of those possibilities.”]*

Under the **POSTMODERNISM** heading, the word **Relative**...

- ☞ ...goes in the box directly to the right of **Absolute**. Explain that postmodernism defines truth as being relative. That means that truth isn't absolute and can be determined in whatever way you want: “Different strokes for different folks.”

- ☞ "There are no absolutes, only different opinions and ideas."

## Illustration



(DISPLAY **DESCRIBE.**)

*Suppose I had [student] stand still, without moving, in the middle of the classroom. Next, I instructed the rest of you to form a circle around him. Then, I asked each of you to describe his appearance based on what you actually see. Would your descriptions be exactly the same? No, because the student who was standing has no one, uniform appearance. His back looks different from his front. His left side appears different from his right. So how you view his appearance is "relative," meaning it can differ from person to person.*

Postmodernism sees "truth" in a similar way. Truth is like the student standing in the middle of the room—something having no uniform "appearance" or standard, because it is being seen from different perspectives, and all of these perspectives are equally valid. That is what it means that truth is relative: There are no absolutes. Truth is based on individual perspectives, which may all be equally valid.

*So, "subjective"...*

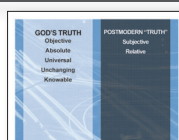
- ☞ *...means that the truth comes from inside of me, rather than from an outside authority. "Relative"...*
- ☞ *...refers to different definitions of what is true based on how different individuals or cultures view the world.*

*When you define truth as subjective and relative, could you then say that truth is universal and applies to everyone? No. And look at the words that the candidate uses to describe this:*

- ☞ *"I don't get to impose on [my children] what it is that I believe is right..."*

*In other words, defining truth is the right of each individual. So there isn't truth that can be imposed on everyone. Truth is not to be universally applied. It is only specific to an individual or culture or group.*

*It's like saying: "Well, you may believe that marriage is only between one man and one woman, but you can't impose that view on other people. That is simply your personal belief."*



(DISPLAY **CHART 3.**)

Under the **POSTMODERNISM** heading, the word **Individual...**

- ☞ *...goes in the box directly to the right of **Universal**.*

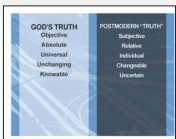
Postmodernism redefines truth in a fourth way. In contrast to God's truth being unchanging, postmodernism defines truth as something that can change as it is always being made. Write the word **Changeable**...

- ✍ ...in the box directly to the right of **Unchanging**. For example, while it may be true that, in the past, marriage was only between one man and one woman, it is no longer to be the guiding truth today.
- ✍ *So someone might say something like: “We have discovered new things about men and women and relationships. So now marriage between two men is just as normal and good as marriage between a man and a woman.”*

*This is the kind of thinking demonstrated in the words of the transcript:*

*I suspect my two younger children...will reach the same conclusion that my daughter...who's 25, has reached, which is she doesn't understand why her dad is not in favor of same-sex marriage, and she says her generation will be the generation that brings about the great change in America on that issue.*

Because of these four ways in which truth is redefined, it naturally leads to a fifth characteristic—truth is **Uncertain**...



(DISPLAY **CHART 4.**)

...rather than being knowable.



In postmodern thinking, you can never be completely certain about whether or not something is really true.<sup>2</sup>

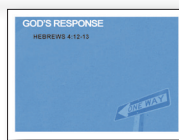
Hold up your Bible and state the following: *The reason God's truth is knowable is because He has communicated it to us through His perfect Word. In the Bible, God chose to make the truth about marriage very clear. God's truth holds the final say. It is unchanging and applies to all people everywhere. There is no uncertainty. God has never defined marriage as being between two men or two women.*

- ✍ Point to the two lists of characteristics that now have been completed:

God's Truth	Postmodern “Truth”
Objective	Subjective
Absolute	Relative
Universal	Individual
Unchanging	Changeable
Knowable	Uncertain

2. You may want to emphasize that this does not mean that every true thing in the universe is knowable! There are many true facts that remain undiscovered and a mystery. But all essential and necessary truths are knowable through God's Word. See Wayne Grudem's, *Systematic Theology*, Chapter 8 on the “Sufficiency of Scripture.”

Do you think that God is surprised that truth has been redefined? Why or why not? Can you think of any verses that would support your conclusion? Why might people want to redefine truth?



(DISPLAY **RESPONSE.**)

Have the students turn to **Hebrews 4:12-13**, and also refer to the **journal** where this Scripture is listed and the questions that follow:

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*Hebrews 4:12-13—For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*

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- 🔑 What do these verses mean and how do they answer the question, “Why might people want to reject God’s truth by redefining what truth is?” [They don’t want to give an account of themselves to God.]

*Why might a person not want the truth of God’s Word to “pierce” him and discern his thoughts and intentions?*

*What does it mean to “give account” to someone? Who is the “him” in verse 13?*

Emphasize that God is in authority over us. We will all answer to his objective, absolute, universal, unchanging, and knowable truth. God’s truth tells us who He is, who we are in relation to Him, and how we are to submit to His authority. But as can be seen in an issue such as marriage, many people do not want to recognize, acknowledge, and submit to God’s truth. So our culture increasingly has come up with a “plan” to try to hide or dodge God’s truth as revealed in the Bible. And that plan involves simply changing the meaning of truth and making it mean something new—something that feels good and seems nice and affirming to people. And as we study God’s truth in the coming lessons, we need to be made aware of how our culture has sometimes twisted the meaning of words so that we are not fooled by wrong thinking about truth.

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the small group application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** Subjective and relative “truth” is appealing to sinful people, because it makes each individual his or her own authority.

**Think About It:** Ask if the students understood the terms “subjective” and “relative.” How does postmodern thinking make individuals the authority on truth? Ask the students how they have been confronted with postmodernism within the context of school, friends, movies, books, etc. You may want to give them a concrete example of this from

your own experience. Why is it so easy for us and others to desire a subjective and relative kind of truth? Who does it put in charge? Why does this appeal to us? What is the danger in it? [It denies God his rightful authority in our lives. Additional texts to help students process this include **Isaiah 51:7** and **John 15:18-19**.]

**Examine Your Heart:** *If you hold to God's objective and absolute truth, how might you be perceived by your peers and others? Can you give an example of this? Have you ever avoided a person or conversation because you were afraid to speak up and seem “arrogant” or “intolerant”? Why? Is it easier to fear God or man? Can you be both bold and humble at once? What would that look like for you? How could you handle future conversations?*

**Live It:** Pray for opportunities to share the truth of God’s Word with others this week.

- **Truth Statement:** Postmodern thinking is an empty philosophy that can even deceive Christians.

**Think About It:** Carefully read **Colossians 2:8**. Should we be surprised by postmodern thinking? Are Christians immune from having this kind of thinking creep into their own thinking? What warning is Paul giving to Christians in this verse?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you carefully examine what you are taught in school, what you read, what you watch, etc. to see if it measures up to God's truth? In what areas of your life are you less careful to test against the truth? Are you afraid to examine any areas of your life in light of God's truth? Why? Are you willing to examine God's truth in any areas you've mentioned? Which ones?*

**Live It:** Pick one topic that you would like to test against Scripture this week. What is it? Write your findings in your **journal** and share them with your small group this week.

- **Truth Statement:** Sometimes people develop creative ways to try to “hide” from the truth of God's Word. For a time, they might seem to be successful. (Review **Hebrews 4:12-13**.)

**Think About It:** Scientist Carl Sagan gained a lot of fame and popularity as he rejected God's truth. What are some other ways you have seen someone who rejected God's truth look successful or popular as a result? Why would rejecting God's truth help someone gain popularity? [Point students to **Romans 2:4-6, 8** for additional understanding.]

**Examine Your Heart:** *Are there particular truths in God's Word with which you struggle? Does the world seem to have a more desirable way of looking at this? Why? Are you more concerned with being popular, or with embracing God's truth? If you are more concerned with being popular, are there any verses that can help you to stay “on track” in this area?* [Have some suggestions ready.]

**Live It:** Pray together that God will help you to fear Him more than fearing other people and what they think.



- **Truth Statement:** Many people today excuse sin by deciding what will be “true” for them.

**Think About It:** Why is it dangerous to make “truth” subjective and relative? If we depend on defining truth through our own desires and human reasoning, what will happen? What gives evidence of this danger in our culture? [Example: Abortion. Many people simply redefine the truth of what is a “person,” saying “a fetus is not a person, so abortion is not murder.” (For additional clarity, discuss **Jeremiah 17:9**.)

**Examine Your Heart:** *While it is important to identify how others excuse sin, it is also important to remember that Christians, too, are sinners saved by grace. Are you tempted to excuse sin in your life sometime? What excuses do you often use? Can you simply trust your heart to create your own truth, which will then govern your life? Why not?* [e.g., You might ignore **Ephesians 6:1**, because “My parents are really being unfair about seeing this movie. All my friends’ parents think it’s okay if I watch it...” Or, you might assume **Ephesians 4:32** doesn’t apply when someone has lied to you and “really hurt you.”]

**Live It:** Try to catch yourself before you excuse sin in your life this week, and pray with your small group that God would help you to tackle sin in your life head-on.

- **Truth Statement:** God’s truth is always objective, but Christians’ interpretations of God’s truth are subjective.

**Think About It:** God’s truth is always objective. However, Christians sometimes interpret God’s Word differently. Why is this? [Humans have limited knowledge and understanding.] Should the fact that Christians have a limited understanding cause us to assume that “we can’t know the truth”? Why or why not? Over which parts of God’s Word can Christians legitimately differ? Which parts of God’s Word are very clear? [Point students to **2 Peter 1:3**.]

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you ever feel like you don’t want to commit to the Bible as truth because there are so many differing views among Christians on topics like spiritual gifts, baptism, communion, etc.? What might be a better response?* [Examine the Word to form your own convictions/conclusions.] *What is one area of the Bible about which you would like to begin forming some convictions?*

**Live It:** Make a list of some areas where Christians differ in their interpretations or convictions. Then, make a list of all the things the Bible is really clear on concerning salvation (life) and how to live (godliness). Which list is longer? Try to research biblically one area where you would like to begin to form convictions. You can ask for help from a friend or mentor.

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week. Also, if time permits, ask them about how they applied one thing from last week’s lesson.**

## **Send Home**

Parent Memo for Lesson 3

# Satan, the Deceiver

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > God's truth is objective, absolute, universal, unchangeable, and knowable.
- > Rejection of God's truth is not new—it began with Satan.
- > Because of Adam's choice to believe Satan's lie, sin spread to all mankind.
- > Sinful people, by nature, reject God's truth.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                 |                  |                   |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Psalm 19:1   | 4. Romans 1:20   | 7. Romans 1:21-22 |
| 2. Isaiah 40:26 | 5. John 8:44     | 8. Romans 5:12    |
| 3. Psalm 104:24 | 6. Genesis 3:1-5 |                   |

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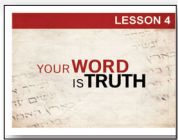
## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 4
- > Verse Cards 1-4 (one set for the class)
- > Parent Memo for Lesson 4 (one per student)

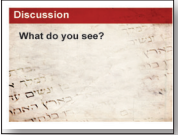
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## OTHER VISUALS:

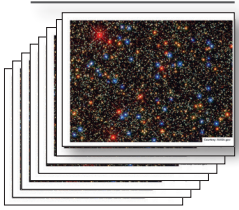
- > Bible
- > Digital camera (cover the lens and remove the batteries)

(DISPLAY **LESSON 4.**)

## Small Group Discussion (5-10 minutes)

(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

Have the students turn to the **What I Saw** activity in the **journal**. Explain that you are going to show them a series of pictures. After seeing all of the pictures, they should give a summary (not a picture-by-picture description) of what they have seen in the journal. (Note: The entire class should see the electronic display of the photos together, but then the activity with those photos should be done in the small groups.)



(Display **13 PHOTOS**, one by one, directing the students not to write down anything until all of the photos have been shown.)

Now, give the students a minute or two to write their answers. Then have them share their answers with one another. Do they all have the same answers? Why or why not?

(Note: The main point of the opening exercise is to demonstrate the subjective nature of how we interpret reality. Two people looking at the exact same thing can come to totally different conclu-

sions about what they have seen.)

After completing this activity, the small group leaders should read the following quote to the students:

*The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind pitiless indifference.<sup>1</sup>—Richard Dawkins, author and scientist*

When you observed these photos of different aspects of the universe, did you see it in the same way as Mr. Dawkins? What words does he use to describe what he sees? Would you say that he speaks the truth about what he observes? Would you say that he is interpreting the universe in terms of objective and absolute truth? Why or why not?

1. Dawkins, Richard. *River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life* (New York: Basic Books, 1995) 133.

## Large Group Lesson

*What conclusions did your group come to about the observations of Mr. Dawkins?*

*Well, here is another perspective on the universe. These two men are scientists who have observed some of the same facts about the universe. They have interpreted those facts in a different way than Dawkins.*

(DISPLAY **QUOTES.**)

Read the quotes from Alan Sandage and Tony Rothman with your students.

☞ *I find it quite improbable that such order came out of chaos. There has to be some organizing principle. God to me is a mystery but the explanation for the miracle of existence, why there is something instead of nothing.<sup>2</sup>—Alan Sandage, winner of the Crawford prize in astronomy*

2. Willford, J.N. "Sizing up the Cosmos: An Astronomers Quest." *New York Times*, March 12, 1991, B9.

- ☞ *When confronted with the order and beauty of the universe and the strange coincidences of nature, it's very tempting to take the leap of faith from science to religion. I am sure many physicists want to. I only wish they would admit it.*<sup>3</sup>—Tony Rothman, physicist

*Which view is closer to the truth, that of these two men, or of Dawkins? What are you using as your measure or standard to judge their words—your own feelings and beliefs, or something else? Is it enough to judge their words on your own personal views or beliefs?*



(DISPLAY **GOD'S WORD.**)

Hand out Verse Cards 1-4 to four students and have each quickly read the text:

**Psalm 19:1—**

- ☞ *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.*

**Isaiah 40:26—**

- ☞ *Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name, by the greatness of his might, and because he is strong in power not one is missing.*

**Psalm 104:24—**

- ☞ *O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.*

**Romans 1:20—**

- ☞ *For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.*

Direct the students to answer the question in the **journal** under these same Scripture references that the four students just read.



(DISPLAY **TRUTH.**)

Emphasize that God's Word provides the only objective, absolute, universal, unchanging truth.

- ☞ When we observe the universe, we are to “see” and understand it through the truth of Scripture.

3. Casti, J.L. *Paradigms Lost*. (New York: Avon Books, 1989), 482-483.

Therefore, it is not enough to say to Mr. Dawkins: “I think you're wrong because I feel or believe a different way than you.”

- ☞ We must use the truth of the Bible as the standard and measure. And although we do not know and understand everything about the universe, the Bible has made the most important truths knowable.

*According to the verses that were read, what types of true things are we supposed to see and understand when we observe the universe and world? (Allow the students to respond.)*

*But that is NOT the way most people see and understand the universe. They don't automatically think of a great God who created it through His wisdom and power. Their first thought is not that they are seeing a glimpse of the glory of God. Why not?*



Point out that both Mr. Dawkins' words and postmodernism,

(DISPLAY **POSTMODERNISM.**)

...as presented in the previous lesson, are ways in which our contemporary culture rejects the truth of the Bible.

*Even though postmodernism literally means “after the modern era” (in other words, something very new to our time), is the rejection of God's objective and absolute truth something new?*

- ☞ *No, it is not new, because Satan is not new. His work is old. What is his work?*
- ☞ Have the students turn to **John 8:44** and also this section in the **journal** for the related questions.

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*John 8:44—You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

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*Who is speaking in this verse? [Jesus.] Who is the “father” he is talking about? [The devil, Satan.] What is the main characteristic of the devil? [He is a liar and has no truth in him.]*

*When did the devil, or Satan, first show himself as a liar in the world?<sup>4</sup>*

- ☞ You may want the students to turn and look at **Genesis 3:1-5**.

Without reading the text out loud, ask the following questions:

*What was God's command to Adam and Eve? [Don't eat or touch the fruit on the tree in the middle of the garden, or you will die.]*

---

4. Satan was a liar before this point in time, but for this study we will be focusing on Satan's deceiving the human race, rather than the fall of Satan and the demons.

*How did Satan suppress God's truth?* [He contradicted what God had said by saying God's words weren't true. He then said that if Eve disobeyed God, she would be like God, knowing good from evil.]

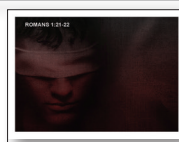
*Adam and Eve had a choice to make. Whose words were really true, Satan's or God's?*

🔑 *God said that Adam and Eve would die if they ate the fruit of the one tree.*

🔑 *Satan said that they wouldn't die; they would become wise like God instead.*

*Why do you think they chose to believe Satan instead of God?* [Because they weren't satisfied being subject to God and living under His rule and blessing. They wanted to be like God themselves.] *So it wasn't just Satan's lie at work. It was also Adam and Eve choosing to believe the lie.*

🔑 *In the end, who had told the truth—God or Satan?* [God.] *How do we know? Because Adam and Eve eventually died, proving God's words to be true.*



(Display **ROMANS 1:21-22** and read it to the students, explaining that it gives an explanation of what happened at the fall.)

🔑 *Romans 1:21-22—For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools.*

When Adam and Eve chose to believe Satan's lie, their hearts became darkened—meaning they became sinful. Sinful hearts hate and reject the truth. Sinful hearts would rather believe Satan's lies than the truth.

*But was this just Adam and Eve's problem? How is it that thousands of years later many people still reject God's truth? With all of our technology, computers, and telescopes shouldn't we know better by now? Shouldn't Mr. Dawkins, with all his scientific knowledge see the truth?*

🔑 Have the students turn to **Romans 5:12**, and also to the corresponding section in the **journal** and its related question.

🔑 *Romans 5:12—Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.*



(DISPLAY **SEES.**)

The reason a person can look at the universe and see “no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind pitiless indifference” is because two things are at work:

🔑 SATAN'S LIES + SINFUL HEART



Having a sinful heart is the natural condition of all people, inherited from the very first man Adam. That is why Mr. Dawkins, with all his knowledge of science, sees what he does.

*Both a sinful heart and Satan's lies work together against knowing and understanding the truth of the Bible. Since sin entered the world, God has given men and women "up" to believing the lies of Satan. This means God has decided to allow people to follow the natural inclination of their sinful hearts to believe the lies of Satan. Unless God acts to change this, people will continue in this way.*

### Illustration

CAMERA

Have a student come to the front of the room. Tell him that you want him to take a picture of the classroom and hand him the **camera**, making sure he does not remove the lens or change anything about the camera. In examining the camera, does he see a problem with it? [The lens is covered.] If he were to take a picture with the lens covered, would he get a picture that reflected the way the classroom really is? Remove the cover over the lens and have him look through the view finder and push the button in order to take the picture. What happens? What else is wrong?

*This camera has no batteries. So even after the cover is removed, it still won't take a picture of the classroom.*

☞ *That's kind of what it's like when we say that both the sinful heart and Satan's lies work together against a person knowing and understanding the truth of the Bible.*

*When a person looks at the universe and wonders, "How and why does everything exist?" Satan does not want that person to know or understand the truth of the Bible. So Satan lies and maybe says something like, "There is no God. The world came into existence all by itself. Therefore it has no purpose...it was all an accident."*

☞ *And instead of wanting to know the truth, the sinful heart would rather believe the lie instead. So now, when this person sees the world through Satan's lies and...*

☞ *...chooses in his sinful heart to believe the lie,...*

☞ *...he can not and will not see the truth.*

Satan's lies come in many forms. Postmodernism's redefinition of "truth" is just one of these lies. Mr. Dawkins has believed another kind of lie. And the sinful heart will come up with many different reasons for believing Satan's lies. But the truth of the Bible does not change. No matter what Satan says, or what people choose to believe, the Bible is God's Word and is the objective, absolute, universal, unchanging, and knowable truth. In the next three lessons you will learn about some of the ways Satan gives...



(DISPLAY **BLIND.**)

*"...false sight to blind sinners."*

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the small group application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** *Romans 1:21-22, 25* explains why sinful people—including Christians—do not naturally submit to God's truth.

**Think About It:** Have the students turn to *Romans 1:21-22, 25*. How do these verses give us a picture of what happened in the Garden of Eden? How does this serve to explain why sinful people would naturally desire to not submit to God's truth?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Are Christians immune to rebellion against God? Why not? What does the term "indwelling sin" mean? [See *Romans 7* and *1 John 1:8-10* as needed.] Why is it important for us to know this about ourselves? When you read the Bible, are there passages or commands in which your "gut" reaction is to stiffen your will against the truth? Which ones?*

**Live It:** Pray with your small group that your heart would desire to submit to God this week. In what area of your life would you like to submit to God in the coming week?

- **Truth Statement:** Our own interpretations of reality are subjective, but God's Word provides us with objective truth.

**Think About It:** Discuss the summary statements concerning what the students saw in looking at the photos. How well did your summaries line up with the truth of Scripture?

**Examine Your Heart:** *If you did not make any connection with the truth of the Bible, was it because you reject the truth of the verses that were read or simply because you have not thought about interpreting everything in life through the truth of Scripture? Why are both approaches dangerous?*

**Live It:** If you have a tendency to reject the truth of the Bible, what is keeping you from desiring God's truth in your life? If you haven't thought about interpreting everything through the lens of Scripture, why not? What steps could you take to build this into your life? Plan to try that this week as a small group, then come back next week and share what happened. [Leaders, you may want to remind them about this via phone or email.]

- **Truth Statement:** Satan's lies and the sinful heart work together to keep people from believing that the world reveals a Designer or Creator.

**Think About It:** Have you ever encountered someone who holds a similar view of the world as expressed by Mr. Dawkins? Have you encountered this view in books, movies, TV, and other media? How?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you ever feel intimidated in discussing God's truth with them because they seem to know more "facts" than you? Do you sometimes feel frustrated because no matter what you say and how you speak God's truth, they don't seem to*

*“get it” or mockingly reject it? What is important to keep in mind? [See **John 8:42-47; 1 Corinthians 2:12-14; 2 Corinthians 4:1-4; 2 Timothy 2:24-25.**]*

**Live It:** Pray for people you know who have rejected that God is the Creator or Designer of the world. Pray that God would reveal the truth to them. Pray that you will have opportunities to be a witness to them.

- **Truth Statement:** Only God's Word reliably provides us with the objective, absolute, universal, unchanging truth.

**Think About It:** Can we identify Satan's lies apart from God's Word? Why is God's truth the only reliable standard by which Satan's lies can be measured?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you feel like you know God's Word well enough to be able to identify Satan's lies? What about some of the harder parts of Scripture? Do you make God's Word a regular part of your day? Do you memorize the Word? Have group members share how they incorporate the Word into their lives on a daily basis.*

**Live It:** If you don't have a Bible reading plan, make a plan now for reading the Bible every day. What will you do when you come to parts that you don't understand? If you don't memorize God's Word, develop a goal and strategy for memorizing this week.

- **Truth Statement:** Satan lies to us about God's Word.

**Think About It:** How did Satan tempt Adam and Eve to ignore God's truth in the **Genesis 3** passage? What methods does Satan use today to get people to disbelieve God's truth?

**Examine Your Heart:** *What lies does Satan use to tempt you to reject, ignore, or disobey God's Word? Be specific about the temptations and discouragements you face in this area.*

**Live It:** [You may want to divide your group into prayer partners for this.] Pray specifically for your partner, that God would help him fight Satan's lies about God's Word this week. Find Scriptures that apply to your specific temptations and write them in your **journal**. Try to memorize one on the way home from church, and use it to help you fight the fight of faith this week!

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week. Also, if time permits, ask them about how they applied one thing from last week's lesson.**

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 4

# Satan's Lie: Atheism

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > God has made His existence clearly known through all He has made so that all people are without excuse.
- > Atheism—the belief that there is no God—is a lie of Satan.
- > Pride in the sinful heart desires to reject the truth of God's existence.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                    |                      |                |
|--------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| 1. 1 Kings 8:27a   | 4. Romans 1:20       | 7. Psalm 14:1a |
| 2. Isaiah 40:25    | 5. 2 Corinthians 4:4 |                |
| 3. 1 Timothy 6:16a | 6. Psalm 10:3-4      |                |

---

## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 5   | > "God's Pool" video                         |
| > Description Page (one per small group, and be sure to keep one of the small group's completed pages to use as a visual later in the lesson) | > Parent Memo for Lesson 5 (one per student) |

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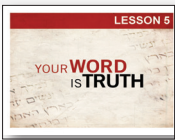
## OTHER VISUALS:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| > Bible   | > Optional: additional measuring and observation tools (e.g., ruler, tape measure, etc.) |
| > Various small objects, each in an opaque bag or container (one per small group; objects should be interesting and varied, requiring students to use a wide range of descriptive observations) | > Video clip from <i>Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed</i>                               |
|   | > DVD Player and Screen  |

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## PREPARATION:

Locate the DVD movie, *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*. About a third of the way into the portion titled "A Religious War," the discussion turns to this being a war against religion and then leads into comments from Richard Dawkins. The video clip starts at 1:28:10 on the DVD player's counter, and ends at 1:33:00. This movie might be available on youtube.com.

(DISPLAY **LESSON 5.**)

## Small Group Discussion (5-10 minutes)

(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

Give each small group a **bag** and a copy of the **Description Page**. Explain that they are going to begin with an activity to challenge their observation skills.

Each small group leader will choose a student who will leave the room for a few minutes (you may want an adult present with the students who are leaving the room). The remaining students will remove the object from the bag and complete the questions on the Description Page. Their answers must only provide the physical

description of the object in the bag, but not include any additional information. For example, if the object is a pine cone, the students may not say that it is a kind of seed or that it grows on trees, etc.

After the page has been completed, the object should be placed back in the bag and the missing student should return to the room. Give this student the Description Page to read and see if he is able to guess the identity of the object based on the other students' observations.

**DESCRIPTION PAGE**  
(ONE PER SMALL GROUP)

**OBJECT IN OPAQUE BAG**  
(ONE PER SMALL GROUP)

**Approximate Size:** Height: \_\_\_\_ Width: \_\_\_\_ Depth: \_\_\_\_

**Shape:** Round \_\_\_\_ Square \_\_\_\_ Oblong \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_

**Texture:** Smooth \_\_\_\_ Rough \_\_\_\_ Irregular \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_

**Color(s):** \_\_\_\_

**Appearance:** Shiny \_\_\_\_ Dull \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_

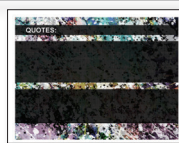
**Hardness:** Moldable \_\_\_\_ Soft \_\_\_\_ Hard \_\_\_\_ Brittle \_\_\_\_ Varied \_\_\_\_

**Smell (if applicable):** Fragrant \_\_\_\_ Foul \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_

*Would any other kinds of descriptions have helped in identifying the object? Would any other tools have helped us in describing the object? What would those be? For example, more categories for describing the object or using comparisons in describing the object, such as "It is hard as a rock." "It is shiny like glass." "It is as sweet as honey." Were there differing opinions about how to describe the object? Did that make it more difficult for the student whose job it was to guess the identity?*

## Large Group Lesson

Our opening activity was a prelude to today's lesson topic.



(Display **Quotes** and read them.)



*An atheist is simply a person who believes that the 260 million Americans (87 percent of the population) claiming to “never doubt the existence of God” should be obliged to present evidence for his existence...—Sam Harris, author<sup>1</sup>*



*Faith is the great cop-out, the great excuse to evade the need to think and evaluate evidence. Faith is belief in spite of, even perhaps because of, the lack of evidence.—Richard Dawkins, author and scientist<sup>2</sup>*

*What worldview do you think these two quotes allude to?* [a rejection of God's existence: Atheism]



(DISPLAY **ATHEISM.**)

*What is meant by the term “atheism”?*

Direct the students to complete the sentence on atheism in the **journal**.

*According to the quotes, what is the main reason given for being an atheist?* [lack of evidence]



*Do these two men have a valid argument? Why or why not? Have we been given sufficient written evidence of God's existence? Where?* [in nature and in the Bible]

#### DESCRIPTION PAGE

#### OBJECT

(Display the completed **Description Page** that you’ve saved from one of the small groups, along with the corresponding **object** that was described.)

Quickly read the description. Does the description present any evidence for the existence of the object? Were the students limited in any way in describing the object? How? But even with these limitations, did the student who was trying to guess the identity of the object come to the conclusion that there was no object in the bag?

*Did any of the students say: “This description is not adequate. I demand real evidence. Produce a photograph of the object first, or I will not believe there is an object in the bag.”?*

Some people approach the existence of God in a similar manner. They reject the written description of God as revealed in the Bible. They are seeking only the kind of evidence that can be measured through the use of scientific instruments, and then be understood through human reasoning. An atheist is someone who says:



*“I don't believe there is a God, because you can't actually see or observe Him.”*

1. From “An Atheist Manifesto,” [www.truthdig.com](http://www.truthdig.com)

2. From an untitled lecture given during the Edinburgh Science Festival of 1992.



(DISPLAY **God's Word.**)

Have the students turn to the following texts, and also to this section of their **journal** and its related question:

**1 Kings 8:27a—**

- 📖 *But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you.*
- 

**Isaiah 40:25—**

- 📖 *To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One.*
- 

**1 Timothy 6:16a—**

- 📖 *[God] alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see.*
- 

What truths are these verses stating about God?

*Is God some kind of object that can be observed and measured by scientific instruments? Why not? As the book of Isaiah reminds us, there's no way God can be measured or compared to anyone or anything else!*

*Does that mean that atheists have a "good excuse" for not believing in the existence of God? Why or why not?*

- 📖 Have the students turn to **Romans 1:20** and the related section in the **journal** with questions:
- 

*Romans 1:20—For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.*

---

*What have all people, including atheists, clearly perceived?*

*Through what specific things has God given evidence to His existence and character?*

*Are these things limited to specific times in history, specific places on earth, or to specific cultures and peoples? No. The truth of God's existence and of His character is universal.*

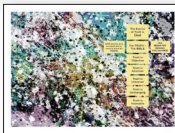
*So why would atheists deny the overwhelming evidence of the created world, which all points to a powerful Creator God?*



VIDEO CLIP AND  
PLAYER

Play the **video** clip "God's Pool."

Discuss the following quote with the students: *"The universe exists to display the glory of God."* John Piper uses the illustration of a "man pool" versus a "God pool" (the ocean). How else have they seen the evidence of God's existence in creation?



(DISPLAY **CROSS.**)

Remind the students of the previous lesson in which we learned that two things are at work when people reject God's truth: Satan's lies...

- ☞ ...and the sinful human heart. The Bible says Satan has "blinded the minds of unbelievers" so that they will not believe the truth (**2 Corinthians 4:4**). And this blindness comes in the form of different lies. The lie of atheism says something like...

*"There is no evidence for God. He can't be measured, observed, or analyzed. Therefore, He doesn't exist."*

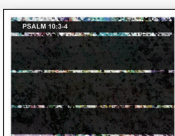
*And the sinful human heart would rather believe this lie...*

- ☞ ...than the truth. Here are the words of one atheist that demonstrate this desire to believe the lie...

Read the quote:

- ☞ *I want atheism to be true...It isn't just that I don't believe in God...I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that.—Thomas Nagel<sup>3</sup>*

- ☞ (Atheism)



(DISPLAY **PSALM 10:3-4**.)

Have the students turn to **Psalm 10:3-4** and the related section of the **journal** to further explain what is fueling the desire to believe this lie:

**Psalm 10:3-4—**

- ☞ *For the wicked boasts of the desires of his soul, and the one greedy for gain curses and renounces the LORD. <sup>4</sup>In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek him; all his thoughts are, "There is no God."*

*What are these two verses saying about atheism?*

- ☞ *What do you think the words, **the pride of his face** mean?*

Let's compare translations to help us understand what this phrase means.

3. Nagel, Thomas. *The Last Word*. (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1997, 2001), 130.

🔊 New American Standard:

*For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire, and the greedy man curses and spurns the LORD. <sup>4</sup>The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek Him; all his thoughts are, "There is no God."*

🔊 The wicked, in **the haughtiness of his countenance**...

...does not seek **Him**. All his thoughts are, "There is no God." *What does it mean to be "haughty" about something?* [arrogant] *What does the face of a "haughty" person look like?* [hard, nose upturned, too good for others to be around]

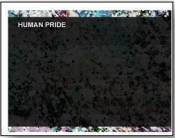
🔊 New International Version:

*He boasts of the cravings of his heart; he blesses the greedy and reviles the LORD. <sup>4</sup>In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God.*

🔊 **In his pride...**

...the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God. *How does the phrase "in all his thoughts there is no room for God" evidence haughtiness or pride?* [He considers his own thoughts more worthy and important than understanding God.]

*What does human pride have to do with saying, "There is no God."?*



(DISPLAY **PRIDE** and direct students to this section of the journal.)

Human pride can be characterized by the following:

🔊 The desire to be **self-reliant** (independent from God) and **self-governing** (not under God's authority). The easiest way in which to accomplish this desire is to simply deny that God exists at all. Atheism demonstrates the ultimate form of pride in the sinful heart. It is a total rejection of all that God is and His rightful place in the universe. As one atheist said,

🔊 "No gods, no masters."—Margaret Sanger, Founder of Planned Parenthood

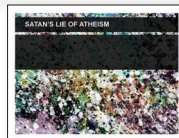
*But as much as a person may not want God to exist and therefore not be accountable to Him, will that make it true? Is that the way things really are? No. God's truth remains absolute and unchanging.*

Atheism has been increasing in popularity over the past 200 years. A book written in defense of atheism and entitled *The God Delusion* was a best-seller in 2006 and 2007. Its author, Richard Dawkins, claims that the God the Bible describes is not a God that he wants to believe in.

Play the **video** clip from *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*.

VIDEO CLIP AND  
PLAYER

As we discussed last week, people can see the same “data” and come to differing conclusions about it. Which do you think came first—Dawkin’s desire not to believe in God or his view of science? **Psalm 10:3-4** suggests that he has not truly sought God, but rather used his scientific “beliefs” as an excuse to ignore Scripture and God.



(DISPLAY **LIE** AND READ.)

How has Satan made the lie of atheism easy for people to believe? One answer is that he has made scientists believe that there is an alternate explanation for the universe called “evolution,” in which the universe started with a Big Bang and developed randomly from there. We will talk about this more in a later lesson. Also, with all of our modern advances in science and technology, people use these more powerful means of measuring the universe and observing it as a way of saying

🔊 *“See, no matter how far we look out, we still can’t find a God!” These excuses make it easy for Satan’s lie to sound “smart” to people.*

Atheism is not a surprise to God. It is one of the many lies of Satan that blinds people to the truth of the Bible. And this lie appeals to the sin of human pride, which is why many scientists and other very “intelligent” people believe it. However, the Bible has a word that rightly describes and summarizes atheism. It is not “intelligent” or “smart.” What is it?

🔊 *Psalm 14:1a—The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.”*

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the small group application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** Satan’s lies + the sinful heart make it appealing for people to believe there is no God.

**Think About It:** Ask the students if they know anyone who claims to be an atheist. Have they ever tried to talk to that person about the existence of God? Have they asked him or her, “How did we get here?” [If possible, give an example from your own experience.] Was trying to talk to him frustrating? In what ways? How does this experience give proof to the truth of God’s Word as communicated in **1 Corinthians 2:14**? Does this mean we shouldn’t even try to persuade an atheist to believe in God? [See also if needed: **2 Corinthians 4:1-2; Colossians 4:5-6; 2 Timothy 2:24-25; 1 Peter 3:15.**]

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you struggle with having the boldness to engage in discussions with atheists? Ultimately, does an atheist’s rejection of truth depend on your ability to persuade him of the truth by arguments and facts? Why not? Do you ever struggle with being patient or humble in discussions with atheists? What does a prideful or impatient attitude reflect toward others who don’t believe in God?*

**Live It:** Pray for your own attitudes in the areas you struggle with most when it comes to talking with atheists.

- **Truth Statement:** The “truth claims” of atheism should be evaluated in light of Scripture.

**Think About It:** Review the quotes by Sam Harris and Richard Dawkins. Are these “new” arguments? Do you think they would automatically believe in God and honor Him as God if they saw Him? Why or why not? [See **John 1:9-11, 14; John 6:36; and 2 Corinthians 4:4.**]

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do the arguments made by atheists sound appealing or clever to you? Why or why not? If so, are you willing to consider God's truth in light of these arguments? If not, do you have compassion toward those who have been attracted by this lie?*

**Live It:** Pray for atheists you know personally—that God would reveal Himself to them. Pray that you would not be enticed by this type of thinking, if it sometimes seems attractive to you.

- **Truth Statement:** Human pride leads even people who say they believe in God to be self-reliant and self-governing.

**Think About It:** What do you think about this statement: “Most people believe in God but are practicing atheists”? [Direct students to **Psalms 10:3-4** again to show that simply refusing to consider God and His truth in your thoughts is practical atheism.] How is this in evidence in the world? For example, does your school environment avoid the topic of God? If so, why?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you give any evidence of this in your own life? If you truly believe that God exists, do you still think and act as a type of atheist—desiring to be self-reliant and self-governing? Do you pick and choose aspects of God you want to believe in and those you want to deny? For example, do you want to believe in the truth of a God who is loving, but deny the truth of a God who is angry at sin and is right to punish sinners? What needs to change in your view of who God is?*

**Live It:** Take one area of your life in which you choose to be self-governing or self-reliant and submit it to God this week. What will you do differently in this area? Pray about this with your small group, and let them know how it went next week.

- **Truth Statement:** Atheism is foolish (and therefore leads to foolishness).

**Think About It:** How do you think an atheist would respond to the questions: “Is it right or wrong to beat a baby? Is it right or wrong to steal your neighbor's car?” If an atheist was correct and there was no God, would there be any reason to have moral laws that decide what is right or wrong? Why or why not? Deep down in every person's heart, he

recognizes that there are things that are right or wrong for all people. Atheism is the rejection of the obvious source of these “invisible” convictions. In other words, an atheist, by saying that it is wrong to beat a baby, is giving evidence to... a universal absolute. And that absolute must come from an outside source. If it is not God, what is it?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Are there any moral laws of God that most people would say make sense? [e.g., murder is wrong, stealing is wrong] How does this reflect that God has made us with a conscience?*

**Live It:** Pray that you would see the goodness in God’s laws. Consider this week how one of the laws you’ve resisted is wise and good. Then decide to obey that law!

- **Truth Statement:** Atheists believe atheism because they want to. They don’t want to be subject to anyone. We all believe what we want most to believe.

**Think About It:** *Have you ever heard the phrase “practice what you preach”? How can even Christians show a difference between what they say they believe and what they do? [e.g., “I believe that those who don’t know Christ will spend eternity in hell.” Does this motivate me to share the gospel with others? Is this belief shown by corresponding or matching action in my life? Why or why not?]*

**Examine Your Heart:** *In what areas of your life is there sometimes a difference between what you say you believe and the way you act? [e.g., “I believe that I should honor my parents because this is one of God’s commandments.” Do I usually do this? What excuses or lies of Satan’s are easy for me to use to justify not honoring my parents? “I believe that God is omniscient—knowing everything.” Do I sometimes act as if I can hide my secret thoughts, desires, and attitudes from Him and pretend I am not accountable to Him?]*

**Live It:** Spend some time thanking God for the gospel and for Christ’s payment for the sins of the Christian. Are there any areas of your life where you would like to be more consistent? What is one step you can take this week to live out your beliefs?

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week. Also, if time permits, ask them about how they applied one thing from last week’s lesson.**

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 5



# Satan's Lie: Other Religions

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**MAIN IDEAS:**

- > Deep down, all people have a God-given desire to have answers to life's most important questions.
- > Satan disguises himself as an "angel of light" by offering false sight through a variety of religions.
- > Sinful people would rather believe these lies than the truth, resulting in final condemnation.

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**SCRIPTURE:**

1. 2 Corinthians 11:14-15
2. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12
3. 1 Timothy 2:1, 3-4

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**CURRICULUM RESOURCES:**

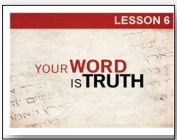
- > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 6
- > "Are We a Nation of Hindus?" article (one per student)
- > Parent Memo for Lesson 6 (one per student)

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**OTHER VISUALS:**

- > Bible





(DISPLAY **LESSON 6.**)

## Small Group Discussion (5-10 minutes)



(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

Have the students look at the **Matching Challenge** in the **journal**.<sup>6</sup> On the left side of the page, there is a list of various religions. On the right side of the page, there are descriptions of various religions. Choose students to read each description, and then, as a group try to match

the description to the name of the corresponding religion. The answers are given in parentheses.

<sup>6</sup>Most religious descriptions taken from *The Compact Guide to World Religions*, ed. Dean C. Halverson (Bloomington: Bethany House, 1996). The description of Scientology was taken from the official Scientology website, [www.scientology.org](http://www.scientology.org). We have modified the wording of some of the definitions slightly.

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| (d) Animism             | a. The belief that the position and motion of the stars and planets influence the affairs of people.   |
| (a) Astrology           | b. The belief in one God as revealed in the Old Testament, who demands that you do your best to conform to his commands and earn his reward.   |
| (c) Buddhism            | c. The belief that life consists of suffering, everything is temporary, we must stop craving what is temporary, and craving can be eliminated through "self-enlightenment," which ends the constant cycle of life and death. |
| (e) Hinduism            | d. The belief that there is some type of supreme being, but he cannot be directly known, and he acts through spirits, which can interact with the natural world and humans.  |
| (h) Jehovah's Witnesses | e. The belief that people are all extensions of an impersonal being. Life is an endless cycle of life, death, and rebirth, in which a person's actions (karma) determine the kind of body they will attain in their rebirth. |
| (b) Judaism             | f. The belief in a coming age of peace and harmony, which can be realized through a wide variety of means: spirituality, god-goddess worship, meditation, holistic healing, globalism, environmentalism, etc.                |
| (g) Mormonism           | g. The belief in the teachings of Joseph Smith, who taught that there are four holy books from God: the Bible and three other books written later, which more correctly explain God.   |
| (f) The New Age         | h. The belief in the God as revealed in a "corrected" Christian Bible, in which Jesus is not God, but is God's first created being. Heaven will be limited to 144,000 people.  |
| (i) Scientology         | i. The belief that people are immortal beings, who are basically good, with unlimited capabilities and potential, and that people simply need to be freed in order to reach that potential.                                  |

*Are you familiar with any of these religions? Do you know people who are followers of any of these? How would you describe their devotion to their religion? Why would these kinds of religions be more appealing to people than atheism? What fundamental questions do you think that these religions are attempting to answer? From these very brief descriptions, would these religions view the Bible as God's one and only objective and absolute truth? How do you think that these religions view Jesus?*

## Large Group Lesson

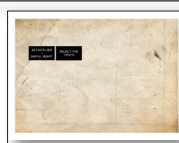


(Display **QUESTIONS**, and direct the students to the corresponding part of the **journal**.)

☞ (to show the questions, in case you want the students to remember them first)

1. How did we get here?
2. Why do we exist?
3. What is wrong with the world?
4. What is the solution?
5. What will happen when we die?

These five questions summarize the struggles all people face. Deep down in the human heart we each are seeking for the answers to these questions. This seeking is not by accident, It was created in us by God (**Ecclesiastes 3:11**). And the one place that provides the objective and absolute truth to these questions is God's Word, the Bible.



(DISPLAY **LIES**.)

Satan hates the truth, so he comes up with lies in order to deceive people. And the sinful heart would rather believe these lies than the truth. One of these lies is atheism...

☞ —the belief that there is no God.

*But for the great majority of people, atheism fails to answer any of their most important questions. If there was no God, there would be no design, purpose, good, or evil in the world. And deep down, people know that can't be true, because they do see design and beauty, they do experience love and hatred, and they do feel some greater purpose in the world.*

☞ *So Satan lies to them by offering a variety of false religions. And hundreds of millions of people around the world believe these lies. Why?*

### Illustration (2-3 minutes)

Suppose I tell you that I have a new iPod™ for everyone in our class. All you have to do is follow my instructions, and you will get the iPod™. Just be sure to come half an hour early to our class next week. If you meet me in the church lobby at [time] and show me that you have finished your journal work for this week, I will give you an iPod™. Just be

sure to be on time! Now, suppose you all show up at [time] in the church lobby with your completed **journal** work and all I have to give you is a smile and a “nice job”! You’d be disappointed, right? Why? [Because I lied to you...] If I had told you at the beginning that I was just joking about the iPod™, would you all have come to church half an hour early?

This illustration can help us to understand an important characteristic of many of Satan's lies. His lies often appear good and wonderful. In the example of lies of other religions, they may seem to provide reasonable, intelligent, and meaningful answers, so people readily believe them. But in the end, people who believe these lies have been tricked. Should it surprise us that Satan is able to do this—make lies seem appealing and even truthful?



Have the students turn to this Scripture in their Bibles and also its reference and related questions in the **journal**:

(DISPLAY **2 CORINTHIANS 11:14-15**.)

*2 Corinthians 11:14-15—And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. <sup>15</sup>So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.*

Briefly explain the context of these two verses: The apostle Paul was warning Christians about false apostles, men who were pretending to be apostles of Jesus. They were really servants of Satan and were liars trying to lead people away from the truth.

☞ *According to these verses, did these false apostles appear to offer teaching that was undesirable or blatantly wrong?*

*Were they easy to spot and recognize? Why not?*

☞ *What point is Paul trying to make by referring to Satan as one who “disguises himself as an angel of light”?*

In the illustration with the instructions and iPod™, you purposely disguised yourself as a type of “angel of light” by appearing to lead the student with truthful and doable instructions to a good reward. That is kind of like how Satan lies through other religions—these religions appear to be truthful and doable and offer a good reward for their followers.



These slides give an overview of six of the significant religions presented.<sup>1</sup> Direct the students to complete the related portions of the **journal** as you provide this overview:

(DISPLAY **ANIMISM**.)

Animism: Found in many parts of the world, and followed by almost 1 billion people in

1. Information taken from: Halverson, Dean C., editor. *The Compact Guide to World Religions*. (Bloomington, Minn.: Bethany House, 1996), and from Ankerberg, John, and John Weldon, editors. *Encyclopedia of Cults and New Religions*. (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House, 1999).

one form or another (it is often “blended” with other religions).

- ☞ Appeal: Offers people a way to deal with life's everyday needs and circumstances.
- ☞ Promises: If you are sick, you can call on spirits to heal you. You can say omens to bring you a new job. Performing certain rituals will bring you luck.
- ☞ As seen in our culture: Voodoo, superstitions, séances, horoscopes, astrology, occultism.



(DISPLAY **BUDDHISM.**)

Buddhism: Found mainly in Asia and followed by about 360 million people.

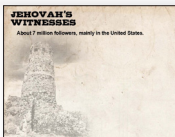
- ☞ Appeal: Offers people a life that strives for wisdom, good conduct, and self-discipline...
- ☞ ...through which they may eventually eliminate suffering in their lives.
- ☞ As seen in our culture: Yoga, meditation.
- ☞ Famous leader: The Dalai Lama.



(DISPLAY **HINDUISM.**)

Hinduism: Found mainly in India with more than 700 million followers.

- ☞ Appeal: People are extensions of the divine being, and through self-effort can fully be enlightened and...
- ☞ ...end the cycle of life, death, and rebirth.
- ☞ As seen in our culture: The term “karma,” reincarnation, yoga.



Famous leader: Gandhi.

(DISPLAY **JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES.**)

Jehovah's Witnesses: About 7 million followers mainly in the United States.

- ☞ Appeal: A clear structure offering salvation through the teaching of a small governing society, The Watchtower Society, which also emphasizes good, moral conduct...
- ☞ ...and promises heaven or earthly paradise.
- ☞ As seen in our culture: Jehovah's Witnesses evangelists.



(DISPLAY **JUDAISM.**)

Judaism: About 10 million followers.

- ☞ Appeal: The Old Testament, especially the law of Moses, provides people with clear guidelines to practice.
- ☞ Promises a right relationship with the one, true God.
- ☞ As seen in our culture: Jewish holidays like Hanukkah, “kosher” foods, traditional Jewish dress (e.g., kippah).



(DISPLAY **MORMONISM**.)

Mormonism: Known as The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints, has about 13 million followers worldwide.

- ☞ Appeal: Strong church structure, which gives very specific direction for life conduct.
- ☞ Promises heaven to its followers.
- ☞ As seen in our culture: Active Latter-day Saints evangelists, Mormon Tabernacle Choir. There are many famous Mormons in politics, sports, entertainment.



(DISPLAY **SCIENTOLOGY**.)

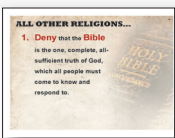
Scientology: An eclectic religion that draws from Eastern philosophy, modern psychology, and occult practice. It seeks to release human potential, free the soul, and restore man to his original state as pure, immortal spirit. Believes people are basically good and divine.

- ☞ Appeal: Promises to free the human spirit from its bondage to the material world.
- ☞ Allows each person to create his own interpretation of God.
- ☞ As seen in our culture: Popular with several famous American icons and movie stars. Uses advertising campaigns to encourage people to “free themselves” or to reach their full potential.

As appealing, reasonable, good, and promising as these religions may seem to be, they are all deceptions of Satan that blind people to the truth of the Bible. These lies offer “false sight” to people as they think they are seeing true answers to life’s most important questions. It is similar to what you did with the student in the illustration with the candy—leading him carefully along to what he thought was a good reward, when all along it was a lie.

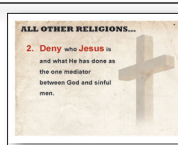
These religions blind people to the truth in two specific ways:

Direct the students to complete the **All false religions** portion of the **journal** as follows:



(DISPLAY **ALL 1**.)

1. They all deny that the Bible is the one, complete, all-sufficient truth of God, to which all people must come to know and respond.



(DISPLAY **ALL 2.**)

2. They all deny who Jesus is and what He has done as the one mediator between God and sinful men.

*What is the end “reward” for denying the truth and instead believing in these religions?*

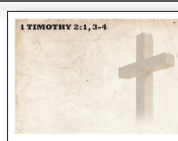
- 🔊 Ask the students to turn to **2 Thessalonians 2:9-12** and the related question in the **journal**:

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*2 Thessalonians 2:9-12—The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders,<sup>10</sup> and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.<sup>11</sup> Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false,<sup>12</sup> in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

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*What will people who believe the lies of Satan and follow these religions receive as their final “reward”? [God's condemnation] Is this the promise that these billions of people have hoped for? No. Yet it remains the truth, and sadly, most people in the world are blindly following the lies of Satan. So should our response be: “Oh well. Too bad for them”? What is God's desire and what should our desire for lost people be?*



(DISPLAY **1 TIMOTHY 2:1, 3-4.**)

- 🔊 *1 Timothy 2:1, 3-4—First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people...<sup>3</sup>This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior,<sup>4</sup> who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*
- 

If God desires for all kinds of people around the world to be saved, then we should also desire this, and have compassion for those deceived by Satan. Specifically, we can and should pray for lost people around the world.

Ask the students if there was any major religion that was not covered and mentioned in this lesson. [Islam.] Because of its growing significance in the world and our own culture, we will be devoting an entire lesson to it.

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the small group application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** Satan can make his lies sound good and rewarding.

**Think About It:** Talk about lies that Satan makes appealing in everyday life. For example, how does Satan lie about **Ephesians 6:1** and make that lie very appealing? What does he seem to promise as a reward? By understanding this, how can we better understand how different religions appeal to millions and even billions of people?

**Examine Your Heart:** *How does your own heart show a longing for answers to life's most important questions? Where are you going for answers to these questions? Has Satan blinded you to the truth in any way? [See also **Ephesians 2:1-5** and **2 Corinthians 4:6**.]*

**Live It:** If there is a question about life that you aren't sure of, go to Scripture this week to examine it. Your parents or small group leader can help you to search for the answers to your question/s, too.

- **Truth Statement:** Every religion tries to answer life's five most important questions, but only the Bible answers these questions correctly.

**Think About It:** Read and talk about the following quote from a book for children on world religions:

*Each religion has its own customs and traditions. As long as we respect each other's beliefs and allow people to practice their religion freely, the whole world should be a happier place. Religion can help us to live together like brothers and sisters.<sup>2</sup>*

The book goes on to say that all religions value human life and that most teach us to love others and to make friends.

*Are most religions basically the same? Why not? Give an example of this from the lesson. In what ways should Christians be tolerant and loving toward believers of other religions? In what ways must Christians be intolerant? [See also **John 14:6** and **2 Timothy 2:22-26**.]*

**Examine Your Heart:** *How do you tend to see non-Christians? If left to yourself, and apart from Jesus' saving work, would you have come to believe the truth? Why not? How should that shape your attitude toward those who do not believe that Jesus is the one and only way to God?*

**Live It:** How can you grow in kindness, and in your ability to correct those who are following the lies of Satan? In what ways should you be more tolerant of others? In what ways should you be less tolerant?

2. Brown, Alan, and Andrew Langley. *What I Believe: A Young Person's Guide to the Religions of the World*. (New York: Transedition Limited & Fernleigh Books, 1999), 60-61.



- **Truth Statement:** We need to be on guard not to be conformed to the influence of other religions, like the culture around us is.

**Think About It:** Our culture is being increasingly influenced by other religions, sometimes in ways we have not even noticed. Ask students if they can identify ways our culture has been influenced by other religions. For example, yoga is a form of meditation and exercise developed within Buddhism and Hinduism, the term “karma” is used in everyday language, and most major newspapers have a section with a daily horoscope.

**Examine Your Heart:** *Have you seen the influence of other religions among your friends or in your own life? How? Are these practices and influences simply “harmless” fun? How can even seemingly “little lies” of Satan be dangerous to your mind and heart?*

[Be prepared to give an example, such as: If you make a practice of reading your horoscope, how will it begin to influence how you think and act on any given day? What does it demonstrate about your understanding of the stars and planets? Does God care about this? Read **Deuteronomy 4:19**.]

**Live It:** Are there any steps that you need to take to rid yourself of influences of other religions on your heart? What are they? [Try to follow up with the students next week concerning any action taken.]

- **Truth Statement:** Christians have the answers to life’s five most important questions.

**Think About It:** How would Christians answer life’s five most important questions? Together, list the five questions and discuss how Christians would answer these questions. [1) How did we get here?; 2) Why do we exist?; 3) What is wrong with the world?; 4) What is the solution?; 5) What will happen when we die?]

**Examine Your Heart:** *How would you answer these five questions? Do you agree with the way Christians would answer them, or would you disagree with some of these? If you accept these answers, does it make you glad that God’s truth works this way? Or do you wish that God had chosen different ways to answer these questions? Why?*

**Live It:** Do you live as if you believe the answers to these five questions? Is there anything about your life you would like to change in order to live in a way that reflects the true answers to these questions?

- **Truth Statement:** Only the Christian faith is true; all other religions are false.

**Think About It:** One popular truth is that all religions are valid. For example, there is a popular bumper sticker with the word “coexist” written using symbols from all the different religions. Can several contradictory things all be true at once? [You could use an example from math, such as  $2 + 2 = 4$ , not 3 or 5.] Since not all things can be true at once, we need to commit to decide which faith is correct. Make a list of things that do not make someone a Christian (e.g., church attendance, Christian parents, etc.). What beliefs do make someone a Christian?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Have you ever evaluated the claims of the Christian faith for yourself? Where are you honestly in relation to the Christian faith? If you are a Christian, why do you believe the Christian faith is the "right" one?* [Ask the students for both intellectual reasons for their faith, as well as "heart" reasons (e.g., evidence of God's work in their lives).]

**Live It:** If you have not accepted the claims of Christianity for yourself, are you willing to consider them now? If you have received salvation through Christ, how will that impact your everyday life this week?

- **Truth Statement:** Christians can proclaim that only the Christian faith is true and that all other religions are false.

**Think About It:** Ask the students to consider how they would defend the idea that only one faith can be true (in other words, not all religions can be true at once) to a friend. [Example: You want to go to a movie with friends. It costs \$7. Will monopoly money work? What about stamps, or gum wrappers? Or, your parents want to get money out of a cash machine. To do this, they must enter a secret code. What if they get 4 of the 5 numbers right? Will they still get their money?]

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do students who have had to defend their belief in "one way to God" ever feel ashamed of doing so? Why? How would they like to approach these conversations at school or with others? What attitudes do they want to have? How can they be both persuasive and gentle? What usually prompts a lack of gentleness in our hearts?* [Pride or self-righteousness] *What usually prompts a lack of boldness?* [Lack of conviction about the truth]

**Live It:** Pray for boldness, wisdom, and gentleness for those who are witnessing to others at school about their faith.

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week. Also, if time permits, ask them about how they applied one thing from last week's lesson.**

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 6

"Are We a Nation of Hindus?" article

# Satan's Lie: Islam

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > Islam is a lie of Satan that blinds people to the truth of the Bible.
- > Islam denies the Person and work of Jesus, and God's means of salvation for sinners.
- > All false religions have the same end: God's wrath.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                 |                    |                 |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. John 1:1, 14 | 3. Hebrews 9:22b   | 5. John 3:35-36 |
| 2. Romans 8:7   | 4. Ephesians 2:8-9 |                 |

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## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 7
- > Parent Memo for Lesson 7 (one per student)
- > "Why Does God Care What We Call Him" article (one per student)
- > "The Challenge of Islam" article (one per student)

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## OTHER VISUALS:

- > Bible

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## NOTE:

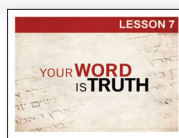
Following is an explanation from Dr. Albert Mohler regarding the use of *Allah* in Islam:

*The question of using "Allah" to refer to god in a clearly missiological setting will raise other issues. If the word is understood as a generic term for God (and not exclusively as a proper name), the question would then be how a Christian must make clear that the God of the Bible—revealed as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ—is not the deity as described in the Qur'an (who explicitly has no son). The linguistic root of Allah may well be connected to Elohim (a name for God found in the Old Testament). This fact may help to clarify the possible use of the word in a missiological setting. The clarity comes in understanding that, even in the Old Testament, the name Elohim is, in itself, quickly accompanied by other names and words to make clear that the God of the Bible is the personal, monotheistic, covenant-making God of Abraham, Moses, and the prophets. The New Testament makes clear that this God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—indeed the God who in these latter days has spoken definitively*

*through the Son [Hebrews 1]. The crucial questions here are these: First, can we assume that the deity central to Islam and known as Allah is, in fact, the same God worshiped by Christians and revealed in the Bible? The answer to that question must be negative. In that sense, Allah is certainly not the God of the Bible.<sup>1</sup>*

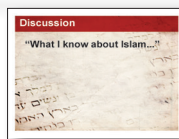
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1. Mohler, R. Albert. "What Does God Care What We Call Him?" (August 22, 2007). <<http://www.albertmohler.com/2007/08/22/what-does-god-care-what-we-call-him/>> (accessed June 10, 2010).



(DISPLAY LESSON 7.)

## Small Group Discussion (5-10 minutes)



(DISPLAY DISCUSSION.)

Have the students turn to the **What I know about Islam...** activity in Lesson 7 of the **journal**. Instruct them, to the best of their ability, to fill in the missing words to complete the state-

ments. Give them about three minutes. Then go through each statement and give them a correct answer. Statements and answers are as follows:

The word “Islam” means submission to God.

Followers of Islam are called Muslims.

The name of the God of Islam is Allah.

Muhammad is Islam's founder and greatest prophet.

Islam was founded about 600 years after Jesus' death on the cross.

The Koran (or Qur'an) is the name of Islam's holy book.

The city of Mecca is Islam's most holy city.

Almost 25 % of the world's population claim to be Muslim.

The country of Indonesia has the greatest number of Muslims in the world.

In Islam, salvation is based on human deeds.

Muslims must do 5 (number) specific things to please Allah.

Islam considers Jesus to be a prophet of Allah.

There are 2 (number) main sects in Islam.

Muslims go to worship in a building called a mosque.

Do you know any Muslims personally? Do they have other customs or behaviors that are unique? What evidence do we see in the world of Islam's growing influence? Based on what you know about Islam, is it a false religion? How is Islam different than Christianity?

## Large Group Lesson



### (DISPLAY **News 1.**)

Ask the students to quickly read the news items on the visuals, and refer them to the portion of the **journal** that asks them to name two ways Islam is present in our culture:

- A city in Michigan gives permission for the local mosque to begin announcing the Muslim daily call to prayer over a loudspeaker so it can be heard throughout the city.
- A major university builds foot baths in its bathrooms so Muslim students can wash their feet before their prayer time.
- The state of Minnesota elects a Muslim to the United States Congress.
- An Ohio teenager runs away from her Muslim family, because she fears that her father will kill her for becoming a Christian.



### (DISPLAY **News 2.**)

- A California elementary school creates a special recess period so Muslim students can pray.
- A Minnesota public school is investigated for promoting Islam in its curriculum and school functions.
- A Florida Muslim woman sues the state for refusing to allow her to wear her face veil for her driver's license picture.
- Some researchers believe Islam is now the fastest growing religion in the world, outpacing Christianity.

In the previous lesson we learned about several false religions. These religions are lies of Satan meant to blind people to the truth of the Bible. But of all the false religions in the world today, Islam is probably the one that is increasingly becoming more and more influential in the world and in our culture. In some ways, its appeal is in its absolute claims. Islam, like Christianity, claims that truth is absolute (fixed and unchangeable), objective (determined by a source outside of me), and universal (applies to all people everywhere). It rejects relativism (that truth is determined differently by different people) and postmodern thinking. Another thing that makes Islam so appealing, which we will explore in a moment, is that it claims to make human righteousness attainable, or possible to achieve through our own effort.



### (DISPLAY **OVERVIEW.**)

Give a brief overview of Islam:

*Do you remember who founded Islam? Islam was founded by a man named Muhammad...*

🕌 *...in the year 610 in the region of Arabia. Islam claims that Muhammad had revelations from the angel Gabriel, which he recorded, and which became the Qur'an...*

🕌 *...Islam's holy book. Through a series of military campaigns, Muhammad was able to unify the tribes of Arabia to submit to and follow Islam.*

*Can you guess how many Muslims there are in the world today? There are now about 1.5 billion Muslims in the world.*

🕌 *More than 60 percent live on the continent of Asia. Do you know what the two main sects of Islam are? The two main sects (somewhat like denominations) are: Sunnis, who make up about 80 percent of all Muslims, and Shi'ites. The Shi'ites believe there should be no separation between civil and religious authorities.*

*Saudi Arabia and Iran are examples of countries governed by Islamic Law, called Sharia, in which civil matters are governed by religious authorities.*

*As the news items we read indicate, Islam is a growing presence and influence in the United States.*

*So what does Islam teach and how does it measure up to the truth of the Bible?*



(Display **TEACHES 1** and present the following information in comparison to the truth of the Bible, referring the students to the comparison chart in the **journal**.)

1. God: Islam teaches that its...

🕌 *...God, Allah, is one (not Trinitarian). Muslims would never refer to “God the Father” as the New Testament does. They would never refer to Jesus as the “Son of God.” Therefore, Islam distorts the truth of who God is.*

🕌 *The one true God of the Bible is triune: He is one God in three distinct persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*



(DISPLAY **TEACHES 2**.)

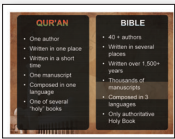
2. The Bible: Islam teaches that the...

🕌 *...Bible has been changed and corrupted by Jews and Christians. They believe the Qur'an is the final, truthful authority on Allah, given to the one prophet Muhammad. Unlike the *Qur'an*, the Bible has...*

🕌 *...one continuous and comprehensive message, even though it was written over more than 1,500 years by more than 40 authors. Furthermore, unlike the *Qur'an*, the Bible*

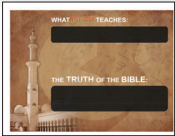


has outside evidence that confirms its factual and historical reliability. Every word in the Bible proves true.



(DISPLAY **QUR'AN CHART.**)

<i><b>Qur'an</b></i>	<b>Bible</b>
One author	40+ authors
Written in one place	Written in several places
Written in a short time	Written over 1,500+ years
One manuscript	Thousands of manuscripts
Composed in one language	Composed in three languages
One of several "holy" books	The only authoritative Holy Book



(DISPLAY **TEACHES 3.**)

3. Jesus: Islam teaches that Jesus is merely a...

- ☞ ...prophet of God. Muslims do not believe...
- ☞ He is God's Son or that He is fully God. They also do not believe Jesus died on the cross.

*Does this measure up to the truth of the Bible? No.*



(DISPLAY **JOHN 1:1, 14.**)

***John 1:1, 14—***

- ☞ *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...  
14And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

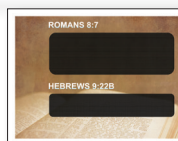


(DISPLAY **TEACHES 4A.**)

4. Man and sin:

- ☞ Islam teaches that man is able to please God by his deeds. Sinful actions can be forgiven by Allah without any kind of payment or atonement. In Islam, the focus is on right behavior rather than a right heart.

*What does the Bible teach about man and sin? Can you give examples of verses that state the truth?* (Allow the students to respond.)



(DISPLAY **ATONEMENT.**)

### **Romans 8:7—**

☞ *For the mind that is set on the flesh [the sinful mind] is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.*

### **Hebrews 9:22b—**

☞ *...and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.*



(DISPLAY **TEACHES 4B.**)

Emphasize that the Bible clearly teaches that man is, by nature, sinful, and sin is not merely the doing of sinful actions. It is fundamentally a rebellion of the heart against God Himself. And forgiveness of sin requires a sacrifice of atonement (not merely repentance, prayer, and good deeds).



(DISPLAY **TEACHES 5A.**)

5. Salvation: Islam teaches that salvation is something...

☞ ...to be worked for, namely, doing more good deeds than bad deeds—like a balance where the weight of your good deeds outweighs your bad deeds. To this end, Muslims are obligated to do the following five specific things, often called...

☞ ...the “Five Pillars of Islam.”

Quickly summarize the Five Pillars as you show the following slides, directing the students to the corresponding part of the **journal**.



(DISPLAY **PILLAR 1.**)

### **Pillar 1**

☞ Recite the *Shahadah*.

☞ *“I bear witness that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is His messenger.”*

Basically this is all a person needs to do in order to become a Muslim.



(DISPLAY **PILLAR 2.**)

### Pillar 2

- ☞ Pray 17 cycles of prayer each day, spread out over five times a day.
- ☞ Must pray facing Mecca.

Must wash in the prescribed way before prayers.

This is why a growing number of schools and work places in the U.S. have special prayer rooms for Muslims. They are required to say these prayers no matter where they are. This is why Muslims in some cities are requesting to use loudspeakers to call Muslims to pray throughout the city. Also, Muslims must wash their feet before going to pray, which is why some places are adding foot baths.



(DISPLAY **PILLAR 3.**)

### Pillar 3

- ☞ Fast during the month of Ramadhan.
- ☞ Must not eat from sunrise to sunset.

This lasts from 28-30 days. During this time, Muslims are to also spend more time in prayer, asking Allah forgiveness for past sins and then trying to do more good deeds.



(DISPLAY **PILLAR 4.**)

### Pillar 4

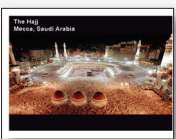
- ☞ Give alms.
- ☞ Must give away 1/40 (2.5%) of income, mainly to the poor and needy.



(DISPLAY **PILLAR 5.**)

### Pillar 5

- ☞ Make the pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj).
- ☞ Must make trip once during lifetime if finances and health permits.



(DISPLAY **THE HAJJ.**)

*These five pillars form the basis of Islam's method of salvation. How does this kind of salvation measure up to the truth of the Bible? Can you think of specific verses?*



(DISPLAY **TEACHES 5B.**)

Have the students turn to:

*Ephesians 2:8-9—For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

Islam does not understand that salvation is by grace alone, meaning that it is a free gift of God. The *Qur'an* teaches that Muslims must try to attain the favor of Allah through their own personal efforts. This appeals to people, because instead of admitting their inability to be righteous, they believe they can do certain deeds that will make them acceptable to God. In Islam, salvation is about doing good deeds rather than accepting Christ's perfect work of righteousness.



(DISPLAY **ALL.**)

Remind the students that all false religions have these two things in common:

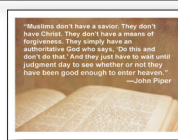
- ☞ 1. They all deny that the Bible is the one, complete, all-sufficient truth of God, to which all people must come to know and respond.
- ☞ 2. They all deny who Jesus is and what He has done as the one mediator between God and sinful men.

Also, as Islam demonstrates, there is another thing that all false religions have in common.

- ☞ 3. They ultimately depend on human effort in order to attain their promised reward.

For Muslims, it is as if Allah is keeping a balance and every time they do a good thing, he places it on the good side of the balance. But every time they do a bad thing, Allah places it on the opposite side of the balance. All the while, the Muslim follower is left to wonder: What will be the outcome? How will I measure up when I die? Will I be approved by Allah and be allowed into paradise?

This is a terrible lie of Satan. And more than a billion people blindly follow this lie, doing their daily works in the hope that maybe, just maybe, they will be pleasing enough to Allah to enter paradise.



(DISPLAY **QUOTE.**)

Pastor John Piper of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis summarized<sup>2</sup> it this way:

2. Piper, John. “How Are Yahweh and Allah Different?” (February 8, 2008). <[http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/AskPastorJohn/ByTopic/124/2588\\_How\\_are\\_Yahweh\\_and\\_Allah\\_different/](http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/AskPastorJohn/ByTopic/124/2588_How_are_Yahweh_and_Allah_different/)> (accessed June 30, 2010).

*Muslims don't have a savior. They don't have Christ. They don't have a means of forgiveness. They simply have an authoritative God who says, "Do this and don't do that." And they just have to wait until judgment day to see whether they have been good enough to enter heaven.*



(DISPLAY **RELIGIONS.**)

Even though Islam claims to be distinct and unique compared to all other religions and beliefs, it is simply one more lie of Satan,

- ☞ ...blinding people to the truth of the Bible. The sinful human hearts of those blinded by Islam would prefer to believe they can achieve their own salvation. But all those who believe in Allah and listen to his prophet Muhammad will have the same “reward” for their belief.
- ☞ (God's Wrath)
- ☞ Have the students turn to the following Scripture and its related section and task in the **journal**:

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*John 3:35-36—The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand.*

*<sup>36</sup>Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.*

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## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the small group application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

To begin this application time, ask the students if they had any misconceptions about Islam clarified. If yes, what were these? Do they have other questions? What are these? How could you go about finding the answers to these? Try to point the students toward finding answers, and research some answers for them yourself this week if you can.

- **Truth Statement:** Muslims need to hear the gospel and be pointed toward the truth of Christ.

**Think About It:** Point out that most of us have some type of exposure to or interaction with Muslims. How should Christians respond to the claims and practices of Muslims? For example, a student wears a shirt with the following statement to school: “Islam is of the devil.” Although this statement is true, (**John 8:44**), would that be the best or most loving way to approach a Muslim? Suppose you see a Muslim girl wearing a veil at school. Does quietly laughing at her or mocking her attract her to the truth?

Have you ever seen someone work very diligently and sincerely on something that was a futile effort? [e.g., washing the car right before it snows or rains, or mopping a floor right before several people arrive with mud on their shoes] What effect would mocking a Muslim have on that person when it comes to their view of Christianity? What attitude must Christians have around the world in order to bring the gospel to Muslims? [See **2 Corinthians 6:3-10**.]

**Examine Your Heart:** *Have you ever been in a situation where someone was making fun of Muslims for their beliefs or habits? What was your response? If you avoided the situation, did that help bring those people to faith in Christ?*

**Live It:** What are some ways that you could be a witness for Christ to Muslims in your school or community? What needs to change in your current witness to Muslims? Think of one way that you could show love and truth to a Muslim person this week.

- **Truth Statement:** Some people, and even some Christians, believe that the main threat of Islam in the world is its growing influence in culture and global politics, especially in its connection with terrorism. Read and discuss the following statements from Dr. Al Mohler (as found in the **journal**):

Unlike New Testament Christianity, Islam is essentially a territorial religion including all lands under submission to the rule of the *Qur'an*.

This ambition drives the Muslim world—and each faithful Muslim—to hope, pray, and work for the submission of the whole world to the *Qur'an*. Clearly, most Muslims are not willing to employ terrorism in order to achieve this goal. Nevertheless, it remains the goal.

As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ and a minister of the gospel, my primary concern about Islam is not civilizational or geopolitical, but theological. I believe that Jesus Christ is indeed, “the Way, the Truth, and the Life,” and that no one comes to the Father but by Him **[John 14:6]**. Salvation is found only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the gospel of Christ is the only message that saves.

For Christians, regardless of nationality, this is the great challenge that should be our urgent concern. Our concern is not mainly political, but theological and spiritual. And, all things considered, Islam almost surely represents the greatest challenge to Christian evangelism of our times.

**Think About It:** In what way does Christianity have a different aim than Islam? [See **John 18:36**.]

**Examine Your Heart:** *Is your main concern about Islam due to its growing influence in our culture and in the world, or that it is blinding people to the truth of the gospel of Jesus, which is the only way to be saved? Ultimately, what is more important to God at this present time?* [See **1 Timothy 2:1-6**.] *Point out that God will call some Muslims to reject*

*the lies of Islam and turn to Jesus Christ for salvation, which is why evangelism and missions work is so important. We will talk more about the gospel next week.*

**Live It:** Spend some time praying for Muslims in your community or around the world. See the prayer cards included in the resource pack for ideas.

- **Truth Statement:** All false religions ultimately base “salvation” or final reward on human effort.

**Think About It:** Why does this appeal to the sinful human heart? [See **Ephesians 2:8-9**]. Why does “self-boasting” appeal to the sinful heart? Do Christians need to be aware of this? What might this look like in a Christian’s life?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Which is easier for you, to believe that God accepts Christians by grace through faith alone, or because of the works that they have done? How are you tempted to try to “earn” God’s approval? Why does earning God’s approval feel easier or better than accepting God’s gift?*

**Live It:** Does anything need to change in your motives for obeying God? If so, what? What Scriptures might help you? [See **Galatians 3:1-3**.] Examples of this today might be a person who, after coming to Christ, uses works such as going to church or reading the Bible to please God. If you are not interested in salvation at all—why not?

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week. Also, if time permits, ask them about how they applied one thing from last week’s lesson.**

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 7

"Why Does God Care What We Call Him" article

"The Challenge of Islam: A Christian Perspective" article



# The Light of the Gospel of Jesus

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > Satan's lies and the sinful heart blind people to the truth of the gospel.
- > The gospel is the good news of how Jesus came to save sinners by His death on the cross.
- > God is the one who removes our blindness, so that sinners may rightly see and respond to the truth.
- > Only God can act to remove our blindness and give us belief in His Son—it is by grace.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                           |                  |                           |
|---------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, 6 | 5. Matthew 26:28 | 9. Mark 1:15              |
| 2. John 1:1, 14           | 6. 1 Peter 2:24  | 10. 2 Corinthians 5:21    |
| 3. John 14:6              | 7. John 11:25    | 11. Ephesians 2:3b-5, 8-9 |
| 4. Matthew 20:28          | 8. Romans 6:23   |                           |

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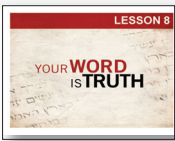
## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 8                          | > Parent Memo for Lesson 8 (one per student) |
| > Crossword Puzzle (one per student)                       |  |
| > Crossword Puzzle Answer Key (one per small group leader) |  |

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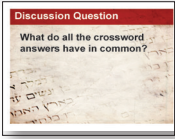
## OTHER VISUALS:

- > Bible



(DISPLAY **LESSON 8**.)

## Small Group Discussion (5-10 minutes)



(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION**.)

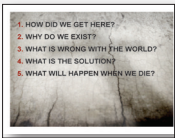
Give each student a copy of the **Crossword Puzzle**, and give each small group leader a copy of the **Crossword Puzzle Answer Key**. Explain to the students that they will have five minutes to complete the puzzle as best they can. When the time is up, have them stop. Review their answers, and have them complete any that were

missed, and correct any that were wrong. See if the students can guess what all the words have in common. How might these words relate to **Satan's Lies + Sinful Heart → Reject the Truth → God's Wrath?** Have them write their answers in the space provided in Lesson 8 of the **journal**.

*CROSSWORD  
PUZZLE (ONE PER  
STUDENT)*

*ANSWER KEY (ONE  
PER SMALL GROUP)*

## Large Group Lesson



(DISPLAY **QUESTIONS**.)

Remind the students that, whether people admit it or not, every person in the world is attempting to answer these questions. And the answer to these questions is found only in one place—the Bible—the objective, absolute, universal, unchanging, and knowable truth.

But as we have seen in previous lessons, most people reject this truth, and instead look for answers in other things or other religions. What are some examples of these? [e.g., Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Mormonism, atheism, etc.]

Why do people look to these lies instead of to the truth? Two reasons.



(DISPLAY **BLINDFOLD**.)

What do these symbols refer to?



(DISPLAY **LIES**.)

Remind the students of the two reasons that people reject the truth. Emphasize that it is important to understand why people reject the truth. Knowing why people reject the truth will help us to understand the solution to the problem. Ask students to turn in their Bibles to **2 Corinthians 4:4** and have a student read the verse aloud.



(DISPLAY **2 CORINTHIANS 4:4.**)

**2 Corinthians 4:4—**

🔊 *In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

Have the students turn to **2 Corinthians 4:3-4** and read it silently.



(DISPLAY **2 CORINTHIANS 4:3-4.**)

*What is it that Satan is keeping people from seeing?* (Allow students to respond, and direct them to the questions in the **journal**.)

**2 Corinthians 4:3-4—**

🔊 *And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. <sup>4</sup>In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

*Does anyone know what the word “gospel” means? [Good news] What is the good news, and what does it have to do with the glory of Jesus? Why would Satan want to keep people from seeing the gospel?*

## Small Group Discussion (5-10 minutes)

Have the students turn to the **Fill in the Missing Words** activity in the **journal**. Listed are several verses that present an overview of the gospel and the glory (greatness and worth) of Jesus. The students should look up the verses, if needed, and fill in the missing words. (To save time, you may want to assign each student a specific verse or two.) All the missing words are found in the crossword puzzle they completed earlier. After 3 or 4 minutes, have the students stop (do not wait for all the students to complete the activity if they have not done so.) Verses and answers are as follows:

1. John 1:1, 14—In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... <sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.
2. John 14: 6—Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”
3. Matthew 20:28—[Jesus said,] “...the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

4. Matthew 26:28—[Jesus said,] “...this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”
5. 1 Peter 2:24—He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.
6. John 11:25—Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.”
7. Romans 6:23—For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
8. Mark 1:15—...repent and believe in the gospel.
9. 2 Corinthians 5:21—For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

*How would you summarize the gospel? How do these verses demonstrate the greatness and worth of Jesus? Suppose a Muslim asked you what a Christian believes about Jesus, what would you say? Does the gospel of Jesus give an answer for who Jesus is? What Jesus has done? What He has promised to do? Why is it important to know and believe this truth? How does it differ from other religions? Why would Satan want to blind people to this truth?*

## Large Group Lesson

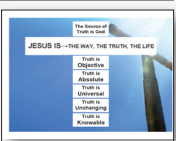


(DISPLAY **JESUS.**)

- ☞ Who is Jesus?
- ☞ What has Jesus done?
- ☞ What has Jesus promised to do?

Using the above passages from the small group time, have the students answer the questions above. As you do so, the result should be a summary of the gospel:

Jesus is both God and man, and is sinless (**John 1:1, 14; 2 Corinthians 5:21**). He is the only way to God (**John 14:6**). He died on the cross (**1 Peter 2:24; Matthew 20:28; Matthew 26:28**), and rose again (**John 11:25**). He has promised to forgive sin and grant eternal life for those who are trusting in Him for salvation (**Matthew 26:28; Romans 6:23**). This is given to those who repent from their sins and believe the gospel (**Mark 1:15**). Salvation is a free gift from God that cannot be earned (**Romans 6:23**).



(DISPLAY **CROSS.**)

What shape does it form? A cross. Explain that this shape was intentional, because at the center of the gospel is Jesus, God's Son who died on the cross in order to save sinners, so that they would know, understand, and love the truth of the Bible.

☞ The gospel of Jesus offers the only solution to our blindness.

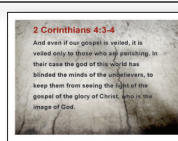
*Suppose you know someone at school or in your neighborhood who is not a Christian and has never heard the gospel. He has been “blinded” by Satan and believes a false religion. Maybe he is a Mormon or a Muslim, or maybe he seems as if he doesn't believe in anything at all. One day you share with him the good news of how great Jesus is and the wonderful work He has done on the cross in order to save sinners. This person listens to you and responds with something like, “Well that might seem true to you, but that is not what I believe about Jesus. Your Bible is wrong.”*

*Why didn't simply speaking the truth automatically remove his blindness? After all, you showed him the gospel. You showed him the truth, didn't you?*

### Illustration

Describe the following scenario. Explain that you are a meat lover, and there are few things you enjoy more than a large, thick, juicy steak. So you go to the store, buy a great steak, and prepare it with seasonings so that it is mouth-watering and delicious. Then you invite a guest to join you for the meal. You set the steak in front of him, but he doesn't seem impressed. You try to explain all the delicious aspects of this particular steak, but finally the guest interrupts and says, “I'm a vegetarian. I don't eat meat.” Is there anything you can do to change the person's mind? Why not? Even if you took this person captive and made him eat the steak, could you force him to enjoy it? Why not?

This can help us to better understand the problem of our blindness to the gospel: Satan's lies do blind us to truth, but the sinful heart is also unable to see and respond rightly. So simply presenting the truth to someone, will not by itself, give the heart “eyes to see” in order that we might rightly respond to the truth in belief. Just as the guest doesn't enjoy meat, a person who is blind to the gospel will be unable to see the goodness of the truth even when it is presented to him. In order to receive the gospel, a person must both understand the facts of the gospel and also see the goodness and worth of the gospel—he must desire and embrace the truth of Christ!



(DISPLAY **VEILED**)

*2 Corinthians 4:3-4—And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. <sup>4</sup>In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

*So how can this blindness be removed? How can anyone really see, understand, and believe the good news and be saved? [Allow the students to respond without critiquing the response, leaving the correct answer hanging until the next Scripture is read.]*

Have the students turn to **2 Corinthians 4:6**. Give them a moment to read it silently, and then direct them to the corresponding section and questions in the **journal**.



(DISPLAY **LIGHT**.)

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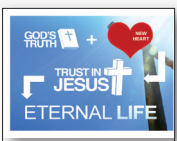
*2 Corinthians 4:3-4—And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. <sup>4</sup>In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God...*

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🔑 *2 Corinthians 4:6...For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

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*Notice that verse 4 is calling blinded people “unbelievers.” But verse 6 is talking about a second group of people, namely, people who have seen Jesus' greatness and have responded in belief. What made the difference between these two groups of people? Was it persuasion? Argument? No! [It was God acting.]*



(DISPLAY **LIFE**.)

God, and God alone, can remove our blindness. God must act to remove the veil that Satan has placed over our eyes, and God must shine His light in our hearts so that we can rightly see Jesus for who He really is, and then rightly respond to Him in belief so that we might be saved. That is why salvation is described as a gift of God (**Ephesians 2:8-9**). It is something that only God can bring about by removing the lies of Satan that blind us to the truth, giving us a new kind of heart that will then see the truth of who Jesus is, what He has done, and all that He has promised to do, and then respond to Him in belief. When God's light shines in a person's heart, that light makes Jesus and the gospel look good to the person. It would be like a vegetarian suddenly wanting that steak! (See example of this is how God opened Lydia's heart to believe in **Acts 16:14**.)

*Here is how **Ephesians 2:3-5, 8-9** describes this:*

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*Ephesians 2:3b-5, 8-9—[We all] were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. <sup>4</sup>But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—...<sup>8</sup>For by grace you have been saved through faith.*

*And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup>not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*



Dead people cannot see or respond to anything. God needs to make spiritually dead people alive before they can see the value and worth of the gospel.

(DISPLAY **QUESTIONS 2.**)

Quickly ask the students the questions on the PowerPoint slides, and then ask them to think about the following:

*Do you understand that, apart from the gospel of Jesus, you will never come to know the truth regarding these questions?...Neither will your friends or neighbors, or the 1.5 billion Muslims and almost 1 billion Hindus of the world.*

*You have seen and heard the truth of Jesus. These others need to see and hear it, too! How will that happen? Will Bibles just fall from heaven?*

*Do you understand that apart from God's grace you cannot believe, respond to, or enjoy the gospel of Jesus in belief? Neither can the millions of atheists, Mormons, or Buddhists. Do you pray that God would demonstrate His love and mercy on them so that they might see and believe?*

The gospel is not meant to be kept to ourselves. The light of the gospel is not to be kept hidden. Unbelievers are walking in darkness toward eternal destruction. The gospel is the only truth that will bring them light and save them. To all of us who have come to trust in Jesus alone for our salvation, our job is to go and shine that light for all to see, praying that God would take that light and shine it in their hearts so that they would believe. What would you do if you saw a physically blind person walking toward a man-hole? Just watch as the person fell in? Of course not! Remind the students that no one has "boasting rights." Everyone is dead in sin unless God shines the light of the gospel into his heart. Rather, we need to have compassion for those who are still in darkness.

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the small group application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** Sin is the main problem in the world today.

**Think About It:** *What do you think is the world's biggest problem today? Carefully read through **Ephesians 2:1-3**. How do these verses give the true answer to the question: What is wrong with the world?*

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you recognize yourself in these verses? In what ways? Would the present tense of these verses be true for you, or the past tense, as written? How do verses 4 and 5 change everything? Suppose you do not yet believe that God has done*



*this in your heart. Should your attitude then be: “Well, it’s not my fault for not trusting Jesus. God hasn’t changed my heart yet.”? (See **Jeremiah 29:13; Mark 1:15; Acts 17:30**.)*

**Live It:** Do you sense God calling you to take any steps of faith in response to this lesson? If so, what are they? Does knowing that sin is the main problem in the world today change the way you view your life? If so, how? What steps would you like to take to fight sin in your heart this week?

- **Truth Statement:** Knowing and loving God and the truth of the gospel is the solution to the problem of sin.

**Think About It:** Review the facts of the gospel represented in the **Fill in the Missing Words** activity in the **journal**. *How do these facts give the true answer to the question: “What is the solution?” Suppose someone agrees with all these true facts about who Jesus is, what He has done, and all that He has promised to do. Is that saving faith and belief? Read **James 2:19**. What then does it mean to truly believe in the gospel message? Can you describe the difference between acknowledging true facts and actually having faith or belief in something? Do you think there are people who think they are Christians simply because they acknowledge the truth?*

**Examine Your Heart:** *How is knowing the gospel different from believing in or enjoying the gospel? For example, suppose you really like football, and you take a friend to see a game with you. Suppose that person sat there patiently while you explained all of the plays and recited the statistics of some of the best players. Your friend may gain knowledge about football, and perhaps even agree that the team plays well or the game is a good one, but that isn’t the same as enjoying the game, is it? If your friend is simply sitting there, not cheering and not excited about the most recent touchdown, then he is not able to truly participate in and enjoy the game. In the same way, a person can affirm the facts of the gospel without really enjoying it or seeing the worth or value of it. Why is it necessary to do both? Why is it dangerous to “know” the gospel but not enjoy it? Are you a participant in salvation, or just a “spectator” of the gospel?*

**Live It:** *If you are a participant in the gospel message, are you willing to share the joy that you have in Christ with other people? What opportunities might you have this week to share your faith with someone else? If you are a spectator of the gospel, would you like to enjoy the truths that you know about God? What’s the next step for you?*

- **Truth Statement:** The gospel is a matter of life and death for each person.

**Think About It:** *What happens after those who trust in Christ die? [eternal life, **John 3:16**] What about those who are not trusting in Christ? [God’s wrath remains on them, **John 3:36**]*

**Examine Your Heart:** *Does knowing this fact cause you to consider both your own faith as well as the eternal future of those around you? Does the future of your soul and the souls of others around you feel like a matter of life and death to you? If not, why not?*

**Live It:** *Is there anything keeping you from being serious about your faith? If so, what is it? What could you do this week to remove it? Share this with your small group and pray for one another.*

- **Truth Statement:** God uses people who share the gospel as a means to provide people with salvation.

**Think About It:** *What does God do to save people? [See **Ephesians 2:4** and **2 Corinthians 4:6**.] How does God's work give a better context for Paul's command in **1 Timothy 2:1-4**?*

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you pray that God would save your unbelieving friends and neighbors? Does God act in a vacuum (only through praying for unbelievers)? Read **Romans 10:14-17**. Why must people hear the gospel? How is our church sharing the gospel? In what way are you involved in doing this?*

**Live It:** *Is God leading you to share your faith with anyone this week? How? Tell your small group and have them pray for that person and for you.*

- **Truth Statement:** How Christians share the gospel can point people to or away from the truth.

**Think About It:** *How would you help someone who is physically blind? What qualities would be helpful in helping someone who is blind? [patience, clear communication, concern for the person] How are these same qualities helpful in talking with people who are spiritually blind?*

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you have these qualities? Why is being winsome or appealing important in sharing the gospel? What qualities could turn someone who is spiritually blind further away from the gospel? [arrogance, argumentative spirit] Can these qualities force someone to "see" the truth? Does it encourage you to know that you are not responsible for making someone believe the gospel? How can this truth free you as you share with others?*

**Live It:** *Take some time to pray for others who are spiritually blind. Pray that God would shine His light in their hearts.*

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week. Also, if time permits, ask them about how they applied one thing from last week's lesson.**

## **Send Home**

Parent Memo for Lesson 8

# Seeing All of Life Through the Truth of Scripture

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > The Bible is the only source of truth for all the most important questions.
- > We can only come to both know and love the truth by God's grace, through faith in Jesus.
- > The Bible is to be the lens through which we see and interpret everything in life.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                     |                  |                      |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Romans 12:2      | 3. Psalm 43:3a   | 5. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 |
| 2. Colossians 2:6-8 | 4. Psalm 119:105 |                      |

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## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 9            | > "Christians and Halloween" article (one per student) |
| > Parent Memo for Lesson 9 (one per student) |  |

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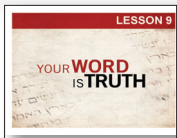
## OTHER VISUALS:

- > Bible

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## PREPARATION FOR TEACHERS AND SMALL GROUP LEADERS:

Be sure to read the "Christians and Halloween" article before class to prepare for this class.



(DISPLAY **LESSON 9.**)

## Small Group Discussion (5-10 minutes)



(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

ARTICLE:  
CHRISTIANS AND  
HALLOWEEN (ONE  
PER STUDENT)

*Can you guess which holiday comes second only to Christmas in terms of economic activity in the U.S.? [Halloween] Where and how did Halloween originate? How is it usually celebrated in our culture? Are these practices good, bad, or simply neutral? Is it okay for Christians to participate in any of these practices?*

You may want to give a brief account of your

own childhood experience with Halloween. (At this point, simply encourage discussion. Do not make judgments on their answers. The article will be sent home with the students for further discussion. **Please read the entire article before class to understand the context and conclusion.**) Read to them the following excerpt from the article by Travis Allen<sup>1</sup>:

*The name “Halloween” comes from the All Saints Day celebration of the early Christian church, a day set aside for the solemn remembrance of the martyrs. All Hallows Eve, the evening before All Saints Day, began the time of remembrance. “All Hallows Eve” was eventually contracted to “Hallow-e’en,” which became “Halloween.”*

*As Christianity moved through Europe it collided with indigenous pagan cultures and confronted established customs. Pagan holidays and festivals were so entrenched that new converts found them to be a stumbling block to their faith. To deal with the problem, the organized church would commonly move a distinctively Christian holiday to a spot on the calendar that would directly challenge a pagan holiday. The intent was to counter pagan influences and provide a Christian alternative. But most often the church only succeeded in “Christianizing” a pagan ritual—the ritual was still pagan, but mixed with Christian symbolism...*

*The Celtic people of Europe and Britain were pagan Druids whose major celebrations were marked by the seasons. At the end of the year in northern Europe, people made preparations to ensure winter survival by harvesting the crops and culling the herds, slaughtering animals that wouldn't make it. Life slowed down as winter brought darkness (shortened days and longer nights), fallow ground, and death. The imagery of death, symbolized by skeletons, skulls, and the color black, remains prominent in today's Halloween celebrations...*

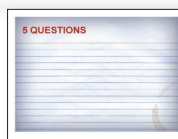
*Halloween didn't become an American holiday until the immigration of the working classes from the British Isles in the late nineteenth century.*

1. Allen, Travis. "Christians and Halloween" (2006). <[http://www.gty.org/Resources/Articles/A123\\_Christians-and-Halloween](http://www.gty.org/Resources/Articles/A123_Christians-and-Halloween)> (accessed June 29, 2010).

*While early immigrants may have believed the superstitious traditions, it was the mischievous aspects of the holiday that attracted American young people. Younger generations borrowed or adapted many customs without reference to their pagan origins.*

*Does understanding the background of Halloween give you a better understanding about how a Christian should view its pagan roots and practices? Have you ever examined these practices through the truth of Scripture? Is the Bible relevant to Halloween, or is Halloween just a cultural holiday that has nothing to do with the Bible?*

## Large Group Lesson



(DISPLAY **FIVE QUESTIONS.**)

- 1. How did we get here?
- 2. Why do we exist?
- 3. What is wrong with the world?
- 4. What is the solution?
- 5. What will happen when we die?

Point out that in the previous lessons we have been learning about how all people are seeking the answers to these questions, and how the Bible is the only source for knowing the truth. However, as we learned in the previous lesson, unless God acts to give us new spiritual sight, we will not only never come to know the truth, but we will also never respond in faith—trusting in Jesus alone for our salvation.



(DISPLAY **WORLDVIEWS.**)

- But seeing the truth of the gospel and then responding to Jesus in belief is not merely meant to change the way we see the gospel. What is meant by that?

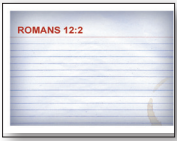
*Suppose a blind man has an operation that now gives him clear sight. Will he just see people, but not dogs? Will he just see his house, but not trees and grass? Will his sight help him find the grocery store, but not the library?*

This is something like coming to see and love the truth of the gospel. Once you are given new sight to see and love Jesus for who He is, what He has done, and all that He has promised to do, that new sight is meant to also let you see the truth about other things. That new sight is meant to transform you.

*What does the word “transform” mean? If a blind person is suddenly given sight to see people, dogs, trees, grass, and everything else, will that new sight also transform his life*

*in other ways? How? Give me a few examples. This can help us to understand how the gospel is meant to change our lives.*

Have the students turn to **Romans 12:2** in the Bible.



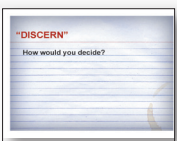
(DISPLAY **ROMANS 12:2**.)

*Romans 12:2—Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

- ✎ What is the negative command in this verse?
- ✎ What are we not to be?
- ✎ What is the positive command in this verse?
- ✎ What are Christians to be?

*Why is this done by “the renewal of the mind”? Why would our thinking need to be renewed?*

*What does it mean to test and discern? Do we just passively become transformed, or do these words suggest taking conscious action? (Direct the students to the main point and the related question in the journal.)*



### Illustration

(DISPLAY **DISCERN**.)

- ✎ Suppose your parents allow you to get a cell phone for your birthday. Would you just go to the store and buy the first cell phone you see? What would you want to know about the phone before buying it? You might want to find a friend who has the phone you are interested in, and test it to see if it has the functions you want it to have. You might want to ask your friend how his phone works and if he likes it before you purchase one. You might go online and try to find out more information about the phone and the service provider. You may need to consider the price before you purchase. You would want to use your capability to test and discern which phone would be the best one for you to buy! You take conscious actions to determine which phone is the best fit for you.

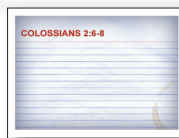
*But what does any of this have to do with a discussion of Halloween?*

- ✎ Explain that as the students were discussing the question of Halloween, they were each seeing and understanding it from a certain perspective. Something was informing their thinking and response.



*But what was shaping your understanding and response? The world, or something else? Should a blind man who has been given his sight, now put on darkened glasses so he can remain conformed to living as a blind man, walking with a cane, feeling his way in the darkness? Or is there a new way for him to walk?*

Have the students turn to **Colossians 2:6-8** in the Bible, and also turn to that section and related questions in the **journal**:



(DISPLAY **COLOSSIANS 2:6-8**.)

Read:

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*Colossians 2:6-7— Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, <sup>7</sup>rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.*

---

- ☞ What does it mean to “walk in Christ”?
- ☞ Is this simply a one-time “decision” someone makes to trust in Jesus and then go on living your life however you want? (Like the once blind man who goes on using a cane?) No. It is a continuous walk that is following Christ. And to do this, we must be on our guard against something. Read verse 8.

---

*Colossians 2:8—See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.*

---

- ☞ What are these verses warning Christians about?
- ☞ What does it mean to be taken captive by philosophy, empty deceit, or human tradition? [absorbing what the culture practices and teaches without examining it through the lens of Scripture] For example, a sponge will soak up whatever is in the bucket, whether it is water or gasoline. It soaks up its environment without taking into account what it is soaking up.

*Another example: Suppose you are in a science class in which the teacher is explaining that humans are simply the result of evolutionary processes. Does that teaching take your mind “captive”? Does your thinking conform to this? Or, does your mind test and discern what is being taught?*

*What about being taken captive by human tradition? Can you give an example of this?*

### **Illustration**

If possible, try and use a personal example of rejecting human tradition after being transformed by the gospel. For example, did the way in which you celebrate a holiday


such as Christmas change in any way after you became a Christian? [e.g., perhaps turning the focus away from Santa Claus and presents and toward the birth of Christ] Was abandoning such a prevalent human tradition easy? Did it call for testing and discernment?

*But how will you determine if something is “not according to Christ”? Does the Bible mention Halloween, Christmas, evolution, or the many other questions we are faced with in everyday life?*



(DISPLAY AND QUICKLY READ **God's Word.**)


### ***Psalm 43:3a—***

 *Send out your light and your truth; let them lead me.*

### ***Psalm 119:105—***

 *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*

### ***2 Timothy 3:16-17—***

 *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.*

*According to these verses, what is to lead and guide our thinking and living? [God's Word] Do these verses limit the Bible to just leading and guiding in specific areas, but not in others? What should we understand by that?*

*According to **2 Timothy 3**, is the Bible profitable for some good works, but not for others? Should we limit the use of God's truth to some areas of life, but not others?*



(DISPLAY **CALVIN**, AND READ THE QUOTE.)

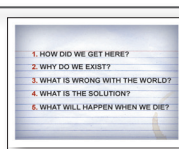
*For by the Scriptures as our guide and teacher, [God] not only makes those things plain that would otherwise escape our notice, but he almost compels us to behold them, as if he had assisted our dull sight with spectacles.<sup>2</sup>—John Calvin*

Direct the students to this quote and related questions in the **journal**.

*According to this quote, what does John Calvin compare to a pair of spectacles or eye glasses? [Scripture, the Bible] How does the Bible act as a pair of spectacles? Is it meant to only give clear sight to some things, but not to others? How is this like a person*

2. Calvin, John. *Genesis (The Crossway Classic Commentary Series)*. J.I. Packer and Alistair McGrath, editors. (Wheaton: Crossway, 2001), xiii-xiv.

*being given new sight to understand and love the gospel, which then gives him new eyes to see everything else in life?*



(DISPLAY **FIVE QUESTIONS.**)

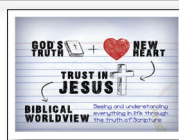
1. How did we get here?
2. Why do we exist?
3. What is wrong with the world?
4. What is the solution?
5. What will happen when we die?

Point out that the Bible alone provides the truth to these questions. We can only fully see and love that truth by grace, through faith in Jesus. But that new sight does not stop there. It is meant to give us sight for the truth of another important question missing from the list:

- 🔊 6. How now should we live?

(Direct the students to complete question #6 in the **journal**.)

*And just as the Bible provides the truth for the previous questions, it also provides the truth for how we are to live each day. The Bible is like a unique, one-of-a-kind set of lenses, through which we are to see and understand everything in life...not just questions about how the world came into existence, or the problem of sin and how Jesus came to die on the cross to save sinners and give us eternal life. The Bible also is the lens through which to see and interpret everything else in life—how we live, the friends we make, how we do our school work, how we view Halloween, and everything else. That is the meaning of the term Christian or biblical worldview—seeing all of life through the truth of Scripture.*



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW.**)

Ask the students to draw a picture depicting what is meant by biblical worldview—seeing all of life through the truth of Scripture—in the **journal**.

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the small group application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** Discernment comes as Christians filter all of life through Scripture.

**Think About It:** Ask the students if, after the lesson, they would now feel the same or differently about their initial discussion about Halloween. Did the facts regarding the pagan origin of Halloween come directly from the Bible? Even though the Bible does not

specifically mention “Halloween” does the Bible speak of darkness and evil? In what context? How should we view this through a biblical “lens”? [See **Ephesians 5:6-11, 15-16.**]

**Examine Your Heart:** *Even though the Bible is very clear in regard to evil, it does leave room for how a Christian might confront evil. For example, some Christians use Halloween as a means to be a “light” to others by taking out its dark practices and replacing these with wholesome practices. How have you seen Christians respond to Halloween in ways that resisted evil and glorified God?*

**Live It:** How could you oppose evil and glorify God during Halloween? How could your family respond to this holiday in a way that reveals Christ to others? (Remember to send home the article *Christians and Halloween* by Travis Allen. Encourage the students to read and discuss it with their parents.)

- **Truth Statement:** Transformation is a process that requires the renewal of the mind through Scripture over time.

**Think About It:** Read **Romans 12:2**. Talk about what the words “conformed” and “transformed” mean. [“Conformed” means to be shaped into something; “transformed” means to become something else entirely.] *Why are we all, by nature, conformed to this world? How does it demonstrate itself in everyday life? Why is being “transformed by the renewal of your mind” a process in our lives? In other words why don't Christians automatically see and understand everything in life through the truth of the Bible when they come to faith in Christ?* [It might help to use the example of a person who comes to live here from a region of the country where he has a certain accent. That accent does not automatically disappear. He will have to make a conscious effort and work at speaking in a new way.]

**Examine Your Heart:** *Are you making a conscious effort to see and understand everything in life through the truth of Scripture? What will be necessary in order to grow in this area?* [See **Psalms 43:3a** and **Psalms 119:105.**] *Is your first thought when presented with a circumstance or issue, “What does the Bible say about this? What will help me to understand this better through a biblical perspective?” Are some things in life more difficult to test and discern through a biblical perspective than others? What might these be? Does that mean the Bible is silent, or does it just take more practice and searching for the answers? Do you take the time to renew your thinking? How?*

**Live It:** With your small group, list some topics that are coming up in your life this week (e.g., school, homework, difficulties with siblings, soccer practice, music lessons) How can you consider these topics in light of what the Bible has to say? Have each person pick a topic to “research” in the Bible this week.

- **Truth Statement:** Christ is the center of all things—He designed them all and upholds them by His power.

**Think About It:** Ask the students if they tend to view their life in certain specific categories (e.g., sleeping, eating, entertainment, friends, school, sports, work, etc.). Do they believe the Bible, while truthful, is not as relevant to some of these categories? Quickly read **Colossians 1:16-18**. Who is the “he” in these verses? [Jesus] What two-word phrase is repeated four times? [all things] Why is this repeatedly emphasized? What “categories” do all things include? What is meant by the last part of verse 18? How does this demonstrate why we are to see all of life through the truth of Scripture?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Is there anything in your heart and mind that makes you want to not have this be the case? What might it be? Why might there be an area of life where we don't want to see the truth? In the example of Halloween, how might the truth challenge you to change? Why is this a struggle?*

**Live It:** Pray with your small group for God's grace in wanting to know and practice what is true.

- **Truth Statement:** To discern something is to test to see if it stands up to the truth.

**Think About It:** What does discernment mean? How does testing relate to discernment? [See **Romans 12:2**.] How can you test whether or not something is true in a situation?

**Examine Your Heart:** *What is your usual response to a new thing, person, or situation? Do you test a situation to determine what is true and what is not? What would it look like to use discernment in daily life?*

**Live It:** With your small group, develop a list of questions that you could ask about a topic, subject, or situation to discern whether or not something is “according to Christ.” [For example: “What Scriptures relate to this topic? Is this topic in my Bible index?” “Does this fit with the gospel? How?” “Does this demonstrate God's character to others? If not, could it? How?” “According to what I know about Jesus/Scripture, how might Jesus respond in this situation? Can I think of a similar situation in Scripture that makes it clear how Jesus might respond?”]

- **Truth Statement:** Transformation occurs as we search the Bible for God's truth.

**Think About It:** Look at **Romans 12:2** together. *Does transformation begin in the mind, heart, or will? [mind] Why do you think it begins in the mind? What tool has God given us to inform our minds of what God's truth, or will, is?*

**Examine Your Heart:** *Are there any methods you usually use to find God's truth about a situation? How could you search the Bible to see what it says about a certain topic? What are some tools that could help you? [Bible concordance, index, cross-references, etc.] What other places could you go to find help in filtering life through the lens of Scripture? [Christian parents, pastor or Bible teacher, an older Christian mentor or friend]*

**Live It:** Have each student pick a method or series of questions they will use to apply to one specific topic this week. Have them bring their truth discoveries back to share with the group next week!

- **Truth Statement:** Transformation occurs first in the mind, then in the heart, and finally in our lives.

**Think About It:** Is “theology” something that is usually separate from your everyday life? Take a topic like “forgiveness.” *How are people forgiven by Christ? How could an understanding of forgiveness be revealed in the life of a Christian?*

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you feel like you know Scripture in your head, but have a hard time applying it in real life? Why is there a disconnect between what you hear in church or read in Scripture, and what you do in daily life?*

**Live It:** *What can you do this week to eliminate the disconnect between the “spiritual” parts of your life, and the rest of your life? [e.g., talking about the sermon with family and discussing possible applications together, memorizing Scripture and bringing it to mind throughout the day, using methods of searching the Scripture, or asking “big picture” questions such as those mentioned above to explore specific areas where there is currently a disconnect]*

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week. Also, if time permits, ask them about how they applied one thing from last week’s lesson.**

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 9

"Christians and Halloween" article

# The Origin of the World

## MAIN IDEAS:

- > The God of the Bible created the heavens and earth and everything in it by His power and wisdom.
- > Evolution is the teaching that life is the result of natural processes involving matter, time, and chance.
- > The Bible is the final authority for all that is true, and evolution does not measure up to its truth.

## SCRIPTURE:

- |                   |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Genesis 1:3-26 | 3. Jeremiah 10:12 | 5. Psalm 104:24   |
| 2. Hebrews 11:3   | 4. Psalm 74:16-17 | 6. Proverbs 16:4a |

## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 10
- > Pattern Sheet (one per small group)
- > Letter Tiles Sheet (one per small group with tiles cut out, or use letter tiles from a game like Scrabble®)
- > Parent Memo for Lesson 10 (one per student)
- > "Evolutionary Trinity" article (one per student)

## OTHER VISUALS:

- > Bible
- > Blindfold (one per small group)
- > Small container for each set of Letter Tiles (put tiles in container before class)
- > *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed* DVD (prepare to play a clip from the movie during class)

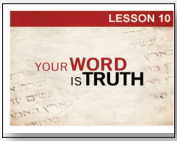
## PREPARATION:

For the *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed* DVD, you'll want to locate the section titled "Religion and Science," which starts at 54:47 on your DVD timer and ends at 58:00. Note: This movie might be available on youtube.com.

## NOTE TO TEACHERS AND SMALL GROUP LEADERS:

This lesson is not meant to be an extensive examination of the scientific flaws in the theory of evolution (or Darwinism), or to dovetail into discussion topics such as the earth's age, the fossil record, gap theories, or different interpretations of Genesis 1 within the church. Please do not get sidetracked on these discussions during the brief period you have to discuss this topic! Rather, this lesson is meant to examine the key themes of evolution: What is meant by "matter and chance and time," and how do these measure up to the truth of the Bible? The theory of evolution is the result of what is commonly referred to as a naturalistic/materialistic/secular worldview. It seeks to replace an infinitely sovereign, wise, almighty Creator with natural and random processes. Please stay focused on this overarching theme throughout the lesson, and steer the students toward a firm understanding of God's Creatorship. The author understands that there are many Christians who have adopted a position called "theistic evolution" with regard to creation. For a more detailed discussion of theistic evolution and why this author does not include it as an orthodox position, please read Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology*, Chapter 15, Section E, "The Relationship between Scripture and the Findings of Modern Science." (Subpoint 2b is on theistic evolution.)





(DISPLAY **LESSON 10.**)

## Small Group Discussion (5-10 minutes)



(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

BLINDFOLD (ONE  
PER SMALL GROUP)

LETTER TILES

PATTERN CARD

Do the following activity in your small group.

**Blindfold** one student (or simply instruct him to keep his eyes closed). Place the container of **letter tiles** in front of him. Have him quickly pick out eight tiles, one at a time. Have another student record his choices, in the order in which he chose them on the **pattern sheet**. Then return the letter tiles to the container. Repeat the activity with each student (if time permits).

*Did a pattern emerge from this activity? Do the letters seem to suggest a particular order? Were any words formed? Any sentences? If someone happened to see our Pattern Sheet lying on the table, would he be able to draw any conclusions about what we were doing? Why or why not? Do*

*you think there would be any purpose to this activity? Would it have been more or less helpful to have had more letters to choose from? Compare this activity to a quote from Richard Dawkins that we read in Lesson 4:*

*“The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind pitiless indifference.”*

*What were the results of our activity when there was no design or intentional purpose involved? What did our “blind indifference” produce? Did the results surprise you, or were they predictable?*

## Large Group Lesson



(DISPLAY **EVOLUTION=.**)

EVOLUTION =

How many of you know what this word refers to? Could you briefly explain what it means? (Allow some brief responses.)

🔗 EVOLUTION = MATTER + TIME + CHANCE

(Point to the “Evolution =” space in the **journal** for the students to complete the equation.)

🔗 What is meant by the word matter? Matter is “stuff.” It is anything that takes up space—even the tiniest of space, and has weight—even the smallest weight.

LETTER TILE

*So the tiniest, unseen part of an atom is matter. And the biggest star is made of matter. (Hold up a **letter tile**.) And this letter tile is matter also—it takes up space and has weight.*

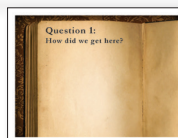
- What is meant by time? Time is simply a measure of duration or how long something goes on. The beginning activity was done over a certain period of time. You chose your tiles over a set period of time.
- What is meant by the word “chance”?* (Allow students to respond, and then clarify: “Chance” is used by people to explain something that happens at random or without intention. It “just happens” without plan or purpose.)

*When each student selected his letter tiles, his letters were picked at random. He didn’t have any way to intentionally choose or select a specific tile—people would say it was “by chance” that each tile was selected.*



(QUICKLY DISPLAY **PHOTO COLLAGE.**)

Point out that all these things are made of matter, take up space, and have weight. Everyone would agree that these things exist—they can be seen and observed. They are all part of the universe and the world. Evolution is meant to answer a very important question all people have.



(DISPLAY **QUESTION 1.**)

*According to evolution, if you have matter—stuff to make things with—and given enough chances for this “stuff” to combine in different ways and varieties over a long period of time, you will get galaxies, rocks, water, living cells, plants, animals, and people.*

### EVOLUTION=MATTER + TIME + CHANCE → ALL THINGS

Point out that evolution is meant to explain how you and I came to exist as humans. According to the theory of evolution, the universe started something like this:

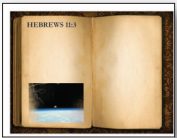
*Our universe came into existence billions of years ago, at the Big Bang. The Big Bang released trillions and trillions of particles of matter and energy into space. Over time, these particles of matter randomly combined in different ways, forming increasingly complex things. For example, particles from stars combined by chance and eventually formed water, rocks, and all the chemicals needed for life. Then particles combined to form the first living cells. And over time these cells combined in different ways to form more complex living things, and eventually people.*

Emphasize that the theory of evolution now forms the basis or foundation for almost every area of science. Most scientists believe evolution to be true and the only reasonable explanation for how things came into existence. Most books explain it as truth. Most teachers in public schools are required to teach it as the truth. And millions and millions of educated and intelligent people believe it to be the truth.

*So what is your opinion? Is evolution the true answer for how the world came into existence? Can you give me just one verse from the Bible that would bring the truth of evolution into question? [Genesis 1:1]*

- ☞ Have the students turn to **Genesis 1** and ask the following questions as they look at verses 3-26:

*Regarding matter, what words do these verses repeatedly use to explain the existence of all matter? [God said...] So can the existence of matter be thought of as simply a “natural state” ... it was just “there” at the beginning of time? No. Matter did not come into existence apart from the spoken command of God.*



(Display **HEBREWS 11:3**, and point the students to the Evolution/Bible chart in the journal.)

### **Hebrews 11:3**

- ☞ *Hebrews 11:3—By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.*

- ☞ Does evolution's understanding of matter measure up to the truth of the Bible?
- ☞ No. Evolution does not rightly explain how matter came into existence. So let's look at evolution's understanding of time.



(DISPLAY **EVOLUTION=TIME.**)

*According to evolution, billions of years are necessary for the increasing complexity of life forms we now see on earth. In other words, billions of years are necessary for the “natural processes” to take place.*

Look carefully at **Genesis 1:1-26** again.

- ☞ *What words are repeatedly used in regard to time? [day, evening, and morning]*

The easiest and most straightforward interpretation of this text is to regard it literally—literal, 24-hour days. In other words, when God spoke, every kind of creature came into existence in a very short period of time. However, there are some Christian scholars who believe that the terms “day” and “evening and morning” are symbolic, and refer to periods of time, not literal 24-hour days. Still other Christians argue that there is a huge gap of time between verses 1-2 and verses 3-26. Even if interpreted that way, the longer time period is not because God **needed more time** to create increasingly complex things, but because He intentionally chose to do it this way. So, in the end, a very old universe may not necessarily contradict **Genesis 1**,

1. A very old universe doesn't necessarily contradict the Bible, because Genesis 1 could be interpreted as a long period of time without compromising the meaning of the word “day.” However, evolution's requirement of an old universe eliminates interpreting the word “day” in Genesis 1 as a 24-hour period—something Scripture does not do.

- ✎ ...but evolution's *requirement* of an old universe does contradict a biblical understanding of the Creator.<sup>1</sup>



CONTAINER WITH  
LETTER TILES

(DISPLAY **EVOLUTION=CHANCE.**)

A key part of evolution is that the increasing complexity of all things has come about through “natural processes” involving the random combinations of matter...all things got to be the way they are by chance. Just from a practical point of view, does this seem to make sense?

(Quickly demonstrate using a container of **letter tiles**. Close your eyes and put your hands in the bowl.)

*Pretend for a moment that these tiles are tiny matter, like atoms. According to evolution, this matter will randomly combine in different ways by chance over a very long period of time, and form the right combinations to make things that are increasingly complex.*

*Does this really work? Why not? What happened when you picked the letters randomly by chance? [You got something that didn't make sense.]*

- ✎ Suggest the following scenario: You wanted to form the following three words in order: MATTER, TIME, CHANCE through the random selection of the tiles.
- ✎ The probability of choosing these 16 letters in that order is 1 in  $2 \times 10^{23}$ .
- ✎ That means, the chances of your happening to choose these 16 letters in that order is 1 in 200,000,000,000,000,000,000,000.
- ✎ In other words, the probability for all practical purposes is zero.

Choosing these 16 letters in that order is really simple when compared to the complexity of the number and order of molecules necessary for even one living cell. The more complex something is the smaller the probability it could happen by chance, even if you had 10 billion years and trillions of particles of matter.

But our evaluation of this part of evolution should not be based ultimately on whether it makes sense or not. Rather, we need to see if it measures up to the final and absolute authority of the Bible.

- ✎ Ask the students to look at **Genesis 1:3-26** again.

Do they see randomness or chance?

What do they see?

*Was it as if God established some kind of “game” parameters: created matter and time, and then simply set them free to see what would happen when they combined in different ways? No. **Genesis 1** does not give us a game of choosing tiles at random.*

- ✎ Ask the students to turn to **Jeremiah 10:12**.

*Jeremiah 10:12—It is he who made the earth by his power, who established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding stretched out the heavens.*

*What is this verse emphasizing?* [God's power, wisdom, and understanding in creating the heavens and earth]

- 🔑 God's “wisdom” and “understanding” imply intentional design and purpose. Our beginning activity displayed the opposite, and the results were predictable: nonsense. God created the world by His perfect design and plan. Nothing was left to chance. God had a plan for the universe, and He accomplished that plan perfectly through His infinite wisdom, power, and understanding.

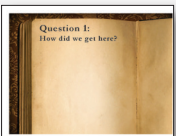


(DISPLAY **GOD'S WORD.**)

Quickly point out that each of these verses emphasizes God's wisdom, design, and purposeful intention in creation:

- 🔑 *Psalm 74:16-17—Yours is the day, yours also the night; you have established the heavenly lights and the sun. You have fixed all the boundaries of the earth; you have made summer and winter.*
- 🔑 *Psalm 104:24—O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all.*
- 🔑 *Proverbs 16:4a—The Lord has made everything for its purpose.*

*Do we see some changes in created things over time? Yes. Your pet dog is different from its relative, the wolf. There have been small changes over time in horses, birds, and fish. Some things no longer exist, like dinosaurs. But none of these changes are by chance. All are by the design, purpose, and power of God. As the Bible states: Not even a sparrow dies apart from God's design and purpose (**Matthew 10:29**).*



(DISPLAY **QUESTION 1.**)

*How did we get here?*

- 🔑 (Click, and point the students to the fill-in-the-blank answer in the **journal**.)  
The God of the Bible spoke everything into existence by His power, wisdom, and understanding.



DVD AND PLAYER

Point out that many people do not believe this truth. And evolution is not the only lie regarding this question.

(DISPLAY **HOW DID WE GET HERE.**)

Every person is looking at this question through a type of “lens” or worldview.

- ✎ For example, Hindus and Buddhists and have creation stories, too.
- ✎ But none of these is a BIBLICAL Worldview OF CREATION.

In our culture, evolution happens to be the most prevalent view presented in schools and in areas of science.

(Play *Expelled* video clip.)

*Some people believe evolution because they want to deny God's existence, and therefore must come up with an alternate answer to the question of how things came into existence.*

*Some people believe evolution because they are mistakenly equating a human understanding of science and the Bible, as if both have equal authority. So if science says “evolution is true,” somehow you must accommodate this thinking. But the Bible is to be the final authority for all that is true—not a human understanding of science. If some scientific “fact,” such as “random processes,” clearly contradicts the Bible, then it is not true, no matter how many people believe it.*

Emphasize that God wants us to see and understand the truth of all life more clearly. We don't need a different kind of lens to understand how we came to exist—the lens of science. Although science can be a good and useful tool for discovering new and amazing things about God's world, it is not the final authority for what is true. Only the Bible is, and we can stand with absolute confidence in the truth that, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the small group application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** Evolution is the result of a worldview.

**Think About It:** Have the students turn to Lesson 10 in the **journal**. Review the definition of evolution. Explain that evolution is the result of a worldview—one that is sometimes called a “naturalistic, materialistic, or secular” worldview. This worldview tries to explain the existence of the world apart from the God of the Bible. For most people in our country, evolution is the most common explanation, and it is considered the most reasonable and truthful. *Why does it seem like some of the most educated people believe evolution to be true, rather than the Bible? If a person says they believe the Bible to*

*be true and evolution to be a lie, how might some people respond? [See **1 Corinthians 1:27-29**; **1 Corinthians 3:19-20**; and **Jeremiah 9:23-24**.]*

**Examine Your Heart:** *If you believe the truth of the Bible concerning how the world came into existence, how might others view you? How could you respond? Are you remembering why they do not see and love the truth? Is there any way in which you could lovingly help them?*

**Live It:** Pray for those you know who do not believe in God's Creatorship. Pray that you would be able to talk with them about the order and design you see in the world—the design of a good and sovereign Creator.

- **Truth Statement:** Belief in evolution can damage the way we view other things—such as the value of human life.

**Think About It:** Have the students suppose for a moment that evolution was true, and everything came about by natural forces involving matter, chance, and time. *If this were true, then will there be anything that doesn't change? Will people continue to exist, or will we change into something else over time? Could you say that one kind of thing, like a monkey, is any less important than another thing, like a person? One of the tenets of evolution is "survival of the fittest." What does that mean for you if you're sick, weak, tiny, or old?* Point out that, for many people, belief in evolution also changes the way in which people understand other things—it's not just about how the world came into existence!

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you see any evidence in our culture in which the acceptance of evolution may lead to an unbiblical view of the value of people and things? [e.g., abortion, animal rights, the absence of moral absolutes, eugenics, euthanasia, etc.] Does this make evolution seem more or less appealing to you? Why? Do you ever find yourself thinking about people's worth in terms of how "fit" they are, disregarding those who don't seem as capable or competent?*

**Live It:** Pray that you would see the value of every human being with whom you come into contact each day. Pray that you would be a light of God's truth, because you treat people with dignity, even if they are old, weak, sick, or tiny. *Who can you treat with dignity this week?*

- **Truth Statement:** Christians can give a reasonable answer to those around them, and share the truth with those who don't believe.

**Think About It:** Ask the students where they have come in contact with evolution (e.g., school, books, television, museums, etc.).

**Examine Your Heart:** *Are you ever ashamed to speak the truth when the topic of evolution comes up? Or do you have a reasonable answer for those who believe in evolution? How do you respond when someone explains the world by the theory of evolution? Have*



*you learned how to challenge someone who believes the world came into existence simply through natural processes? (The “At Home” section of the **journal** for this lesson will provide a list of helpful resources.)*

**Live It:** With your small group, think of ways that studying science could help you to explain what you believe. What scientific tools could help? [e.g., microscopes help us to see the complexity and design of even the tiniest life forms; understanding the water cycle can help us be more amazed by God's design and provision for all living things] Science is meant to help us better understand God's creative work, not to remove God from His work.

- **Truth Statement:** God's truth is something that changes people over time as their minds are transformed by God's Word.

**Think About It:** Why might some Christians accept evolution as true? When God causes a person to see, understand, and love the truth of Jesus, does that person automatically see and understand the truth of everything else clearly? Why not? [We still have a sin nature, and Satan still tempts us to believe lies.] How can we guard our hearts against this? Read and discuss **Romans 12:2**.

**Examine Your Heart:** *How can we help one another grow in this way? What influences might we need to guard against? What influences would we want to be immersed in? Why is the Bible—reading and studying it—key to growing in God's truth?*

**Live It:** *What is one influence you'd like to remove from your life? What will you do about it this week? What is one influence you'd like to listen to more closely, and why?*

- **Truth Statement:** Although there is one answer to the question “Who created the earth?,” Christians do have different perspectives about *how* He created it.

**Think About It:** Point out that when it comes to how the world came into existence, there is one clear, knowable, true answer: *The God of the Bible created the heavens and earth and everything in it by His power and wisdom.* However, there are areas within that answer in which Christians might have disagreements. [e.g., Some Christians believe that God created the world in six literal 24-hour days, and that the world is young—only thousands of years old. Other Christians believe the “days” mentioned in **Genesis 1** are actually periods of time, and therefore the world may be millions or even billions of years old. In either case, the Bible is still true—it is our interpretation of the truth that is sometimes in error. In our lifetime, we may not know which interpretation is the actual truth. What is most important is that Christians hold to the essential truth as stated in **Jeremiah 10:12**.]

**Examine Your Heart:** *When someone expresses a different view about how God created the heavens and earth, what is your response? Do you feel the need to argue or be in the right when you discuss your differences with other Christians in these less essential areas?*

**Live It:** Pray for a gracious and humble attitude when you interact with others who differ from you in minor areas.

- **Truth Statement:** God is the Creator, but He was never created by anyone or anything.

**Think About It:** Point out that some evolutionists argue against a biblical view of creation by asking Christians the question: *You say that God created all things. But where did God come from? How would you respond?* [See **Psalm 90:2** and **Job 36:26**.]

**Examine Your Heart:** *Have you ever doubted that God exists? What causes these doubts to spring up in your mind or heart? What does the Bible say about doubts? What proofs have you seen or experienced of God's existence?* [See **Psalm 14:1** and **Isaiah 44:6**.]

**Live It:** With a prayer partner, pray honestly about any doubts that you have, and ask God to reveal Himself to you. Then look this week for His answer. If your prayer is sincere, He will reveal himself to you (**Matthew 7:7**).

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week. Also, if time permits, ask them about how they applied one thing from last week's lesson.**

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 10

“Evolutionary Trinity” article

# The Environment

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > God is the owner, sustainer, and ruler of all creation.
- > God created people in His own image and likeness in order that we might have a unique role in God's world.
- > Man is to have God-honoring dominion over other living things.
- > God has placed a curse on this world.
- > When Jesus returns, the curse will be removed and He will restore all creation.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                 |                     |                     |
|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Psalm 24:1   | 4. Genesis 1:27-28  | 7. Revelation 21:1a |
| 2. Hebrews 1:3a | 5. Romans 8:20, 22  |                     |
| 3. Psalm 103:19 | 6. Revelation 21:5a |                     |

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## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| > PowerPoint Slides® for Lesson 11                    | > "Blood, Gore, and Global Warming" article (one per student) |
| > "Environment In the News" handout (one per student) |   |
| > Parent Memo for Lesson 11 (one per student)         |   |

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## OTHER VISUALS:

- > Bible

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## PREPARATION FOR TEACHERS AND SMALL GROUP LEADERS:

If possible, read "The Cornwall Declaration on Environmental Stewardship" before the lesson (found at [cornwallalliance.org](http://cornwallalliance.org) under "Key Documents" for "Cornwall Declaration." It will provide helpful context. Although not all evangelical Christians would agree with all points in the document, it does provide a simple, concise statement concerning a biblical view of the environment.

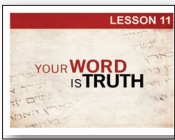
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## PREPARATION FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS:

The following two articles might be helpful for your small group application time. If you choose to use them, print them for the students in your small groups to read:

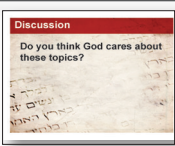
Derrick Z. Jackson, *Malaria, DDT, and desperation in Uganda* (June 27, 2009). <[http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial\\_opinion/oped/articles/2009/06/27/malaria\\_ddt\\_and\\_desperation\\_in\\_uganda/](http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2009/06/27/malaria_ddt_and_desperation_in_uganda/)>.

Wall Street Journal, *Malaria, Politics and DDT* (May 26, 2009). <<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124303288779048569.html>>.



(DISPLAY **LESSON 11.**)

## Small Group Discussion (5-10 minutes)



(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

Give each student a copy of **Environment in the News** handout, and choose students to read the short articles:

1. Humans are just one of the millions of species on Earth, but we use up almost a quarter of the sun's energy captured by plants—the most of any species.

The human dominance of this natural resource is affecting other species, reducing the amount of energy available to them by almost 10 percent, scientists report.

Researchers said that the findings showed humans are using “a remarkable share” of the earth's plant productivity “to meet the needs and wants of one species...”<sup>1</sup>

2. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said Monday that climate change is the greatest challenge facing a world beset by crises and called on governments to reach a deal on the environment at a meeting in Denmark later this year.

Ban said the world has “less than 10 years to halt (the) global rise in greenhouse gas emissions if we are to avoid catastrophic consequences for people and the planet.”<sup>2</sup>

3. More than 250 experts, scientists and government delegates from 13 tiger range countries this week called for immediate action to save tigers before the species disappears from the wild, citing the urgent need for increased protection against tiger poaching and trafficking in tiger parts.<sup>3</sup>

4. A new EPA study shows concentrations of toxic chemicals in fish tissue from lakes and reservoirs in nearly all 50 U.S. states. For the first time, EPA is able to estimate the percentage of lakes and reservoirs nationwide that have fish containing potentially harmful levels of chemicals such as mercury and PCBs.<sup>4</sup>

*To what general issue or topic would each of these four news items be categorized? [Environmental issues] When you look at the four articles, do any seem more urgent than others? Why or why not? Do any concern you personally? Do you think God cares about these topics? If yes, in what way? If not, why not?*

*Can you think of other pressing environmental topics in the news? Why do you think a growing number of people are concerned about these issues? In the first article, what kind of perspective does the author seem to have regarding people versus other creatures? [an evolutionary worldview, in which humans are not unique but just another animal species] Is this a biblical view? Why or why not? [No, it does not reflect people as a special or distinct creation of God, as Scripture does.]*

1. Leung, Chee Chee. “Human greed takes lion's share of solar energy.” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, July 3, 2007. <<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2007/07/02/1183351126304.html>>, (accessed June 29, 2010).

2. Swaine, Jon. “Ban Ki-moon warns of catastrophe without world deal on climate change.” *The Telegraph*, August 10, 2009. <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/environment/climatechange/6004553/Ban-Ki-moon-warns-of-catastrophe-without-world-deal-on-climate-change.html>>, (accessed June 29, 2010).

3. World Wildlife Fund. “Tiger experts call for urgent action to save species.” October 30, 2009. <[http://wwf.panda.org/wwf\\_news/?178922/Tiger-experts-call-for-urgent-action-to-save-species](http://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?178922/Tiger-experts-call-for-urgent-action-to-save-species)>, (accessed June 29, 2010).

4. United States Environmental Protection Agency. “EPA Study Reveals Widespread Contamination of Fish in U.S. Lakes and Reservoirs.” November 10, 2009. <<http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/d0cfc618525a9efb85257359003fb69d/62b53c67bc92ef878525766a004b3456?OpenDocument>>, (accessed June 29, 2010).

## Large Group Lesson



(DISPLAY **ENVIRONMENT.**)

Each of the news items we read was based on actual events relating to environmental concerns.

- ☞ In the context of the news stories, the environment refers to the world in which we live and how created things interact with one another in the world. The environment has become an increasingly important topic throughout the world.



(DISPLAY **TRUTH.**)

Remind the students that a worldview is a certain way in which someone sees and understands the world and everything in it. There are many worldviews, but only one worldview will give us a right and true perspective—a biblical worldview.

- ☞ *What views of nature and man were represented in the news items we read? Were they written with a biblical worldview in mind? Why or why not? (Allow brief responses.)*

*But is it even possible to look at something like climate change through the lens of Scripture? Does the Bible talk about climate change, toxic chemicals harming fish, or the possible extinction of tigers?*

The Bible is not intended to be an encyclopedia where you simply look up a certain topic. But the Bible does give us the “lenses” through which to see and interpret all of life, and this includes environmental issues.

*To begin with, we are going to look in the Bible for what the Bible does clearly teach about the environment. (Direct the students to follow along in the **journal.**)*



(DISPLAY **TRUTH 1.**)

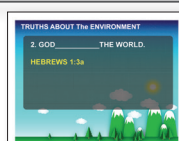
1. God \_\_\_\_\_ the world.

***Psalm 24:1—***

- ☞ *The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.*

*What important truth is stated in this verse? [Everything belongs to God.] Why does the earth and everything in it belong to God? [because He created everything; **Genesis 1:1**]*

- ☞ So God owns the world.



(DISPLAY **TRUTH 2.**)

2. God \_\_\_\_\_ the world.

**Hebrews 1:3a—**

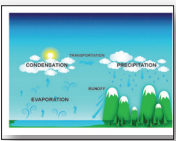
- ☞ *[Jesus] is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.*

*What important truth is given in this verse? [Jesus is God, and He upholds the universe.]  
What does it mean to uphold the universe?*

The word “upholds” doesn’t just mean to “hold up” or support something. It also means maintain it and keep it going. In other words,

- ☞ ...God sustains the world.

He supports the world by the word of His power, and He keeps everything going, every moment of time. Things like the water cycle...



(DISPLAY **WATER CYCLE.**)

...carbon cycle, and solar energy from the sun are all forms of God's sustaining work.

God planned and designed the relationships between everything in the environment, and it is God who upholds and sustains these relationships. The sun shines. Grass uses the sun’s energy along with air, water, and soil in order to grow and reproduce. The rain falls to water the plants. The cows eat the grass, and eventually produce food for people to eat and enjoy. This is God's way of sustaining His creatures.



(DISPLAY **TRUTH 3.**)

3. God \_\_\_\_\_ over the world.

**Psalm 103:19—**

- ☞ *The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.*

*What truth about God is stated in these verses? Ultimately, who will decide whether the earth cools down or warms up? Who will ultimately decide if an animal disappears from the earth, or whether the earth has 8 billion people instead of 6 billion people? God will decide. That is because God sovereignly rules over the world.*

- ☞ *But God’s rule does not give human beings an excuse to be wasteful with the earth, as we will see.*



(DISPLAY **TRUTH 4.**)

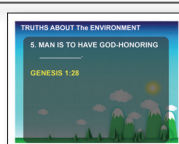
4. Man is God’s unique \_\_\_\_\_.

**Genesis 1:27—**

- 🔊 *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

Emphasize that man (human kind) is God's unique image bearer.

- 🔊 That means that we have been created to be like God in certain ways. We are different than any other creature. We have a value and worth that is distinct and greater than all other created things. We are not to see humans as simply one of many living species. Human beings are different from animals in many ways. For example, humans have creativity—they can draw pictures of plants and animals. They have the ability to think and reason at elevated levels, the ability to communicate, express emotion, and be self-reflective, and the ability to have deep relationships with others. They make moral choices, and have an eternal destiny.



(DISPLAY **TRUTH 5.**)

5. Man is to have God-honoring \_\_\_\_\_.

**Genesis 1:28—**

- 🔊 *And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*

*Who is “them” in this verse? [Adam and Eve, men and women] Although God gave the command to Adam and Eve, it applies to all the generations that followed Adam and Eve, and to us today.*

*What does “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” mean?*

*What does the second part of verse 28 mean, specifically the words “subdue” and “dominion”? Did God give this instruction to any other creatures? [No.]*

To subdue and dominate means to take charge of something in order to rightly manage it. It does not mean you carelessly use or abuse it. God commands His unique image bearers to have God-honoring dominion...

- 🔊 ...over the other living things. We are to carefully manage and use the environment in ways that honor God. This is sometimes referred to as “stewardship,” as it involves carrying out specific duties in a thoughtful and responsible manner. For example, humans have the ability to subdue a piece of rocky land in order to cultivate it and harvest crops for food. We can take a dog and train it to lead blind people. We can build dams across rivers that provide electricity for the needs of people. But there is another important biblical truth we must keep in mind with this truth:





(DISPLAY **TRUTH 6.**)

6. The world is under a \_\_\_\_\_.

**Romans 8:20, 22**<sup>5</sup>

✎ *For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope...<sup>22</sup>For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.*

*“Subjected to futility” means to be given over to brokenness, decay, and death. Do you understand what these verses mean? Who subjected the creation, and why did He subject it? [God subjected the creation as a result of the sin entering the world.] How do they help us to rightly see and understand the environment?*

The world in which we live is under a curse.

✎ God subjected the world to this curse in response to Adam and Eve’s sin in the garden of Eden. This world in which we live will not look or act as it did before the fall. Man is sinful, and not all of his decisions will be good management decisions, and God-honoring. But even apart from the decisions of man, there will be death, pollution, famines, and harmful climate events—like hurricanes, volcanoes, and forest fires. Because of this curse, it is as if all creation is groaning.



(DISPLAY **SIX TRUTHS**)

*So how can these six biblical truths serve as a guide for us when we confront environmental issues? Let's use a real life example.*

### Illustration:



(DISPLAY **EAGLE.**)

*The first thing we should recognize about eagles is they have been created by God and belong to God. God has created the environment in a way that will sustain eagles, providing them with food, water, and places to live. As God's image bearer, man should treat eagles in a God-honoring way.*



(DISPLAY **MOSQUITO.**)

God also created mosquitoes. They belong to Him, too.

However, because the earth is now subjected to a curse due to sin, many mosquitoes spread disease. One of these diseases is malaria.

5. “Groaning in the pains of childbirth” refers to the grief that must take place before the new heavens and earth are wrought by God.



(DISPLAY **MALARIA.**)

- ☞ Every year approximately 1 million people die from malaria. Most of these people live in Africa.

As God's unique image bearer, man has been given the ability to discover and create chemicals that can kill harmful mosquitoes to help prevent millions of people from getting malaria.

*One of these chemicals is something called DDT.*



(DISPLAY **DDT.**)

*Many scientists believe that when used in small amounts, DDT could prevent millions of cases of malaria every year, and prevent hundreds of thousands of deaths of people.*

However, in many countries around the world, DDT has been banned.

- ☞ And people will not use it, even though it might save the lives of many people. Why? Because it is believed by some scientists to threaten the survival of certain animals, especially birds such as eagles. Many years ago, bald eagles almost became extinct and some people believe it was because of the use of DDT.<sup>6</sup> (Direct students to the journal for related questions.)

*How can the six biblical truths help us to rightly understand this issue, and what should be done?*

*Should the truth that people, and not eagles, are God's unique image bearers guide our perspective? Yes. People are more valuable than eagles. Our primary concern should be for the 1 million people who are dying every year from malaria.*

*But does that mean people should simply disregard the effect DDT might have on animals like eagles? No. Whenever possible, man should try to manage creation in a way that does not harm God's creatures.*

It is very important for Christians to have a biblical worldview of the environment. We are not to simply be conformed to the thinking of this world. What are some of these other worldly perspectives?



(DISPLAY FOR **LIES 1.**)

## 1. LIE: The earth belongs to all creatures.

6. This was one of the main contentions stated in the book *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson, which ushered in the modern environmental movement. There is current debate about whether DDT was indeed the main factor in the thinning of bird eggshells, resulting in decreased populations.

☞ (Truth: God owns the world.)

**2. LIE: All living things have equal value.** *Eagles should have the same rights as people.*

☞ (Truth: Man is God's unique image bearer.)



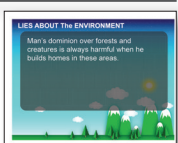
(DISPLAY **LIES 2.**)

**3. LIE: Man should not interfere with nature.** *He shouldn't be making and using chemicals like DDT.*

☞ (Truth: Man is to have God-honoring dominion over nature.)

**4. LIE: There are too many people in the world.** *Diseases like malaria help to reduce the population.*

☞ (Truth: God has commanded man to be fruitful and multiply.)



(DISPLAY **LIES 3.**)

**5. LIE: Man's dominion over forests and creatures is always harmful when he builds homes in these areas.** *People shouldn't live where there are lots of mosquitoes.*

☞ (Truth: Man is God's unique image bearer and is to have God-honoring dominion over nature. The world is under a curse.)

The use of DDT to prevent malaria demonstrates how difficult it is as God's image bearers to rightly manage creation in a God-honoring way. Placing a priority on human life may mean that hard choices need to be made—choices that may harm another creature, like the eagle. For example, in the Middle Ages thousands and thousands of people were dying of the bubonic plague. Rats were found to carry the disease. Human life takes priority over the lives of rats, so people began to exterminate the rats. But there is another truth that should guide our decisions and give us great hope.



(DISPLAY **TRUTH 7.**)

7. God will \_\_\_\_\_.

**8. Revelation 21:5a—**

☞ *And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."*

**Revelation 21:1a—**

☞ *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...*

*What is the wonderful hope stated in these verses?*

🔑 [Restore and renew]



(DISPLAY **BLANK SLIDE.**)

Read the following quote:

*Everything suffering and death takes away from us [Christians], God will give back to us, and in better condition.<sup>7</sup>*

Although the world is currently under a God-given curse, a day is coming in the future when Jesus will return, remove the curse, and restore and renew all things. There will be no more death, disease, famines, pollution, or extinctions. There will be no more dilemmas about how to save people without harming eagles. Until that time, Christians must do their best to be God-honoring in the ways we subdue and have dominion over God's world.

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the small group application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** Man is to have God-honoring dominion over creation.

**Think About It:** Review the seven biblical truths about the environment from this lesson. Then review one of the “In the News” articles. Evaluate the environmental concern stated in the article in terms of biblical truth. *Do these truths give a guide and standard for seeing these concerns?* [You may want to use article 1 as a clear example of an unbiblical worldview.] *Does that mean that we shouldn't care about how much energy we use, or whether or not tigers disappear? Can you give one or more reasons why there might be fewer and fewer tigers in an area?* [e.g., people moving into these areas, disease] *Are these necessarily reasons that don't honor God? Why not?*

**Examine Your Heart:** *Have you thought about whether you use and manage God's creation in a God-honoring way? What is one area where you tend to manage God's creation well? What is one area where you could do a better job of caring for God's creation?*

**Live It:** This week, determine one change you could make to better care for God's creation.

7. Ortlund, Raymond C., Jr. *Supernatural Living for Natural People*. (Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publications, 2001), 118.

• **Truth Statement:** God rules over the world.

**Think About It:** Many people who call themselves environmentalists, often blame the problems of pollution, hunger, climate change, etc. on the notion that the world is too populated—meaning that this earth is not able to support this many people. What biblical truths are they rejecting with this belief? (See **Genesis 9:1-3** and **Isaiah 46:9-10**.) Does this mean that Christians should simply ignore the problems of pollution, hunger, and the loss of wildlife? Read and discuss **Mark 12:29-31**.

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you love your neighbor in how you live and use God's creation? Are there any ways in which you are wasteful of God's creation? How can you make a God-honoring contribution to keeping the earth clean, or using a resource wisely?*

**Live It:** Notice some of your own habits—how do you dispose of common materials (e.g., disposable plastics, chewing gum, paper, old electronics, etc.)? What are your habits when visiting a park, walking in the neighborhood, etc.? Are you cruel to animals? Evaluate your habits and consider making any changes. With your small group, consider doing a service project together (e.g., cleaning up litter, or adopting a highway or stream, etc.) in an area of your community. (Be prepared with suggestions and try to make the plan a reality!)

• **Truth Statement:** God upholds the world.

**Think About It:** Point out that some people are very concerned with the environment, not because they want to honor God, but because they worship the creation instead of the Creator. Read and discuss **Romans 1:21-23, 25**. Do you ever honor created things above God? What might this look like in someone's life? Reread the second article in the "In the News" handout. Why would someone who is not a Christian have a fear of global warming or climate change? Even if man-made global warming is true, why shouldn't Christians be afraid? Read and discuss **Matthew 10:28-31** and **Genesis 8:21-22**.

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you ever fear things like global warming or the future of the earth? What can help you to remember to trust God's sovereignty over the earth? How can you speak the truth in a loving way to those who reject the truth of the Bible concerning the environment?*

**Live It:** Pray with your small group that God would calm any fears you have about the earth's future, and pray for opportunities to be a witness to the biblical truth about the environment.

• **Truth Statement:** The world is under a curse.

**Think About It:** Read and discuss **Romans 8:18-22**. Should it surprise us that pollution exists, and that man sometimes does harmful destructive things to God's creation? Imagine if all people were suddenly removed from the earth—would that solve the problems in the environment? Why not? Who placed the curse on the earth? Who will

someday remove it? Read a description of this restored earth from **Isaiah 11:6-9**.

**Examine Your Heart:** *How have you been personally affected by the curse that has been placed on the earth? How does this affect your view of the new heavens and the new earth? If your heart is not excited about the new heavens and new earth, give reasons why.*

**Live It:** Pray with your small group, thanking God for the future heavens and earth, and asking him to help you to look forward to that day.

- **Truth Statement:** Man is to have God-honoring dominion over nature.

**Think About It:** Have the students think of at least 10 God-honoring uses for trees. What determines whether something is God-honoring or not? Does this particular use display a glimpse of God's glory in the world? Read **Psalms 104:10-18**. What do these verses tell us about how God acts to sustain the environment? According to these verses, would it be God-honoring for man to knowingly and intentionally pollute the water? Would it be God-honoring to cut down all the trees?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Are you using part of God's creation in the way that it was intended? (Do you eat apples as food, or use them to throw at squirrels?) Does your use of creation serve people and encourage awe and worship of God? Does it help point people to supremely treasure Jesus? Is your definition of "God-honoring dominion" sometimes skewed by your own sinful greed or laziness?*

**Live It:** With your group, come up with a definition of what it means to use creation in a "God-honoring" way. This week, look for ways to honor God with creation. Pray for opportunities with your small group.

- **Truth Statement:** God created people in His own image and likeness in order that we might have a unique role in God's world.

**Think About It:** Review the problem of DDT and malaria as presented in the lesson. Ask the students what they would decide to do concerning DDT and malaria. *What would be God-honoring? Is there another choice that would both protect the birds, but still save people? If not, what should or should not be done? Would your decision reflect a biblical view of God, people, and other created things?* (Refer to the seven truths about the environment presented in the lesson.) *What other information would you want to explore before deciding what is a God-honoring decision? How can science be a helpful tool in this regard? However, why must we be careful when using "scientific facts"? Do all scientists study a subject from a purely objective point of view?* [No, each scientist has assumptions based on his or her own biases.]

If you printed the articles from the *Boston Globe* and the *Wall Street Journal*, both referenced in the beginning of this lesson with website information, hand them out to your students to read for more information about this issue.

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you desire to have a biblical worldview when faced with issues like the one we just talked about? What could help you to develop a more biblical worldview when it comes to issues in the environment? Are there any resources or people to help you learn more about this?*

**Live It:** This week, find one article or discussion in the news that relates to the environment, and talk to your parents or mentor about it. What is the biblical worldview on this topic? How do you know? (Use Scripture!)

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week. Also, if time permits, ask them about how they applied one thing from last week's lesson.**

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 11

"Blood, Gore, and Global Warming" article



# Being a Man

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > God created all people in His image, but He also created us distinctly different as men and women.
- > God has designed each man to be a servant-like leader, provider, and protector.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                                |                |                       |
|--------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Genesis 1:27                | 3. Genesis 3:9 | 5. Titus 1:7-8        |
| 2. Genesis 2:5-7, 15-17, 18-23 | 4. Romans 5:12 | 6. Ephesians 5:23, 25 |

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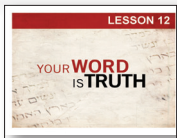
## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 12            | > "From Boy to Man: The Marks of Manhood" article (one per male student) |
| > Parent Memo for Lesson 12 (one per student) |  |

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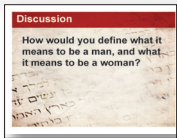
## OTHER VISUALS:

- > Bible



(DISPLAY **LESSON 12.**)

## Small Group Discussion (5-10 minutes)



(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

Explain that an article entitled *Can a Boy Wear a Skirt to School?* appeared in *The New York Times* in November 2009. Read the following quotes from the article:

*In recent years, a growing number of teenagers have been dressing to articulate—or confound—gender identity and sexual orientation. Certainly they have been confounding school officials, whose responses have ranged from indifference to applause to bans.*

*Last week, a cross-dressing Houston senior was sent home because his wig violated the school's dress code rule that a boy's hair may not be "longer than the bottom of a regular shirt collar." In October, officials at a high school in Cobb County, Ga., sent home a boy who favored wigs, makeup and skinny jeans.*

*"This generation is really challenging the gender norms we grew up with," said*

*Diane Ehrensaft, an Oakland psychologist who writes about gender. "A lot of youths say they won't be bound by boys having to wear this or girls wearing that. For them, gender is a creative playing field." "Adults," she added, "become the gender police through dress codes." Dress is always code, particularly for teenagers eager to telegraph evolving identities.<sup>1</sup>*

*Should schools be allowed to ban certain types of dress in guys and girls? Why, or why not?*

*Apart from the obvious physical differences, how would you define what it means to be a man, and what it means to be a woman?*

1. Hoffman, Jan. "Can a Boy Wear a Skirt to School?" *The New York Times*, November 8, 2009. < <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/08/fashion/08cross.html>> (accessed June 21, 2010).

## Large Group Lesson

Remind students that they learned about the environment in Lesson 11. There are many different worldviews on the environment, and one's worldview has implications for how one sees and understands the roles and relationships of all of God's creatures in this world. However, only the Bible provides the truth. It is the standard and measure by which to test all views. Only a biblical worldview will allow us to correctly see and understand everything in life. Today's news article that was read in small group time demonstrates the implications of another worldview.



(DISPLAY **WORLDVIEWS.**)

The *Can a Boy Wear a Skirt to School* story tells about a particular worldview—a worldview on what it means to be a man and a woman. It is characterized by this short statement in the article:

🔑 “...gender is a creative playing field...”

*What do you think is meant by that statement?* (Allow students to respond.)

Our culture increasingly views being a man or woman as a creative playing field with each person defining and expressing manhood and womanhood in his or her own way. And, as the article points out, that can sometimes mean a blurring of what is seen as typically male or female—guys dressing like girls and girls dressing like guys. But what does the Bible have to say about being a man and being a woman? Is it really a “creative playing field”?

🔑 Have the students turn to **Genesis 1:27**.

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*Genesis 1:27—So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

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*According to this verse, are men and women the same in some way? In what way?* [They were both created in the image of God.]

*So why didn't God just say, “So God made people in His own image, in the image of God He created them.”?* (Allow the students to respond.)

God created two distinct image-bearers: male and female. Both are equally made in His image and are of equal worth, but they are also distinct and different from one another. That is why the verse reads: male and female He created them. What is the difference? (Direct the students to the portion of the **journal** where they can answer these questions during the class discussion.)



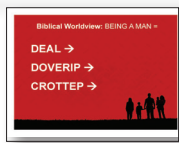
(DISPLAY **MALE OR FEMALE?**)

One of the differences between men and women is physical appearance and body structure. We are alike in some ways, but very different in other ways. For example, men have the ability to be stronger than women. If you watch the Olympics, the strongest man in the world will always be much stronger than the strongest woman. The fastest man will always be faster than the fastest woman. But even the strongest man cannot have a baby. Only women can have babies.

*But are those the only kinds of differences—physical appearance and structure? Suppose a woman cuts her hair short, exercises to gain more strength, and dresses like a man. Will she be a man?*

*And suppose a young man wears a skirt to school, will he now be a woman?*

The difference between men and women goes much deeper than physical appearance and structure. It is about being designed differently in order to play distinct roles. Therefore, this issue is relevant to all of us, no matter how you may dress or what age you are. To begin with, you will first examine what it means to be a man.



(DISPLAY **MAN.**)

There are three words on this visual with scrambled letters:

DEAL → \_\_\_\_\_

DOVERIP → \_\_\_\_\_

CROTTEP → \_\_\_\_\_

These three words when properly unscrambled will state the truth of the distinct role God designed men to fulfill. As you read the following text, you will be looking for these truths.

- 🔊 Have the students turn to **Genesis 2:5-7, 15-17, 18-23** and choose three students (guys, if possible) to quickly read each portion:

## Student 1:

*When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, <sup>6</sup>and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground—<sup>7</sup>then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.*

## Student 2:

*The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. <sup>16</sup>And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, <sup>17</sup>but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”*

Ask the following questions:

*According to these verses, who was created first?* [the man]

*What job did God first give to the man?* [working in the garden]

*What warning did God give to the man?* [not to eat from the one tree]

*What was the purpose for this warning?* [to protect the man from death]

## Student 3:

*Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” <sup>19</sup>Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its*

name. <sup>20</sup>The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. <sup>21</sup>So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. <sup>22</sup>And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup>Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

Ask the following questions:

*Did God form the woman in the same way in which He formed the man? [No, she was taken out of man.]*

*Did she name herself? Who took the initiative in naming her? Did God stop the man from doing this? Why not? [God wanted the man to take the lead and name her just as he had named the animals.]*

*Who do you think is now responsible for protecting the woman from the danger of eating from the one tree? Who had God entrusted with the warning, and who would be held responsible if the warning was not heeded?*

*In what ways is the man providing leadership and protection for the woman?*

Quickly read or summarize **Genesis 3:9**, in which God calls out to Adam after the fall. (Also read **Romans 5:12**.)

*Genesis 3:9—But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"*

*Romans 5:12—Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned...*

The text we read serves to point out why God created men to be distinctly different than women. God designed men differently so men would have a distinct role of headship to perform three distinctly masculine tasks. Ask the students to guess what three words the letters spell when unscrambled. Give them a few moments, then display the completed visual, pointing to the place in the **journal** to write these tasks:



(Display **MAN 2**.)

DEAL → LEAD

🔑 DOVERIP → PROVIDE

🔑 CROTTEP → PROTECT



(DISPLAY **LEADER**.)

*So what does it mean to be a leader?*

As was seen in the text from Genesis, being a leader means taking initiative and assuming responsibility.

- ☞ Adam wasn't called to sit around the garden and wait for Eve to say something like: "Shouldn't we be getting to work in the garden today?" Adam was to take the initiative and bear the responsibility for getting the job done, even as Eve helped and assisted him.

Many people do not understand this definition of leadership and distort it in two main ways. One way is to view men as being superior to women. Some men affirm this view and express it by treating women as inferior, and treating them harshly or crudely, or as servants. The second distortion is to view male leadership as something oppressive to women, and therefore to be avoided. Some men affirm this view and express it by being passive and avoiding responsibility, waiting for or allowing women to take charge. One author describes these two distorted extremes as seeing men as either barbarians or wimps.



(DISPLAY **God's Word.**)

Before reading **Titus 1:7-8** and **Ephesians 5:23, 25**, explain that the first passage describes what qualities a man who leads in the church is to have. The second describes the qualities of male leadership in marriage.

- ☞ *Titus 1:7-8—For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, <sup>8</sup>but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined.*
- ☞ *Ephesians 5:23, 25—For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior...<sup>25</sup>Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.*

*Do either of these examples describe a harsh and domineering man, a kind of barbarian? Do either of these examples describe a man who is passive or wimpy?*



(DISPLAY **PROVIDER.**)

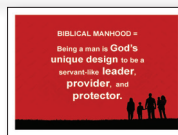
In what ways do you see men being unique providers? Think of your own dad or other dads you know, how do they demonstrate provision for their families on a daily basis? [going to work to earn money, making sure there is a place to live and food on the table, etc.] (Point to the **journal**, where the students can take notes during this discussion.)



(DISPLAY **PROTECTOR.**)

*If something goes “bump” in the night, should your dad’s natural impulse be to wake your mom and tell her to go check it out? No, he should feel a sense of responsibility for protecting the family. Your mom might follow or assist him, but it is his responsibility to protect the family.*

*And young men, if you are walking down the street with your sister, and some guy tries to harass her, are you to simply let her fend for herself? No, you are to try and protect her as best you can.*



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL MANHOOD 1.**)

Being a godly man involves embracing God’s unique design to be a servant-like leader, provider, and protector.

Direct the students to this part of the **journal** to complete the definition of Biblical Manhood listed there. Emphasize that God created men to be different from women. We are not the same. God designed men differently so they would serve a distinct role—one that is different from women. Gender is not some kind of creative playing field in which each person defines and expresses his or her own preferences. God has defined gender, men and women, and determines the parameters in which each is to be expressed. When you see a man and observe how he expresses himself, it should be very clearly and distinctly God’s design for a man—it shouldn’t be blurred or confusing.



(DISPLAY **OTHER WORLDVIEWS 1.**)

The news article we read at the start of class points out only one lie of Satan concerning what it means to be a man or woman. There are other views that are also wrong in their definitions and expressions. (Direct the students to this part of their **journal**.) Some of these are:

Men are more important than women.

☞ **Truth:** Both men and women are created in the image of God and are equal in worth or value.

Men are to dominate women.

☞ **Truth:** Men are to express servant-like leadership that protects women and provides for them.



(DISPLAY **OTHER WORLDVIEWS 2.**)



Men should be more passive and let women assume leadership.

🔑 **Truth:** Men are to practice godly leadership in relating to women.

Men should be more like women and assume more feminine qualities.

🔑 **Truth:** God created men and women differently, designing men to be masculine.

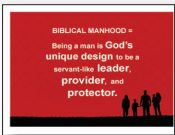


(DISPLAY **OTHER WORLDVIEWS 3.**)

Gender and roles are constantly evolving and changing.

🔑 **Truth:** Gender was designed by God; masculinity and femininity are permanent.

These other worldviews are lies about what it means to be a man. Only the Bible tells the truth about what it means to be a man, and God's design and intention for men.



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL MANHOOD 2.**)

Being a godly man involves embracing God's unique design to be a servant-like leader, provider, and protector.

*God is loving, good, and wise in how He designed men and women. His truth, when believed and lived out, is a wonderful gift. How is it a gift? Can you think of some positive expressions of God's unique design of being a man in our culture or church, or your home?*

Ask the students to give a few brief examples of how we see a biblical view of manhood demonstrated correctly in the world. [e.g., men going out to work—providers; men in roles of leadership, protection—policemen and soldiers; etc.] What examples do we see in our church? [e.g., men as the pastors and elders; men leading worship; men initiating prayer; watching over the teaching of the church; etc.] If possible, end the lesson with a brief personal story (or relevant testimony) that illustrates the goodness of God when biblical manhood is rightly expressed.

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the small group application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** Being a godly man involves embracing God's unique design to be a servant-like leader, provider, and protector.

**Think About It:** Review the definition of what it means to be a man. Next, read the texts listed on the "Qualities of Biblical Manhood" portion of the **journal** page. Each presents a characteristic of manhood. How do each of these qualities (e.g., love, humility, courage, strength, etc.) serve to shape the way in which God calls men to lead, provide, and

protect? If a man was very strong, but not loving and humble, what kind of leadership might he demonstrate? (See **Ephesians 5:22-25**.) How are these characteristics at odds with the world's image of a man?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you admire the Scriptural understanding of what it means to be a man? Or do you wish masculinity were defined differently? If so, what is the main cause of your hesitation?*

**Live It:** Look for godly examples of what it means to be a man this week. What stands out to you about these men? How do their lives reflect the gospel?

- **Truth Statement:** Being a godly man involves embracing God's unique design to be a servant-like leader, provider, and protector.

**Think About It:** Point out that God calls men to lead, provide, and protect in both physical and spiritual ways. What does that mean? How do men lead, provide, and protect in physical ways? How do men lead, provide, and protect in spiritual ways? (Read and discuss Paul's words to Timothy from **1 Timothy 4:6-12** and **1 Timothy 5:1-2**.)

**Examine Your Heart (guys):** *Are you growing and being trained to increasingly do these things in a godly and servant-like way? What are you doing to prepare for manhood? Are there things in your life that are hindering you? Suppose you have a passive or lazy attitude. Will that help you to grow toward manhood? Are you growing and being trained to lead in spiritual ways? How? How are you doing this in your own family as you relate to your mother and sisters?*

**Examine Your Heart (girls):** *Are you encouraging the young men and boys in your life to be godly and servant-like leaders, providers, and protectors? In what ways? Is there anything that hinders you from doing this? For example, do you like to be "in charge," rather than allowing your brother to take the lead when appropriate? Are you growing in how you act toward responding to men when they lead, provide, and protect? How will this be expressed differently within the family and with your father's leadership, as opposed to with other men? (Note: Women are called specifically to submit to their own husbands, and girls to their father, not just any man in general. However, women should have a respectful and submissive attitude toward all male leadership that is rightly expressed.)*

**Live It:** Choose one area this week where you want to work on being a godly man (guys), or encouraging men in leadership (girls). In the classroom this year, how could you demonstrate servant-like leadership to those around you?

- **Truth Statement:** Men and women were created to have different roles.

**Think About It:** If a young boy is given a stick, what is he likely to do with it? Pretend it's a sword or gun, or pretend that it is a fairy wand? If given a choice between a doll or a truck, what would a little boy choose to play with? Would little boys rather build things or have tea parties? Point out that these differences exist because God created men and women to be different from one another in important ways. How does the desire to play

with swords, trucks, and building sets help boys become men? Are there worldviews that attempt to change how gender is expressed? (For example, it is becoming more and more popular for guys to dress and look and act like girls.) Why would people want men to become more like girls?

**Examine Your Heart:** *How have you seen gender expressed in ways that are unbiblical? Are there any areas where you have tried to become more like the opposite gender? [e.g., girls wanting to act “tough” to compete with the guys, or guys acting passively and waiting for girls to take the lead] Do you conform to the thinking of this world when it comes to how gender is expressed? (See **Romans 12:1-2**.)*

**Live It:** Pray with your small group that you will be content with the gender God made you to be, and ask God for opportunities to grow in godliness as (guys/girls).

- **Truth Statement:** Being a leader means taking initiative and assuming responsibility in a servant-like manner.

**Think About It:** Recall the ways in which God’s design for men is correctly demonstrated in the world, the church, and the family. Next, give some examples of how God’s design for men is wrongly demonstrated (e.g., bullies, abusive men, men who are wimps, crudeness, laziness, men allowing women to take the leading roles in the church, etc.). Why does this happen in the world? What does it demonstrate?

**Examine Your Heart (guys):** *Are you more tempted to be passive or “wimpy” in your masculinity? Or are you more tempted to be domineering, or a “bully”? How would you like to change how you express your masculinity?*

**Examine Your Heart (girls):** *When men do not take the lead in a biblical manner (i.e., they are either wimps or bullies), what is an appropriate response? Do you tend to take charge when guys are wimpy, or get angry at bullies? Does the sin of men cause you to disregard God’s design for men and women? What might God want to change in your heart or thinking?*

**Live It:** Focus on one area this week where you would like to grow in godliness in your thinking about men and women.

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week. Also, if time permits, ask them about how they applied one thing from last week’s lesson.**

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 12

"From Boy to Man: The Marks of Manhood" article for each male student

# Being a Woman

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > God created all people in His image, but He also created us distinctly different as men and women.
- > God has designed each man to be a servant-like leader, provider, and protector.
- > God has designed each woman to be a willingly submissive helper and nurturer.
- > God's design for men and women is complementary and is a wonderful gift.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                 |                |                |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Genesis 2:18 | 2. Titus 2:3-5 | 3. 1 Peter 3:4 |
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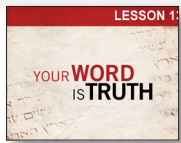
## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 13</li> <li>&gt; Parent Memo for Lesson 13 (one per student)</li> <li>&gt; "Homemaking Internship" article (one per female student)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; "Over My Dead Body, Son" (one per male student)</li> </ul> |
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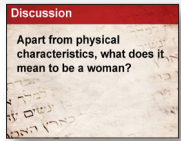
## OTHER VISUALS:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Bible</li> <li>&gt; Power drill with drill bit and complementary screw</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Sewing needle</li> </ul> |
|---|--|



(DISPLAY **LESSON 13.**)

## Small Group Discussion (5 minutes)



(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

Explain that you are going to read portions of an article titled *More Girls Take Part in High School Wrestling*, from The New York Times in February 2007.

*Wrestling may be the ultimate contact sport, and it can be a startling sight, teenage boys grabbing girls... and trying to flip them onto their backs. For the most part, girls who want to wrestle—and they are slowly moving into the mainstream—must practice with, and compete against boys.*

*“It’s always a little intimidating for the boys at first,” said Jamie [a coach]. “They’re raised not to do this to a girl.”*

Some comments from the mother of a wrestler named Jessica:

*“When she was little, I told Jess that it’s a little bit of a man’s world, but you should never let anyone say you can’t do something because you’re a girl...When she wanted to wrestle, I was very skeptical. But she reminded me of what I said, and*

*told me that the first time she was hearing she shouldn’t do something because she’s a girl, she was getting it from me.”*

The article further notes:

*But Jessica and her teammates say coed wrestling seems perfectly natural... Nick [a senior] who often wrestles Jessica at practice, said he never thought about her being a girl.<sup>1</sup>*

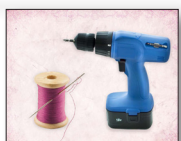
*What do you think of girls wrestling against boys? Do you think girls wrestling against boys encourages guys to grow in biblical manhood? Why or why not? Is it true that “it’s a bit of a man’s world”? Why or why not? Apart from physical characteristics, what does it mean to be a woman?*

1. Lewin, Tamar. “More Girls Take Part in High-School Wrestling.” *The New York Times*, February 17, 2007. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/17/nyregion/17wrestle.html>> (accessed June 21, 2010).

## Large Group Lesson

SEWING NEEDLE

POWER  
SCREWDRIVER



(Display the **sewing needle** (for a larger class, you may need to verbally tell them what you are holding) and the **power drill**.)

(DISPLAY **DRILL/NEEDLE.**)

Ask the students what the two things have in common and give them a few moments to respond.

*Each of these was specifically designed to work together with something else. In and of themselves, they are not complete. What does this drill need to do its job? [a screw]*

*What does the needle need to do its job? [thread] The screw completes the power drill, and the thread completes the needle so each job can be done.*

Point out that a drill and screw are complementary objects. A needle and thread are also complementary objects. When something complements another thing, it means that it finishes or completes it. (Direct students to the question about this in the **journal**.)

POWER  
SCREWDRIVER

SCREW

*Hold up the **power drill** and the **screw** and ask: Would you ever confuse the screwdriver and the screw? No, they are made to be distinctly different from one another. Not only do they look different from one another, but they also perform very different roles.*

*But could you join two pieces of wood together with only the use of a power drill? Or could you join two pieces of wood together with only a screw? No. Both are equally important, because they are designed to complement one another. The drill drives the screw into the wood, joining the two pieces together.*

Remind the students that we learned about God's unique image bearers—human beings—in the last lesson. But God didn't just create us as “people” made in His image and likeness. God created us male and female, of equal worth and value, but also distinct and different from one another. God did this in order that men and women would have unique roles, and these roles would complement one another perfectly.



(DISPLAY **BEING A MAN**.)

Quickly review the biblical truth of what it means to be a man:

God has designed each man to be a servant-like leader, provider, and protector.

*Going back to the article, do you think that allowing guys to wrestle against girls is a proper expression of biblical manhood? What specific characteristic is being violated or skewed? [men being protectors]*

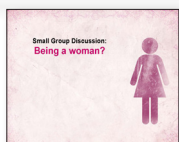
*Men were uniquely designed by God to be protectors of women, not to fight against them.*

*So far we've discussed this from the perspective of manhood. But what about the girls? Is participating in wrestling against guys an example of what it means to be a woman? Do you think it complements God's unique design for men?*

Just as there is a biblical view of what it means to be a man, there is also a biblical view of what it means to be a woman. This biblical view teaches that God designed the role of women to perfectly complement the role of men.

*For example, young ladies, have you ever thought about how you should respond if a man opens a door for you? Your response should demonstrate a respectful attitude that complements his initiative.* (Direct the students to the question in the **journal** about what it means for something to complement another thing.)

## Small Group Discussion (5 minutes)



(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION 2.**)

Have the students return to their small groups and complete the Qualities of Biblical Womanhood activity in the **journal**. Listed are the following verses for the students to quickly look up and read. These verses should be viewed from the perspective of what it means to be a woman.

*Genesis 2:18—Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”*

*Titus 2:3-5—Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, <sup>4</sup>and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, <sup>5</sup>to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.*

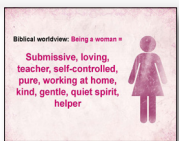
*1 Peter 3:4—but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.*

Next, have the students use the box to write down key descriptive words used to characterize womanhood. [e.g., helper, loving, self-controlled, working at home, submissive, etc.]

If time permits, ask the following questions:

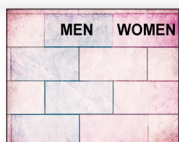
*Do you believe that a girl wrestling a boy is a good expression of these biblical characteristics? In what other ways does culture paint a very different picture of what it means to be a woman? [Women can and should compete with men, and try to do everything men do; women who stay home with their children are unfulfilled and bored; raising children is insignificant work; there are no real differences between men and women.]*

## Large Group Lesson



(DISPLAY **BEING A WOMAN.**)

God designed women in a very distinct way so they would play a very special role—a complementary role. The words the students discovered in the texts they read in the activity could be summarized into three general descriptive words that complement those of what it means to be a man. Direct the students to complete the “Men—Women” chart in the **journal**.



(DISPLAY **MEN—WOMEN.**)

	Men	Women
☞	Lead	Submit
☞	Provide	Help
☞	Protect	Nurture





(DISPLAY **SUBMIT.**)

*Let's look at the first word, "submit." What does that mean?* [a willingness to yield to another's authority or leadership] (Direct the students to follow along in the **journal**, answering the three questions about submission, helping, and nurturing.)

☞ *Why would submission be a good complement to leadership?*

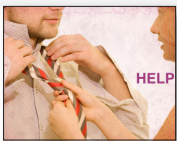
### **Illustration (Optional):**

Take the example of the screw and screwdriver again. What would happen if the screw tried to move against the direction that the drill was trying to move to drive it into a piece of wood? The effort would prove frustrating and futile. But the job can be accomplished when the screw yields to the drill, following its lead.

Some of you may have noticed that the Bible refers to wives submitting to husbands. Does this mean submission has no place in the lives of young or unmarried women? No, daughters can still practice submission by obeying their fathers. Women can respect their brothers and encourage their male friends to take initiative, and to provide and lead. Emphasize that biblical submission in women is a good thing—not a burdensome thing. And just as a screw accomplishes a good purpose when it yields to the direction and guidance of the screwdriver, women are able to accomplish wonderful things by yielding to the direction and guidance of servant-like male leaders.

### **Illustration (Optional):**

Provide a brief, prepared role play between two leaders to illustrate what submission might look like. For example, a female leader needs to move some heavy tables before the students come to class, and a male leader walking by offers to help her move them. Or a man and woman leader need to make a decision together about the class, and the male leader asks for the woman's input, but she leaves it to him to make the final decision.



(DISPLAY **HELP.**)

*Let's look at the second word. Why would the word "help" be a good complement to provide?* (Allow students to respond.)

Remind the students that God gave the first man, Adam, the job of tending the garden so he would work it and provide for not only his own needs, but also for those of his wife, Eve. But as **Genesis 2:18** states, God intended for Eve to assist Adam in this responsibility, not by taking charge, but by being Adam's helper.

*Can you give me one or more examples in which a wife acts as a helper to her husband as he works to provide for the family?*<sup>2</sup>

2. This is not to say that there are not certain situations in which the mother may need to assume, at least temporarily, a greater role in physical provision for the family. However, this should not be the norm or the desired role for women.

Yet again, God's unique design for women being a helper is a wonderful gift when it is rightly lived out.



(DISPLAY **NURTURE.**)

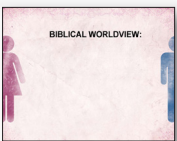
*What about the last word, “nurture”? What does it mean?*

The picture helps express some of the meaning of what nurture is. Nurture means to nourish, care for, encourage, comfort, and teach and train another. God uniquely designed women for this role.



(DISPLAY **MOTHER.**)

An example of this is a mother who makes it her responsibility to care for the many needs of her children. This, again, is a perfect complement to the man's role as protector. The men go out and “slay the dragons” while the women care for the daily needs of the family. Another example of this in the world is the fact that most teachers of young children in schools are women. Women are uniquely gifted and suited as nurturers.



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL VIEW.**)

- ☞ God has designed each man to be a servant-like leader, provider, and protector.
- ☞ God has designed each woman to be a willingly submissive helper and nurturer.



(DISPLAY **OTHER WORLDVIEWS.**)

Just as with everything else in life, Satan does not want people to rightly see and love God's truth about what it means to be a man or a woman. And the sinful heart would rather believe these lies instead of the truth. In our culture, feminism has had a huge influence over the past 40 years. What is feminism? It can be summarized as a rejection of God's wonderful design for women.



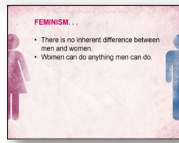
(DISPLAY **FEMINISM 1.**)

Briefly discuss the following points, and direct the students to follow along in the **journal**:

LIE: Male leadership is demeaning to women.

LIE: Submission to male leadership must be resisted.

- 🔑 **Truth:** Submission is complementary to male leadership by God's design. Godly male leadership is a blessing to women.



(DISPLAY **FEMINISM 2.**)

LIE: There is no inherent difference between men and women.

LIE: Women can do anything men can do.

- 🔑 **Truth:** Men and women were created distinctly different in order to have differing roles.



(DISPLAY **FEMINISM 3.**)

Being a wife and mother is not fulfilling enough for women.

- 🔑 **Truth:** Being a wife and mother are both satisfying, God-given roles.

These lies appeal to the sinful hearts of many women, and even men. But these views represent a worldview that, in the end, will not make women happy or complete.



(DISPLAY **HOUSE.**)

How was the house created? By complementary items working together as designed. A man used a screwdriver and a screw together to create a functional building. A woman used a needle and a thread to create an attractive, comfortable interior. Without the man, the house wouldn't be as functional or sturdy. Without the woman, the inside of the house wouldn't be warm and beautiful. Both are necessary. Just as the screw yields to the drill, and the thread yields to the needle, a woman's submissive, helping, and nurturing attitude is a complement to the initiative, provision, and leadership of the man. Both are equally important, yet each plays a distinct role.

The unique differences between men and women are not by chance. They didn't just "happen." God designed each with a specific role in mind, and they are to complement one another. The Bible provides the truth of what these roles are, and how they are meant to complement one another. When believed and lived out, they demonstrate what a wonderful gift from God they truly are.

If possible, close the lesson time by giving a brief (1-2 minutes) personal testimony about how biblical womanhood is expressed in your life, relationships, or marriage, or how God has matured or changed your thinking in this area.

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the small group application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** God designed women with a unique role that is complementary to that of men.

**Think About It:** Review the descriptive words found in the “Qualities of Biblical Womanhood” activity in the **journal**. How are these qualities meant to serve women in complementing the unique role of men? How do these qualities serve to demonstrate a woman’s unique role in being submissive, helping, and nurturing? Ask the students to give some examples of how women correctly demonstrate their unique role in the world, the family, and in the church. Referring to the opening article about girls and wrestling, ask: *When a girl trains to be a wrestler, is it helping or hindering her from growing in the qualities listed?*

**Examine Your Heart (girls):** *Are there any things that are hindering you from growing as a woman? Do your friends help you or hinder you in this area? What steps could you take to make any necessary changes in your life?*

**Examine Your Heart (guys):** *Do you honor and value women who exemplify biblical qualities? How is this demonstrated in your relationship with your mother, for example? How can you encourage women to be godly?*

**Live It (girls):** Decide on one step you will take this week to be a godly woman.

**Live It (guys):** If your mother or sisters honor God in the way they treat you and other men, pick one way that you will honor them for this or encourage them in this week.

- **Truth Statement:** Satan wants people to believe his lies about manhood and womanhood.

**Think About It:** Sometimes the world presents a view of women as inferior. Satan wants men to view women as inferior, stupid, weak, and silly. Or, Satan wants women to see their role as unimportant, unfulfilling, and mindless. What evidence in the world demonstrates that women believe these lies? Next, read and discuss **Ephesians 5:22-25, 28-29**, and selected verses from **Proverbs 31:10-31**. How do these verses refute Satan’s lies? How can women who are not married demonstrate these same qualities (plus the ones listed in the “Qualities of Biblical Womanhood” activity in the **journal**) as they interact in the world, go to school, or work outside the home?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you believe any of the lies regarding manhood and womanhood? If so, what are they? What should your attitude and the desire of your heart be?*

**Live It:** Pray together with your small group that God would help you to not only accept, but really appreciate God’s design for men and women, and help you live out this design in your lives.

- **Truth Statement:** Women and men are equal in value, yet differ in their roles and strengths.

**Think About It:** Point out that when little girls play with dolls and have tea parties, they are demonstrating their unique design by God to be helpers and nurturers.

**Examine Your Heart (girls):** *Are you growing in ways that encourage your unique role as a biblical woman? In what ways? Do you submit to the leadership of your father? Are you training yourself to be a worker in the home someday? Or, do you see being a wife and mother as something less appealing than having a career? Have you thought about what kind of classes or job training would best suit your growth in womanhood? (e.g., nursing has a wide appeal with women as it serves to demonstrate many nurturing qualities)*

**Examine Your Heart (guys):** *Do you affirm the unique role your mother plays in nurturing you? Do you encourage your sisters as joyful submitters and helpers? (e.g., do you demonstrate servant-like manhood to your sister by opening the door for her?) Do you treat the girls you meet in school and church in a manner that affirms their worth? Suppose you were on a wrestling team and were slated to wrestle against a girl. What would you do? Wrestle her, or forfeit the match? What decision would best demonstrate the truth of what it means to be a man and woman? What might obeying God's truth cost you?*

**Live It:** Choose one way you would like to see your relationship with your family members change as a result of our discussions. Pray together that God will give you the grace to change.

- **Truth Statement:** Submission should play a role in the lives of all Christians.

**Think About It:** Together, read **Ephesians 6:1**. Does this verse apply only to girls? [No.] All children must honor God by submitting to their parents. Read **Romans 13:1**. Who in this verse is to submit to the governing authorities? [every person] Read **Hebrews 13:17**. Who are Christians to submit to within the church? Finally, read **James 4:7**. Who should every Christian submit to each day?

**Examine Your Heart:** *In which of these areas of submission do you struggle most? Why is this hard for you? Do you trust God enough to submit your life to Him? If not, why not?*

**Live It:** Pray with your small group that God will give you opportunities this week to demonstrate biblical submission to authority, and ultimately to God.

- **Truth Statement:** Men and women should each function in their primary roles, but this does not mean they never practice the other's role at times.

**Think About It:** Review the two definitions of what it means to be a man and a woman. Emphasize that these definitions are not meant to be "all or nothing" descriptions. In other words, just because women are uniquely designed to be nurturers does not mean men are not supposed to nurture their children. And just because men are uniquely

designed to be protectors, it does not mean women are not supposed to protect their children from dangers. These unique distinctions should be seen as primary roles and attitudes. So, if an intruder enters your home, your dad should see that it is his primary responsibility to protect the family and not your mother's... even though she may serve to help your dad.

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you function most in your primary role as a young man or young woman? When you make an exception to practice the opposite role, is it with the right motivation? Describe a situation where you saw someone else take on an opposing role appropriately (or inappropriately—but without names!).*

**Live It:** Enjoy the freedom that comes with being able to practice your primary role this week. Note any ways people respond to this and be willing to share your experiences with your small group next week.

- **Truth Statement:** Women and men are of equal worth, but God has designed women to function and thrive under the leadership and protection of godly men.

**Think About It:** Read and discuss **1 Timothy 2:8-14**. Point out that some feminists would use this text as an example of how the Bible treats women as inferiors, and encourages the view that women are somehow dumber or more incompetent than men. But what does verse 12 mean? Why does God command this? Is it because women are dumber than men? Is it because women are less important than men? Read verse 13 for the primary answer. How can submission then be seen as a form of protection for women?

**Examine Your Heart (girls):** *Do you believe that the Bible's statements about women were designed for the protection and care of women in the church? Or do you resent the Bible's teaching in this area?*

**Examine Your Heart (guys):** *Do you believe the Bible treats women and men as having equal worth? Or do you secretly view them as inferior?*

**Live It:** Pray that God would change any wrong thoughts in your mind and heart and give you joy in being biblical instead.

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week. Also, if time permits, ask them about how they applied one thing from last week's lesson.**

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 13

"Over My Dead Body, Son" article (one for every male student)

"Homemaking Internship" article (one for every female student)

# Marriage and Family

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > Marriage is God's design to join together one man and one woman in a unique lifetime commitment.
- > Marriage is God's unique design to display the complementary roles of men and women most fully.
- > Marriage is a picture of Jesus' amazing loving and faithful relationship with His people, the church, in which His people joyfully submit to and follow Him.
- > Marriage is God's design for the wonderful gift and responsibility of having and training children to be followers of Jesus.
- > Children are to honor and obey the instruction of their parents.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                             |                 |                    |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1. Matthew 19:4-6           | 3. Psalm 78:5-7 | 5. Ephesians 6:1-2 |
| 2. Ephesians 5:22-25, 28-29 | 4. Proverbs 1:8 |                    |

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## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

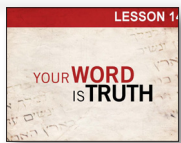
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 14              | > Parent Memo for Lesson 14 (one per student) |
| > Article Excerpt handout (one per small group) |   |

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## OTHER VISUALS:

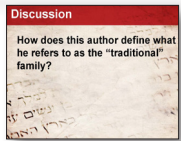
- |         |                             |
|---------|-----------------------------|
| > Bible | > Name brand candy or treat |
|---------|-----------------------------|





(DISPLAY **LESSON 14.**)

## Small Group Discussion (5-7 minutes)



(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

Choose a student to read the following portions of an opinion article titled "The Traditional Family is Dead, and That's Good Reason to Rejoice":<sup>1</sup>

*Back in the "traditional" family, the man was king, and the wife was his servant. Gender roles have changed, though, giving more and more liberation to the female, allowing her to make her own choices instead of being a puppet.*

*Sure, this may be "corrosive" [destructive] to the family unit, but doesn't everyone deserve the right to have others respect their ideas? Divorce is also liberation from what may be a damaged or a potentially harmful marriage...*

*No longer can the commanding figure of the father glue the family together in a king's court fashion. This newfound autonomy is actually a boon to the individual, and should be respected as such.*

*Face it, a new "traditional" family is arising, and with that we must change our views to accept it.*

*How does this author define what he refers to as the "traditional" family? When you think of a family, do you think of a king-like dad and a servant mom, who acts like a puppet? Where does your view come from? If the view in the article truly*

*describes a traditional family, would it be a good or bad thing? Why?*

*The author admits that more liberation for women might be corrosive [destructive] to the family but comments that, "doesn't everyone deserve the right to have others respect their ideas?" Do you recall any worldview that expresses truth as being subjective and relative like this? [postmodernism]*

*Overall, do you like the way the author seems to view the death of what he calls "the traditional family"? Why or why not? Do you think his vision of a new kind of traditional family would be a good thing for our culture? Why or why not?*

In their **journal**, ask the students to write a simple definition of marriage and family. Is their definition different in any way from the one in the article? In what way? Explain to the students that what is most important is not whether or not we understand family from a traditional or non-traditional perspective, but what the Bible has to say about marriage and family. We need to evaluate both views in light of Scripture in order to come to a biblical understanding.

1. Soma, Jonathan. "The Traditional Family is Dead, and That's Good Reason to Rejoice." *Fredricksburg Free Lance Star*, August 30, 2001. <[http://fredericksburg.com/News/FLS/2001/082001/08302001/367300/index\\_html](http://fredericksburg.com/News/FLS/2001/082001/08302001/367300/index_html)> (accessed June 21, 2010).

ARTICLE EXCERPT  
(ONE PER SMALL  
GROUP)

## Large Group Lesson

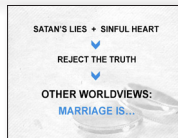
CANDY OR TREAT

(Display **candy or treat.**) Briefly describe it in a manner that is false, and therefore unappealing, such as: *Suppose I tell you that this chocolate candy bar tastes awful. It is sour when you first bite into it, and tastes like soured milk. It leaves that rotten taste in your mouth all day long.*

If the students based their decision on whether or not they wanted the candy only on your description of it, how many would want to eat it? But were you giving them a true

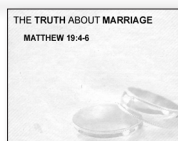
description? How many of them have eaten this type of candy? This illustration can help us understand the viewpoint of the article that was read about the traditional family. The author gave a description of marriage and family that was very negative: a king-like dad with a servant mom who acts like a puppet. Just as a bad “testimony” about a candy bar could discourage you from trying one, the negative views of marriage that our culture presents could also discourage you from seeing God’s good design in marriage.

In the past 50 years, there has been a great change in our culture regarding marriage and family. Much of this change has come about through a wrong understanding of what marriage and family are to be. But at the heart of the issue is still the same problem.



(DISPLAY **WORLDVIEWS.**)

Before we learn and examine what these lies are, we must first look at the truth, since God's truth is the standard and measure we must use for examining everything in life.



(DISPLAY **MATTHEW 19:4-6.**)

Have the students turn to **Matthew 19:4-6**. Choose a student to read the text, and direct the students to follow along with the questions about this text in the **journal**:

### **Matthew 19:4-6—**

*He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, <sup>5</sup>and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? <sup>6</sup>So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”*

*Briefly look at verses 1-3 to understand the context of verses 4-6.*

- ☞ Who is speaking in verses 4-6? [Jesus] What important question is He addressing? [the question of divorce] Let's look carefully at Jesus' answer for two things.
- ☞ First, what specific people are to get married and...
- ☞ ...second, how long is marriage to last?

According to the verses, who is to get married...what people are involved? [a male and a female, joining together as husband and wife]

From the beginning of time, God has designed marriage to be between a man and a woman. This can be seen in the very first marriage in human history: Adam and Eve.

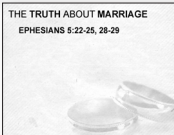
According to the verses, how long is marriage between a man and a woman intended to last? Look at the last words of verse 6. What did Jesus mean by this? [Marriage is to last a lifetime.]



(DISPLAY **TRUTH 1.**)

1. Marriage is God's design to join together one man and one woman in a unique lifetime commitment. (**Matthew 19:4-6**)

Next, let's look at what is unique about the marriage relationship.



(DISPLAY **EPHESIANS 5.**)

Have the students turn to **Ephesians 5:22-25, 28-29**. Choose student/s to read the text, and direct the students to follow along with the questions related to the text in the **journal**:

**Ephesians 5:22-25, 28-29—**

*Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup>For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. <sup>24</sup>Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. <sup>25</sup>Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her... <sup>28</sup>In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup>For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church.*

☞ According to these verses, do the husband and wife have the same roles in the marriage? Keeping in mind our recent discussions about manhood and womanhood, how would you characterize the role of the husband? [leader, provider, protector]

☞ Who is he to pattern himself after?

*How would you characterize the role of the wife?* [to nurture, submit, and help]

☞ Who is she to pattern herself after?

*Did God just assign these roles arbitrarily?*

☞ What are they to give us a picture of? Is this to be a wonderfully appealing description, or one of a demanding king-like husband and a puppet wife?

Explain that Christ loved the church and sacrificed His own life for her! This is hardly a domineering “king-like” authority figure who treats people like “puppets.” Rather, Jesus’ relationship to the church is one of love, sacrifice, and faithful commitment.

Recall that God created men and women in His own image and likeness. Men and women are of equal value and worth. But God also designed us to be distinctly different in order that we would have different primary roles:



(DISPLAY **God's DESIGN.**)

- ☞ God has design each man to be a servant-like leader, provider and protector.
- ☞ God has designed each woman to be a willingly submissive helper and nurturer.

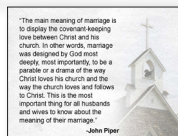
When these roles are understood and expressed as God intended, it is wonderful, exciting, and delightful. Encourage the students to be on the lookout for godly marriages within their families and church. While no marriage is perfect due to sinful human nature, these marriages do reflect a level of faithfulness, joy, and commitment that helps us see a glimpse of God's good design in marriage. If possible, give a brief, appropriate personal illustration from your own marriage and family of the goodness of God's design in marriage.



The verses in Ephesians bring to light three more important truths about marriage:

(DISPLAY **TRUTHS 2 AND 3.**)

1. Marriage is God's design to join together one man and one woman in a unique life-time commitment.
- ☞ 2. Marriage is God's unique design to display the complementary roles of men and women most fully.
- ☞ 3. Marriage is a picture of Jesus' amazing loving and faithful relationship with His people, the church, in which His people joyfully submit to and follow Him.



(DISPLAY AND READ **JOHN PIPER QUOTE.**)

Here is how Pastor John Piper has described this last truth:

*The main meaning of marriage is to display the covenant-keeping love between Christ and his church. In other words, marriage was designed by God most deeply, most importantly, to be a parable or a drama of the way Christ loves his church and the way the church loves and follows Christ. This is the most important thing for all husbands and wives to know about the meaning of their marriage.*<sup>2</sup>

2. Piper, John. "Marriage Is Meant for Making Children...Disciples of Jesus, Part 1." (Sermon delivered on June 10, 2007). < [http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByDate/2007/2188\\_Marriage\\_Is\\_Meant\\_for\\_Making\\_ChildrenDisciples\\_of\\_Jesus\\_Part\\_1/](http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByDate/2007/2188_Marriage_Is_Meant_for_Making_ChildrenDisciples_of_Jesus_Part_1/) > (accessed June 21, 2010).

## Small Group Discussion (5-7 minutes)

Have the students turn to the **Truth and Lies** chart in their **journal**. On one side of the chart are the three truths about marriage we've discussed in class. On the other side of the chart, titled *Lies of Satan*, have the students discuss and record how Satan lies and skews each of the three truths, and how those lies are then believed and expressed in our culture. For example:

**Truth 1 is that marriage is to be between a man and a woman.**

*Do all people believe this as objective, absolute, universal, and unchanging truth? How have we seen the lies of Satan expressed in our culture? [e.g., the growing acceptance and push for laws that redefine marriage so men can "marry" men and women can "marry" women]*

**Truth 2 is that marriage is to last a lifetime.**

*Do all marriages last a lifetime? How does our culture view divorce, as something ordinary and expected, or as something rare and tragic?<sup>3</sup> What kinds of lies might Satan present to make*

*divorce seem more appealing than staying married? [e.g., you'll be more happy and fulfilled, have more freedom, etc.]*

**Truth 3 is that marriage is mainly a picture of Christ's love and faithfulness to His people and their joyful submission to Him.**

*Do most people see that as the main reason for marriage? What do you think many people see as the main reason for marriage? [e.g., two people loving one another, living together, having children, etc.] How has this view led some people to justify divorce and same-sex marriage? [e.g., marriage is mainly about love, so when the love stops, the marriage should stop; because love is the main thing, it doesn't matter if it is a man and a woman, and can be a man with a man]*

3. Please take great care in talking about divorce. Most likely, your group of students will include one who has been personally affected by divorce. The students do need to know that the Bible does recognize that there are certain parameters in which separation is biblically permissible, but it is never God's intended design for marriage as Jesus' response in Matthew 19 indicates.

## Large Group Lesson

The three truths about marriage we've studied thus far are very important, as they serve to direct our attention to the fourth truth. Whether or not you understand and embrace these three truths will directly impact our culture, society, and even the whole world. What is the fourth truth? Here is a clue:




(DISPLAY **NEST.**)

*What are nests for? Are they a natural part of the life of a bird? Yes, birds were designed to reproduce and have baby birds. And birds instinctively will build a type of nest in order to properly protect and rear their young.*

*Marriage is like a nest, uniquely designed by God. Marriage is the means through which humans are to reproduce through having children. Marriage is like a nest in that it serves as a proper place for the training of children: a husband and wife working together in their God-designed roles to lead, provide, protect, and nurture their children. And, that training is designed to have a very specific goal.*

Ask the students to turn to **Psalm 78:5-7**.

 *Psalm 78:5-7—He [God] established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, <sup>7</sup>so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.*


*What is to be the main aim of parents as they rear their children? Look carefully at verse 7. [that their children might put their hope in God and obey His commands] What does it mean for a child to “put his hope in God”? [to put his hope in Jesus for his salvation; To respond to the gospel in belief and trust]*

Children are a wonderful gift from God (**Psalm 127:3**), and God has uniquely designed marriage with its distinct roles in order that parents might properly lead and nurture their children in the hope that they would someday come to trust and follow Jesus.

#### THE TRUTH ABOUT MARRIAGE

1. Marriage is God's design to join together one man and one woman in a unique lifetime commitment.
2. Marriage is God's unique design to display the complementary roles of men and women most fully.
3. Marriage is a picture of Jesus' amazing loving and faithful relationship with His people, the church, in which His people joyfully submit to and follow Him.

(DISPLAY **TRUTH 4.**)

1. Marriage is God's design to join together one man and one woman in a unique life-time commitment.
2. Marriage is God's unique design to display the complementary roles of men and women most fully.
3. Marriage is a picture of Jesus' amazing loving and faithful relationship with His people, the church, in which His people joyfully submit and follow Him.
-  4. Marriage is God's design for the wonderful gift and responsibility of having and training children to be followers of Jesus.

(Direct students to complete this truth statement in the **journal**.)

1. HOW DID WE GET HERE?
2. WHY DO WE EXIST?
3. WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE WORLD?
4. WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?
5. WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN WE DIE?
6. HOW NOW SHOULD WE LIVE?

(DISPLAY **SIX QUESTIONS.**)

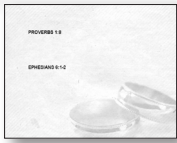
1. How did we get here?
2. Why do we exist?
3. What is wrong with the world?
4. What is the solution?
5. What will happen when we die?
6. How now should we live?

These are the most important questions that all people must ask. And the only true answers to these questions are found in the Bible. God has designed marriage and the resulting family to be the first and primary place in which the truth is taught to the next



generation. Parents are to love and train their children in the truth of the Bible. God designed marriage as a means for making and multiplying “Christians”—having children who will grow up to know, love, trust, and obey Jesus.

*As young people, do you believe you, too, have a unique role in your family, just as your father and mother do? What do you think it might be? Can you think of one or two verses that state the truth? [Allow a few brief responses.]*



(Quickly display and read **PROVERBS 1:8** and **EPHESIANS 6:1-2**, and direct the students to the related summary question in the **journal**.)

### **Proverbs 1:8—**

🔊 *Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching.*

### **Ephesians 6:1-2—**

🔊 *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise).*

There are many views about what marriage is and what a family is, and how children are to relate to their parents. Some of these views state that marriage can be anything you want it to be. Some views state that fathers and mothers should have the exact same roles in the family. Some views state that dads aren't important for leading the family. Some views state that children aren't important, that children shouldn't listen to their parents' instruction, or that children and parents are equals. But these views are all lies. Only the Bible tells the truth about God's design and intention for marriage, parents, and children. God's truth, when rightly understood and enjoyed, is a wonderful gift for husbands, wives, and children. And where marriage and family is expressed as closely as possible to God's intended design, all society benefits from it, demonstrating again that God's word proves true.

## **Small Group Application**

*The following examples are possible discussions for the small group application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** A Christian view of marriage comes from Scripture, not from our own feelings about marriage or experiences with it.

**Think About It:** Have the students quickly look at the definition they wrote out in the **journal** in the first small group discussion time. Then quickly review the four key truths about marriage that were presented in the lesson. How does their initial definition compare to what was revealed in the Bible? Were there any contradictions, or was it simply incomplete?



**Examine Your Heart:** *When you look ahead toward the future, do you see marriage as something appealing or something to be avoided? If it looks appealing, what appeals to you? Are you trusting God with your future in this area? If marriage feels like something to be avoided, are you trusting God's good design for marriage? What is causing that struggle, and will you ask God to change your heart? How can you submit this area of your life to God and to His perfect wisdom? If possible, from your own experience or pointing to others, give the students an example of the wonderful appeal and benefits of a marriage understood and lived out as God intended.*

**Live It:** Pray together with your small group that God will grant you the grace to both understand and admire His design for marriage.

- **Truth Statement:** God's truth about marriage is unchanging. Marriage is God's design to join together one man and one woman in a unique lifetime commitment.

**Think About It:** Point out that in the United States there is a major debate about how society should view marriage. Some states now have laws that recognize "same-sex marriage"—a man can "marry" a man and a woman can "marry" a woman. *Does that mean these people are truly married? Do man's laws change God's law? (See **Psalm 33:11** and **Isaiah 40:8**.) How should Christians respond to these challenges? Are there arguments for a biblical view of marriage that even unbelievers would find convincing? What might these be?* [Since the beginning of history, almost every culture, religion, society and government has only recognized and encouraged marriage between a man and a woman. This is a demonstration of God's common grace in the world, as God's design and intention for marriage benefits the whole society, and not just Christians.] *How do marriages in which a husband and wife rightly express their God-given roles especially in regard to children, benefit all of society?* (You may want to even give an example of unbelieving parents, who have a loving and faithful marriage, and train children who grow up to be law abiding and productive members of society.)

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you ever feel embarrassed about going against the culture's tide in order to explain a biblical view of marriage to others? Are you ashamed of the truth, or do you simply find it hard to explain to others? Did thinking through the benefits of God's design for marriage that even non-Christian families could enjoy help you to think of ways to explain it or defend it better?*

**Live It:** Pray with your small group for opportunities to explain your beliefs about marriage to someone this week. Pray for boldness and humility in sharing God's truth with others.

- **Truth Statement:** Marriage is God's unique design to display the complimentary roles of men and women most fully. Marriage is a picture of Jesus' amazing loving and faithful relationship with His people, the church, in which His people joyfully submit to and follow Him.

**Think About It:** *Read and discuss the specific roles of husbands and wives found in **Ephesians 5:22-29**. How do these roles complement one another? How do these roles serve to show the world the kind of relationship that Jesus has with His people? Why is it so important that this relationship in marriage last for a lifetime? (Does Jesus ever break His promise to love and commit Himself to His people?) Is this the way we always see marriage lived out in the world? Why not? What sometimes happens?* (Be very sensitive to your students here, especially those who come from families where parents are divorced. The children need to see and understand that divorce does happen—we live in a fallen world. A divorced parent is not necessarily a bad parent and, by grace, may be doing a wonderful job in trying to fulfill the difficult responsibility of parenting alone. And even within marriage, there may be parents who fail to parent in the way God intends. Their parents are not perfect. But God’s intention is that marriage between one man and one woman would last for a lifetime, and that **Ephesians 5:22-29** and **Ephesians 6:1-4** be lived out. Furthermore, whatever the measure of their own parents, God through His church provides us with examples to observe and follow. In the end, only the covenant-keeping love of Jesus for His church provides the perfect example of marriage.)]

**Examine Your Heart:** *How do you see God’s design for marriage being lived out in your family or in other families that you know? Have you ever thought that divorce was an acceptable option for a marriage? Why? Do you have any fears or concerns about God’s design that you would like to share? How can you submit these to God?*

**Live It:** Pray with your small group that you would submit any concerns you have about God’s design for marriage and for your future into His hands. As time permits, try to look up some Scriptures that can encourage you when you feel fearful about God’s design for a lifelong commitment in marriage.

- **Truth Statement:** Marriage is God’s design for the wonderful gift and responsibility of having and training children to be followers of Jesus.

**Think About It:** Read and discuss **2 Timothy 1:5** and **2 Timothy 3:14-15**. *What role did Timothy’s grandmother and mother serve in acquainting Timothy with the Bible? When did this begin? Notice that Timothy’s father is not mentioned. Not everyone comes from a home with two parents; we live in a fallen world and God’s design is not perfectly lived out in the world, but this needn’t discourage us from learning about and pursuing God’s design for marriage and family. (Be sensitive to the home lives of your different students. Offer suggestions for helping those from single-parent homes to respect and love their parent for attempting to fulfill both roles to the best of their ability.) (See **Deuteronomy 6:5-7** and **Proverbs 1:8**.) Why is the family to be the foundation through which the truth of the Bible is passed on to children? [Children spend the most time at home, and their parents are primary influences in their life; God has designed them to meet your spiritual, emotional, and physical needs.] How is God’s unique design for your fa-*

*ther meant to meet your physical, emotional, and spiritual needs? How is God's unique design for your mother meant to meet your physical, emotional, and spiritual needs?*

**Examine Your Heart:** *How do you respond to your parents as you see them doing this? Do you thank God for this gift in your life? Do you ever verbally thank your parents when you see them demonstrating godly marriage and parenting?*

**Live It:** Tell your parents this week how much you appreciate their love, care, and guidance in your life.

- **Truth Statement:** Children are to honor and obey the instruction of their parents.

**Think About It:** Point out that God's intention for parents is that they speak and act in such a way that they represent what God is like to their children, even though very imperfectly! (See **Ephesians 6:1-4**.) *What does it mean to "honor" your parents? Why is this important? How do you learn to honor God who you cannot see? Why is it so important to obey your parents? What is this meant to train you to do? Does verse 1 mean that you only obey when you think that your parents are being fair? Or when you feel like obeying?*

**Examine Your Heart:** *On a scale of 1-10, how obedient are you toward your parents? Do you have a heart attitude of honor toward them? If not, why not?*

**Live It:** What steps this week could you take to make your part of the relationship with your parent/s better by honoring and obeying? Be specific. Give an example of how an act of obedience to your parents has resulted in things going "well with you" in the past. *Does this encourage you to obey them now?*

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week. Also, if time permits, ask them about how they applied one thing from last week's lesson.**

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 14



# The Church

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > The true church is the household of God and includes all Christians.
- > The church is to uphold the truth of the gospel of Jesus.
- > The church is to uphold the truth by teaching, guarding, proclaiming, and demonstrating the truth of God.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                      |                    |                        |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Acts 19:26-27     | 4. 1 Timothy 2:4-5 | 7. 1 Peter 2:9         |
| 2. Acts 4:12         | 5. Titus 2:1       | 8. John 14:6           |
| 3. 1 Timothy 3:14-15 | 6. Titus 1:9       | 9. Philippians 2:14-15 |

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## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 15
- > "Transforming Culture" article (one per student)
- > Parent Memo for Lesson 15 (one per student)

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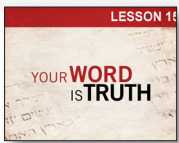
## OTHER VISUALS:

- > Bible

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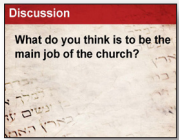
## NOTE:

Note: This lesson is not intended to cover all aspects of the church comprehensively (roles, governing, ordinances, etc.). While there are three "top priorities" for the church (worshiping God, helping and encouraging other Christians, and proclaiming the gospel to the world), this lesson focuses primarily on the aspect of proclaiming the truth to the world, in keeping with the theme of the curriculum.



(DISPLAY **LESSON 15.**)

## Small Group Discussion (5-7 minutes)



(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

Read this excerpt from an article in *The Cutting Edge News*:

*Two American preachers in Birmingham, UK, were warned to leave for allegedly distributing Christian leaflets to Muslims. The preachers, 48-year-old Arthur Cunningham and 65-year-old Pastor Joseph Abraham, were talking to four Muslim youths when a "police community support officer" (PCSO) approached them.*

*According to Cunningham, [the police community support officer] "...said we were in a Muslim area and were not allowed to spread our Christian message. He said we were committing a hate crime by telling the youths to leave Islam and said that he was going to take us to the police station."<sup>1</sup>*

*Do you think these preachers were being arrogant or hateful in presenting leaflets to Muslims? Why or why not? How do you think they should respond to the police officer's warning? If they were to be convicted of a hate crime, should they stop giving leaflets to Muslims?*

Now read the following news summary to the group:

*On Sunday, November 9, 2008, hundreds of protesters who support same-sex*

*marriage marched outside a church in southern California. They were protesting the pastor's appeal to his congregation to vote in favor of Proposition 8. Proposition 8 would amend the state constitution to legally define marriage as being between one man and one woman. The protesters believed that the church has no right to impose its moral beliefs and views on the greater society. Many view the beliefs of the pastor and church members on this issue as being hateful and discriminatory.*

*Do the protesters have a good point? Do you think the pastor was right or wrong for encouraging his congregation to vote on this issue? Why?*

*Should the church simply concern itself with Christians and their views and behavior? Does the church have a role to play in issues that involve people of other diverse beliefs? If yes, what is that role?*

*How would you define what the church is? What do you think is to be the main job of the church?*

1. Morgan, Adrian. "Christian Ministers Charge that Human Rights Violations on Increase in London's Muslim 'No-Go Areas'." *The Cutting Edge News*, June 16, 2008. <<http://www.thecuttingedgenews.com/index.php?article=567>> (accessed June 21, 2010).

## Large Group Lesson



(DISPLAY **EPHESUS.**)

Ephesus was an important city in New Testament times. One of the reasons for its importance was the presence of the Temple of Diana (Artemis).



(DISPLAY **TEMPLE.**)

Very briefly describe the temple as follows:

- It was a huge building: more than 400 feet long, 250 feet wide (bigger than a football field!), and 60 feet high.
- There were more than 100 massive stone pillars supporting the roof.
- People would travel from all over the world to come and see the temple. It was considered one of the great wonders of the world at that time.
- The temple gets its name from the “goddess” of the Ephesians, “Diana” (or Artemis). The temple was built in her honor, and served as a place for people to worship Diana. The temple was filled with gold and silver shrines and other artwork in worship to Diana. The city of Ephesus was also the scene of a protest in New Testament times.

In **Acts 19**, the apostle Paul had been preaching the truth of the gospel in and around Ephesus. Paul had been proclaiming that salvation is in Jesus Christ alone, and as a result, many people in and around Ephesus were turning away from magic, witchcraft, and idols, and putting their trust in Jesus Christ for salvation. This angered the silver-smiths who made the silver shrines that the people would buy and then bring to the temple of Diana.

- 🔊 Quickly read **Acts 19:26-27** to the students, and point the students to the summary question in the **journal**:

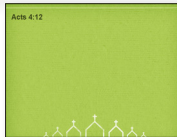
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*Acts 19:26-27—“...And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods. And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship.”*

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Paul had confronted the lie of Diana worship. By confronting that lie with the truth, a riot broke out in the city because the silversmiths were angered that their livelihood was now in jeopardy.

*Was it right for Paul to speak out like this, especially as it threatened the livelihood of the silversmiths? Should Paul just have minded his own business? Why or why not?*

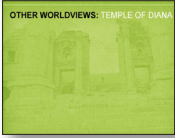


(DISPLAY AND READ **Acts 4:12.**):



**Acts 4:12—**

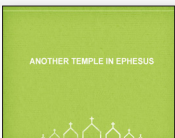
- ☞ *"And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."*



(DISPLAY **WORLDVIEW.**)

The temple of Diana represented a false religion of that time. It was built upon a lie of Satan...

- ☞ ...that was believed in the sinful hearts of people: The lie that Diana was a real goddess and was worthy of worship. Belief in that lie was deadly, because apart from the truth of the gospel of Jesus, no one can be saved. But that lie did not go unchallenged in the city of Ephesus.



(DISPLAY **ANOTHER TEMPLE.**)

During the time in which the temple of Diana stood tall and strong in the city of Ephesus, another temple was being built. It was a stronger kind of temple—built out of material that would last throughout time and would outshine the temple of Diana. What temple was this?

- ☞ Have the students turn to **1 Timothy 3:14-15**, and point them to the questions about this passage in the **journal**.

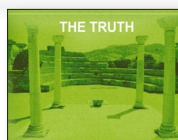
*1 Timothy 3:14-15—I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, <sup>15</sup>if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.*

These words were written in a letter by the apostle Paul to a young man named Timothy. Timothy lived in the city of Ephesus. He probably had passed by the temple of Diana many times. Paul was writing this letter to Timothy to give him instructions about a new kind of “temple” that was being built in Ephesus.

*Is there any word, or are there any words in these verses that give reference to a type of building?* [Church, pillar, buttress]

*Is Paul referring to an actual building here, one made of stone? Why not? How does he define the word “church”? [the household of God] What does he mean by the “household of God”?*

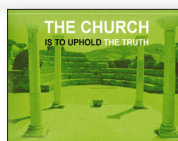
The term “household” means “family.” The family of God includes all those who are trusting in Jesus alone for their salvation. The household of God is all Christians, everywhere in the world. But it also refers to those specific Christians who were a community of believers in Ephesus of which Timothy was the leader.



(DISPLAY **THE TRUTH.**)

*So according to Paul, is the “church” really a type of building? No, it is the family of all of God’s people—all true Christians.*

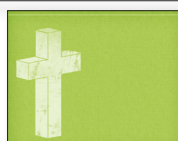
- ☞ *But Paul uses the image of a building in these verses in order to remind Timothy about the purpose of the church in the world—even the church community in Ephesus. What is that purpose? Look again at verse 15. [The church is to be a “pillar and buttress of the truth.”] What do you think that means? What do pillars do?*



(DISPLAY **UPHOLD THE TRUTH.**)

The church is to uphold the truth of the Bible. This is what Paul was doing in Ephesus. He was upholding the truth of passages, such as **1 Timothy 2:4-5**.

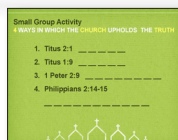
- ☞ **1 Timothy 2:4-5—**
- ☞ *[God] desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*



(DISPLAY **GOSPEL.**)

- ☞ The main truth is that the church is to uphold the gospel of Jesus.

## Small Group Activity (5 minutes)



(DISPLAY **FOUR WAYS.**)

Have the students turn to the **Uphold the Truth** activity in the **journal**. There are four texts listed that the students are to look up and read. To the right of each text are blank lines—each line indicates a letter of a missing word that summarizes how the church is to uphold the truth. The first letter for each word is given. (Numbers 2 and 4 may be hard for the students to determine at this point. That is okay. Encourage them to guess. The answers will be made clear when the large group lesson resumes.)

Texts:

**Titus 2:1** (Teach)

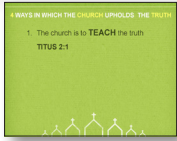
**Titus 1:9** (Guard)

**1 Peter 2:9** (Proclaim)

**Philippians 2:14-15** (Demonstrate)

## Large Group Lesson

Briefly ask the students if any of them guessed the answers to the words. Then display the slides with the answers and give a brief explanation of each. Also, point to the place in the **journal** where the students should record what they are learning about these four ways.



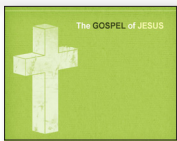
(DISPLAY **TEACH.**)

The church is to TEACH the truth.

🔑 *Titus 2:1—But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.*

Doctrine is what the whole Bible teaches about specific topics. Sound doctrine refers to true doctrine (i.e., the truth about what the Bible teaches). If God's people are to know what the truth is, they must be taught that truth from one generation to the next. And the most important doctrines for us to know, understand, believe, and teach are those concerning the gospel.

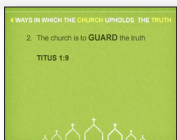
Do you remember what has to happen before the truth of the gospel can be believed? [God has to remove our blindness to it.] It is only through the saving work of the gospel—Jesus' redeeming work on the cross on behalf of sinners—that people can truly know, understand and love the truth of the Bible...including the truth about the origin of the world, the roles of men and women, and marriage.



(DISPLAY **GOSPEL 2.**)


Quickly review the main points of the gospel with the students from Lesson 8:

- 🔑 Jesus is fully God and became fully man, and lived a sinless life (**John 1:1, 14; 2 Corinthians 5:21**).
- 🔑 He is the only way to God (**John 14:6**).
- 🔑 He died on the cross and received the punishment that we deserved (**1 Peter 2:24; Matthew 20:28; Matthew 26:28**) and then rose again (**John 11:25**).
- 🔑 He has promised to forgive sin and grant eternal life for those who repent of their sin and trust in Him alone for salvation (**Mark 1:15; Matthew 26:28; Romans 6:23**).
- 🔑 Salvation is a free gift from God, and cannot be earned through any merit or effort of our own (**Ephesians 2:8-9**).



(DISPLAY **GUARD.**)

## 2. The church is to GUARD the truth.

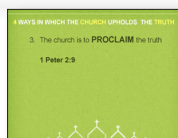
 *Titus 1:9—He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.*

This verse was written specifically for the elders of the church, the men who lead the church. They must guard the truth from any errors in its interpretation. Why is this important? (Direct the students to the related questions in the journal.)

### Illustration (Optional):


Ask the students if any of them as children played the “Telephone Line” game. One person whispers a message into the ear of a second person, who whispers it to another person, and so on. After many people have been involved in transferring the message, what often happens is that the message has been changed from its original meaning.

As God's truth is passed from one generation to another, the correct interpretation of those truths must be carefully guarded, so that they are not changed and distorted. Each generation must check the teaching it receives against the Bible. Give a brief example of this: The Bible teaches that God knows everything. That is the truth. But there are now some teachers who have made a deviation from this truth by saying: God knows everything knowable—meaning that there are some things God cannot know. This one little word, *knowable*, has changed what the Bible teaches. The church is to be a pillar of truth by checking all teaching against the Bible and by guarding the teaching from errors or lies, throughout every generation.

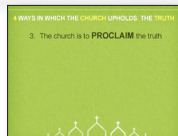


(DISPLAY **PROCLAIM**, AND DIRECT STUDENTS TO THE RELATED JOURNAL QUESTIONS.)




## 3. The church is to PROCLAIM the truth.

 *1 Peter 2:9—But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

Point out that there are three ways in which the church proclaims the truth:



(DISPLAY **PROCLAIM 2.**)

-  1. Proclaims the truth back to God in worship (worship of God)
-  2. Proclaims the truth to each other in the church (nurture of believers)
-  3. Proclaims and demonstrates the truth to non-Christians (evangelism/missions)

Would it have been easier for Paul to have kept his mouth shut in Ephesus? Would it have been less disruptive to the city if he would have just quietly kept his preaching within the church itself? After all, Paul's message started a riot.

Wouldn't it have been easier for the pastor of the church in California to keep his views about marriage within the church and not encourage his people to vote these views into state law? After all, his actions caused a protest outside his church.

Have the students turn to **John 14:6**.

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*John 14:6—Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”*

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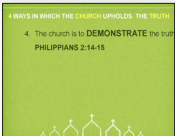
The church has the unique privilege of sharing the only way of salvation with others. The gospel is of supreme value! Proclaiming the gospel is not always easy, but it is a privilege because the message of the gospel is the most important message in the world!

The church is to uphold the truth by proclaiming it to the unbelieving world. For example:

When the world says that there are many ways to God, the church must proclaim the truth that Jesus is the only way to God. This is what Paul did in Ephesus.

Sometimes upholding the truth will involve taking a public stand on important issues in our world, like the issue of marriage. The church is not meant to keep quiet, but by speaking the truth in love, try to persuade unbelievers to come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. Other possible examples:

- When the world proclaims the lie that people simply evolved from lower life forms, the church must proclaim the truth that God created people in His image and likeness.
- When the world proclaims the lie that marriage can be between two men, the church must proclaim the truth that marriage is only between one man and one woman.
- When the world proclaims the lie that a fetus is not a person, and therefore a woman has the right to an abortion, the church must proclaim the truth that abortion is the murder of an unborn baby.



(DISPLAY **DEMONSTRATE.**)

#### **4. The church is to DEMONSTRATE the truth.**

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🔊 *Philippians 2:14-15—Do all things without grumbling or questioning, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.*

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*What does it mean to demonstrate the truth? [to live as obedient children of God] If you*

*live out God's truth, will you stand out as being different? In what ways? How will that be like a light shining in the world? How might that serve to attract someone to Jesus?*

The church is to live out and demonstrate the rightness and goodness of God's truth. When people are embracing and living according to God's truth, there will be a satisfaction and joy evident that will stand out in the unbelieving world. The church will look distinctly different, and hopefully in a way that is attractive to the watching world. Please briefly share a testimony (specific to your church) of a way the church has demonstrated the truth. (For example, the last lesson was on marriage, and one of the ways in which the church can demonstrate God's truth to the world is to display the goodness of God's design for marriage. So you could give an example of how a church couple has shown God's good design in marriage. Or, give an example of the church demonstrating the truth about the lives of unborn children—supporting care for women in crisis pregnancies and promoting adoption.)

Many people hear the word “church” and have the wrong idea of what the church really is and what its purpose is. Briefly comment:

*The world often sees the church as simply a place or building.*

*Or, they see the church as a kind of social club where people meet.*

*Or, they see the church as simply a group of weak and needy people.*

*Others see the church as a group of intolerant people who are trying to force their personal morals on everyone else.*

*And sometimes organizations that call themselves a “church” are not even a true church and do not uphold the truth of the Bible, serving to confuse and deceive people.*

But none of these views gives a true picture...



(DISPLAY **TRUTH 2.**)

...of what the church is supposed to be. The true church...

- ☞ ...is the household of God, every Christian, living out the truth of the gospel. The church is to be the “pillar of the truth”...
- ☞ ...in this world—upholding the truth of the Bible by teaching it,
- ☞ ...guarding it,
- ☞ ...proclaiming it,
- ☞ ...and demonstrating it...
- ☞ by living it out for the whole world to see, in the hope that others might come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved.

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the small group application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** The church is to teach, guard, proclaim, and demonstrate the truth.

**Think About It:** Read and discuss **Ephesians 4:11-15**. *Who are the pastors and elders of our own local church? How are they actively engaged in teaching and guarding the truth? Do you thank God for them? Do you listen carefully to their instruction? How have you seen God's truth demonstrated in their lives? (You may want to give some concrete examples.)*

**Examine Your Heart:** *Can you give examples of what is being referred to in verse 14? Do you sometimes feel "tossed to and fro"? Are there ways in which you could better use the resources God has placed in your life for growing in maturity? Can you give an example, in which you have proclaimed a specific truth in a non-Christian setting? How was that truth received? Were you surprised with the response? Why or why not?*

**Live It:** Do you have any opportunities this week to teach, guard, proclaim, or demonstrate biblical truth? If so, what are they? Pray with your small group that God will help you to uphold His Word.

- **Truth Statement:** The weapons the church uses to guard and proclaim the truth are spiritual weapons.

**Think About It:** Read and discuss **Ephesians 6:10-20**. Remind the students that the apostle Paul wrote this letter to the churches in and around the city of Ephesus. *Is Paul talking about real armor in these verses? Is he telling the church to go out and fight the lies of Satan by killing the people who are worshiping Diana? Why not? So why does he use the image of a soldier? What does he want the church to understand about guarding and proclaiming the truth? What is meant by verse 19? What is Paul praying will happen when the gospel is proclaimed? Read **1 Timothy 2:3-5**. Can you see evidences of this happening through the ministry of the people of our own church? What about in your own life?*

**Examine Your Heart:** *Does the idea of guarding the truth feel important to you, or unimportant? Is proclaiming the truth a priority in your life? If not, why not? Is there anything hindering you from being bolder with the truth than you are? Or, are you too aggressive in your stances on the truth? Do you hurt and offend those around you by the manner in which you proclaim the truth? Do you put on the full armor of God in the passage we just discussed?*

**Live It:** Choose one area of spiritual armor that you would like to work on putting on this week, with God's help. Make any changes needed to make proclaiming the truth a priority in your life. Pray for gentle boldness in sharing the truth with others this week.



- **Truth Statement:** The church must guard itself from error.

**Think About It:** Read and discuss Paul's words to the Ephesian elders from **Acts 20:28-31**. *According to these verses, does the danger from error come only from "the world" or can error come from within the "visible" church? (You may want to give a relevant example: Some church leaders and/or denominations have changed their teaching regarding marriage and no longer interpret the Bible rightly. They say that the Bible does not forbid same-sex marriage.) Why is it important for every true Christian to pay careful attention to the truth of the Bible?*

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you pay attention to the truth of the Bible, or have you grown lazy in listening to the pastors, elders, and teachers at your church? If your family has devotions together, do you listen during this time, or do you think about other things? Do you pay close attention to what you read in the Bible? Do you think you know the Bible well enough to be able to identify errors, even if they are made by a church or denomination or a teacher you know?*

**Live It:** With your small group, make a list of verses on the importance and benefits of knowing the Word (**Psalms 119** or your Bible concordance might be a good place to start). Each person should pick a verse from the list to memorize this week. Resolve to pay close attention to the Word when you read it and hear it taught.

- **Truth Statement:** Christians should be ready to proclaim and defend the truth of Scripture to those who ask.

**Think About It:** Ask the students if they have ever heard the word "apologetics." It means to make a case or defense, as in making a case for the truth of the Bible. Read portions of, or summarize Paul's testimony before King Agrippa in **Acts 26:22-29**. *With what type of attitude did Paul defend the truth? What important truth did he proclaim to the king? What was the goal of Paul's testimony?*

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you feel ready to defend the truth of the Bible? What things hinder you? Fear? Feeling unprepared? How can you overcome these obstacles?*

**Live It:** Practice sharing the gospel with one another in your small group. This is the most important truth you should be prepared to share. Pray for opportunities to share it with someone this week.

- **Truth Statement:** The true church will endure forever, whereas lies will crumble in time.

**Think About It:** Recall the picture of the Temple of Diana. Sometimes it seems as if the lies of this world are bigger, stronger, and more beautiful and popular than the truth of the Bible. For example, more people stay home and do other things on Sunday than go and hear the truth being preached and taught at church. More people believe in other religions, than believe in the truth of the Bible. All around the world, the true church is mocked and persecuted for upholding the truth. Point out that most people do not even

remember that this temple existed and you would find very few, if any, people who still worship Diana. The temple was built as a monument to a lie. And in the end it “collapsed.” What about the true church? Will it ever collapse and disappear? Read Jesus’ words to Peter from **Matthew 16:18**. The true church will last forever. Read and discuss some of the characteristics of the true church of Jesus from **Philippians 1:27-30**.

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you ever feel it is “not worth it” to defend and proclaim the truth? Does it seem too hard? Are you afraid of persecution? What can strengthen you when you are afraid or intimidated by this task?* [e.g., the knowledge that the church will last forever and prevail over its enemies, the promise of **Isaiah 55:10-11**] *Does your life evidence some of the characteristics from the **Philippians 1:27-30** passage? Which of those characteristics would you like to grow in as you uphold the truth?*

**Live It:** Discuss with your parents any opportunities they see in your life for growing in the way you uphold the truth.

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week.**

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 15

"Transforming Culture" article

# Self

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > The Bible provides the only true measure through which we are to see and understand ourselves.
- > Our value and worth is not self-derived. It comes from God.
- > We are totally dependent on God for everything. We are not self-sufficient.
- > We exist for God and were created to glorify Him.
- > Only through Christ can we rightly see and live in a way that glorifies God.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                       |                        |                       |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Genesis 1:26-27    | 4. 1 Corinthians 10:31 | 7. Romans 5:6-8       |
| 2. Acts 17:25         | 5. Romans 3:23         | 8. 2 Corinthians 5:17 |
| 3. 1 Corinthians 4:7b | 6. Romans 6:23a        |                       |

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## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 16    | > Encouraging God-Esteem Verse Sheet (one per student) |
| > Me Cards (one per student)          | > Parent Memo for Lesson 16 (one per student)          |
| > Results Sheet (one per small group) |  |

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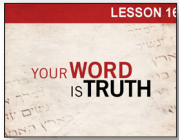
## OTHER VISUALS:

- |         |               |
|---------|---------------|
| > Bible | > Hand Mirror |
|---------|---------------|

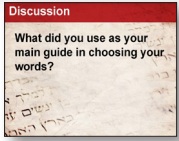
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## NOTE:

Be sure to have a volunteer leader ready to give the second scenario during the large group lesson.

(DISPLAY **LESSON 16.**)

## Small Group Discussion (5-6 minutes)

(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

ME CARDS (ONE PER STUDENT)

RESULTS SHEET  
(ONE PER SMALL GROUP)

Hand out a **Me Card** to each student. Listed on the card are 25 descriptive words. Each student should take a few moments to read the list. Then each student should circle five words that he believes best applies to or describes himself (this should be done independently without students talking or sharing answers). When they have finished, instruct them to turn their cards face down. Collect the cards. Give one student the **Results Sheet**. As you read the circled words on each Me Card, have the student with the Results Sheet make a check mark next to each word that is read, making multiple checks for words that are read multiple times. After all the words are read, examine the results:

*Was any word checked more than any other? Which one? Do you think this is a good or a bad thing? Were you surprised by any words that were checked or not checked? Why or why not? Is there a particular word you would have wanted included in the list?*

*What did you use as your main guide in choosing your words? Suppose the person sitting next to you had been asked to circle words that describe you. Do you think the words chosen for you would be the same or different from the words you chose for yourself? Would you care about how he or she would describe you? Does it matter how others see you?*

## Large Group Lesson



HAND MIRROR

(DISPLAY **BLANK SLIDE.**)

Stand in front of the class and hold the **hand mirror**. As you look into the mirror, briefly state the following:

*I am so good looking! There is no one else as beautiful (or handsome) as me. And not only that, I'm also smart, athletic, and talented! It's no wonder I am so popular. Everyone wants to be my friend. What can I say? I'm just all-around wonderful!*

How did the students react to that simple demonstration? Was their reaction what you would expect if a person actually felt that way about himself? Explain why. Now hand the mirror to the volunteer, who will briefly state the following:

*Wow, these braces sure make me look ugly. Man, no wonder I don't have that many friends. Even if I did have friends, I don't know what I'd say to them. I can never seem to think of the funny stuff that the cool kids at school are always joking about. I wish I were good at sports, or at least that I made decent grades. Being me is a total bummer.*

We may not react as negatively to this person. In fact, we may even secretly see ourselves in this person's self-evaluation. Explain that we all have perceptions about our-

selves—both positive and negative. Some of these we are willing to state on paper, as in our opening small group activity, and others we are less willing to state openly. But either way, when we look at ourselves, we are using a standard or measure in which to decide who we are and what we are like.

*The above illustration with the mirror demonstrates a common measure that people use. And we can find examples in many places.*

Explain that there was a greeting card cover that pictured a kitten looking into a mirror. But what was odd about that picture was what was shown in the mirror's reflection: a lion.

The inside of the card read: "All that matters...  
...is what you think about yourself."

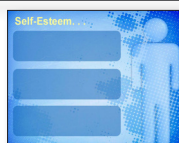


(DISPLAY **KITTEN.**)

*According to that statement, what measure does that card encourage someone to use in evaluating himself? [yourself; you are to be your own measure]*

*And according to what's implied by that card, would you be happier with a higher view of yourself, or with a lower view of yourself?*

Point out that there is a commonly used term for this type of thinking regarding yourself...

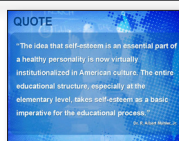


(DISPLAY **SELF-ESTEEM.**)

The philosophy of self-esteem can be summarized as follows (direct the students to complete these statements in the **journal**):

- ☞ Self-esteem is to have a high regard for your own worth, character, and abilities.
- ☞ Self-esteem comes from within yourself, and is not dependent on what others think of you.
- ☞ The higher your self-esteem, the more confident, successful, and happy you will be.

This view of self has become the prevalent thinking of our culture.



(DISPLAY **AL MOHLER QUOTE.**)

*The idea that self-esteem is an essential part of a healthy personality is now virtually institutionalized in American culture. The entire educational structure, especially at the elementary level, takes self-esteem as a basic imperative for the educational process.<sup>1</sup>*

1. Mohler, Dr. R. Albert. "The Myth of Self Esteem." Published on February 8, 2005 at <http://www.albertmohler.com/2005/02/08/the-self-esteem-myth/> (accessed September 4, 2010).

The following example shows how the concept of self-esteem can be seen in our culture.

Some schools no longer use the A-F grading system in order to remove the stigma of poor grades.

Many students are now in what are termed “advanced” or “honor” classes, even though the content and expectations are the same or even lower than that same class at the ordinary level (not advanced or honors) taught 20 years ago.

In some tests, there are no longer “right” and “wrong” answers. Rather, you are tested on how you might go about finding an answer. That way, students may never be “wrong.”

One study revealed that gang members often were said to have high self-esteem, while many people who were intelligent, beautiful, etc. were often found to have low self-esteem. The conclusion is that your perceived self-esteem doesn’t necessarily reflect reality.

Ask the students for a few brief examples of the self-esteem culture from their everyday lives.



(DISPLAY **KITTEN 2**, AND ASK...)

*However, just by looking at this picture, can you see anything wrong with this type of thinking? In other words, if the kitten just looks in the mirror and thinks great thoughts about himself—even imagining himself to be a lion—what is the truth? Even though his self-esteem might make him feel good about himself, is there any danger in thinking himself to be greater than he really is? What might that be? [His self-esteem is not reality; it's not the truth. He is not really a lion, and if he tried to act like one and attack a zebra, he could be killed.]*

Your illustration with the mirror was meant to demonstrate the foolishness of this kind of thinking. Although the students thought it was funny, because your perception of yourself was so exaggerated, it does give an example of the folly of self-esteem: it's not necessarily based on the truth. Ask the students to write down one obvious flaw about this type of thinking in the place indicated in the **journal**.

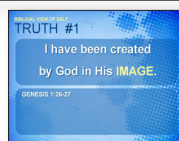


*So how are you and I to see ourselves? What will provide us with the truth?*

(DISPLAY **TRUTH 1A**.)

In order to have a right perception of ourselves, we need to look to the Bible. The Bible is the truth through which we are to understand everything in life. Explain that we will look at five truth statements. Each visual will state an “incomplete” truth...

- ...one in which a word is missing. The students will be asked to quickly guess the missing word from a list below the statement. Then a corresponding verse will be given that states this truth (time may not permit for you to read the verses out loud). Direct the students to complete these statements in the **journal**, and to take notes in the spaces provided as each statement is discussed in class.



(DISPLAY **TRUTH 1B.**)

**Truth 1: I have been created by God in His image.**

**Genesis 1:26-27—**

- Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

*Based on this truth, do you and I have worth as human beings? Yes. We were created in the image of God Himself. We are more valuable than rocks, or galaxies, or any animal. But our worth is not self-derived. In other words, we do not determine our worth. It is determined by God.*

This truth is extremely important. As our scenarios at the beginning of our lesson revealed, our culture tends to see worth in terms of outward characteristics and measurable accomplishments. This is not a right measure! We need to see the significance of these verses. For example, the greatest athlete and the most physically disabled person both have inherent worth as God's image bearers.



(DISPLAY **TRUTH 2A.**)

(Pause)



(DISPLAY **TRUTH 2B.**)

**Truth 2: I am totally dependent on God for everything.**

**Acts 17:25—**

- ...nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.*

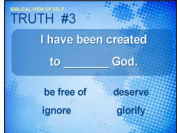


**1 Corinthians 4:7b—**

- ☞ *What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?*

Based on this truth, are we to see ourselves as something independent of God? No. Even though you and I are God's image bearers, we are not God, and we should see ourselves as being utterly dependent on Him for every breath we take.

Based on this truth, do I have the right to boast and brag about something I have accomplished? Ultimately, who is the source of my intelligence, athletic ability, or talent?



(DISPLAY **TRUTH 3A.**)

(Pause.)



(DISPLAY **TRUTH 3B.**)

**Truth 3: I have been created to glorify God.**

**1 Corinthians 10:31—**

- ☞ *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

*What does it mean to glorify God? It means to demonstrate and reflect His greatness and worth in everything. It means to make much of Him by honoring Him as God, thanking Him, and praising and worshiping Him in all your thoughts, words, and actions. It means that you exist for God, not God for you. He is to be the center or focus of your universe, rather than you being at the center. In other words, it's all about God!*



(DISPLAY **It's ALL ABOUT GOD.**)

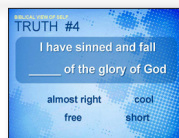
In summary of the first three truths:



(DISPLAY **SUMMARY.**)

- ☞ My worth is not self-derived (determined by me) but is determined by God.
- ☞ I am not self-sufficient, but am dependent on God for everything.
- ☞ I was not created for self-admiration, but for worshiping God.

Point out that the list is not complete yet. There are more important truths to understand about ourselves.



(DISPLAY **TRUTH 4A.**)

(Pause.)



(DISPLAY **TRUTH 4B.**)

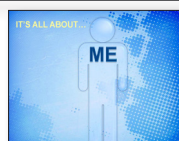
**Truth 4: I have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**

***Romans 3:23—***

*...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...*

*What might this look like as I view who I am and what I am like?*

Give the students a moment to respond. Explain that we fall short of the glory of God because we were created to reflect God's greatness and worth perfectly. Instead, we reflect ourselves, the world, or Satan's lies. We make life all about us, not all about God. Give an example of this: It's having an attitude that is expressed by thinking and acting as if you are at the center of the universe—"It's all about me and my desires and needs."



(DISPLAY **ME.**)

But this attitude is not just expressed with boasting and pride; it also can be expressed by the following type of self-centeredness:

**Guys:** *I wish I were more handsome, athletic, or smarter like the other guys in my class. Then I would be happier.*

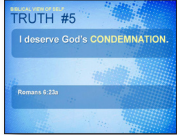
**Girls:** *If only I were thinner, prettier, and more popular like the other girls. Then I would be happier.*

Have the students recall the example of negative self-perception provided at the beginning of the lesson. Even though this person had a negative perception of himself, his measure was still wrong. These expressions come from not rightly seeing who you are in relation to your Creator. It is still an expression of self-centeredness: Poor me! Self-pity is also not what you were created for.

These biblical truths do not just apply to adults, or to people in one culture. These are objective and absolute truths that are universal and apply to all people everywhere... which is why the next truth is important for us to understand.



(DISPLAY **TRUTH 5A.**)



(Pause.)

(DISPLAY **TRUTH 5B.**)

**Truth 5: I deserve God's condemnation.**

***Romans 6:23a—***

🔊 *For the wages of sin is death,*

All of us, by nature, put “self” at the center of the universe. We do this by exaggerating our own importance, or by demeaning God's design as His image bearers. Either way, we do not rightly understand the truth of who we are and what we have been created to be, because we are looking to self and not to God. We are denying God's rightful place and authority in our lives. This is sin. It falls short of the glory of God, and deserves His condemnation. The solution to this problem cannot be found within ourselves. And having family, friends, or teachers try to build up our self-esteem will only make the problem worse.

*So what is the solution? To hang your head in woe and despair for the rest of your life?*  
[Allow the students to respond.]

Have the students turn to **Romans 5:6-8** and read:

***Romans 5:6-8—For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.***

*What solution do these verses point to?* [The gospel—Jesus dying for sinners so that we might be saved from God's condemnation.]

This solution—salvation through trusting in Jesus—is so amazing that it brings about what the Bible refers to as a new “self.” (Direct the students to answer the question in the **journal** about how we can rightly see and express who we are and what we are to be.)



(DISPLAY **2 CORINTHIANS 5:17.**)

***2 Corinthians 5:17—***

🔊 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

This new “self” is the reality of anyone who is “in Christ,” meaning everyone who is

trusting and depending on Jesus alone for their salvation. *What characterizes this new self?* (Direct the students to complete the related statement in the **journal**.)

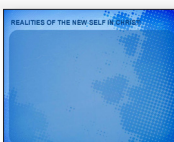
### Small Group Activity (4-5 minutes)

Have the students turn to the **Truth Statement** activity in the **journal**. Have them look up each verse and fill in the missing words to complete each truth statement.

If there is time left over, discuss the following G.K. Chesterton quote together (in the **journal**):

*How much larger your life would be if your self could become smaller in it.*

## Large Group Lesson



(DISPLAY **REALITIES.**)

Realities of the new “self” in Christ (for everyone who believes in Christ)...

- 1. Christ lives in me.
- 2. I am a loved child of God.
- 3. God has given me the righteousness of Jesus.
- 4. God is for me.
- 5. God has prepared good works for me to do.
- 6. I can do all things through Christ's strength.
- 7. In Jesus, I can have fullness of joy.

These realities are true for everyone who is trusting in Jesus. And these realities will transform the way in which you see and understand who you are and what you are to be.

*It means that you rightly see that your worth and value come from Jesus.*

*It means that you rightly understand that, apart from Him, you can do nothing.*

*It means that everything you are and will accomplish is through grace—an undeserved gift from Him.*

*It means that you see Him as the center and focus of your life.*

*It means removing the mirrors of self-esteem and replacing them with windows of God-esteem.*



(DISPLAY **JOHN PIPER QUOTE.**)

Here is how Pastor John Piper summarizes this reality:

*Faith is looking away from ourselves to another. Faith is total dependence on another. When faith stands in front of a mirror, the mirror becomes a window with the glory of Christ on the other side. Faith looks to Christ and enjoys him as the sum and judge of all that is true and good and right and beautiful and valuable and satisfying.*

*Do you want to have significance? Then look to Christ as infinitely significant. Do you want to have value? Then look to Christ as infinitely valuable. Do you want to have esteem? Then look to Christ as worthy of infinite esteem.<sup>2</sup>*

This truth goes against almost everything in our culture concerning self. Many of society's problems are now attributed to people having "low self-esteem." Therefore, books, television shows, and classes in schools are increasingly trying to build up and encourage you to simply have higher self-esteem. But this is a subtle lie of Satan, which appeals to the sinful, self-centered heart. Your true worth and value can only be found in the greatness and worth of Jesus. And your lasting happiness will only be found in praising and boasting about Him.

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the small group application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** The Bible provides the only true measure through which we are to see and understand ourselves.

**Think About It:** Have the students look at the descriptive words listed on the Results Sheet. *After listening to the lesson, are there words they would have chosen differently? Why or why not? For the most part, what do you use as a measure of who you are? Yourself? Friends? Family? The Bible? But how can your friends, family, and the church encourage you to rightly see yourself? Do you help your friends to do this? Do you surround yourself with friends who help you grow in this area? Or, do you tend to choose friends who serve to "puff you up"? Do you have a sense of entitlement when it comes to how others treat you? Consider the following examples of entitlement:*

(Student) My paper deserves an "A" more than his did! It's so unfair.

(Child) I need to get to baseball practice more than my little sister needs a nap!

**Examine Your Heart:** *Which of the first seven truths from the lesson do you tend to struggle with most? Do you often have an "It's all about me" attitude? If you say "no,"*

2. Piper, John. "Assessing Ourselves with Our God-Assigned Measure of Faith, Part 1." (Sermon delivered on August 29, 2004) <[http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByDate/2004/180\\_Assessing\\_Ourselves\\_With\\_Our\\_GodAssigned\\_Measure\\_of\\_Faith\\_\\_Part\\_1/](http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByDate/2004/180_Assessing_Ourselves_With_Our_GodAssigned_Measure_of_Faith__Part_1/)>, (accessed June 21, 2010).

would your parents agree with you, or do you sometimes express by your words and actions that you think your parents and others exist for you? Why do you think this is a struggle for all of us? Can we change our selfish tendencies simply through our own power and effort? Why not? (See **2 Corinthians 5:17**)

**Live It:** Pray with your small group for opportunities to point to God rather than self with your actions and attitudes this week.

- **Truth Statement:** Our value and worth are not self-derived. They come from God.

**Think About It:** Have the students review the Truth Statement Activity in the **journal**. Discuss the following statements with the students:

*Christ lives in me. (Galatians 2:20)*

*I am a loved child of God. (1 John 3:1)*

*God has given me the righteousness of Jesus. (Philippians 3:9)*

*God is for me. (Romans 8:31)*

*God has prepared good works for me to do. (Ephesians 2:10)*

*I can do all things through Christ's strength. (Philippians 4:13)*

*In Jesus, I can have fullness of joy. (John 15:11)*

When you look at the completed statements, is there any room for boasting about yourself? Why not? Who receives the boasting? If someone is not yet “in Christ,” how does God view that person? Is he still created in the image of God? Yes. (See **Genesis 1:26-27**.) But what is also true? (See **John 3:36**.) Will any amount of self-affirmation or people trying to build up his self-esteem help this problem? Why not? What is God's desire for him? (See **1 Timothy 2:3-4**.)

**Examine Your Heart:** Are you “in Christ” today? If not, is there anything keeping you from Christ that we can pray about? If you are in Christ, do you find it easy or hard to believe the truth statements in your **journal**? Which is the easiest to believe? Why? Which is the hardest to believe? Why? (You may want to point out that a key to believing these truths is looking to Christ in dependence for what He can do in a person.)

**Live It:** Pick one truth from the list to memorize and pray about this week. Remember to look to Christ when you struggle with doubt!

- **Truth Statement:** We exist for God and were created to glorify Him.

**Think About It:** Review Pastor John Piper's statement that was presented in the lesson:

Faith is looking away from ourselves to another. Faith is total dependence on another. When faith stands in front of a mirror, the mirror becomes a window with the glory of

Christ on the other side. Faith looks to Christ and enjoys him as the sum and judge of all that is true and good and right and beautiful and valuable and satisfying.

Point out that this thinking is very much at odds with what most of our culture teaches and displays. The message we often are given is that the way to be happy is to be made much of. Can the students think of a concrete example in which “self” is lost and happiness is found in seeing something else made much of? [e.g., watching your team win the Super Bowl or seeing a great movie] God designed us to be most happy in making much of Jesus, not making much of ourselves. (See **1 Corinthians 1:26-31**.)

**Examine Your Heart:** *Have you experienced what it is like to be “lost” in the wonder of who Jesus is? Do you long to experience this? If not, what is keeping you from wanting to enjoy Jesus fully? What are some practical ways you can encourage yourself to worship Jesus throughout the week? What are some practical ways you can point others toward Christ instead of toward yourself?*

**Live It:** Pick one specific way you can either worship Jesus more fully this week, or point others away from you and toward Christ. Be ready to share your attempts to do this next week.

- **Truth Statement:** We exist for God and were created to glorify Him.

**Think About It:** Some people look in the mirror and think, “I am no good. I am constantly blowing it. I have no real friends. People wouldn't like me if they knew what I'm really like.” *Is any of this kind of thinking true? (See **Romans 3:23**.) But will it help to just simply acknowledge this over and over again? Will it help to constantly look into the mirror of self-esteem...even if it is low self-esteem? Read and discuss **2 Corinthians 7:10a**. What is “godly grief”? How is it different from self-pity? What is godly grief meant to produce in us? When true repentance happens, will it produce a higher self-esteem? [No, it will produce a greater God-esteem.] (Review the truths from the truth statement activity, which become realities when you trust in Jesus for your salvation.)*

**Examine Your Heart:** *In what ways are you prone to feel sorry for yourself or think little of yourself? During what times are you most tempted to feel sorry for yourself? How can you remind yourself to focus on the truth of who you are in Christ during times of self-pity? Are you ever tempted to be bitter toward God for the way He has made you? (See **Isaiah 45:9**.) When you think about who God is, does this attitude make sense? Why not? How can you encourage contentment in your own heart and mind with the way He made you?*

**Live It:** This week, write one of the Scripture verses from this lesson on a sticky note and put it up your mirror, bedside table, or somewhere else where you will see it when you are tempted to pity yourself. Stop to read it and pray during times of temptation this week.



- **Truth Statement:** Only through Christ can we rightly see and live in a way that glorifies God.

**Think About It:** Give each student an **Encourage God-Esteem** verse sheet. Listed are various categories, including "Boasting & Pride," "Having Confidence," "Being Loved," "Having Purpose," etc. These verses are meant to be helpful "windows" through which a believer can rightly understand his condition in Christ. For example, suppose you struggle with your physical appearance and are prone to wanting the world's approval. Reading and meditating on verses within the "Worth" category may help you to rightly see who you are before God. Even if you are not a believer yet, these verses may serve to challenge you with the truth, and attract you more and more away from yourself toward the incomparable greatness and worth of Jesus.

**Examine Your Heart:** *Are there any areas in which you would like to encourage greater God-esteem in your life? Would you be willing to share these? Are there any verses that have helped you in this area of your life? What are they?*

**Live It:** In prayer partners, pray for each other to find your value, worth, and purpose in Christ and in living for Him. Use specific verses to pray for one another.

***Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week.***

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 16

Encouraging God-Esteem Verse Sheet



# Friends

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > Ideally, parents are to be the primary influence for communicating the truth of God in their child's life.
  - > Ideally, the church (the community of believers) is to be the secondary influence for truth in a young person's life.
  - > Friendships are a wonderful gift from God and are also intended to help and encourage us to better know and trust in Jesus and walk in His truth.
  - > The Bible warns against friendships that hinder our growth in godliness.
- 

## SCRIPTURE:

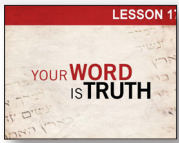
- |                      |                        |                         |
|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Proverbs 13:20    | 7. Romans 15:14        | 13.1 Thessalonians 5:11 |
| 2. Proverbs 22:24-25 | 8. 2 Corinthians 13:11 | 14.1 Thessalonians 5:15 |
| 3. Proverbs 27:9     | 9. Galatians 5:13      | 15. James 5:9           |
| 4. Proverbs 12:26    | 10. Galatians 6:2      | 16. James 5:16          |
| 5. Romans 12:2       | 11. Ephesians 4:32     |                         |
| 6. Romans 12:10      | 12. Colossians 3:9     |                         |
- 

## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

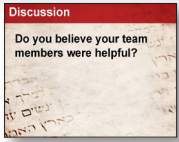
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 17       | > Parent Memo for Lesson 17 (one per student) |
| > Mazes 1 and 2 (2 sets per small group) |   |
- 

## OTHER VISUALS:

- |                                    |                                    |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| > Bible                            | > Doughnut or cookie               |
| > Blindfolds (two per small group) | > Garlic clove or onion            |
| > Pencil, pen, or marker           | > Plastic storage bag or container |

(DISPLAY **LESSON 17.**)

## Small Group Discussion (5-6 minutes)

(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

MAZES 1 &amp; 2

BLINDFOLD

PENCIL, PEN, OR  
MARKER

Divide your small group into two teams. Blindfold one member of each team. Explain that the teams are going to compete in a contest. Place **Maze 1** on the table in front of each **blindfolded** student and give each a **pencil, pen, or marker**. Tell the students that the goal of the game is to verbally instruct your team member to successfully complete the maze before the other team finishes theirs. The rules are as follows:

1. Only verbal commands are allowed. The team members are not allowed to touch the person's hand or the pencil.
2. Team members may try to verbally interfere with the other team's instructions—but no shouting or inappropriate comments!
3. The maze must be completed within the lines. If the student crosses a line, the team members must verbally guide him back to the place where he crossed the line and begin again from that point.

4. The first team to reach the trophy symbol wins the game.

If the game is finished quickly, you may play it again using **Maze 2**.

### For blindfolded students:

*Do you believe your team members were helpful? In what ways? Can you think of ways they could have been more helpful? Did the other team's members try to distract you? If so, were you able to ignore them? Was this difficult?*

### For other team members:

*Were you more concerned with helping your team win, or trying to interfere with the other team? Why did you choose to do that? After doing the contest, can you think of ways you could have been more helpful?*

## Large Group Lesson

(DISPLAY **6 QUESTIONS.**)

- ☞ Briefly review the six questions:
1. How did we get here?
  2. Why do we exist?
  3. What is wrong with the world?
  4. What is the solution?
  5. What will happen when we die?
  6. How now should we live?

Remind the students that, in one way or another, these are questions that all people are asking. And when we are first born, it is as if we are all “in the dark” as to the true answers to these questions. The answers just don't pop into our heads. We are all like the students with the blindfolds on and need to be led to the truth, which is found in only one place—God's Word as communicated in the Bible.

*But we have also learned that the blindness we have to the truth is not really a physical blindness. It is a spiritual blindness. By nature, we have been blinded by the lies of Satan, and our sinful hearts reject God's truth. Only God can remove that blindness and cause our hearts to see the truth of the gospel of Jesus so that we will be saved. This explains why simply hearing the truth is not enough. God must also, by His grace, give us faith to trust in Jesus and embrace His truth. And even after this happens, everyday Christians need to be guided and encouraged in how we are to live and walk in the truth.*

We both give and receive guidance daily, because we are influenced by others, and we also influence other people. Those who influence us tend to guide our thoughts and actions. Both unbelievers and believers alike need guidance. The first need is to be guided to the truth of the gospel, and the second need is to be guided to what it means to daily live as a “new creation” in Christ. God has designed “means” through which this guidance and encouragement happens, most notably people, who greatly influence our lives.



(DISPLAY **CIRCLES.**)

The innermost circle...

- ☞ ...is labeled **Self**. (Direct the students to the circles visual in the **journal** where they will add labels as you discuss these concepts in this lesson.)

In the last lesson we learned about a biblical understanding of “self,” meaning how each of us is to see and understand who we are, and how we are to view ourselves in relation to God. By nature, from the moment we are born, we are self-centered. But God has not designed you and me to simply be born and then left on our own. The second circle...

- ☞ ...represents your **Parents and Family**. Your parents are to have the greatest influence in your life as you are growing up, and they bear the greatest responsibility in guiding you to the truth, and encouraging you to grow in the truth. Even though not all have Christian parents, this is God's ideal—that Christian parents would guide their children into the truth. But your parents are not alone in this. The third circle...
- ☞ ...represents **The Church**, the community of Christians, especially those in the local church. Recall from our previous lesson that the church is to uphold the truth. As you meet together with God's people, they are to guide you by teaching you and living out the truth in their everyday lives.

*So that explains the first two circles surrounding you, but what about the third circle of influence in your life?*

🔑 *Can you think of another group of people who are influential in your life?*

Have the students turn to the following verse. Choose a student to read the verse, and then ask the following questions.



(DISPLAY **PROVERBS 13:20.**)

*Proverbs 13:20—Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.*

*This verse contrasts two kinds of outcomes brought about by the influence of two kinds of people. What are the two? [the wise and fools] What do you think it means to “walk with the wise”? Look to the second group of people for a clue: this second group is called the “companion of fools.” What is another name for companions? [friends] Why do you think having wise friends will result in becoming wise?*

(Direct the students to the question about this verse in the **journal.**)

🔑 Be influenced by wise friends → Become wise.

🔑 Be influenced by foolish friends → Suffer harm.



(DISPLAY **PROVERBS 22:24-25.**)

*Proverbs 22:24-25—Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man, <sup>25</sup>lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare.*

*What counsel is given in this verse? What is meant by “entangle yourself in a snare”? What are snares? They are traps used to capture animals. They work by luring an unsuspecting animal into them.*

Point out that during the small group contest, members from the other team may have tried to “ensnare” your team member who was blindfolded. They may have done this by pretending to be on your team and then giving wrong commands and guidance.

*Can you think of an Old Testament biblical example in which a friendship resulted in a snare or trap? [e.g., in Judges, after the death of Joshua, Israel befriended foreign nations and became ensnared in their idol worship; King Solomon; Samson, etc.]*

*Could we replace the words “anger” and “wrath” with other negative examples, such as a complaining or rebellious person? How might you learn his ways? Do you necessarily do this in an intentional way as in: “I will become friends with him so that I can learn to become a more rebellious person”?*

**Illustration**

DOUGHNUT  
GARLIC  
CONTAINER

Display the **doughnut** (or cookie) and the clove of **garlic** (or onion). Pose the following scenario:

*Suppose you needed to store each of these food items. What would happen if you did the following...*

(Place both in the same plastic bag or container.)

*After a day or two together, would the doughnut (or cookie) taste like it originally did? Why not? Would you be surprised by this? Of course not! In a similar way, you shouldn't be surprised if friendship with an angry, or complaining, or rebellious friend begins to rub off on you, influencing the way you think and act.*

(Direct the students to the question about this verse in the **journal**.)

- ☞ Friendship with an angry (complaining, rebellious) person can ensnare you into that behavior.



(DISPLAY **PROVERBS 27:9**.)

*Proverbs 27:9—Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel.*

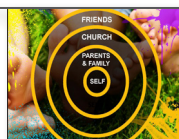
*What does this verse mean? Is the friendship pictured in this verse good, or bad? What makes the friendship in this verse “sweet”? [the friend's earnest counsel] What do you think is meant by “earnest counsel”?*

Counsel that is earnest is thoughtful, serious, and heartfelt, helpful guidance and advice. Refer to the students who were blindfolded during the beginning contest in the small groups. Hopefully, the team members gave you some “earnest counsel” as you tried to complete the maze. If so, they were encouraging and helpful in completing your task. That is the type of friendship that is “sweet” and will make your heart happy.

- ☞ (Direct the students to the question about this verse in the **journal**.)

Friendship that provides helpful guidance, makes the heart happy.

These three verses provide a better understanding of the importance of friendship, which represents the third sphere of influence in your life.



(DISPLAY **CIRCLES 2**.)

And these verses demonstrate that your friends are not simply “neutral” when it comes to influencing you. They will have an effect on you, and you in turn will have an effect on them.



*Have you ever thought of your friends in terms of influence? Most of the time we simply think of friends as people we have fun with and enjoy being with. Often we are drawn together by common beliefs, interests, and likes and dislikes. And that is not necessarily a bad thing. But it shouldn't be the only or most important consideration.*



(DISPLAY **PROVERBS 12:26.**)

### **Proverbs 12:26—**

- ☞ *One who is righteous is a guide to his neighbor, [1] but the way of the wicked leads them astray.*

[1] Or, the righteous chooses his friends carefully.

- ☞ The [1] mark in this verse refers to the added footnote below the verse. This footnote shows another way in which the verse can be understood based on the translation. This footnote is the one that we want to discuss.

*What is the observation or advice in this verse? Do you choose your friends carefully? Do you understand the influence they will have on you, and you on them? What kind of influence are you having on others?* (Direct the students to the question about this verse in the **journal**.)



DISPLAY **MAZE.**

This maze is a life maze. The entrance to this maze is through trusting in Jesus. We are all something like the blindfolded students in our opening contest. We are blind to the truth of the gospel of Jesus. And unless God...

- ☞ ...by His grace acts, we will not come to see, love, and trust in Jesus.
- ☞ But God has also designed “means” to guide us to the truth of the Bible—people who influence you, such as parents, the church, and friends.

*But notice that this maze doesn't simply end with trusting in Jesus. What question is written within the maze?*

- ☞ [How now should I live?] *So once you have come to trust in Jesus, He has a path for you to walk...He wants you to walk in the truth of the Bible's commands and promises. It means living out the truth in your daily life (**3 John 1:4**). And walking in His truth involves being transformed to a new way of thinking and living.*



(DISPLAY **ROMANS 12:2.**)

**Romans 12:2—**

- ☞ *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

It is easy to be conformed to the world's thinking. That is the natural inclination of the sinful heart. But to everyone trusting in Jesus, that thinking is being transformed by God's truth, which involves testing and discerning what is God's will in every situation.

*And the friends you choose can either help and encourage you in this, or hinder and discourage you in this. That is why the Bible tells you to choose your friends carefully. Are they helping to guide you in the truth, or are they being like a snare in your life? (Direct the students to complete the sentence about friendships in the **journal**.)*



(DISPLAY **FRIENDSHIPS**.)

*How can you tell the difference between these two kinds of friendships?*

Use the following type of example, or use an example from personal experience:

*Suppose you have a friend who loves soccer just like you. You start to spend a lot of time together playing soccer, and also doing other things. You have fun together. You like to be with him. But when he talks about his parents, he makes comments such as: "My dad acts like a dork when he comes to our games. I wish my parents wouldn't come at all!" He also makes comments such as, "My parents are so unfair. They make so many stupid rules. They are always bugging me about cleaning my room."*

*You might think this will not influence the way in which YOU think about your parents. But if his attitude and comments go unchallenged by you, that may be an indication that he is influencing you in a negative way rather than you encouraging him to grow in a godly way. And over time, that friendship may become a dangerous snare. Before you know it, his attitude may start to influence the way in which you see your own parents.*

- ☞ Often instead of choosing our friends carefully, we choose our friends casually. We don't evaluate whether or not they are being like snares in our lives. God's truth points us to develop friendships that serve to help us in better knowing, trusting, and walking in God's truth.

*Helpful friends want to speak and act in ways that serve one another in becoming more godly. Yes, your friend might also have a common interest like soccer. But most importantly, the friendship is serving to help you grow in knowledge, love, and obedience to Jesus. And these kinds of friendships have a very special "flavor" to them.*



(DISPLAY **CHARACTERISTICS.**)

Quickly read the qualities listed on the slide (at this point do not comment on each as this will be done in the application time). Have the students write the missing words for each of these characteristics as indicated in the **journal.**:

- ☞ Love one another. (Romans 12:10)
- ☞ Instruct one another. (Romans 15:14)
- ☞ Comfort one another. (2 Corinthians 13:11)
- ☞ Serve one another. (Galatians 5:13)
- ☞ Bear one another's burdens. (Galatians 6:2)
- ☞ Be kind to one another and forgive one another. (Ephesians 4:32)
- ☞ Do not lie to one another. (Colossians 3:9)
- ☞ Encourage and build up one another. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
- ☞ Do good to one another. (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
- ☞ Do not grumble against one another. (James 5:9)
- ☞ Pray for one another. (James 5:16)



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL VIEW.**)

Ask the students to quietly think about the following before small group time:

*Do you see friends as one of God's gifts meant to help and encourage you to better know and trust Jesus and walk in His truth?*

*Do you carefully choose your friends?*

*Think of the friends you have chosen. Do you thank God for the ones who have helped you to grow in godliness? In turn, are you encouraging them?*

*Are any of your friends acting as snares in your life? Would you know a snare if you saw it? And, in turn, are you acting as a snare to any of your friends? How would Jesus want you to be transformed in this area of your life?*

*Who are you influencing? How are you influencing them? Are you pointing friends to Christ?*

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the small group application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** Friendships are a wonderful gift from God, and are intended to help and encourage us to better know and trust in Jesus and walk in His truth.

**Think About It:** Have the students quickly review the truths from Proverbs that were presented in the lesson. Have they viewed their own friendships in the context of these truths? Why or why not? Does it seem as if friends are a “non-God” issue? How do these verses demonstrate that God is concerned about how we see and understand friendships? Quickly review the verses listed in the “Characteristics” portion of the lesson. How can these verses serve as a guide or measure for evaluating our friendships, both from the perspective of how our friends act toward us, and from a perspective of how we act toward our friends?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Are there any things you see in your friendships that need change or improvement?*

**Live It:** What steps can you take this week to make progress in this area?

- **Truth Statement:** The Bible warns against friendships that hinder our growth in godliness.

**Think About It:** Talk about how friends share things in common: interests, hobbies, beliefs, convictions, etc. *How would they rate the importance of these things? What are some common ways friends influence one another? [e.g., the way they talk, how they wear their hair, how they dress, etc.] Are these things necessarily “bad” influences? But can you think of a circumstance in which being influenced by your friends to dress a certain way could act as a snare? What can help you to guard against this happening? Do you invite your parents’ counsel and that of other mature Christians in evaluating your friendships? Do you heed their advice when it is given? (See **Proverbs 1:8**.)*

**Examine Your Heart:** *Without naming names, do you think that you are being influenced toward godliness by most of your friends? How are these people specifically influencing you toward godliness? If they are not influencing you this way, why not? What do your parents think of your friends? If you don’t know, are you willing to ask them this week?*

**Live It:** Consider spending less time with friends who are not influencing you toward godliness. Ask your parents this week about how they see your friends influencing you.

- **Truth Statement:** The Bible warns against friendships that hinder our growth in godliness.

**Think About It:** Read and discuss **1 Corinthians 15:33** and **Psalms 1:1**. *Why are these verses especially important when you are young?* [e.g., Suppose you began to make funny faces to a one-year-old. Often the child will try to imitate you. He simply follows your lead without thinking about what he is doing. If you began to make funny faces at a 40-year-old, would he be more or less likely to imitate you? Why less likely?] Point out that, for the most part, children are more apt to be influenced by others without thinking about what they are imitating. At times you may mistakenly believe that you can constantly hang around and be good friends with ungodly (behavior-wise) people and not be influenced in sinful ways. If possible, give the student an appropriate example from your own youth in which the friends you chose became a snare and not a help in godliness.

**Examine Your Heart:** *Have you ever found yourself thinking you are not influenced by your friends? Why is this thought so appealing? If your friends are not a good influence on you, what is keeping you from switching friend groups? Can you think of some people with whom you would like to be friends because they would influence you positively?*

**Live It:** Take steps this week to spend less time with friends who are a negative influence, and more time with friends who point you toward Christ.

- **Truth Statement:** Friendships are a wonderful gift from God, and are intended to help and encourage us to better know and trust in Jesus and walk in His truth.

**Think About It:** Ask the students how they would define a good friend. *What is the difference between an acquaintance and a friend? Would you say that you have many friends, or just a few?* (See **Proverbs 17:17**, **Proverbs 18:24**, and **Proverbs 27:6**.) *Is the number of friends you have the most important thing? Why not? Do friends who help and encourage you in godliness sometimes “wound” you? Why might a good friend “wound” you?* Read **Hebrews 3:13**. *What does the word “exhort” mean?* Share an appropriate (and general) example of how a friend exhorted you.

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you love your friend enough that you sometimes “wound” him in order to help him walk in the truth? Why is this sometimes difficult? What might we be afraid of? How could humbly acknowledging your own sin help the situation?*

**Live It:** This week, think of one way you can be a friend who offers sweet, earnest counsel—even if it means saying something hard. Be humble!

- **Truth Statement:** Friendships are a wonderful gift from God, and are intended to help and encourage us to better know and trust in Jesus and walk in His truth.

**Think About It:** Review the “one another” commands that were presented in the lesson. Point out that the “one another” in these verses refers specifically to members of the church—all true Christians. These commands are meant to show us how Christians are to help and encourage each other to grow in our knowledge, trust, love, and obedience to Jesus. But they also apply to the “one another” in friendships.

**Examine Your Heart:** *Would Christians or non-Christians best be this kind of friend to you? Why? When seeking good, close friends, do you take this into account? In your friendships, do you seek to be a friend who acts this way? How would you like to grow in this area? If you are not yet a Christian, will choosing “snare” types of friends help you in the long run or bring you closer to the truth of who God is? If you are a Christian, how might being a friend to a non-Christian help you to grow in your own trust and love for Jesus? (See **John 17:15-18** and **Matthew 5:13-16**.) How could this kind of friendship be a means or tool that God uses to display His mercy on an unbeliever?*

**Live It:** Consider one way you could be a better friend to others this week. Pray with your small group that God would help you be this kind of friend. Talk with your parents about any opportunities they see for you to befriend a non-Christian.

- **Truth Statement:** Friendships are a wonderful gift from God, and are intended to help and encourage us to better know and trust in Jesus and walk in His truth.

**Think About It:** Sometimes we seek out friends very casually—they are in our classes, they live next door, we’re on the same team, we like the same kind of things and have fun together. Will these things, in and of themselves, provide you with the best basis for seeking out friends who encourage you to grow in godliness? (See **James 2:1-4** and **Romans 12:16**.) What mistake is James warning us against? How can this apply to choosing friends?

**Examine Your Heart:** *What steps could you take to be intentional when choosing friends? How can you avoid showing favoritism to some people, but not others? Is there a way you could treat someone who is usually left out kindly this week?*

**Live It:** This week, seek to show kindness to someone who doesn’t have as many friends. Consider each of your friendships and ask yourself, “Why am I friends with this person?” Be willing to make changes if necessary.

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week.**

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 17





# Ethics

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > Ethics is a term used to describe the set of moral principles and values used to determine what is right or wrong in a given situation.
  - > The Bible provides the only sure set of moral principles and values for determining what is right or wrong in a given situation.
- 

## SCRIPTURE:

- |                      |                        |                         |
|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Psalm 32:8        | 6. Exodus 20:15        | 11. John 16:13          |
| 2. Isaiah 48:17      | 7. Romans 13:1a        | 12. Proverbs 11:14      |
| 3. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 | 8. Colossians 2:8      | 13. 2 Corinthians 10:5b |
| 4. Proverbs 18:17    | 9. 1 Corinthians 10:23 | 14. James 4:7           |
| 5. Psalm 119:15      | 10. Matthew 5:16       | 15. Deuteronomy 6:18a   |
- 

## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 18
  - > Parent Memo for Lesson 18 (one per student)
  - > Scripts 1-3
- 

## OTHER VISUALS:

- > Bible
  - > \$5 bill
  - > mp3 Player (or Christian music CD)
  - > A simple compass
- 

## PREPARATION:

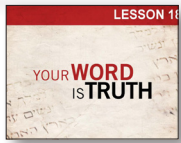
Recruit six students before the class begins to each take a part in doing the three skits (see Scripts 1-3). Each skit will require two students.

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## NOTE:

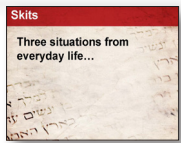
The material in the first part of the lesson should be presented very quickly and without extended comments and discussion. The main thrust of the lesson starts with the discussion of Psalm 32:8 and Isaiah 48:17.

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(DISPLAY **LESSON 18**.)

## Large Group Lesson



(DISPLAY **SKITS**.)

Have the six students chosen before the lesson, come to the front of the class. Explain to the class that each team is going to illustrate a particular situation involving two friends. Introduce each skit with the following teacher comments, and then quickly perform the skits in the following order:

### Skit 1

*\$5 BILL*

Teacher: [Student 1 and Student 2] are two friends who have just returned from shopping together.

Student 1: Wow! Look at the change the cashier gave me. He accidentally gave me a \$5 bill instead of a \$1 bill!

Student 2: That's great! You know what they say..."Finders keepers. Losers weepers!" Let's use it to buy some snacks at the store.

### Skit 2

*MP3 PLAYER (OR  
MUSIC CD)*

Teacher: [Student 1] has just downloaded some new Christian songs [or purchased a new Christian music CD] and is showing it to his/her friend.

Student 1: Look at my new music [or CD]. This is my favorite Christian group. The songs are really great.

Student 2: I would love that music [or CD], but I don't have enough money to buy it. Could you copy some of the songs and burn a CD for me?

Student 1: Sure, no problem.

### Skit 3

Teacher: [Student 2] has been sick from school for a few days.

Student 1: It's good to see you back at school.

Student 2: I feel a lot better, but now I'm behind in my homework assignment and it's due tomorrow. The teacher won't give me extra time. I'll never be able to finish on time.

Student 1: That's not fair. The teacher should give you more time. Why don't you meet me after school, and I'll let you copy some of my answers.

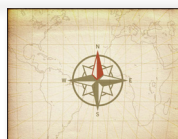
Have the students return to their seats. Point out that all three situations are based on things that really happen in everyday life. Every single day we experience situations that challenge us to make decisions regarding what is right or wrong to do in certain situations. And all people, whether they are Christians or not, make these decisions based on a set of moral principles or values. The word “moral” refers to right and wrong. And there is a term that is used to describe the process in which people make these kinds of decisions. (Direct the students to complete the definition as indicated in the **journal**.)



(DISPLAY **ETHICS**.)

- 🔗 Ethics are a set of moral principles and values used to determine what is right or wrong to do in a given situation.

Sometimes people refer to ethics as a “moral compass.” What do you think is meant by that?



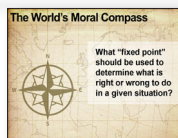
COMPASS

### Illustration

(DISPLAY **COMPASS SLIDE**, AND THE ACTUAL COMPASS.)

A compass is an instrument used to orientate a person's location based on a fixed point—the northern magnetic pole. The needle of a compass always points north. In doing so, the compass can help you find the right direction in traveling from one point to another. In a similar manner, people use a type of moral compass to find their way in deciding the right or wrong path to take in a given situation. It is as if they have a “fixed” point that they use to determine what is right or wrong to do in a given situation.

*According to all we have learned so far in the previous lessons, what is the one fixed point that is to be the guide for what is right or wrong in any given situation? [The Bible, God's truth] Do you think that the skits the students did at the beginning of the lesson demonstrated decisions using a biblical moral compass? Why or why not?*



(DISPLAY **WORLD**.)

Satan does not want people to use the truth of God's Word as their moral guide, so he has counterfeit compasses to offer people. And the sinful heart would rather trust in these lies than the truth. What are some of these compasses like, and what “fixed point” do they use? (Direct the students to the **journal** to fill in the missing words about the world's moral compasses.)



(DISPLAY **COMPASS 1**.)

- 🔗 The guiding principle for determining what is right or wrong in a given situation is ME—my own needs and desires.

The first skit with the student receiving more change than he deserved is an example of this.

*Why was this skit a demonstration of this? What was the student's primary concern? What desire drove his decision to keep the extra money?*

*What would happen in a world where everyone simply did whatever they thought was best only for themselves? What if everyone just took whatever they liked at the grocery store, library, school, etc.? "I am stronger than you. I like your new iPod™, so I am going to take it from you." Chaos would result!*



(DISPLAY **COMPASS 2.**)

- ☞ The guiding principle for determining what is right or wrong to do in a situation is the **END GOOD**—the outcome justifies the means in which you get there.

*Let's review skit 3 where the one student suggested supplying answers for the student who had been sick. What circumstances seemed to warrant this decision? [e.g., the teacher was being unfair to the sick student; the student supplying the answers was showing compassion to his friend; etc.]*

*Another example of using the End Good as a compass is "Robin Hood"—the story of a man who stole from the rich to give to the poor. Robin Hood is always seen as a hero and not a thief. He seemed to be doing what was compassionate, fair, and good.*

This is a very common "compass" used in ethics: rightness or wrongness is determined in view of a "good" outcome. And that outcome may even be guided by care and compassion for another person. It is characterized something like:

*"Yes, I know that cheating is wrong, but in this case it is justified because the teacher is being unfair to my friend." And "Yes, I usually don't copy answers, but in this case, it's the only way that I can complete my assignment on time."*

However, human compassion and care, while they are important in guiding decisions, are not the "fixed" points we need. Ultimately, they are not trustworthy as to what is right or wrong since what feels good is not necessarily what is truly good.

There is only one moral compass that provides the true fixed point in determining what is right or wrong to do in any given situation, the Bible.



(DISPLAY **BIBLE.**)

But many times, even Christians who believe the Bible is absolute and objective truth don't use it as their guide in a given situation.

*Why do you think that is the case? [e.g., our sinful nature; the Bible doesn't seem to address some issues; etc.]*



(DISPLAY **GPS**.)

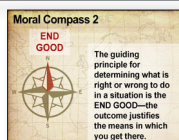
Most people no longer use compasses because a GPS is a much easier way of getting directions. In a car, you can simply type a specific location into the GPS, and it will give you verbal, step-by-step instructions for getting there.

*Sometimes people, even Christians, think of the truth of the Bible only in terms of a GPS. How is that?*

MP3 PLAYER

Hold up **mp3 player** (or Christian music CD) and recall the skit in which the one student was going to make a copy of the download (or CD) for the other student.

*The students need to determine whether it is right or wrong for the one student to copy the download (or CD) for his friend. Pretend for a moment that the Bible is a GPS system. If you type in the words “What does the Bible say about copying music downloads (or CDs)?” will it give you a verse that specifically says “Copying Christian music downloads (or CDs) is okay.” Or, “Copying music downloads (CDs) is wrong.”? No, you will not find a verse like that. Nowhere in the Bible are music downloads (or CDs) mentioned. So, do you simply say: “Well the Bible is not relevant in this situation. I will have to use another compass instead...”*



(DISPLAY **COMPASS 2B**.)


*...I think Compass 2 would work best here.”? (Allow the students to respond.)*

Some people feel that if the Bible doesn't address a certain situation specifically or clearly, you must rely on some other fixed point for making your decision about what is right or wrong. In the case of the students and the download (or CD), they reverted to Compass 3 for making their decision. But this is not right thinking.




(DISPLAY **PSALM 32:8** AND **ISAIAH 48:17**, and direct the students to the related question in the **journal**.)

**Psalm 32:8—**

 *I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.*

**Isaiah 48:17—**

 *Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “I am the LORD your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you in the way you should go.”*

*In these verses God is speaking to His people. Does God want His people to go elsewhere in order to determine what is right to do in any given situation? What is God prom-*

ising to do for His people in these verses? [to instruct, lead, and teach them, and even to teach them to profit] *Do these promises specify certain types of situations? Why not?*



(Display **2 Timothy 3:16-17**, and direct the students to the related questions in the **journal**.)

### **2 Timothy 3:16-17—**

- 🔑 *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.*

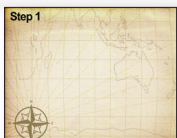
*Focus on the words “training for righteousness.” What does it mean that all Scripture is profitable for training in righteousness?*

Training involves intentional and active effort toward a desired goal—righteousness. Righteousness involves doing what is right. In other words, for a Christian, there needs to be an intentional and active effort to use God's word for doing what is right to do.<sup>1</sup>

*What do the words “competent” and “equipped” mean? (Competent means to be capable of doing something. Equipped means to be properly supplied.) If a person knows how to set up a tent, he is capable of doing it, but he needs tent poles and tent pegs in order to be equipped. God's Word makes us capable to make godly decisions as we understand it more and more, and it equips us with Scripture to speak to our situations.*

Verse 17 also emphasizes the *sufficiency* of the Bible in providing us with guidance in what is right or wrong in any situation. That is what is meant by the words: **“equipped for every good work.”** The truth of the Bible is not limited in its scope of guiding us in doing what is right in some situations but not others. It is necessary and able to help us in determining what is right to do in every situation. (Direct the students to complete the sentence in the **journal** about the Bible's sufficiency.)

We are going to use some suggested steps that will better serve to train us about how we can use the truth of the Bible to determine what is right to do in a given situation. (Go through these steps quickly to leave time for the small groups to develop each further. For example, do not read through every Scripture text given.)




(DISPLAY **STEP 1**.)

- 🔑 **1. Carefully examine the real issue/s involved.**

1. This is not referring to justification (God's unmerited grace in imputing Jesus' righteousness for the justification of sinners), but to sanctification (the process by which a Christian, in the power of the Holy Spirit, strives to become more and more like Jesus).

**Proverbs 18:17—**

 *The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him.*

MP3 PLAYER

*At first glance, it might seem good and right that your friend would copy a download (or Christian music CD) for you. However, once you spend some time really examining the issue, you may find that this is not right.*

(Display the **MP3 PLAYER** or Christian music CD.)

*For example, in downloading the album, you might remember that the Terms and Conditions you agreed to before downloading the content included a statement limiting any copies of the album that you make for your own personal use. This means that, by law, you can't reproduce the album for others. (Or, in examining the CD, I might point out and read the following to you: "Warning: Unauthorized reproduction is prohibited by law." That means that you can only reproduce this CD if you have permission by the company that produced it. That law exists so the people who write, perform, and produce the album (or CD) get paid for their work.) So when you really examine the situation, you are not just talking about "sharing with a friend" anymore. You are talking about breaking the law and stealing money from the people who made the album (or CD).*



(DISPLAY **STEP 2.**)

 **2. Search for the truth in Scripture.**

**Psalms 119:15—**

 *I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways.*

The situation should drive you to the Bible. That may take some time and study. Verses do not just “pop” out of the Bible. You need to go looking and understand whether the verse applies to your situation. Even though the Bible doesn’t say anything specifically about copying downloads (or CDs), it does have a “fixed point” when it comes to breaking the law—even man’s laws—and stealing. Ask the students if they can think of any verses, and then give the following two examples:

*Exodus 20:15—You shall not steal.*

*Romans 13:1a—Let every person be subject to the governing authorities.*



Point out that computerized Bible programs...

☞ (Show "Bible program word search.")

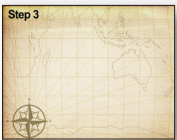
...with topic or word searches can be very helpful for this.

(If time permits, you could quickly show students how to do a topical or word search using free software, such as *E-Sword*, which is available for download at <[www.e-sword.net](http://www.e-sword.net)>.)

☞ Another tool is the topical index and concordance in the back of many Bibles. Also, think of...

☞ ...biblical examples.

Are there stories and events in the Bible that are similar to your own situation? What can be learned from those examples? Note that there are both positive and negative examples in Scripture, so students should be discerning about who they choose to imitate!



(DISPLAY **STEP 3.**)

☞ **3. Ask important questions:**

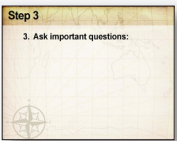
☞ *Does Scripture directly address this issue?*

☞ *Is this "according to Christ"?*

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☞ *Colossians 2:8—See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.*

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(DISPLAY **STEP 3B.**)

☞ *It may be lawful, but will it be helpful?*

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☞ *1 Corinthians 10:23—"All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up.*

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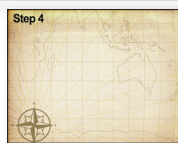
☞ *What will my actions demonstrate to others about God?*

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☞ *Matthew 5:16—In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

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In the case of whether or not it is right to make a copy of an album (or CD), the answer was clearly presented in Scripture. Some issues are harder to determine about what is right or wrong to do. Therefore, asking the above questions can help to guide our thinking.

(DISPLAY **STEP 4.**)


#### **4. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance.**

 *John 16:13—When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth.*

*Often we make rash decisions without taking time to pray and listen to the Holy Spirit. If you are trusting in Jesus, He has given you the Holy Spirit to guide you in the truth. But we need to learn how to listen to His guidance and not our own sinful inclinations. The Holy Spirit guides through the truth of the Bible—not contrary to it. So if the Bible is clear on a topic, the Holy Spirit will never guide you in a different direction. Make sure you know what the Bible says! (You could remind students briefly of the importance of Scripture memory, study, reading plans, etc.)*

(DISPLAY **STEP 5.**)

#### **5. Seek out wisdom from others.**


 *Proverbs 11:14—Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.*

*If possible, before making a decision about what is right or wrong in a given situation, seek wise counsel, especially from your parents and other mature Christians. Getting wise counsel is a safety for you, and it is God's way of protecting you from making wrong decisions.*

(DISPLAY **STEP 6.**)

#### **6. Submit to God's Word and authority.**

 *2 Corinthians 10:5b—...and take every thought captive to obey Christ,*

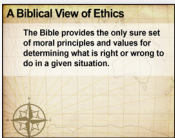
 *James 4:7—Submit yourselves therefore to God.*

*It may seem like such a good thing to help your friend by copying a download (or music CD). It may seem like such a little wrong in your eyes, “What's the big deal?” It might seem as if there is no harm done, just this one time. But God wants us to take these thoughts “captive”—grab them and lock them up—and then obey Jesus. Submit to God's word, not to these thoughts.*

(DISPLAY **STEP 7.**)**7. Do what is right.**

*Deuteronomy 6:18a—And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may go well with you,*

*It is not enough to just discover what is right or wrong to do, you must follow through and act on that truth by doing what is right. True submission to Jesus will be evidenced by right actions, not simply by right thoughts.*

(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL.**)

The Bible provides the only sure set of moral principles and values for determining what is right or wrong to do in a given situation.

God's truth is necessary every day. Christians cannot function without God's truth being the “fixed point,” which guides us about what is right or wrong in any given situation. For some things, the Bible is almost like a GPS system that clearly states what is right and wrong. But for other situations, the Bible is more like a compass with a fixed point of truth, whereby we must learn how to orient ourselves and be guided to what is right to do. And that takes continuous training and practice. It is a lifelong process.

## Small Group Application

Have the students turn to the **Ethics Activity** in the **journal**. Choose one of the following situations to use as a basis for going through the seven suggested steps from the lesson. Have the students quickly write a summary of the situation in the appropriate box. (Note: In place of the suggested scenarios, you may present your own. However, make sure it is relevant and appropriate for your particular group of students.) Whatever scenario you choose, be prepared before class with applicable Scripture passages and Bible tools (a sample text is given as starting point for searching for applicable texts). Carefully go through and discuss each step. Then look at the “Examine Your Heart” section.

**Think About It:**

**Situation 1:** You must do a science project for a class assignment. The rules state that you cannot have help from your parents, but most of the kids in the class are breaking the rule. The teacher knows this, but doesn't care. Your aunt knows what is happening and offers to help you since the rule says, “parents” not “aunt.” What is the right thing to do? (See **Proverbs 21:2; Psalm 15:2; Luke 16:10; and Proverbs 10:17.**)

**Situation 2:** You have been on the soccer team for the past two years. You are the best scorer on the team. Starting next month, you will have games every other Sunday morning during the same time that church meets. If you don't go to the games, it could affect whether or not your team wins. The coach wants you to be there, and tells you that the whole team is counting on you. What is the right thing to do? (See **Matthew 6:19-21; Proverbs 29:25; Matthew 6:33; and Psalm 37:4.**)

**Situation 3:** You go to a friend's house for a party. You are having a great time playing games and eating pizza. Then they decide to watch a movie you've never seen. You begin to watch it and find out that it is rated PG-13 for bad language and scenes that you know your parents would not like you to see. Your friend's parents are there watching it with you, and they believe that it is an okay movie for the group. What is the right thing to do? (See **Proverbs 6:20-22; Exodus 20:12; and Psalm 101:3.**)

**Situation 4:** Your basketball team is playing an important game. If you win, you'll go on to the play-off tournament. The score is tied in the final seconds of the game. You have the ball and only have time for one final shot. You stop and shoot the ball... and it goes through the hoop for the winning score. However, just after the shot you look down and notice that you were out-of-bounds when you made the shot. The referee was on the other side of the court and didn't see it. What is the right thing to do? (See **Proverbs 20:17; Proverbs 16:30; and Luke 16:10.**)

**Situation 5:** Your best friend is having a hard time in school. The day for the big math test arrives and he is not ready. She tells you to promise to keep a secret. You agree and then she tells you that she is going to fake being sick for the day in order to get out of taking the test. What is the right thing to do? (See **Proverbs 27:5-6; Hebrews 3:13; and 1 John 1:7.**)

**Examine Your Heart:** *Can you give an example of a difficult situation in your own life when it was hard to decide what was right or wrong to do? What made it difficult? Did you have time to examine the issue? Did you look to the Bible? Did you stop to pray and ask God to guide you? Did you seek counsel from your parents or other godly people? Why is it hard to sometimes submit our will to God's truth? Does the reward for doing what is wrong seem better than the reward for doing what is right? How is this a lie of Satan?*

*Read and discuss **Hebrews 5:14**. What can help us become better at discerning what is right or wrong?*

**Live It:** *What decisions or situations (big or small) are you facing this week that you would like to pray about? What steps could you take similar to those described in this lesson in order to decide what to do? Pray for one another. Point students to the **journal** to work through the seven steps for situations they are facing this week.*

As follow-up, you may want to read and discuss one of the following texts: **1 Peter 3:14-17; Psalm 19:7-11; Ephesians 5:8-10; Colossians 1:9-10.**

*Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week.  
Try to follow up with them next week.*

## **Send Home**

Parent Memo for Lesson 18

# Life and Death: Abortion

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > God is at work within the womb, intimately and wonderfully forming His unique image bearer.
- > All of our days, both before and after birth, belong to God.
- > We are to praise God for His wonderful gift of children.
- > Abortion is the killing of human life. God hates abortion.

---

## SCRIPTURE:

- |                    |                  |                   |
|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Psalm 139:13-15 | 4. Psalm 127:3   | 7. Ephesians 5:11 |
| 2. Psalm 139:16    | 5. Proverbs 6:17 | 8. Proverbs 24:11 |
| 3. Genesis 1:27    | 6. James 4:2a    |                   |

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## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 19
- > Parent Memo for Lesson 19 (one per student)

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## OTHER VISUALS:

- > Bible

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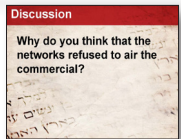
## NOTE:

Be prepared to show the 40-second video clip “Imagine Spot 1—Rejected by NBC and CNN,” found on youtube.com by searching for the title. (Note: If it isn't possible to play the video in class, the teacher should watch this video before the class and be prepared to describe it to the class as part of the lesson presentation.)



(DISPLAY **LESSON 19.**)

## Small Group Discussion (5-6 minutes)



(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

OPTIONAL: PROLIFE  
VIDEO CLIP FROM  
YOUTUBE.COM

Explain that the following video was created as a commercial to be aired during the Super Bowl in 2009. However, the networks which broadcasted the Super Bowl refused to air it. Show the above noted video clip (or describe it, if it's not possible to show it in class). Since it is very short, you may want to play it twice.

*Why do you think the networks refused to air this commercial? Was there anything "offensive" about it? What message do you think the creators of this ad were trying to convey? Does this ad target an important issue? What is it? What misconceptions were they attempting to address? Do you believe their ad was persuasive? Why or why not?*

(Instruct the students to use the "word bank" to fill in the missing words/numbers for the **What I Know about Abortion** Activity in the **Student Journal**. Answers will be given during the large group lesson.)

1. At the moment of conception, all human

chromosomes are present, creating a unique human life in a mother's womb.

2. By 22 days after conception, an unborn baby's heart begins to beat.
3. Six weeks after conception, brain waves can be detected in an unborn baby.
4. Eight weeks after conception, every organ is in place.
5. In the United States, it is legal for a woman to end her pregnancy (by abortion) for almost any reason during all nine months of pregnancy.
6. The number one reason women give for wanting an abortion is feeling unready to have a child.
7. Since 1973, there have been more than 47 million abortions in the United States.
8. Throughout the world, there are about 40 million abortions every year.

## Large Group Lesson

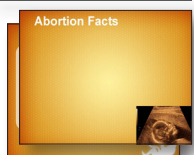


(DISPLAY **ABORTION.**)

The opening video clip and the activity both concern issues involved in the topic of abortion. Ask the students how they would define what is meant by "abortion."

Explain that this is how some people would define abortion:

☞ Abortion is the intentional termination of a pregnancy.

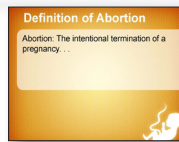


(DISPLAY **ABORTION FACTS 1 & 2**, AND CLICK THROUGH THE ANSWERS.)

Quickly read statements 1-8 from the **What I Know about Abortion** activity in the **jour-**



**nal.** Have the students compare and, if necessary, correct their answers. Point out that just by the sheer numbers—there are more than 40 million abortions every year around the world—the issue should demand our attention. But we also need to understand the deeper truth about abortion.



(DISPLAY **DEFINITION.**)

- ☞ *Based on the facts presented in the activity, is this definition adequate? Why not?* (Allow the students to respond.) For example, the termination of a pregnancy results in the kill-  
ing of a human life.

Point out that abortion is also an ethical issue, one of the greatest ethical issues of our time.

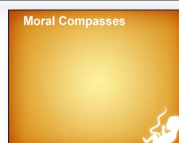


(QUICKLY DISPLAY **ETHICS.**)

- ☞ Ethics are a set of moral principles and values used to determine what is right or wrong to do in a given situation.

Abortion is an ethical issue because it presents a situation in which people are making decisions about what they believe is right or wrong to do in regard to an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy. And in the case of abortion, it is not just a personal ethical issue, it is also a societal issue with the government making laws about what is or is not right to do.

*For example, the number one reason women in the United States give for having an abortion is that they feel unprepared for the responsibilities of motherhood. And in the United States, there are established laws that give women the legal right to have an abortion for this reason. In doing so, they (the woman and the government) are using a type of moral compass for making this decision. What type of moral compass do you think this reasoning demonstrates?*



(DISPLAY **MORAL COMPASSES.**)

- ☞ 1. The guiding principle for determining what is right or wrong in a given situation is ME—my own needs and desires.
- ☞ 2. The guiding principle for determining what is right or wrong to do in a situation is the END GOOD—the outcome justifies the means in which you get there.
- ☞ 3. The Bible provides the only sure set of moral principles and values for determining what is right or wrong to do in a given situation.

The Bible provides the only sure “fixed point” for determining what is right or wrong to do in a given situation. Ask the students if they can think of a simple verse to help guide us and determine whether or not abortion is right or wrong. [e.g., “You shall not murder” from the Ten Commandments]

*The clearest text on this subject is God's command not to murder (**Exodus 20:13**). However, there are people who argue: “Well, a fetus is not really a person, but simply a potential person. So this text doesn't apply here.” How would you answer them? Was there any evidence presented in the beginning activity that would tend to contradict this argument? [e.g., statements 1-4]*

Regardless of “personhood,” there is another important biblical truth involved. Have the students turn to **Psalm 139:13-15**.



(Display **PSALM 139:13-15**, and direct the students to complete the related statements and answer the questions in the **journal**.)

**Psalm 139:13-15—**

🔊 *For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. <sup>14</sup>I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. <sup>15</sup>My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.*

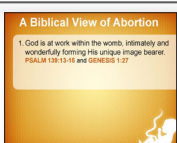
*What important truth is made evident in this text? Who was intimately involved in forming an unborn child?*

Choose a student to read **Psalm 139:16**.

🔊 *Psalm 139:16—Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.*

*According to this verse, does God care about His creative work in the womb only after a certain amount of time, let's say, three months after conception when all of the organs are formed?*

Apart from any arguments about whether or not an unborn child is truly a “person” based on how fully formed he is, the Bible makes very clear that what is happening in the womb is the wonderful work of God. It is God creating His own unique image bearer. It is God creating a person for His glory. And that life, every one of our days, belongs to God.



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL**.)

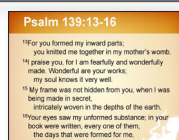
1. God is at work within the womb, intimately and wonderfully forming His unique image bearer (***Psalm 139:13-15*** and ***Genesis 1:27***).

☞ 2. All of our days, both before and after birth, belong to God (***Psalm 139:16***).

### Illustration (optional)

Give the following brief scenario (or something similar):

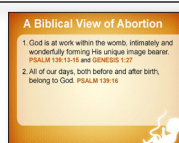
*Suppose a mother was making her five-year-old son a special birthday cake. Would she care about the cake from the beginning of making it, or only after its completion? For example, what if, as she was mixing the batter together, her son came by and threw some dirt in the bowl, ruining the batter. Would she simply say to him, "Well, that's okay. I wasn't finished anyway."? Of course she wouldn't have that attitude, and neither does God as He is wonderfully forming His image bearer in the womb.*



(DISPLAY **PSALM 139:13-16.**)

This passage also points us to how we are to rightly view and respond to the person-forming work of God within the womb.

*According to these verses, what is that response to be?* [praise to God; recognizing His wonderful work]



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 2.**)

☞ 3. We are to praise God for His wonderful gift of children (***Psalm 139:14***).

And,

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*Psalm 127:3—Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward.*

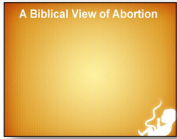
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Children are to be seen as a wonderful gift from God, not some kind of burden. We should thank and praise God for children. Therefore, because statements 1-3 are true, abortion at any stage of pregnancy is an offense against the wonderful gift of God, as He knits together His unique image bearer.



(DISPLAY **DEFINITION 2.**)

New Definition: Abortion is the killing of a unique human created by God in His image.



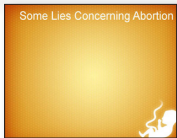
(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 3.**)

✎ 4. Therefore, God hates abortion.<sup>1</sup>

✎ *Proverbs 6:17—[The LORD hates]...hands that shed innocent blood.*

*In what way is an unborn child “innocent”? Explain that even though unborn babies do have a sin nature, they are “innocent” in the sense that they are helpless and cannot defend themselves from attack. They are also “innocent” in the sense that they have done nothing (from a human perspective) deserving of murder. From the perspective of human justice, these children are innocent victims. (Direct the students to the related question in the **journal**.)*

If you asked people if it is wrong to kill a one-year-old baby, they would say “Yes.” That is why there are laws against killing babies after they are born. So Satan has lies that he uses in order to blind people, especially women, to the truth that abortion is wrong... something to make abortion seem okay and even preferable to giving birth to the baby.



(DISPLAY **LIES.**)

✎ A very young unborn child is not actually a “person” but simply a mass of tissue.

*There are some pregnant women who are actually told this terrible lie. They are deceived into believing that having an abortion is comparable to having a tooth pulled, or having a tumor removed. But most people understand that abortion is indeed ending a human life. So Satan uses other lies in attempt to justify abortion—the “end good justifies the means.”*

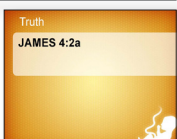
✎ The right of a woman not to have a baby is more important than the right of the unborn child to live.

✎ Children born from unplanned pregnancies will suffer in the long run.

✎ Abortion might be a necessary option for a woman's happiness.

✎ Abortion is necessary for the greater good of society.

All of these are terrible lies of Satan, who was a murderer from the beginning (**John 8:44**). And the sinful heart would rather believe these lies than the truth.




(DISPLAY **TRUTH.**)

Have the students turn to **James 4:2a**, and direct them to the related question in the **journal**.

1. If any of the students exhibit hateful attitudes toward abortion providers, remind the students that God's hatred of sin doesn't justify hateful actions against abortionists. Abortion providers, like all sinners, are to be loved and prayed for by us. Vengeance belongs solely to the Lord (Romans 12:19-21).

**James 4:2a—**

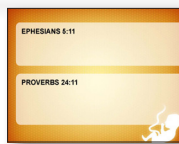
 *You desire and do not have, so you murder.*

*What is this verse speaking about? Do you recall the number one reason women give for having an abortion? [They don't feel ready for the responsibilities of motherhood.]*

*In other words, it may be this kind of attitude, “I desire my freedom. I desire to be free of the responsibilities of raising a child. I desire more free time and more things for myself. So I will have an abortion.”*

Abortion is the result of the rejection of God's truth, and it has terrible and tragic consequences: the death of more than 40 million unborn children worldwide every year... each child a unique and wonderful creation of God. And each with the potential to do great good in the world!

*So, do you think that the main point of this lesson should simply be: “Abortion is wrong so never have one.”? Or, does God's truth call us to something more than this? Should Christians care about the ethical decisions of others?*



(Display **TRUTH 2**, and direct the students to the section in the **journal** related to our response.)


**Ephesians 5:11—**

 *Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.*

*Yes, one thing we should have learned from this lesson is, “never be involved with having an abortion,” but what is the second part of the verse calling us to do?*

The commercial shown at the beginning of class was meant to expose some of the lies of Satan by using a real life example of a woman who experienced an unplanned pregnancy, but chose not to have an abortion. It also used an ultrasound picture of an unborn baby, showing that it was not merely a “mass of tissue,” but a living, moving human being.

**Proverbs 24:11—**

 *Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter.*

*Should we simply be content with telling the world that abortion is wrong? What might this look like?*

Point to a few examples of ways to rescue children from abortion:

- Volunteering at crisis pregnancy centers, which tell women the truth about the life of the unborn, and provide women with the help they need both during their pregnancy and after the birth of the baby.
- Working toward changing laws concerning abortion.
- Promoting and affirming adoption.
- Peacefully protesting outside abortion clinics.



(DISPLAY **ALL.**)

At one end of life's spectrum is the beginning of life in the womb. Abortion is the result of the rejection of God's truth concerning life in the womb. But increasingly, our world would also have us reject God's truth about all of our days. The word "euthanasia" is a term used for killing people, at any age, as an act of supposed kindness toward them. The lies used to support euthanasia are very similar to those used to justify abortion. Explain that the "At Home" section of the **journal** will have some Scripture and questions to discuss with parents regarding this.

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the small group application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** Abortion is the killing of human life. God hates abortion.

**Think About It:** Quickly review the four truth statements used to present a biblical view of abortion. How does science now serve as a tool to help people understand the amazing truth of **Psalm 139:13-15**? For example, in looking at statements 1-4 of the beginning *What I Know About Abortion* activity in the **journal**, what facts have become evident about the development of a child in the womb? How does this demonstrate that God's word "proves true"?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Which truth statement regarding abortion made the biggest impact on you? Why? How did today's lesson affect your view of unborn children? Did anything change in your perspective on abortion today? Do you believe that abortion is a serious issue to God? Why?*

**Live It:** Pray with your small group, that God would rise up and stop abortion in our country, and around the world, for His glory.

- **Truth Statement:** God is at work within the womb, intimately and wonderfully forming His unique image bearer.

**Think About It:** Review the truths presented in **Psalm 139:13-16**.

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you praise God for the gift of your own life? Do you see your-*

*self as fearfully and wonderfully made? As you look at your own family, do you see your brothers and sisters as gifts from God? Do you recognize that all your days belong to God, your Creator? What does that mean? For example, do believe you should have the final say over what you do with your life? Can you think of a situation in which someone believes he or she has the right to decide the number of his or her own days?*

**Live It:** *Do you treat others around you in a way that reflects that you value them? What could you do this week to show others that you recognize that they are gifts from God? How can you show others dignity in the way you treat them—even the clerk at the grocery store or the little boy next door? Think of concrete ways to express that you value the lives of those around you each day.*

- **Truth Statement:** All of our days, both before and after birth, belong to God.

**Think About It:** Review **Psalm 139:13-16**. Based on these verses, would it be right for someone to end his own life? Why not? How does suicide tragically reflect the words of **James 4:2**? [It is someone saying something like: “I desire to be free from the terrible pain and sadness of my life. The only way to do this is to end my life.”] How might verses like **Matthew 11:28-30** help to expose this lie?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Have you or someone you know (don't name names at this time) struggled with thoughts of hopelessness regarding life? How would you counsel a friend who was struggling with suicidal thoughts? Is there anything you could do to point this person toward seeing the value of his life in God's eyes?*

**Live It:** If you are aware of someone in this class or in your church who is struggling with hopeless thoughts, please be sure to privately mention this to a responsible adult who could help both that person, and you. Pray for this person regularly—that he would believe the words of **Psalm 139** regarding his own life.

- **Truth Statement:** Abortion is the killing of human life. God hates abortion.

**Think About It:** Review statements 5-8 from the *What I Know About Abortion* activity in the **journal**. When you read these facts, what thoughts or feelings came to mind? Anger? Sorrow? Hopelessness? Helplessness? Indifference? Read and discuss **Ephesians 5:11** and **Psalm 82:3-4**. How can these verses guide us? Do you know of ways our church does this? Are there ways you could be involved, too? How?

**Examine Your Heart:** *If you struggle with hopelessness or indifference, why? Do you believe God is sovereign over this situation? Should God's sovereignty move you toward indifference, or toward action? Do you believe God uses people to do His will? Do you want to be used by God in this way?*

**Live It:** (You may want to do some research ahead on this one to help guide the group.) With your small group, discuss doing a service project together to help raise awareness, or to rescue those affected by abortion. You could consider volunteering at a crisis pregnancy center, or doing an annual life walk or fund raiser, or even organizing a fund raiser



of your own at church. Or, you could talk to your pastor about starting a prolife ministry group in your church if there is not one already.

- **Truth Statement:** God is at work within the womb, intimately and wonderfully forming His unique image bearer.

**Think About It:** Sometimes people believe there is justification for having an abortion in the case where the unborn child is known to have some kind of disability. The thinking is something like this: "This child would have too many difficulties in life. Therefore, it is better to end his life now in order to save him and his parents from a future of suffering." What do you think of that kind of thinking? Would abortion be justified in these circumstances? Can you point to specific verses to support your position? Read and discuss **Exodus 4:11**. Why is this a hard verse for many people to accept? Yet it is the truth, and so is **Psalms 139:13-16**. Can we always understand the ways of God? And yet, if a child has a certain disability, is he still fearfully and wonderfully made in God's image? [Yes.] How might God show His glory through the life of a child with disabilities?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you have any personal testimony of how God has shown His power and goodness through the life of a person with a disability? Read the promise of **Philippians 3:20-21**. What promise does Jesus have for all those who trust in Him?*

**Live It:** Do you have any opportunities to interact with someone who has a disability this week? If so, how could your interaction with this person reflect that he is made in the image of God? How will you treat him with this knowledge?

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week.**

Reminder for "At Home" section in the **Journal**:

**Tell the students to do the short assignment asking students to read *Ephesians 5:11* and *Proverbs 24:11*, and then make a list of six specific ways these verses could be lived out:**

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 19

# Prejudice, Partiality, and Discrimination

## MAIN IDEAS:

- > Prejudice is sinfully prejudging people based on wrong and prideful distinctions.
- > Partiality is sinfully treating people with favor based on wrong and unfair distinctions.
- > Discrimination is sinfully treating people with disapproval based on wrong and unfair distinctions.
- > We guard against prejudice, partiality, and discrimination by being humble and teachable and by only using biblical distinctions when making judgments about people.

## SCRIPTURE:

- |                     |                    |                  |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1. 1 Samuel 16:7    | 5. Isaiah 53:2     | 9. John 7:24     |
| 2. John 1:46        | 6. Genesis 1:27    | 10. Luke 6:43-45 |
| 3. James 2:1-4, 8-9 | 7. Romans 3:22-23  | 11. 1 Peter 2:23 |
| 4. 1 Timothy 4:12   | 8. Ephesians 2:8-9 |                  |

## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| > PowerPoint Slides® for Lesson 20            | > "Help the Children Love the Different People" article |
| > Skit for Leaders (2 copies per class)       | (one per student)                                       |
| > Parent Memo for Lesson 20 (one per student) |   |

## OTHER VISUALS:

- > Bible

## VISUALS FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS:

- |                                |           |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| > Exotic fruits (two or three) | > Plate   |
| > Knife                        | > Napkins |

## PREPARATION FOR TEACHERS AND SMALL GROUP LEADERS:

Prepare the skit (or a similar one) for the illustration showing prejudice or discrimination.

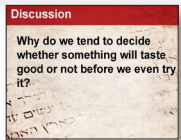
## PREPARATION FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS:

Bring to class two or three exotic, or less familiar, edible fruits/vegetables (e.g., pomegranate or eggplant), along with a knife, plate, and napkins. (Note: Be sure to ask your students if any are allergic to these fruits/vegetables before allowing them to taste them.)



(DISPLAY **LESSON 20.**)

## Small Group Discussion (5-6 minutes)



(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

EXOTIC FRUITS,  
KNIFE, PLATE, AND  
NAPKINS

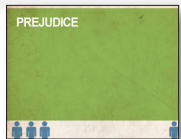
The following exercise is meant to help the students see that we all prejudge unfamiliar things, to one extent or another, based on outward appearances or the opinion of others:

Show the students the **fruits/vegetables** you have brought to class. Before cutting into any of the fruits or vegetables, have the students predict what they might taste like. Then encourage them to taste a sample of each. Are any students hesitant to do this? Why? If any refuse to try one of the food items, why are

they doing this? Are they prejudging the fruits/vegetables based on any outward characteristics? Are they prejudging the foods based on what others have told them? Is this right to do? Can they think of a type of food that they were hesitant to try at one time, but now they really like?

*Why do we tend to decide whether something will taste good or bad before we even try it? Why do you think we all tend to prejudge things?*

## Large Group Lesson



Point out that the opening activity was meant to introduce a very important topic: **PREJUDICE.**

(DISPLAY **PREJUDICE.**)

*From what you know about this topic, and from our opening activity, how would you define what is meant by "prejudice"? (Allow the students to respond, and then direct them to write the following definitions in the **journal** where indicated.)*

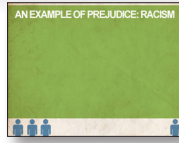
1. Preconceived judgment or opinion;
2. An adverse opinion or leaning formed without just grounds or before having sufficient knowledge;
3. An irrational attitude of hostility directed against an individual, a group, a race, or their supposed characteristics.<sup>1</sup>

*According to this definition, is prejudice limited to making preconceived judgments about food? What is the scope of prejudice—what may it also include? Why is the third definition so important? What is the main target of prejudice that is mentioned here?*  
[People]

*Can you give me any examples of how the third definition has been, or is being demonstrated, in our culture or world? [e.g., history of slavery in Europe and the Americas,*

1. Definition for "prejudice" from the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. 2010. Merriam-Webster Online. <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/prejudice>> \*accessed June 24, 2010).

U.S. segregation laws and treatment of Native Americans; Hitler's murder of Jews in the Holocaust, etc.]



(DISPLAY **RACISM.**)

- ☞ A preconceived judgment or opinion of someone based on his race
- ☞ An adverse opinion formed without just grounds, based on a person's race
- ☞ An irrational attitude of hostility directed against a person, because of his race



(DISPLAY **HISTORY.**)

- ☞ African slavery and segregation of African Americans in the United States
- ☞ The murder of Jews in the Holocaust during World War II
- ☞ The slaughter of the Tutsi people by the Hutu people in the Rwandan genocide
- ☞ The slaughter of Chinese civilians by the Japanese military in World War II



(DISPLAY **GLOBAL.**)

- ☞ The global slaughter of helpless unborn infants through abortion
- ☞ The sale of women and children through human trafficking around the globe

The beginning activity of the fruit/vegetable was only meant to serve to introduce a much more important type of prejudice that we see in our world—the prejudice that occurs among people. It is a huge topic because of its worldwide and historical scope. And we have seen the tragic consequences of prejudice taken to its extreme in examples, such as slavery, segregation, and the Holocaust. But as horrible as racism has been, and still is, it would be wrong to simply think of prejudice in terms of racism—because race isn't the only factor used in prejudging people. The Bible points to other kinds of prejudice as well. Instruct the class to return to their small groups and do the following activity:



(DISPLAY **PREJUDGING.**)

## Small Group Activity (5-7 minutes)

Have the students look up and quickly read each of the verses listed in the **journal** for the *Identifying Prejudice Activity*. Each verse displays a type of prejudice—prejudging someone based on a certain type of standard. The students should identify each, and write it under the “Prejudging Someone Based On...” heading. The possible correct answers are written within the brackets.

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*1 Samuel 16:7—But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”*

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[outward appearance, stature]

---

*John 1:46—Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”*

---

[where someone lives or is from]

---

*James 2:2-4— For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, <sup>3</sup>and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,” <sup>4</sup>have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?*

---

[wealth, class, or income]

---

*1 Timothy 4:12—Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.*

---

[youth, age]

---

*Isaiah 53:2—For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.*

---

[beauty, good looks]

*Did any of the above examples come as a surprise to you? Can you think of any other biblical examples? Can you give a contemporary example of one of the above? Do you honestly think anyone could say: “I am never prejudiced”? Why or why not? Why do you think that we are so quick to prejudice people based on these kinds of things?*

## Large Group Lesson

The biblical examples presented in the activity demonstrate the scope of prejudice—it is not limited to prejudging people of a different race. We also prejudge people based on where they are from, what they look like, their accent, how much money they have, their age, popularity, intelligence, etc. Prejudice is a heart attitude that can present itself in a multitude of different ways in our actions. Sometimes our prejudices show themselves in passivity—what we don't do, or who we choose not to hang out with. For example, when sitting in the cafeteria for lunch, would you choose to sit by people of a different race, or would you gravitate automatically toward those who look similar to you? Or, if you have to choose between visiting elderly people in a nursing home, or going to an event where lots of young people are present, which would you choose? Would you choose to ignore a new kid at school who was from a more rural area, but seek to be friends with a “cool” new kid who lives in a trendy part of the city?

And that prejudice often is demonstrated by actions that show partiality and/or discrimination.

*What is partiality? What is discrimination?*

Explain that one way of defining each may be as follows:

(DISPLAY **PARTIALITY AND DISCRIMINATION.**)



- ☞ Partiality is showing favoritism toward someone based on a preconceived opinion.
- ☞ Discrimination is treating someone unfavorably based on a preconceived opinion.

The example given in the book of James demonstrates both of these. Have the students turn to **James 2:1-4, 8-9**, and also to the related questions in the **journal**. Then read:

*James 2:1-4—My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. <sup>2</sup>For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, <sup>3</sup>and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,” <sup>4</sup>have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?*

*Who is being shown favoritism in this example? [the rich man] Do these verses describe the true character of this rich man? [no] So no one knows whether he is a righteous and good man, or if he gained his riches by stealing or unfair business practices. Yet, he is given special treatment.*

*Who is being discriminated against? [the poor man] Why is he being treated unfavorably? [Because he appears poor and is dressed shabbily] Do we know the true charac-*

*ter of this man? Do we know if he is poor because he is a good man and has chosen to give his money away to those in greater need? Yet, he is basically ignored and is treated less favorably.*

*According to verse 4, what is behind making these distinctions? [evil thoughts]*

*So what does God think of this kind of prejudice, expressed as either partiality or discrimination? Read:*

---

*James 2:8-9—If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. <sup>9</sup>But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.*

---

God views this kind of prejudice, partiality, and discrimination as sin. It is not in keeping with God's command to love your neighbor as yourself. It is judging people by the wrong standards. It is not seeing and judging people as God does. We are not to prejudge people based on these kinds of distinctions and then treat people either favorably or unfavorably based on them.

For example, how would the following scene be an example of showing prejudice or discrimination?

**Illustration:**

Quickly use this skit or a similar one you have prepared ahead of time with another leader.

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SKIT FOR LEADERS

Leader #1: Let's ask the youth in our class tonight if they want to help with the all-church workday on Saturday. Some of these strong young guys could help with the repairs that need to be done, and some of the girls have a pretty artistic eye and could help us paint.

Leader #2: Nah...I wouldn't spend time asking teenagers if they could help us. Kids today are so lazy and irresponsible! They would just get in the way. Teenagers are never interested in serving other people. All they do is sit around and text each other on their phones all day. They would be a burden, not a help.

Leader #1: Well, I don't think it's fair to say that all teenagers are lazy. Some adults are lazy, too! I think some of the students would really enjoy helping. Plus, they may have some fresh, new ideas for painting and illustrating the children's wing. If we give the students enough work to do, I bet most of them would rise to the challenge.

Leader #2: Well, you can think that if you want to, but I know better! If I end up serving alongside a bunch of teens...well, I'll just find another area to help. I don't want to hang out with them and get stuck doing all the work myself!

*How did you feel when hearing [Leader #2] express his thoughts? Could there be some truth in what he said? It's true that some youth may be lazy or irresponsible. But is that*



*always true? Could he have any way of knowing for sure whether the youth would work hard? How did his prejudgment become discriminatory? [He decided ahead of time that he would refuse to work with the teens.] How could [Leader #2] have expressed an attitude of loving the youth (his neighbor) as himself? [assuming the best rather than the worst, emphasizing their strengths rather than their possible weaknesses, etc.]*

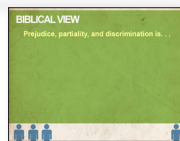
Point out that our culture, at times, rightly sees and understands that this kind of thinking and behavior is wrong. However, often people only see and identify certain types of prejudice as being wrong, and ignore the worldwide scope of prejudice. But we need to have a much larger view of prejudice.

*For example, maybe you have come to recognize and understand that it is wrong to prejudice someone based on the color of his skin—and that is very good. Our culture has increasingly come to recognize this and take steps to discourage racism. (You might want to give a few brief examples of this: laws that prohibit race-based discrimination, greater integration in schools and neighborhoods, churches addressing the issue, etc.)*

Use the following type of example or use one that is more relevant to your specific group of students:

*But do you still prejudice people based on the way they look or dress? If all the kids at school are wearing a certain style of clothing, and a new kid shows up wearing something “old-fashioned” and out-of-date, do you develop an unfavorable opinion about him based on that? Will you be less likely to try and get to know him based on the fact that he doesn't appear to fit in with the rest of the students?*

We need to have a much larger and deeper view of prejudice, partiality, and discrimination. We need to see these from a biblical perspective, not just man's perspective.



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL.**)

Prejudice, partiality, and discrimination is...

- ☞ Making wrong distinctions about people.
- ☞ Treating people favorably or unfavorably because of those wrong distinctions.
- ☞ A sin against others.
- ☞ A sin against God.

One of the ways that we can guard against prejudice, partiality, and discrimination is to use a right measure when making judgments about people. What measure? The Bible—God's measure. Explain that there are at least six biblical truths that should guide our thinking about others.



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 1.**)

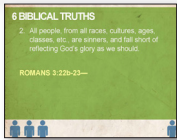
(Display the slides one at a time and make the following brief comments, directing the students to complete the statements in the **journal**.)

1. All people, regardless of any outward or inward qualities, are God's image bearers, and deserve to be viewed as such.

**Genesis 1:27—**

☞ *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

*This is important. For example, one of the reasons for justifying slavery in the early history of the United States was the belief that people with darker skin were less than human and could therefore be perpetually enslaved. And Nazi Germany regarded Jewish people to be an inferior and undesirable race. But the Bible makes very clear that people of all races, ethnic groups, physical and mental abilities, etc. are equally created in the image and likeness of God, and should be regarded as such.*



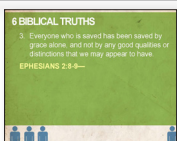
(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 2.**)

2. All people, from all aces, cultures, ages, classes, etc., are sinners, and fall short of reflecting God's glory as we should.

**Romans 3:22b-23—**

☞ *...For there is no distinction: <sup>23</sup>for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...*

*All of us are prone to be prejudiced and show partiality or discriminate. No race, culture, class, or other group has a “corner” on prejudice. We are all guilty of doing it at one time or another, to a greater or lesser extent.*



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 3.**)

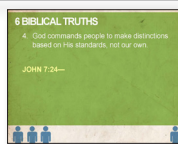
3. Everyone who is saved has been saved by grace alone, and not by any good qualities or distinctions that we may appear to have.

**Ephesians 2:8-9—**

☞ *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

*If you are truly saved, it is nothing to brag about or use as a means of judging someone as being inferior to yourself. Your salvation is by grace alone, and forgiveness for your*

*own prejudice is not owing to anything you have done. Therefore, you have no right to use your faith to count yourself as better than someone else, or to hold a grudge against someone who has discriminated against you. And when you look at an unsaved person, you should long for them to be saved by God's grace, too.*



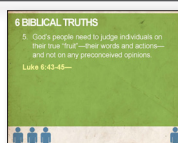
(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 4.**)

4. God commands people to make distinctions based on His standards, not our own.

**John 7:24—**

 *Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.*


*We will recognize distinctions in people and make judgments regarding them. For example, we are to choose our friends carefully—this requires making judgments about them. However, we must not use the world's standards or our own preferences as our main guide. We must use right distinctions as found in God's Word. In the case of friends, we are to judge them based on whether or not they have a godly influence in our lives, and not based on their popularity, looks, or athletic ability.<sup>2</sup> We cannot impose our perceptions of a group on any individual within a group. For example, you meet five students from another school and they aren't very friendly, so you tell your friends that students from [school X] aren't very friendly.*



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 5.**)

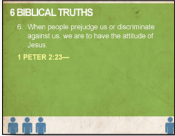
5. God's people need to judge individuals on their true “fruit”—their words and actions—and not on any preconceived opinions.

**Luke 6:43-45—**

 *For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, <sup>44</sup>for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. <sup>45</sup>The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.*

If I were to use these guidelines, can I form a right opinion about someone simply by looking at what he is wearing or who he is talking to in the school hallway? No.

2. In making judgments, it is helpful to note that God alone judges someone with total accuracy, because He alone can discern the true intentions of a person's heart. Also, He alone judges with the authority to condemn. However, we are called to use discernment about people according to God's Word, and to be fair, and charitable wherever possible in our judgments. It is best to get to know someone before attempting to discern his character.



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 6.**)

6. When people prejudice us or discriminate against us, we are to have the attitude of Jesus.

### **1 Peter 2:23—**

🔊 *When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.*

---

*How would you have responded if you had overheard the earlier conversation in our skit? Would you have responded defensively, trying to prove yourself and point out the error of the other person? Or would you have trusted that God would judge both your heart and the heart of the other person with justice, and bring the truth of the situation to light?*

*If I use these guidelines, can I make statements like: “Boys are smarter than girls.” or “Soccer players are better than football players.” or “Old people are a bore.” or “Poor people deserve to be poor.”?*

*But in using these guidelines, could I rightly say the following: “Adolf Hitler was an evil man.”? What is the difference between making this judgment and making judgments like “Boys are smarter than girls.”?*

Recall that we began our class time with an activity with fruit/vegetables. Although it may have seemed somewhat silly, it was meant to help us see how prone we all are to having preconceived opinions before we really try something. And we can have similar attitudes in relation to how we view and treat people. We often prejudge people based on wrong distinctions, and then treat them either with partiality or discriminate against them based on those wrong distinctions. History is filled with examples of the great harm that this has done to millions of people. But God wants His people to walk and live in His truth.

*We are all prone to prejudice, and we all have also been at the receiving end of prejudice. Some of us have experienced it to a much greater degree than others. We all know what it feels like to be wrongly judged, and none of us like to be treated that way. But the answer to prejudice, partiality, and discrimination is not more of the same in return. Rather God calls us to grow in living out the command: “love your neighbor as yourself.”*

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the small group application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** Prejudice is sinfully prejudging people based on wrong and prideful distinctions. Partiality is sinfully treating people with favor based on wrong and unfair distinctions. Discrimination is sinfully treating people with disapproval based on wrong and unfair distinctions.

**Think About It:** Review the definitions of prejudice, partiality, and discrimination given in the lesson. Did you begin the lesson feeling that these topics were an important issue in relation to other people, but not to you personally? Were you surprised that prejudice and discrimination are not limited to racism? Were you surprised that partiality was included along with discrimination? *What evidence do we see in our culture and throughout the world that prejudice is more than racism and is a common human problem?* [e.g., in China girls are often aborted, because boys are judged to be more desirable; in India there is a class of people called “untouchables” who are discriminated against; many people with physical and mental disabilities are judged to be less valuable and “useful” in society; elderly people are often treated with impatience and disrespect, etc.]

**Examine Your Heart:** *If you were to be totally honest with yourself, are there some groups of people you tend to prejudice in your mind? What do you think prompts you to think of others in this way? Why is it so tempting to prejudge others? Which is harder: to get to know someone, or to assume that you couldn't really be friends? Explain why. Does this tendency grieve you?*

**Live it:** Pray together that God would help you to approach others without negative assumptions about what they are like. Pray that God would help you discern the character of others with fairness and kindness. Pray that God would give you an open, humble, and teachable spirit when getting to know someone new. Pray that you would be able to love your neighbor as yourself.

- **Truth Statement:** Partiality is sinfully treating people with favor based on wrong and unfair distinctions. Discrimination is sinfully treating people with disapproval based on wrong and unfair distinctions.

**Think About It:** Review **James 2:1-4, 8-9**.

**Examine Your Heart:** *Ask the students to think of a specific way in which they have been prejudged and discriminated against. (You may want to give a personal example.) How did it feel? How did they respond? Was their response similar to Christ's response in **1 Peter 2:23**? Have they ever been shown partiality similar to the partiality shown to the rich man in **James 2**? Why might we crave that kind of partiality? How does partiality point to human pride and wanting to feel superior to others? Just as in James, did that*

*kind of partiality come at the expense of someone being discriminated against? How could you rightly handle that type of situation? How could you love your neighbor as yourself?*

**Live It:** Can you think of a situation in your own life in which you prejudged someone based on wrong distinctions that were not biblical? Are there any steps you should take to reconcile with that person?

- **Truth Statement:** Prejudice is sinfully prejudging people based on wrong and prideful distinctions. Partiality is sinfully treating people with favor based on wrong and unfair distinctions. Discrimination is sinfully treating people with disapproval based on wrong and unfair distinctions.

**Think About It:** Talk about the ways in which our society rightly sees and addresses prejudice, partiality, and discrimination. However, apart from God's truth and people being transformed by the gospel, can these issues be completely solved? Why not? How do we see society wrongly trying to solve these issues? Can you tell about a situation in which the answer to discrimination was to discriminate in reverse? Have you ever done this? How does this measure up to **James 2:8**?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Why is it tempting to answer discrimination with discrimination? (See **Romans 12:14-21**, **Philippians 2:1-7**, and **1 Peter 3:8-12**.) Why is it difficult to respond in these ways? What hinders us? How can Jesus serve as our example? How does the gospel empower us to respond in these ways? In the end, whose approval is most important, God or man's?*

**Live It:** If you find yourself being discriminated against this week, how do you hope to respond? Pray with your small group that God will help you to respond in a way that honors Him.

- **Truth Statement:** Jesus atoned for the sin of those who prejudged Him, and discriminated against Him.

**Think About It:** Point out that as terrible and unjust as prejudice is, none of us has been as wrongly prejudged or discriminated against as Jesus. Recall **Isaiah 53:2**. Also Read verse 3. Point out that these words refer to Jesus. In what other ways was Jesus wrongly judged? In what ways was He wrongly treated? How did He respond?

**Examine Your Heart:** *When you are prejudged and/or discriminated against is your first response personal indignation and a feeling of "How dare somebody treat me like this! I don't deserve this!"? Or, do you have the mind and attitude of Jesus as expressed in **Philippians 2:1-8**? Why is this difficult for us? Why do we crave the approval of men? Why do we tend to be self-centered and not look to the interests of others?*

**Live It:** This week, how could you count someone as more significant than yourself? Do

you have any “enemies” that you could show love to in a manner similar to Jesus? How could you do this?

- **Truth Statement:** We guard against prejudice, partiality, and discrimination by being humble and teachable and by only using biblical distinctions when making judgments about people.

**Think About It:** How do we often show a certain amount of prejudice in everyday life? Are there times when we need to make generalizations that are, in some ways, a form of prejudice? For example, parents might tell their young children: “Don’t talk to strangers.” In a way, this is prejudging strangers—saying that all strangers could be dangerous. However, why is this both helpful and even necessary? But could a stranger be offended by this? Point out that we need to be people who do not take offense easily and always assume wrong motives and intentions when we feel prejudged. (You may want to give the students a relevant example of this.)

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you find yourself responding with over sensitivity sometimes when you aren’t automatically included in a group, or when someone “seems” to exclude you or misjudge you by their actions? Think of a situation when you have felt excluded, but you had no evidence that this oversight was intentional. Were there other possible factors that could have accounted for this seeming exclusion or misjudgment? (For example, a classmate may only have been allowed to invite a certain number of people over to his house for a party or gathering, and so he just had to choose some people over others.) Do you think you are generally the type of person who is quick to be offended when you are overlooked by others?*

**Live It:** *Are there any situations you anticipate this week that you could handle with grace or humility rather than taking offense? How could you assume the best of others when you are in doubt about what they think of you? Are there any verses that could help you with this? What are they?*

- **Truth Statement:** Prejudice, partiality, and discrimination give evidence that we are sinners in need of a Savior.

**Think About It:** Ask the students if they know anything about the life of John Newton who wrote the hymn Amazing Grace. Before and shortly after his conversion he was involved in slave trading, contributing to the misery of thousands of people who were unjustly treated. *How did he find forgiveness for such terrible deeds? Do these truths only apply to the “worst” racist? Do each of us need to see ourselves as he did? Why? What is this meant to point us to?* The truth of the gospel!

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you consider racism of the kind described above as a worse sin than, say, pride, lying, or cheating? Do you see the sins you struggle with the most as being equally as bad as some of the worst racism mentioned in this lesson? If God defines sin as “falling short of the glory of God,” does He have a sliding scale for judg-*



*ing sin? (See **Romans 3:23** and **Romans 6:23**.) Why is it tempting to see our own sin as less offensive than the sin of others? Remember, the standard of judging all sin is God and His perfections, not one another! In light of this, how does Christ's sacrifice demonstrate the love of God? Are you thankful for Christ's sacrifice for sin? (See **Romans 5:8**. The words of the hymn *Amazing Grace* might also be appropriate.)*

**Live It:** Pray with your small group, thanking God for the gift of the gospel and for His grace toward sinners. When you are tempted to think of your sin as “no big deal” this week, consider the suffering of Christ for sin.

***Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week.***

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 20

"Help the Children Love the Different People" article

# Education

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > Education is the process of acquiring knowledge about God and His world, with the goal of becoming wise for salvation and then equipped to do good works, so that God would be glorified.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                  |                      |                        |
|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Proverbs 2:6  | 5. 2 Timothy 3:14-15 | 9. 1 Corinthians 10:31 |
| 2. Proverbs 1:7a | 6. Psalm 145:5b-6    | 10. Proverbs 23:12     |
| 3. Psalm 119:130 | 7. Ephesians 2:8-10  |                        |
| 4. Psalm 19:1-2  | 8. Matthew 5:16      |                        |

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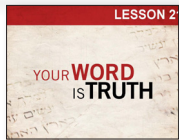
## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 21 | > Parent Memo for Lesson 21 (one per student) |
| > Clue Card (one per student)      |   |

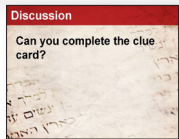
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## OTHER VISUALS:

- > Bible

(DISPLAY **LESSON 21.**)

## Small Group Discussion (5 minutes)



CLUE CARD

(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

Hand out a **Clue Card** to each student. Explain that the topic of today's lesson can be found by correctly identifying letters from the nine statements on the clue card, and then unscrambling the letters to form a word. Some clues will be more difficult than others, but the students can work together as a team.

Give the students a set amount of time to complete the statements (about 4 minutes). Important Note: Do not help the students! It is okay if they cannot correctly answer each statement as this will serve to emphasize the importance of today's topic.

Clue Card:

1. The second note in the C-major musical scale.
2. This is the 20th letter of the English alphabet.
3. The first letter of the first name of a famous French emperor whose last name was Bonaparte.
4. The second letter of the planet closest to the sun.
5. This is the first letter of the first name of the 16th President of the United States.
6. The first letter of the name of the Old Testament city where Abraham was from.
7. This letter is used to represent the eighth element of the periodic table.
8. The first letter of the name of the world's most populated country.
9. The last letter of the name of the 39th book of the Bible.

Answers:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

## Large Group Lesson

(DISPLAY **ANSWERS.**)

Have the students quickly check their answers without discussing the statements.

- 1. D is the second note in the C-major musical scale.
- 2. T is the 20th letter of the English alphabet.
- 3. N is the first letter of the first name of the famous French emperor whose last name was Bonaparte. (Napoleon)
- 4. E is the second letter of Mercury, the closest planet to the sun.
- 5. A is the first letter of the first name of the 16th President of the United States. (Abraham)
- 6. U is the first letter of the name of the Old Testament city where Abraham was from. (Ur)
- 7. O is used to represent the eighth element of the periodic table. (Oxygen)
- 8. C is the first letter of the name of the world's most populated country. (China)
- 9. I is the last letter of the name of the 39th book of the Bible. (Malachi)

Answers:

D	T	N	E	A	U	O	C	I
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Ask the students if any believe that they have properly unscrambled the word.



(DISPLAY **TOPIC.**)

*What does the word "education" mean?* (Allow the students to respond.)



(Display **DEFINITION**, and direct the students to write this simple definition in the journal where indicated)

Education ➔ The process of acquiring KNOWLEDGE

One way to think of education is that it is the process of learning or acquiring knowledge about specific subjects. This process involves instruction, as in a teacher instructing a student. The reason the students may not have been able to complete all the statements in the beginning activity is because they may not have yet been given instruction about a specific topic.

Have the students look at their **Clue Card** again and give a few brief examples:

*In which specific topic of study would you learn that “D” is the second note of a C-major scale?* [music]

*In which topic of study would you learn about the presidents of the United States or the Emperors of France?* [history]

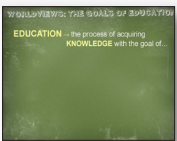
*In which area of study would you learn about the periodic table of elements?* [science]

Education ➔ The process of acquiring KNOWLEDGE...

✎ ...about reading, writing, math, history, science, music, art, geography, etc.

If you were to ask your friends or other students, “Why do you go to school and study these various topics?” what answers do you think you would get in response? (Allow students to give a few responses.)

People usually don't see education simply in terms of accumulating knowledge about various subjects. Education is seen as a means to a greater end or goal.



(DISPLAY **GOAL.**)

Briefly state some common goals people may have in mind for education, and direct the students to make note of some of these goals in the journal.

Education ➔ The process of acquiring KNOWLEDGE with the goal of...

- ✎ Getting good grades
- ✎ Graduating from college
- ✎ Having a fulfilling career
- ✎ Earning money
- ✎ Being a responsible member of society
- ✎ Achieving personal success and happiness

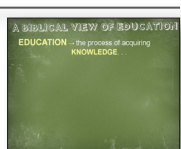
These goals can only be achieved through acquiring knowledge in various areas of study. That is why education is necessary and very important. That is why almost every government in the world mandates or encourages parents to send their children to school beginning at a young age in order to begin the process of acquiring the knowledge necessary to pursue these goals. One United States senator even went so far as to say:

*I've been asked the question over the years, "What's the single most important issue?" I always say education because it is the answer to every other problem we confront as a people here.<sup>1</sup>*

Many people would agree with him. This is a good reason to carefully examine this issue, since it has important implications for our society and for each of us personally.

Let's look first at what the Bible has to say about the subject.

(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 1.**)



Education ➔ The process of acquiring KNOWLEDGE...

As with everything else in life, we must view and evaluate the topic of education through the truth of Scripture. However, the word “education” is not found in the Bible, although the word “educated” can be found twice.

Does that mean you can say, “Since the word ‘education’ is not found in the Bible, the Bible is not relevant for this topic.”? What should you do? [look for related words and related themes] For example, words like knowledge, understanding, instruction, and teach are found in numerous places.

Two key words to begin with are “knowledge” and “understanding.”

- 🔍 Have the students look up the texts listed on the slide and turn to the related portion of the journal. Then read to them:

---

*Proverbs 2:6—For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;*

---

What important truth about knowledge is stated in this verse? [Ultimately, knowledge is from God.] Is the knowledge and understanding stated in this verse limited to specific topics or areas of study? No.

---

*Proverbs 1:7a—The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge.*

---

What important truth about knowledge is stated in this verse? [Knowledge begins with the fear of the Lord.] What does this mean? [You cannot understand rightly the whole truth of a topic apart from God and submitting to His rightful authority.]

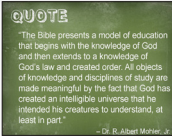
1. Senator Christopher Dodd, cited at townhall.com on November 6, 2007.

*Psalm 119:130—The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.*

What important truth about understanding or knowledge is stated in this verse? [God's Word imparts knowledge and understanding.]

*Psalm 19:1-2—The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.*

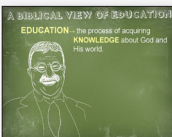
What important truth about knowledge is stated in these verses? [Knowledge about God is also revealed through God's created world.]



(DISPLAY **MOHLER QUOTE.**)

*The Bible presents a model of education that begins with the knowledge of God and then extends to a knowledge of God's law and created order. All objects of knowledge and disciplines of study are made meaningful by the fact that God has created an intelligible universe that he intended his creatures to understand, at least in part.<sup>2</sup>*

A true knowledge, and therefore education, begins with recognizing and acknowledging God's rightful place and authority in all things: math, science, geography, music, etc. Recall that God is the source of all truth. Knowledge is not merely gaining useful facts and information that have a source apart from God. Knowledge is, first and foremost, about God and His revealed truth. The most important and essential truths are communicated in the Bible. But all other knowledge people acquire has its source in God too, whether they acknowledge it or not.



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 2.**)

Education ➔ The process of acquiring KNOWLEDGE about God and His world...

✎ A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education.

These words were spoken by President Theodore Roosevelt.

✎ He was a very educated man, and had acquired knowledge in many areas of study. He excelled in his studies and was a college graduate. But he saw that education was of secondary importance compared with knowledge of the Bible.

*Why did he consider knowledge of the Bible to be worth more than the knowledge he gained from his college education?*

Have the students turn to **2 Timothy 3:14-15**, and to the related portion of the journal.

2. Mohler, Dr. R. Albert, Jr. "America's Educational Crisis—A Christian Response." Published at [albertmohler.com](http://albertmohler.com) on August 17, 2004.



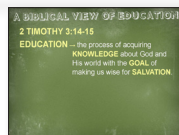
*2 Timothy 3:14-15—But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*

What is Paul reminding Timothy of in these verses?

What is meant by “the sacred writings”?

When did this education begin?

What was the goal in becoming acquainted with God's Word?

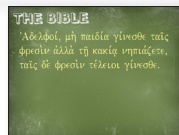


(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 3.**)

Education ➔ The process of acquiring KNOWLEDGE about GOD and His world with the GOAL of becoming wise for SALVATION

The main reason that we have been given the ability to learn and gain knowledge is so we might come to know, understand, and love the gospel of Jesus and be saved. All other knowledge is secondary to this.

*So does this mean that you can now go home and tell your parents, “I don't need to go to school anymore and learn math, science, geography, and history—those are all worthless subjects. All that matters is that I know the Bible and trust in Jesus for salvation.”?*



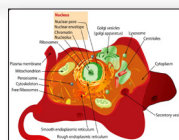
(DISPLAY **GREEK.**)

Ἀδελφοί, μὴ παιδία γίνεσθε ταῖς φρεσὶν ἀλλὰ τῇ κακίᾳ νηπιᾷζετε, ταῖς δὲ φρεσὶν τέλειοι γίνεσθε.

This is a verse from the Bible. What does it say? [It is 1 Corinthians 14:20.]

This is an important example of how knowledge of a certain topic can help our understanding of the Bible. Greek was one of the original languages of the New Testament. In order for the New Testament to be accurately translated into other languages, translators must have knowledge of this language. Many other areas of study are useful in growing in understanding the Bible. The study of grammar, history, and geography can help us to correctly read and interpret the Bible.

Not only do some studies help us gain knowledge about the Bible itself, but they also help us better understand God through studying His world.



(DISPLAY **CELL.**)

Through the study of science, more specifically the study of biology, man has discovered the amazing complexity of a single living cell.



(DISPLAY **PSALM 145:5B-6**, and direct the students to the related question in the journal.)

🔑 *Psalm 145:5b-6—...on your wondrous works, I will meditate. They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness.*

Knowledge of God's created world is meant to serve our understanding of the greatness of God. A study of topics such as astronomy, biology, chemistry, geology, and physics is meant to reveal the depth of God's greatness as we gain a greater understanding of His creative power and wisdom.



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 4.**)

Education ➔ The process of acquiring KNOWLEDGE about GOD and His WORLD with the GOAL of becoming wise for SALVATION

With this understanding of education, even schools, teachers, and books that do not recognize God's rightful place can serve to help you grow in understanding God's Word and world. That is why we should diligently study those topics, too. But this definition of education is not complete, because salvation is also meant to change the way we use the knowledge we gain.

🔑 Have the students turn to Ephesians 2:8-10, and to the related portion of the journal.

*Ephesians 2:8-10—For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

According to verse 10, what is salvation to produce in us? [good works] What might these “good works” include? For example, suppose you have gained a lot of knowledge about cars and how they work. Is that knowledge simply meant for you to keep to yourself? What if your neighbor's car breaks down?



(Quickly display **WORKS 1**, and direct the students to record at least three of these examples in the journal)

🔑 A man named R.G. (Robert) LeTourneau used his knowledge of engineering to invent large earth moving machines used in construction, especially in poor developing nations.

🔑 A woman named Franny Crosby used her knowledge of poetry and music to write hymns for the church.



(DISPLAY **WORKS 2.**)

- ☞ C.S. Lewis used his knowledge of writing and literature to write *The Chronicles of Narnia* and other books illustrating and defending Christianity.
- ☞ George Washington Carver used his knowledge of plant science to discover many helpful uses for plants, especially peanuts, which has been beneficial to farmers and consumers.



(DISPLAY **WORKS 3.**)

- ☞ William Wilberforce used his knowledge of government and politics to bring about the end of the slave trade in England.
- ☞ Susanna Wesley used her knowledge of many different subjects to manage a home and train up her children in the truth of the Bible.

Each of these men and women were Christians. They pursued various areas of study, understanding that this knowledge was given to them from God and was meant to serve a greater goal in doing the good works God had for them to walk in and live out. This knowledge was not limited to Bible knowledge, Bible facts, but the Bible was necessary in properly shaping and directing their knowledge. Apart from the Bible, education cannot accomplish its proper goal.



(DISPLAY **GOAL 2.**)

Education ➔ The process of acquiring KNOWLEDGE about GOD and His WORLD with the GOAL of becoming wise for SALVATION and then equipped to do GOOD WORKS so that \_\_\_\_\_

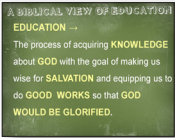
- ☞ I will get good grades
- I will graduate from college
- I will have a fulfilling career
- I will earn money
- I will be a responsible member of society
- I will achieve personal success and happiness

*Do you think any of these would be the ultimate goal of education from God's perspective? Is it wrong to want to get good grades? No. Is it wrong to want to go to college? No. But all these fall short of the ultimate goal of education. Can any of you guess what that is?*

Have the students turn to **Matthew 5:16** and then **1 Corinthians 10:31**, and to the related portion of the journal.

*Matthew 5:16—In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

*1 Corinthians 10:31—So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 5.**)

Education ➔ The process of acquiring KNOWLEDGE about GOD and His WORLD with the GOAL of becoming wise for SALVATION and then equipped to do GOOD WORKS so that GOD WOULD BE GLORIFIED

When you look at education in this way, should it be something that you pursue in a casual or “hohum” way? No, because it is about demonstrating the greatness of God in your life in how you study, going to class, listening carefully to what is being taught, and doing your homework for the glory of God.

The time you spend in your studies right now—even in subjects you may consider boring or useless—is meant to increase your knowledge and understanding of God and His world. And that knowledge is also to prepare you for doing good works. Here is what Proverbs has to say about the kind of student you should be:



(DISPLAY **PROVERBS 23:12.**)

*Proverbs 23:12—Apply your heart to instruction and your ear to words of knowledge.*

Think about your attitude toward school, your teachers, the subjects that you are required to take, and learning in general. Are you applying your heart to diligently do your homework, humbly receive instruction, and do your best?

Does your interaction with your teachers and the way in which you do your schoolwork bring honor to God?

Are you thinking toward the future about how God might call you to apply that knowledge to a job, vocation, or ministry? Do you limit the areas of study to only those topics you really like, or are you open to gaining knowledge in a wide variety of areas, trusting God will use these for your benefit, too?

What is more important to you, being “smart” or being godly? Is the way in which you view the purpose and goal of education, emphasizing being godly above being smart?

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the Small Group Application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** Education is the process of acquiring knowledge about God and His world.

**Think About It:** Have the students look up and read the following: Proverbs 18:15 and Proverbs 23:12. According to these verses, is learning and gaining knowledge merely a “brain” thing—only involving your mind? Why not? Why is the heart mentioned in these verses? What attitude do you need to have when you approach learning?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you always have a right heart attitude when you approach a certain topic of study? What circumstances might make this difficult? Pride? Laziness? Apathy? Not seeing the relevance of the topic? A poor teacher? How can you overcome these obstacles to applying your heart and mind to instruction?*

**Live It:** Pray that God will help you to have a right heart attitude this week in school as you learn about Him and His world. Tape one of the verses we just read to the textbook you enjoy studying from the least as a reminder to pray that God will help you to have a right heart attitude about learning.

- **Truth Statement:** Education is the process of acquiring knowledge about God and His world with the goal of becoming wise for salvation and then equipped to do good works so that God would be glorified

**Think About It:** Review the biblical view of education as presented in the lesson. How does this view of education differ from most forms of formal education found in the world? [e.g., the absence of God and the Bible from education] Why is this difference important? However, does that mean that education in a public school is necessarily wrong? Why not? Are there precautions a student should have when learning from an unbelieving teacher (or even a believing teacher!)? How can you take the knowledge that you learn about math, reading, science, etc and have it serve your knowledge and understanding of the Bible, God, and His world? Can you give an example of this? How can the knowledge learned by unbelievers potentially point them to biblical truth? For example, one of the questions that all people ask is “How did we get here?” How can gaining more knowledge of the complexity of the universe serve to point someone to the existence of God? Do you ever use this kind of knowledge as a means of pointing an unbeliever to biblical truth?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you look for opportunities to share the knowledge of God with unbelievers in discussions where it would be appropriate to share how your faith in God relates to the topic being discussed? If not, why not? Are you afraid you will look foolish? Do you feel your views are in the minority because they are not always popular among your classmates? How can you remind yourself of God’s absolute truth in these situations? If you attend a school in which God is not discussed very much, do you ask*

*yourself how God relates to the topics and subjects you are studying in class? Do you ask older friends or mentors for wisdom in areas where it seems that the Bible and what you are learning in the classroom seem to contradict each other?*

**Live It:** This week, ask yourself how God relates to the topics you are reading and studying in school. How is each subject under His rule or authority? Look for opportunities to share the truth with your classmates at school as conversation allows. Tell your small group leader what happened next week.

- **Truth Statement:** Education equips us to do good works so that God may be glorified.

**Think About It:** Read and discuss the following examples: Exodus 31:1-5 and Daniel 1:4-5. Can you think of other biblical examples in which God prepared people in specific areas of knowledge for a certain task or profession? Do you think these men, when they were very young, ever imagined the “good works” that God had for them?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you have in mind yet what God might call you to do in the future? Why is it important that you study all the topics diligently? Are there certain topics of study you enjoy more than others? Do you see this as a means God might use to equip you for a certain “good work” in the future? How could you glorify God in a topic you like? How about in one you dislike? Do you want to work for God’s glory, or for your own? How could you glorify God now with something you have learned?*

**Live It:** This week, consider how you can use the knowledge you have gained in school for God’s glory, in both small and big ways. This could include bringing attention to God’s role in a subject matter, or doing a good work that will help serve others.

- **Truth Statement:** Education is the process of acquiring knowledge about God and His world with the goal of becoming wise for salvation and then equipped to do good works so God would be glorified.

**Think About It:** Does God give some people a greater capacity to know and understand some subjects more than others? Why is this a good thing? How can a variety of gifts and abilities glorify God? (See 1 Corinthians 12 for help.)

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you affirm these differences to others and encourage them? How can you discover what abilities God has given you? Do you try to learn new and different things? Do you try your best and work hard at it? (Read Colossians 3:23-24.) Are there times when you say something like: “I don’t need to work hard at this subject. I will never use it anyway.”? Even if this were true (that you won’t use it in the future), what important lessons can you learn from applying your heart and mind to the topic? Do you want to do your best, for Christ? Is most of your schoolwork done as if you are working for Christ, or for someone else (parents, teachers, friends)? If for someone else, who? How could you change your focus so you are working for God instead of man?*



**Live It:** What would it take for you to do your best at a topic in which you struggle? This week, remind yourself that you are serving Christ when you do work for this class. When you have a hard time applying yourself to your schoolwork, be sure to ask God for grace to carry out the tasks you have, for Him.

- **Truth Statement:** Education is the process of acquiring knowledge about God and His world with the goal of becoming wise for salvation and then being equipped to do good works so God would be glorified.

**Think About It:** Review the list of common goals some people have for education:

- Getting good grades
- Graduating from college
- Having a fulfilling career
- Earning money
- Being a responsible member of society
- Achieving personal success and happiness

*Are you pursuing education with some of these goals in mind? Are these necessarily bad or wrong? No! God uses education as a means of “common grace” for all people. This means that, even for unbelievers, gaining knowledge is meant to help people lead purposeful and productive lives. And for Christians, too, this is true. But why is it important that you don’t see these goals as the ultimate goal for gaining knowledge? How does keeping in mind the ultimate goal put “intelligence” and “knowledge” in its proper perspective?*

**Examine Your Heart:** *In your life, do you keep “intelligence” and “knowledge” within the proper perspective? How might this be demonstrated? Do you brag about good grades? Keep in mind 1 Corinthians 4:7. Are you a lazy student and don’t care about bad grades? Keep in mind Colossians 3:23. Are there any areas where you need to grow in keeping knowledge in a right perspective? How? On one side of a sheet of paper, list some of the benefits of working hard in school. On the other side, make a list of things knowledge or intelligence do not guarantee (godliness/happiness, good health, wealth, etc.). Is Christ worth more to you than knowledge or intelligence? Does your quest for knowledge prevent you from pursuing other (good) spiritual things? Consider the following quotes by Theodore Roosevelt: “A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education.” “To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to create a menace to society.”*

**Live It:** Choose one way you would like to grow spiritually this week and pursue that. Or, if you tend to struggle with laziness, choose one bad habit to cut out of your life and pursue studies more diligently.

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week. Also, if time permits, ask them about how they applied one thing from last week’s lesson.**



## **Send Home**

Parent Memo for Lesson 21

# Technology

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > Man is able to create technology, because we are made in God's image and reflect His divine ability to create.
- > Technology often assists man in exercising rightful dominion over creation, and is a means of God providing for the needs of people.
- > The sinful heart is prone to develop and use technology for evil purposes.
- > The sinful heart is prone to trust and find its satisfaction in technology, and not in God.
- > Technology can be used as a means of glorifying God, or glorifying man.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                 |                  |                        |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Exodus 31:3  | 3. Jeremiah 17:9 | 5. Isaiah 55:2-3a      |
| 2. Psalm 104:14 | 4. Psalm 20:7    | 6. 1 Corinthians 10:31 |

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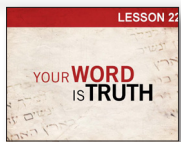
## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 22
- > Parent Memo for Lesson 22 (one per student)

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## OTHER VISUALS:

- > Bible
- > Be prepared to show the 2-minute and 46-second video "Smart," found on [ignitermedia.com](http://ignitermedia.com) by searching for the title.

(DISPLAY **LESSON 22.**)

## Small Group Discussion (5-6 minutes)

(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

Have the students turn to the “My Favorite Inventions” activity in the journal. Have them think for a moment about what they would consider to be their five favorite inventions—those they feel have had the most significant impact in their lives. Have them write these down. Then, one by one, ask the students to read their list.

*Did there seem to be a favorite invention in the lists? If so, why do you think it was a favorite?*

*How has this invention been important to you? As entertainment? Making work easier? Making life more comfortable?*

*How would you do if you had to go without using any of these items for a day or a week or a month?*

## Large Group Lesson

Begin by writing your own five favorite inventions on a whiteboard or display them if they are small enough to bring to class. Point out that these inventions and innovations have an important influence in our world—both on a personal level and on a global level. All of our lives have been influenced by the examples you and the students listed. Explain that there is a word commonly used to refer to the development and use of these things.

(DISPLAY **TECHNOLOGY.**)

Direct the students to the “fill-in-the-blank” portion of the journal for the following part of the lesson.

Technology =

- ☞ The practical application of knowledge, especially in a particular area
- ☞ Accomplishing a task using scientific processes, methods, or knowledge

All the inventions the students listed during the small group activity are the result of the practical application of knowledge in a particular area of study. In other words, technology comes about through people gaining knowledge in a particular area or areas, and applying that knowledge in a practical way. For example, the Wright brothers gained knowledge of processes necessary for an object to fly, and then used that knowledge to create a simple airplane. Have the students quickly respond to the following questions by raising their hands:

*How many of you came to church today in a car?*

*How many of you used a computer this week?*

*How many of you have a cell phone?*

*How many of you have ever taken antibiotics?*

*How many of you have eaten cereal for breakfast?*

All of these things involve technology. These examples, and thousands of others, are so much a part of our everyday lives now that we often don't even think about them in terms of "technology." And more often than not, we don't ask, "What does the Bible have to say about these things?"

*Have you ever sat down in front of a computer and asked something like, "What does the Bible have to say about computers?" Why not? Does it seem as if the Bible is irrelevant to computers? If so, why? [Allow the students to give a few responses.]*

On the surface, the Bible might seem irrelevant to computers, cars, and all other technologies. However, this would be a lie of Satan, because we are to see everything in life through the truth of Scripture.

**A BIBLICAL VIEW OF TECHNOLOGY**  
1. Man is able to create technology because we are made in God's image and reflect His divine ability to create.  
EXODUS 31:3

(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL VIEW 1.**)

(Direct the students to the "A Biblical View of Technology" portion in the journal for the following part of the lesson.)

1. Man is able to create technology, because we are made in God's image and reflect His divine ability to create.

### **Exodus 31:3—**

✎ *And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship.*

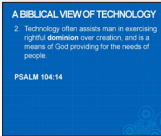
*As we have seen in the previous lesson on education, God is the source of all knowledge (Proverbs 2:6), and as His image bearers we have the ability to discover and understand some of that knowledge through His Word and through His world. Man has the God-given curiosity to know and discover new things.*

(DISPLAY **IRON.**)

*For example, God created rocks. But God also gave man the mind to discover that these rocks are more than just rocks.*

✎ *They are also the source of valuable resources, like iron, aluminum, gold, and silver. We have the natural inclination to want...*

- ✎ ...to create something with these resources—
- ✎ ...buildings,...
- ✎ ...cars, airplanes, and materials for phones, computers, and millions of other things.



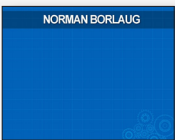
(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL VIEW 2.**)

2. Technology often assists man in exercising rightful dominion over creation, and is a means of God providing for the needs of people.

***Psalm 104:14—***

- ✎ *You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth.*

*So suppose you are a farmer and your wheat crop isn't producing much wheat due to disease and pests. Do you just throw up your hands, give up, and say, "That's just the way things are. I guess we won't have enough food to eat."? No. God's creation is to be under man's management in order that it would provide food.*



(DISPLAY **NORMAN BORLAUG.**)

Ask the students if anyone recognizes his name. Explain that...

- ✎ Mr. Borlaug was an agronomist—someone who studies farming and crop production. In some areas of the world, hunger is an issue due to crop diseases and available soil.
- ✎ Mr. Borlaug used his knowledge to develop varieties of wheat that are disease resistant and produce more crops in order to increase the food supply. He is often credited with saving the lives of more than one billion people through the technologies he developed. Those technologies demonstrate man taking his God-given authority over creation in order to supply for the needs of people.



(DISPLAY **REVIEW 1.**)

1. Man is able to create technology, because we are made in God's image and reflect His divine ability to create.
2. Technology often assists man in exercising rightful dominion over creation, and is a means of God providing for the needs of people.

*Is this all we need to know about technology? Why or why not? What might be missing? [Allow the students to respond.]*

(DISPLAY **News.**)

September 11, 2001: Terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center towers in New York City caused the deaths of almost 3,000 people.

*Was technology used to carry out these attacks? Yes. What kind? [airplanes] Do you think the original intention of the Wright brothers in developing an airplane was so it could be used as a flying bomb in order to kill innocent people? No.*

What important biblical truth does this demonstrate?

🔗 Have the students look up this verse and read it.

---

*Jeremiah 17:9—The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?*

---

Because the human heart is sinful, man is prone to use his abilities in wrong ways. Sometimes this is done through misusing a particular technology. However, there are some technologies that are designed for evil from the very beginning. An example of this is that the gas chambers developed in Nazi Germany were designed to kill large numbers of people efficiently.

(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL VIEW 3.**)

3. The sinful heart is prone to develop and use technology for evil purposes.

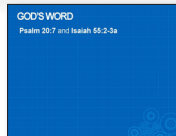
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*Jeremiah 17:9—The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?*

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Many times society does not recognize the importance of sin in relation to the development and use of technology. Technology is often viewed simply as “progress” that should never be interfered with or governed by any outside moral standards or principles. However, we need to understand that the sinful human heart is inclined to use our God-given abilities for developing and/or using technology for evil.

Point out that there is also another important thing that we must see and understand about technology—one that is much more subtle, one we often fail to recognize.

(DISPLAY **God's Word.**)

Have the students turn to each verse and read, and then follow along in this portion of the journal:

*Psalm 20:7—Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.*

*Isaiah 55:2-3a—Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear and come to me; hear, that your soul may live;*

*The first verse addresses putting your trust in the wrong things. The other verses address looking for satisfaction in the wrong things. What truth in these verses is relevant to technology? How do people put their trust in technology? How do people attempt to find satisfaction in technology?*

For many people, technology becomes a substitute for God, the Bible, and God's saving work in Jesus. Quickly recall the six questions presented in previous lessons:

- ☞ How did we get here?
- Why do we exist?
- What is wrong with the world?
- What is the solution?
- What will happen when we die?
- How now should we live?

*A way in which people put their trust in technology is by thinking that the world's problems can simply be solved through technological advancements. But this is a lie.*

A Lie of Satan: What's Wrong - Solution

(DISPLAY **LIE.**)

Direct the students to the “A Lie of Satan” portion of the journal.

- ☞ Hunger ➔ Ultimate solution: Develop technologies to feed more people
- ☞ Sickness ➔ Ultimate solution: Develop technologies to treat and cure disease
- ☞ Difficult work ➔ Ultimate solution: Develop labor saving technologies

All of these problems are the result of sin and the curse that God has subjected the world to because of sin (**Genesis 3:14-19**). Although these solutions may serve to alleviate some of the temporary suffering brought about because of sin, they cannot bring about the ultimate solution to our sin problem. And if technology is seen as an ultimate solution, it becomes a substitute for what we really need. Instead of depending on technology, we should depend upon God to meet all our needs, most importantly our need for salvation in Jesus.





(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL VIEW 4.**)

(Direct the students to the fourth Biblical View statement in the journal.)

4. The sinful heart is prone to trust and find its satisfaction in technology, and not in God.

Only Jesus...

✞ ...can save and give us true and lasting happiness.

---

*Psalm 20:7—Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.*

---



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*Isaiah 55:2-3a—Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear that your soul may live;*

---

*Has the power ever gone out at your house? Did it ruin your plans for what you were going to do that evening? Did the things you “absolutely had to do” change as a result? Our high level of frustration when technology doesn’t work demonstrates that it is easy for our sinful hearts to trust in, depend on, and find ultimate satisfaction in technology, rather than in God.*

*Therefore, as good as it is that Norman Borlaug found a way to help save one billion people from starvation, the only thing that can ultimately bring them eternal life is Jesus, the Bread of Life.*

Most Christians would readily agree with the above statements. However, there are ways in which Christians can be subtly wooed to place too much confidence and value in technology:

*Quickly review your list of favorites that you wrote down. Is there one item on your list that makes you think something like this?*

*“I can’t live without my iPod™ (mp3 player)!”*

*Can you live without an iPod™? Of course, but what about it makes you desire it so much that you feel as if you couldn’t be happy without it? And what happens when your iPod™ breaks down? Or are you happy with your old iPod™ when a new and improved version comes out?*

*Or, when you are feeling lonely, is your first thought, “I need to get on Facebook and chat with my friends.”*

These examples illustrate the need to carefully evaluate our perspective of the technologies we use in everyday life. Sinful desires can take technologies that are good and helpful, and use them as a means of turning our trust and satisfaction away from God. Often, we do not even see the ways a certain technology may be having a negative influence on us because of our own sinful desires.

### Illustration (Optional):

Play the three-minute video, **SMART**. Before playing the video, ask the students to watch for answers to the following three questions. The answers will be discussed during the Small Group Application time.

- Why is it foolish to put your trust in technology?
- Why can't any particular technology bring us lasting happiness?
- In what way does technology often serve to increase human pride?



#### (DISPLAY **RESPONSE 1.**)

Direct the students to the questions in the journal about how we should respond to these truths for this part of the lesson.

1. Man is able to create technology, because we are made in God's image and reflect His divine ability to create.
2. Technology often assists man in exercising rightful dominion over creation, and is a means of God providing for the needs of people.

🔑 Response: Recognize God as the source of knowledge, creativity, and goodness and give Him praise and thanksgiving for it.

*When we look at the millions of inventions and technologies that have benefited our world, we should be amazed at the greatness of God in giving people the ability to acquire knowledge and put it to creative and practical uses. He should be given praise and thanks for this.*



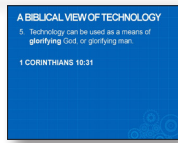
#### (DISPLAY **RESPONSE 2.**)

3. The sinful heart is prone to develop and use technology for evil purposes.
4. The sinful heart is prone to trust and find its satisfaction in technology, and not in God.

🔑 Response: We must be discerning in how we develop, view, and use technology.

When we look at technology, we must be very careful in evaluating why and how it is being used by others and ourselves.

Point out that a final point about technology can be used to summarize statements 1-4:



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL VIEW 5.**)

Direct the students to the fifth Biblical View statement in the journal.

5. Technology can be used as a means of glorifying God, or glorifying man.

**1 Corinthians 10:31—**

🔑 *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

The following inventions are examples of how technologies can demonstrate godly values that serve to glorify God in the world:



(DISPLAY **GLORY.**)

- 🔑 • Printing presses that make the Bible available to billions of people
- 🔑 • Vaccinations that save millions of lives from disease every year
- 🔑 • Ultrasounds that provide people with evidence of the humanity of an unborn child
- 🔑 • Television and radio programming that allows for the gospel to be preached and heard almost anywhere in the world
- 🔑 • Weather forecasting equipment that is used to warn people of dangerous storms

In the end, technology can be developed and used for two differing goals:

One goal is to glorify God by using technology in a way that points us and others to the greatness and worth of God. A second goal is to glorify man by using technology in a way that points us to trust and find our satisfaction in our own achievements.

So is the Bible relevant to the issue of technology? Yes. The truth of the Bible is the “lens” through which we are to see and understand EVERYTHING in life!



(DISPLAY **RESPONSE 3.**)

5. Technology can be used as a means of glorifying God, or glorifying man.

🔑 Response: Look for ways to glorify God in the use of technology.

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the Small Group Application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

If you watched the “Smart” video:

*What evidence did the video use to show why it is foolish to put your trust in technology? [Technology is limited and imperfect, and will fail.] Why can't any particular technology bring us lasting happiness? [It won't last, and will always be replaced by something that claims to be better.] In what ways does technology increase human pride? [We think we have “arrived,” and are smart and wise in our own eyes. We don't see our dependence on God.] In what other ways might technology be hurting us and making us weaker as individuals?*

- **Truth Statement:** The sinful heart is prone to trust and find its satisfaction in technology and not in God.

**Think About It:** Have the students review their “My Favorites” list. Have them share if they have ever had any problems or frustrations with how these things have worked or functioned. On average, how long will these things remain working, or how long before they will need to be replaced by something better and faster?

**Examine Your Heart:** *When one of these things fails to function as it should, how do you react? What does your reaction demonstrate about how much you are trusting or trying to find satisfaction in that thing? Read and discuss **Matthew 6:19-21**. Or, read **Philippians 4:13**. Do you ever replace the word “him” [Christ] with technologies?*

**Live It:** Encourage the students to ponder one practical way they can turn their attention away from a particular technology this week in order to turn their attention toward Christ. For example, when you are lonely and want to talk to someone, first go to the Bible and to prayer for 15 minutes or more, before going to the phone or computer.

- **Truth Statement:** The sinful heart is prone to develop and use technology for evil purposes.

**Think About It:** Have the students think of examples of technology that were developed for evil purposes. Ask if any of these technologies can also be used for good purposes. You may want to give an example: Nuclear technology can produce bombs, but it can also produce electricity and destroy cancerous tumors in the body. In the same way, technologies developed for good can be used for evil. Have the students look at their list of favorites: Do you think these inventions were intended for good or evil? What evidence would you give for your answer?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Have you ever used one of your favorites for evil? For example, would it be right to use your phone or the internet in order to spread gossip about someone? What verse or verses could be used to examine your heart? Read and discuss **Colossians 3:12-14**.*

**Live It:** Encourage the students to identify a way in which they may have wrongly used a particular technology. How can they take steps this week to use it for loving others instead? Or, would it be better to discipline themselves to not even use that technology for a time in order to break a bad habit?

- **Truth Statement:** Technology can be used as a means of glorifying God or glorifying man.

**Think About It:** Choose one item from the students' favorites lists. Have the students brainstorm together for a minute for ways this technology could be used for good works that would glorify God. Do they know whether or not that particular technology was developed by a Christian? Point out that many technologies are developed by people who do not understand the five main points from our lesson. This truth gives evidence for "common grace," God's gifts and mercies given to all mankind—intelligence, abilities, etc.

**Examine Your Heart:** *Have you thought of the different technologies that you use as means or tools for glorifying God? Do you use these same things to sometimes glorify man, including yourself? For example, do you use your electronic gadgets as a means of boasting? Is this God-honoring? Is this a way of loving your neighbor? When we get a new device, do we automatically think, "I really like this new computer. I wonder how I could daily use it to glorify God."? Why is this thinking uncommon for most of us? Are we prone to see and understand some things—like computers—as simply objects that have nothing to do with God or our relationship to Him? Read **Romans 12:1-2**. How do these words challenge our perceptions of what true worship is?*

**Live It:** Encourage your students to think and pray about a concrete and practical way in which they could use a specific technology as a means of glorifying God this week.

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week.**

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 22



# Communication

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > God created us to be relational.
- > Our words and manner of speech flow out of the desires of our heart.
- > The type of words we use and the manner in which we use them can be a powerful tool for either blessing or cursing.
- > Each mode of communication presents us with unique opportunities and dangers that we must carefully evaluate.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                   |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Ephesians 4:15 | 5. Titus 3:2      | 9. Matthew 12:34b |
| 2. Ephesians 4:29 | 6. Romans 16:18   | 10. James 3:4-10  |
| 3. Ephesians 5:4  | 7. Matthew 12:36  | 11.2 John 1:12    |
| 4. Colossians 4:6 | 8. Proverbs 16:23 |                   |

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## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

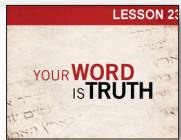
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 23                       | > "Does Your Child's Cell Phone Preach..." article (one per student) |
| > Phrase Cards (one set per small group, cut and folded) |  |
| > Parent Memo for Lesson 23 (one per student)            |  |
| > "Facebook Turns Five..." article (one per student)     |  |

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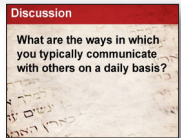
## OTHER VISUALS:

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| > Bible                                   | > Cell phone |
| > Blank sheets of paper (one per student) |              |



(DISPLAY **LESSON 23.**)

## Small Group Discussion (6-8 minutes)



PHRASE CARD AND  
BLANK SHEET OF  
PAPER

(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

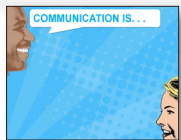
Hand each student a folded **Phrase Card** and a blank sheet of **paper**. Explain that there is a different phrase printed on each card. Each student should open his card and look at the phrase without letting the other students see it. Next, each student should use the paper to draw a depiction of the phrase, using no words, letters, or numbers. The goal is to make the drawing in a way that will allow the other students to guess the phrase correctly, as quickly as possible. Give the students a time limit (not more than two minutes) to complete their drawing. When they are done, have them place their drawings face down on the table. One by one,

have each student display his drawing and have the other students attempt to guess the phrase. The small group leaders may want to keep track of the time to see which phrase is most quickly guessed. If you have a larger group of students, you may need to limit the time allowed to guess the phrase to 20 or 30 seconds, or you may need to limit the number of phrases you illustrate.

*Do you think that drawing pictures would be the best means of daily communication? Why not?*

*What are the ways in which you typically communicate with others on a daily basis?*

## Large Group Lesson

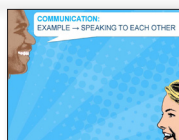
(DISPLAY **COMMUNICATION.**)

Direct the students to this definition to complete in the journal.

- ☞ Communication is the process in which people convey information to one another.

Remind the students that God created us to be His image bearers so we would be like Him in certain ways. One of the important ways in which we are like God is that we are relational—we are meant to interact and communicate with one another. We communicate things like basic information—a simple phrase—but we also communicate thoughts, ideas, desires, and emotions. The most common means of communication is through the use of words and speech in personal communication. That is why the beginning activity may have been a little frustrating. When words and speech are removed as a means of communicating information, the results may not be what we mean to convey.

*Have you ever thought of your words and speech with others in terms of biblical worldview? In other words, is there a biblical view of how we are to talk with one another?*

(DISPLAY **EXAMPLE 1.**)

Direct the students to the “Speech Activity” portion of the journal. Choose a student to quickly read each text. After each text is read, ask the students what kind of speech the verse is affirming or forbidding. Instruct the students to circle (or draw a rectangle around) the words or phrases that state the type of speech we are to have and underline the type of speech in which we are not to engage. Then display the slides with the correct answers shown.

**Note:** Depending on the needs of your particular class, this activity could be extended with a brief discussion about the meaning of each verse. In this case, shorten the lesson in the discussion of cell phones, texting, and Facebook. However, if the majority of your students use those technologies, you may want to spend only a minimal amount of time on this activity.

🗨 *Ephesians 4:15—Rather, speaking...*

🗨 *...the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,*

🗨 *Ephesians 4:29—Let no...*

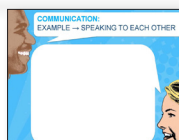
🗨 *corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is...*

🗨 *...good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.*

🗨 *Ephesians 5:4—Let there be...*

🗨 *...no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there...*

🗨 *...be thanksgiving.*

(DISPLAY **EXAMPLE 2.**)

🗨 *Colossians 4:6—Let your speech always...*

✎ ...be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

✎ *Titus 3:2—to speak...*

✎ ...evil of no one, to avoid...

✎ ...quarreling, to...

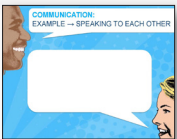
✎ ...be gentle, and to show perfect...

✎ ...courtesy toward all people.

✎ *Romans 16:18—For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by...*

✎ ...smooth talk and...

✎ ...flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.



(DISPLAY **EXAMPLE 3.**)

✎ *Matthew 12:36—I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every...*

✎ ...careless word they speak,

✎ *Proverbs 16:23—The heart of the wise makes his speech...*

✎ ...judicious and adds...

✎ ...persuasiveness to his lips.

Point out that there are hundreds more verses in the Bible that address the issue of personal communication—how we talk to one another. Some address the type of words we use: “true,” “encouraging,” “foolish,” and “crude.” Others address the manner or tone in which we express these words: “in love,” “gracious,” and “courteous.”



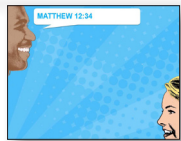
(DISPLAY **ADDRESSES.**)

The Bible addresses the TYPE of words we use and the MANNER in which we use them.

Explain that the Bible repeatedly draws attention to our words and manner of speech for two main reasons. First, our conversation serves as a type of thermometer for our hearts.

### Illustration:

Explain that a thermometer measures your body's internal temperature to detect whether or not you are suffering from some form of illness. In a similar way, our words and manner of speech often are a measure of our internal “heart temperature,” detecting sinful attitudes and desires.



Direct the students to the related questions in the journal.

(DISPLAY **MATTHEW 12:34B.**)

🗨️ *Matthew 12:34b—[Jesus said,] ...For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.*

*What does this verse mean? [Allow students to briefly respond.]*

*For example, if your speech is often crude and angry, it is not just “words” but serves as an indication of what is going on in your heart. Unhealthy sinful desires and attitudes are being expressed in your words and manner.*

*Listen to your words and manner of speech. They are an internal thermometer for your heart. Do they indicate health or sickness?*

🗨️ Conclusion: Our words and manner of speech flow out of the desires of our heart.

Explain that the second main reason that the Bible repeatedly draws attention to our words and manner of speech is because of the effect that our speech has on others.

Have the students turn to **James 3:4-10**, and choose one or two students to quickly read the text:

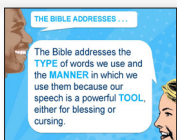
*James 3:4-10—Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot di-*

rects. <sup>5</sup>So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! <sup>6</sup>And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. <sup>7</sup>For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, <sup>8</sup>but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup>With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. <sup>10</sup>From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.

These verses are to give us a vivid picture of how strong and powerful our speech can be. Even seemingly little comments can “set a forest ablaze.”

*Can you give a real-life example of how a short, careless, or nasty comment could “set a forest ablaze”?* (Be prepared to share your own example, such as gossip, in case the students do not respond with an example.)

God does not want us to view our words and speech in a casual manner. The type of words we use to communicate with others, and the manner in which we use those words are very important. Our words will either do good or do harm.

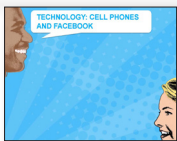


(DISPLAY **Tool.**)

**The Bible addresses the TYPE of words we use, and the MANNER in which we use them because our speech is a powerful tool, either for blessing or cursing.**

*But what about the means we use to convey those words? For example, in Bible times there were only two basic means available: face-to-face conversations and writing letters. Is this still the case today?*

*What other ways do you speak to people? [e.g., telephones, e-mail, texting, Facebook] Does God care about the means we use to communicate? And what about the new technologies that we use?*



(DISPLAY **QUESTIONS.**)

Ask the following quick questions:

🗣️ *How many of you own a cell phone?*

*How many of you don't have one, but would like one?*

*Can you give me a few specific ways in which a cell phone is helpful in your ability to communicate with others?* (Briefly give examples: Cell phones are great to have if you are lost, late, or in an emergency. Facebook is a quick way to ask others for information, or to RSVP for an event.)

✎ *How many of you have been, or are currently on Facebook, MySpace, or something similar?*

*How many of you are not on any of these, but would like to be?*

*Can you give me a few specific examples in which Facebook could be helpful in your ability to communicate with others?*

*How does it affect the nature of your “friendships”?*

Explain that you are going to examine two means that are now commonly used in personal communication.

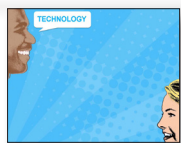


(DISPLAY **STATISTICS.**)

Read the following facts concerning cell phones and social networking among 8- to 18-year-olds in the United States<sup>1</sup>:

**Among 8- to 18-year-olds:**

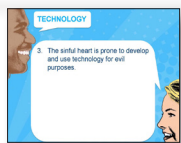
- ✎ Sixty-six percent own a cell phone.
- ✎ These spend an average of 33 minutes talking on a cell phone every day.
- ✎ Forty-six percent send text messages on a given day.
- ✎ On average, 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders spend about 1½ hours texting every day.
- ✎ The most popular computer activities are social networking sites, such as Facebook and MySpace.



(DISPLAY **TECHNOLOGY 1.**)

Use the slide to give a summary of the previous lesson's main points:

- ✎ 1. Man is able to create technology, because we are made in God's image and reflect His divine ability to create.
- ✎ 2. Technology often assists man in exercising rightful dominion over creation, and is a means of God providing for the needs of people.



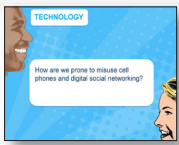
(DISPLAY **TECHNOLOGY 2.**)

- 3. The sinful heart is prone to develop and use technology for evil purposes.
- ✎ 4. The sinful heart is prone to trust and find its satisfaction in technology, and not in God.
- ✎ 5. Technology can be used as a means of glorifying God, or glorifying man.

1. From "Generation M<sup>2</sup>: Media in the Lives of 8-to18-Year-Olds," A Kaiser Family Foundation Study, 2009.

Technologies such as cell phones and computer social networking sites demonstrate all of the main points discussed in the previous lesson. They provide many opportunities for good, expanding our ability to communicate with others. So, in and of themselves, cell phones and social networking sites are not necessarily wrong means or tools in communicating. However, our sinful hearts are prone to misuse them.

Direct the students to the questions in the journal for the following part of the lesson.

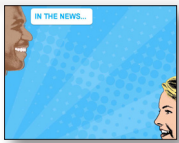


(DISPLAY **MISUSE.**)

*How are we prone to misuse cell phones and digital social networking?*

☞ Destructive cravings and Satan's counterfeits

God has made each of us with good God-given cravings. Our craving for communicating with others is an example of this. It is a good craving meant to draw us into relationships with both God and others. But the sinful heart distorts these good cravings and they become destructive. Here's an extreme example of this:



(DISPLAY **News.**)

☞ In September of 2008, a passenger train crashed into a freight train killing 25 people. Cell phone records of the driver of the passenger train showed that he had sent a text message about 22 seconds before the crash.

*Why would he be texting instead of fully paying attention to his job? What kind of destructive craving was at work here?* [the craving to have the ability to instantly communicate with someone, no matter when, where, or in what circumstance]

Though this is an extreme example, consider the following: many people talk on the phone or even text message while they drive; students text message during church services and class; students can send wrong words or pictures to each other's phones. The average teenager sends more than 2,000 text messages a month, and for some young people the first thing they do every morning is check their phones for text messages from friends. These realities reflect a destructive craving for constant communication with people, especially our friends.

*If you use a cell phone, ask yourself the following questions: Do you wake up in the morning craving contact with your friends right away? Do you feel "lost" without a cell phone? Does your cell phone distract you from personal conversations with God, parents, and others? Is the ability to immediately connect with others an idol in your life?*



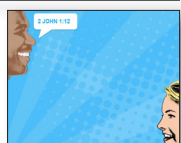
(DISPLAY **News 2.**)

☞ A mother purposely created a fake MySpace identity named "Josh" in order to befriend

a 13-year-old girl. The girl thought she had found a true friend. After time, however, “Josh” told the girl that the world would be better off without her. She later committed suicide.

*The 13-year-old girl had a God-given craving—the craving for a friend. But what did she receive instead? [a counterfeit, an unreal, deceitful friendship] This is the work of Satan, who is a liar and has been a murderer from the beginning.*

Though this, too, is an extreme example, Facebook can be used to cultivate “false” friendships, to compare popularity according to the number of “friends” one has, and to spread gossip or slander about others through the internet. Satan very subtly offers counterfeits for true friendship. The technology involved in Facebook and MySpace offers opportunities for Satan to present us with counterfeits for true, genuine relationships. The Bible continually emphasizes and gives preference to face-to-face conversations and relationships. This is reflected in the following verse (read the following Scripture passage to the students):



(DISPLAY **2 JOHN 1:12.**)

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*2 John 1:12—Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete.*

---

There are at least two reasons to care about the means or mode of communication:

- ☞ 1. There is a greater joy that can be experienced with face-to-face communication. (See **2 John 1:12.**)

*God designed us to live in fellowship with one another, enjoying one another's physical presence. That is why “being there” with your best friend and doing things together is more enjoyable than only using the phone or Facebook.*

- ☞ 2. Face-to-face communication helps to guard us from the temptations and dangers of sinful communication.

### Illustration:

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CELL PHONE

Quickly pose and act out the following scenario: A friend calls you. She is crying, because she just got cut from the soccer team. She is just looking for a shoulder to cry on, someone to sympathize with her. And this is what you do:

(Hold your **cell phone** to your ear, and say and do the following):

*I am really sorry that you got cut from the team. (Roll your eyes in exasperation.)*

*Yeah. It really doesn't seem fair. (Look at your watch as if you can't wait to get off the phone.)*



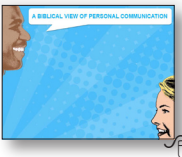
*Sure, I would love to get together tonight and do something together.  
(Shake your head as if to communicate "I really don't want to do this.")*

Face-to-face communication encourages and challenges us to be more sincere, truthful, and loving. It is much easier to hide behind the "screen" of a phone, text message, or Facebook. When we do this, we can create our "image"—appearing to care when we don't, appearing happy when we are really sad. These types of communication may also give us a false sense of not suffering the consequences of unloving words: gossip and cruel words sent out with a fast click of a button don't feel as wrong or vicious compared to if we were to say these things to someone face-to-face.

Ask yourself the following questions if you use Facebook or MySpace:

*What makes someone your "friend"? The simple click of a button? Do you know all of these friends personally? Are these friends counterfeits for the real thing?*

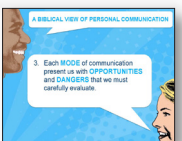
(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL VIEW 1.**)



Direct the students to the "Biblical View..." portion of the journal to complete the following statements:

- Our words and manner of speech flow out of the desires of our heart.
- The type of words we use and the manner in which we use them can be a powerful tool for either blessing or cursing.

(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL VIEW 2.**)



3. Each mode of communication presents us with unique opportunities and dangers that we must carefully evaluate.

We have been created to be in relationship with one another, and communication is a gift God has given us to convey our thoughts, desires, and emotions to one another. God cares about the words we use, and the manner in which we communicate with one another. Therefore, we need to evaluate our words and speech through the truth of Scripture. But we must also be careful about the means by which we communicate, and we must use technology to improve personal relationships in God-honoring ways, while guarding against destructive cravings and Satan's lies.

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the Small Group Application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** Our words and manner of speech flow out of the desires of our heart.

**Think about it:** Read **Matthew 12:33-37**. What would Jesus have you understand by these words? Can you give examples of what Jesus means by “good” speech and “evil” speech”? Have you had a casual attitude toward your speech? (e.g., “They’re just words, no big deal.”) Does Jesus take this attitude?

**Examine your heart:** Examine your speech from the last few days and think about your words and manner as a type of thermometer for your heart. Think to yourself about the answer to this question: Would your speech indicate sickness or health? Would your parents agree with your assessment? Would your friends, classmates, or siblings? Would Jesus?

**Live it:** Encourage the students to spend time this week thinking and praying about the above questions. Encourage them to talk with their parents and other mature Christians about areas of concern and struggle. Remind them that superficial changes (e.g., not using crude language or speaking in anger) are not the main goal, but rather heart change reflected through their words and manner.

- **Truth Statement:** The type of words we use, and the manner in which we use them can be a powerful tool for either blessing or cursing.

**Think About It:** Have the students review the verses from the “Speech Activity” portion of the journal. Discuss any difficult words (e.g., judicious) and, if appropriate, ask the students to give specific examples of each type and manner of speech. *Why are there so many biblical guidelines regarding our words and speech?*

**Examine Your Heart:** *How would you evaluate your type and manner of speech? Does it change according to your mood? Does it change according to who you are talking to? Does your speech change based on whether you’re talking to your parents or your friends? Would your parents be pleased with how you talk to your friends? Why or why not? If so, in what ways does it change? Why does it change? Do you see your speech as no big deal—it’s just talk and doesn’t really mean anything? Read and discuss **Luke 6:45**.*

**Live It:** From the list of verses, encourage the students to choose one or two areas of speech in which they see a need for improvement. During the week, they should take these areas to God in prayer, asking for His power to change their hearts and words. Have them ask their parents to hold them accountable.

- **Truth Statement:** Our speech is a powerful tool, either for blessing or cursing.

**Think About It:** *How have the words you used in the last week blessed others by encouraging and building them up? Can you give some specific examples? Encourage them to think about any words they have used that served to set “a forest ablaze”? Was this intentional, or can even careless words do this? How can saying true words in an unloving manner also do this? What were the consequences of these words? How might they have harmed another? Can that harm be undone easily?*

**Examine Your Heart:** *Have your words harmed someone? Have you gossiped about anyone this week, or spoken harsh words to your parents? Have you confessed this to God and asked His forgiveness? Are there any further steps you need to take? Do you care about the effect your words may have on others? If not, why not?*

**Live It:** Encourage the students to talk to their parents about any areas of concern regarding their speech. Also, encourage them to ask a good friend to help point out any areas in which their speech is hurtful to others, and pray together about it.

- **Truth Statement:** Each mode of communication presents us with unique opportunities and dangers that we must carefully evaluate.

**Think About It:** *How would you rate the means of communication you use in terms of the most used to least used? Which do you prefer over the others? Why? Do you equate the most recent technology with the “best”? Why do you think that the Bible promotes and encourages face-to-face communication? How does talking to someone face-to-face better foster genuine relationships? However, how could these technologies be used to foster God-honoring relationships? Can you give specific examples?*

**Examine Your Heart:** *If you use all the latest technologies like texting and Facebook, have you carefully evaluated why and how you are using these? Are they helping you to have real and God-honoring relationships, or are they a means to promote destructive cravings? Are they serving you well, or have they become your master? Would your parents approve of your conversations? Would God? What dangers must you avoid in these technologies? Is there a way in which these technologies could be used to glorify God?*

**Live It:** Send home the following articles for parents to read and discuss with their students (articles included in the Curriculum Resources):

"Facebook Turns Five: Thoughts on Social Networking"

"Does Your Child's Cell Phone Preach Another Gospel"

**Note:** Encourage all students to complete this last “Live It” activity, as it is part of the In Home section of the journal for this lesson.

**Also, encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week.**

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 23

As listed above:

"Facebook Turns Five..." article

"Does Your Child's Cell Phone Preach..." article

# Literature and Music

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > Literature and music are gifts that God has given to man, which display our uniqueness as His image bearers.
- > Music and literature have a unique ability to actively engage and influence our minds and emotions.
- > Every author and songwriter has a worldview that is expressed, to one extent or another, through his writing or music.
- > Literature and music present us with unique opportunities and dangers that we must carefully evaluate.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                  |                   |                    |
|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. John 21:24-25 | 3. 1 Samuel 16:23 | 5. Philippians 4:8 |
| 2. Exodus 15:1   | 4. Hebrews 5:14   | 6. Proverbs 4:23   |

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## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 24
- > "Cultural Discernment" video (Note: the quality of this video isn't high, but the content is still worth sharing with your students.)
- > Parent Memo for Lesson 24 (one per student)

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## OTHER VISUALS:

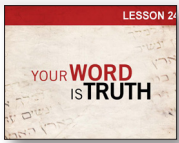
- > Bible
- > Old book (originally written more than 100 years ago, such as *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan)
- > Textbook
- > CD player or other means of playing music
- > Two instrumental (no words) music selections (one should demonstrate music that is calming, with a soft, slow rhythm; the second should demonstrate music that is energetic, with a loud, fast rhythm)
- > Optional: bowl of cereal to which other small, inedible items have been added, such as paper clips, safety pins, dog food, etc.

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## NOTE TO TEACHERS:

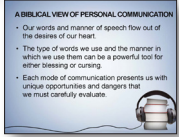
Because of the vast nature of this topic and its potential to bring to mind many personal examples, comments, and other distractions (as good as they might be), it is important to present the first four pages of the lesson as quickly as possible, avoiding tangents or protracted discussions. When presented as written, these first four pages should take approximately 15-20 minutes.

## Large Group Lesson



(DISPLAY **LESSON 24.**)

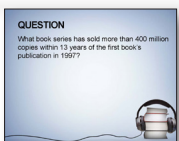
Remind the students that in the previous lesson we focused mainly on personal communication—how we talk and converse with one another. We found that biblical truth is very relevant to this kind of communication and the means through which it is expressed.



(Briefly, without comment, display **COMMUNICATION.**)

- Our words and manner of speech flow out of the desires of our heart.
- The type of words we use and the manner in which we use them can be a powerful tool for either blessing or cursing.
- Each mode of communication presents us with unique opportunities and dangers that we must carefully evaluate.

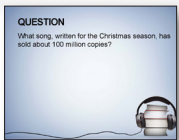
In today's lesson, we will focus on two other forms of communication: literature and music. To begin, we have two, quick trivia questions.



(DISPLAY **QUESTION 1.**)

What book series sold more than 400 million copies within 13 years of the first book's publication in 1997?

🔊 *Answer: The Harry Potter series sold more than 400 million copies from 1997-2010.*



(DISPLAY **QUESTION 2.**)

What song, written for the Christmas season, sold about 100 million copies?

🔊 *Answer: White Christmas, written by Irving Berlin in 1940*

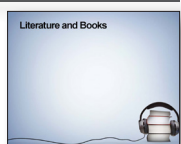
These two trivia questions illustrate that books and music have a special appeal and popularity. That is because they are both forms of communication that have some unique qualities. These qualities go beyond the subject matter of the Harry Potter books or the musical style of *White Christmas*.

*The first thing to recognize about books and music is that both are reflections of man's "God-likeness." As God's unique image bearer, man is the only creature on earth who is able to communicate through written language. Even though birds may sing beautiful songs, man is the only creature on earth who can actually compose music. Birds only "sing" in the sense that they are acting out of their inborn instinct. Man creates music out of his mind and heart.*



(DISPLAY **LITERATURE AND MUSIC.**)

- Literature and music are both gifts that God has given to man, which reflect our uniqueness as His image bearers.



(DISPLAY **LITERATURE AND BOOKS.**)

As sales of Harry Potter books illustrate, written communication, such as books, continues to have a special appeal to people. This is because the written word has unique advantages to offer.

Quickly present the following four points, and direct the students to the “Advantages of the Written Word” section in the journal.

- ☞ 1. The written word has a type of permanency.

*Suppose a friend tells you a funny story. Will you remember the exact words to that story next week? Next month? When you retell the story to another friend, will the story still be completely, word-for-word accurate? Not likely.*

---

OLD BOOK

Display the **old book**. One of the unique advantages of books is that they have a kind of permanency, because the information or story is committed to paper.

*For example, you may have read Pilgrim's Progress. That story was written in 1678. It has never been out of print since that time. If you read it, you are reading a story that has been accurately preserved and passed on for more than 300 years.*

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TEXTBOOK

Display the **textbook** and explain that another unique advantage of books is that their permanency gives us the opportunity to carefully examine the content, since you can read at your own pace, and stop and think about something if necessary. That is why good educational instruction often includes the use of books.

- ☞ 2. The written word can be carefully and repeatedly examined and responded to.

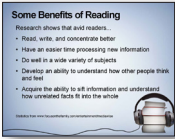
*For example, suppose you have a big history test based on the information presented in the book. Having a book gives you the opportunity to examine the material carefully, reading it slowly, and maybe even highlighting the most important facts to memorize for the test.*

Have the students consider their favorite book for a moment. It may bring about a certain response when they read it. Maybe it is a book that makes them laugh or even cry. Maybe it makes them want to do great things or go on an exciting adventure. It might even challenge them to love their parents more or to be a better friend. Because of this, they want to read it more than once. A book kept on your bookshelf, gives you the means to pick it up and read it over and over again for enjoyment.

- ☞ 3. The written word is accessible to many people.

*Books require no special batteries or assembly instructions. You don't need electricity or the internet. You can read a book in a modern city or in the middle of the wilderness. The only thing necessary is the ability to read. That is why books were popular even before electricity, and are still popular in the age of television and computers.*

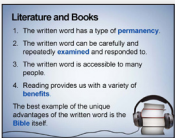
Another reason we should like books is because of the general benefits that can be gained by reading.



(DISPLAY **BENEFITS.**)

Research shows that avid readers...

- Read, write, and concentrate better
- Have an easier time processing new information
- Do well in a wide variety of subjects
- Develop an ability to understand how other people think and feel
- Acquire the ability to sift information and understand how unrelated facts fit into the whole<sup>1</sup>



(DISPLAY **LITERATURE AND BOOKS 2.**)

4. Reading provides us with a variety of benefits.

The best example of the unique advantages of the written word is the Bible itself. It is not a coincidence that when God decided to communicate the most important truths in the universe, He chose to do it by having His words written down in a book for us to read for our benefit.



(DISPLAY **JOHN 21:24-25.**)

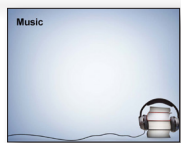
🔊 *John 21:24-25—This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true. Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.*

These verses in Scripture demonstrate some of the advantages of the written word. *Did God just trust that the disciples would pass along an accurate testimony of Jesus' life by word of mouth? No! God moved the Holy Spirit to cause men to write down an accurate testimony of Jesus' words—so the words would be permanent, copied, and passed down in their original form for many years to come. Then people would be able to study and examine them for themselves. Further, more people would have access to the Bible*

2. From: Vinley Jewell, Andrea. "Benefits of Reading." Focus on the Family, <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/entertainment/mediawise/time-for-a-good-read/benefits-of-reading.aspx> (accessed July 25, 2010).



once the printing press was developed and the Bible began to be printed in larger numbers and in different languages.



(DISPLAY **Music**.)

There are also some unique advantages to the use of music for communication.

*What might be a unique advantage to communicating through music?*

### Illustration:

#### MUSIC AND PLAYER

Explain that you are going to play two musical selections. The students should close their eyes and listen. Afterward, you will ask them what came to mind as you played each selection.

(Play about 30 seconds of the **soft, slow, relaxing instrumental music**.)

*What came to mind when the music was played? A certain emotion? A certain event? A vivid scene?* (Allow the students to give a few brief responses.)

(Play about 30 seconds of the **loud, fast, energetic instrumental music**.)

*Did this music have the exact same effect on you as the first selection? What was the difference?* (Allow a few brief responses.)

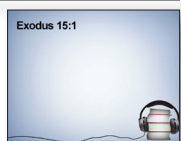
One of the unique qualities of music, even in the absence of words, is its ability to tap into our emotions, and even enhance or encourage certain feelings. For example, the first selection may have had a calming effect, while the second selection may have made you want to tap your foot, or get up and move.

(Direct the students to this part of the journal.)

1. Music and its beat, rhythm, and melody have a unique ability to encourage, enhance, and give expression to certain emotions.

*Certain kinds of music tend to have a calming effect. That is why parents sing soft soothing songs to their babies before bed. But you don't hear soft calming music being played at a football game.*

*Music also offers us a means of giving expression to our emotions. Suppose something very exciting has happened. Energetic music may help you to communicate your joy better.*



Because of this unique ability to touch our spirits and emotions, it is no coincidence that music is repeatedly found in the Bible in connection with praise and worship of God.

(Briefly display **Exodus 15:1**.)

- Exodus 15:1—*Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the Lord, saying, "I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea."*

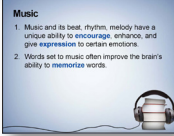


*What had Moses and the people of Israel just seen God do? [deliver them from Egypt, part the Red Sea, destroy Pharaoh and his armies, etc.] Would simply talking about this awesome event have allowed them to give full expression to what they were feeling about God? No. They sang, and it was probably very loud and energetic singing!*

A second advantage to communicating through music is how it helps the brain with memorization.

*Do you ever get a tune stuck in your head? Do you wonder why that is?*

Music, especially music with a simple, repeated melody and rhythm, is more readily memorized by the brain than a written series of words and sentences. This can have great advantages for communication. That is why many advertisers use music with their slogans. That is why many children learn to memorize their “ABCs” by singing a simple song.

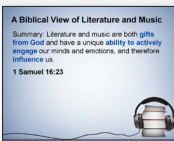


(DISPLAY **Music 2.**)

2. Words set to music often improve the brain's ability to memorize the words.


This is also why Bible verses are often easier to memorize if they are set to music, and why biblical truths are easier to learn through the words of hymns.

As with literature, music is not a man-made invention. Music began with God. God even sings over His people (**Zephaniah 3:17**).



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL.**)

**Summary: Literature and music are both gifts from God and have a unique ability to actively engage our minds and emotions, and therefore influence us.**

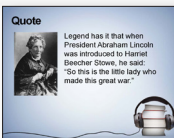
 *1 Samuel 16:23—And whenever the harmful spirit from God was upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand. So Saul was refreshed and was well, and the harmful spirit departed from him.*

David’s music served to influence the heart of King Saul and to calm and refresh him. Music can be a very powerful influence—for good, but also for evil.



(DISPLAY **INFLUENCE.**)

Anything that has the ability to engage your mind and heart also has the ability to influence your thoughts, desires, and even your actions.

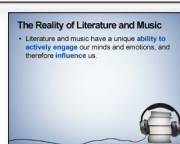


(DISPLAY **QUOTE.**)

Legend has it that when President Abraham Lincoln was introduced to Harriet Beecher Stowe, he said: “So this is the little lady who made this great war.”

*Does anyone know what Mrs. Stowe had done to be, somewhat jokingly, blamed for starting the Civil War?*

Mrs. Stowe wrote a very influential book called *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. The book had a very strong antislavery message. She wanted to persuade others to agree that slavery was wrong and should be ended. The book was widely read and fueled a growing opposition to slavery in the United States, which contributed to the outbreak of the Civil War.



(DISPLAY **REALITY**.)

Literature and music have a unique ability to actively engage our minds and emotions, and therefore influence us.

- 🎧 Literature and music flow out of the desires and perspective of the heart.
- 🎧 Every author and songwriter has a worldview that is expressed, to one extent or another, in his book or music.

*When you read a book or listen to a music selection, are you asking what worldview is being expressed? What is the author’s perspective? What does this songwriter want you to believe or feel?*

*How would you go about doing that?*

Have the students turn to **Hebrews 5:14**, and also to this part of the journal.

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*Hebrews 5:14—But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.*

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*How would you define the word “discernment”? [the ability to understand the true nature or intent of something]*

*What does discernment enable us to do? [distinguish good from evil]*

*Is discernment a one-time thing? [No, we need to be trained through constant practice.]*

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**BOWL OF CEREAL  
(WITH OTHER  
OBJECTS INCLUDED)**

### **Illustration (Optional):**

Hold up the **bowl of cereal**, showing it to the students from a distance, and ask them what it appears to be. Next, give the bowl to a student and have him examine it more carefully. Have him quickly tell what he finds in the bowl. Point out that after careful inspection, the cereal was found to contain other less desirable food, and even some inedible items.

*This is how our minds must approach books and music—with discernment. This takes training and practice. It takes knowing what is truly good and truly evil, just as [the student] knew the difference between a piece of cereal and a paper clip.*

Have the students quickly turn back in their journals to Lesson 23 on Communication. Draw their attention to the verses listed under the Speech Activity. Remind the students that these verses give examples of the type and manner of speech that the Bible commands or forbids. These verses can also serve as a measure for what is communicated in the books we read and the music we listen to. But apart from this, there are larger themes we should be discerning.

*For example, we should be asking, “What is this author’s view of the world? How does he view parents, friends, sports, and issues like good and evil?”*

*Or, “What is the message behind this music? In what way is the songwriter trying to influence my feelings and emotions?”*

*How can you go about finding the answers to these questions?*

Have the students turn to the **Fill in the Missing Words** activity in the journal. Instruct them to turn to **Philippians 4:8** in their Bibles and fill in the missing words. Next, briefly discuss the “Questions to Ask.”

This is not an extensive list of questions, but is meant to help us understand the types of ques-

tions we should be asking as we read a book or listen to music. If possible, use an example of a popular story, book, or selection of music familiar to most of your students. It could even be a well-known children’s story, since that would make the students less defensive and avoid unwanted controversy.

## Small Group Discussion (10 minutes)

Philippians 4:8		Questions to ask:
<i>Finally, brothers,</i>		
<i>whatever is <u>true</u>,</i>	→	Can I clearly point out any truths or lies in this (book, music)?
<i>whatever is <u>honorable</u>,</i>	→	Do the “heroes” strive to be honest and good?
<i>whatever is <u>just</u>,</i>	→	Is good behavior rightly rewarded and evil punished?
<i>whatever is <u>pure</u>,</i>	→	Do the characters demonstrate a hatred of sin and evil?
<i>whatever is <u>lovely</u>,</i>	→	Is good character viewed more highly than popularity, fame, intelligence, or wit?
<i>whatever is <u>commendable</u>,</i>	→	Are valuable life lessons or information presented?
<i>if there is any <u>excellence</u>,</i>	→	Is this well done, reflecting God’s intention for communicating with thoughtful skill and creativity?
<i>if there is anything worthy of <u>praise</u>,</i>	→	Is this worthy of my admiration?
<i>think about these things.</i>		

## Large Group Lesson



(DISPLAY **PHILIPPIANS 4:8.**)

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*Philippians 4:8—Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, **THINK ABOUT THESE THINGS.***

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*Why does Paul instruct us to “think about these things”? Because what we set our minds on exerts influence on our thoughts. Using this verse can serve to help us in being discerning in what we are reading and listening to. Does the book measure up to the qualities described in this verse? If not, it may mean that you need to stop reading a particular book. It may mean removing some of your listening choices also.*



(DISPLAY **HEBREWS 5:14B.**)

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*Hebrews 5:14b—have [their] powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.*

---

We cannot assume that just because a book or selection of music is from a distinctly Christian perspective that our minds and hearts are “safe” and we can let our internal “radar” down as we read or listen.

*For example, there are some books that are described as “Christian romance novels” written specifically to appeal to young women. Although the characters appear to be honorable and good, it might be that the story is actually fueling sinful desires in a young woman reading it, such as a desire for a relationship with a young man who is not real, or daydreaming about having a boyfriend when she is not yet mature enough for this type of relationship, or unfairly judging the Christian men in her life against the “ideal” man described in the book.*

Have the students turn to **Proverbs 4:23** and to the related portion of the journal.

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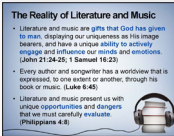
*Proverbs 4:23—Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.*

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*Most of you have probably used a prescribed medicine at one time or another. Most medicines come with a warning label that gives some examples of potential side effects that may occur when you take the drug (nausea, for example). Books and music don’t come with such labels. That is why it is so important to evaluate these with a biblical mind set. Even books with a “good” message may present a worldview that could have harmful side effects for your heart or spiritual life.*

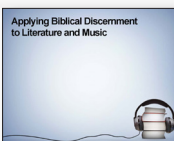
Some of you may have seen music CDs that have a “parental advisory” warning on them. These warnings indicate that there is graphic or obscene content contained in the music. However, even CDs with a “good” message might cause us to long for things that God doesn’t intend for us (e.g., an easy life, more money, a certain relationship). These CDs may not have a warning label, but we still need to be on guard. And books never come with a paragraph explaining what worldview you will find inside. You will not find a warning saying “this author will present a worldview that makes all religions seem like different paths to the same God” or “this book will present ghosts and vampires in an attractive light and make you feel compassion for what is evil.” We need to be diligent to guard our minds and heart, and search the Scripture for principles to be aware of as we read and listen.

Because literature and music have the ability to engage our minds and our hearts, we must be on guard about how our desires are being influenced by the message—even a good message. Sometimes even Christian literature can cause dissatisfaction in our hearts by lifting up something good (for example, adventure or a special relationship or friendship) and cause us to long for that thing rather than being satisfied with God’s design for our lives. Sometimes even Christian music does not represent God or the Christian life with biblical accuracy. We must be on guard, with all vigilance, so that our heart’s desires are being moved toward what is good and acceptable.



(DISPLAY **REALITY 2.**)

- Literature and music are gifts God has given to man, displaying our uniqueness as His image bearers, and have a unique ability to actively engage and influence our minds and emotions (*John 21:24-25; 1 Samuel 16:23*).
- Every author and songwriter has a worldview that is expressed, to one extent or another, through his book or music (*Luke 6:45*).
- Literature and music present us with unique opportunities and dangers that we must carefully evaluate (*Philippians 4:8*).



(DISPLAY **APPLYING.**)

- Music and literature can have a powerful effect on the mind and heart, and must be approached with biblical discernment—including Christian music and literature. (See *Hebrews 5:14*.)
- Because even good music and literature can affect minds and hearts negatively, Christians should take care to guard their hearts and minds while they read and listen. (See *Proverbs 4:23*.)

VIDEO CLIP AND  
PLAYER

Optional: End the lesson by showing the **video clip** by Dr. R. Albert Mohler, Jr., “*Cultural Discernment*.”

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the Small Group Application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

**Truth Statement:** Literature and music are both gifts from God and have a unique ability to actively engage our minds and emotions, and therefore influence us.

**Think About It:** *When is the last time you read a book? Was it for school or pleasure? How can even a textbook be viewed as a gift from God? Can you give an example of a book that really engaged your mind so that you could hardly put it down? What about it grabbed your attention? Did the book influence you in any way? How?*

*When was the last time you listened to music? What do you like most about music, the message or the way the music's beat or rhythm makes you feel? Are there different musical styles you prefer over others? How can this be seen as a gift from God? (You may want to quickly read **Psalm 150** and note the various kinds of instruments.) How does our church incorporate different musical styles into our worship service experience? How can you grow in appreciation for different styles of music? Is there a song that has influenced you in some way?*

**Examine Your Heart:** Encourage the students to examine their own experience in reading and listening to music. Have they taken advantage of enjoying God's intended benefits through these media? Do they see that these media were ultimately God's idea to be used and enjoyed for our good, so that we would better know and worship God, and expand our knowledge of His world? Would they say that they read too little or too much? Do they listen to music in a way that would be honoring to God and even their parents? Overall, would their parents say that what they read and listen to is having a positive influence on their lives?

**Live It:** Encourage the students to keep a short log this week of the time spent reading (for school, pleasure, and devotions) and listening to music. Have them share their results with their parents. Do the results reflect a good balance and use of time? Do their parents see any areas of concern?

**Truth Statement:** Every author and songwriter has a worldview that is expressed, to one extent or another, through his book or music. Therefore, books and music present us with unique opportunities and dangers that we must carefully evaluate.

**Think About It:** *Have the students imagine that they are in a car. Should they care who is driving? Would they feel safer if their dad was driving as compared to a complete stranger? Point out that authors and songwriters can be compared to drivers in some ways. When you read their books or listen to their music, they are trying to drive you somewhere. That is why it is so important to understand the worldview or perspective that they are coming from. Are they more like your dad or a complete stranger? If a stranger, do you know whether or not they are trying to drive you to a good end?*

Review **Philippians 4:8** again and share with students a brief appropriate example of a book in which you felt the author was attempting to take you for a “ride” to a destination far from that of **Philippians 4:8**. How did you handle the situation? Why is it important to carefully discern everything we read and listen to? Why is this sometimes a struggle? (e.g., it requires a lot more time and energy, and may require a hard choice between to select what is good for us instead of something that is popular; it may cause us to be seen by peers as “narrow-minded” or weird since we aren't into what the culture deems to be popular and relevant; etc.)

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you find Philippians to be a gift or a burden when it comes to what you like to read and listen to? Does it seem helpful and good, or convicting? Do you feel as if your reading and listening habits should be “off limits” to the Bible's instruction? Do you realize that God loves you and wants you to enjoy the intended benefits of good books and music? Are there habits you know you need to submit to God more fully? Have you asked Jesus for His power to help you to grow in these areas?*

**Live It:** Encourage the students to take inventory of one or two of their favorite books and/or music selections. Have them answer the following questions in the “At Home” section of the journal:

*What is it about this book or music that I like most?*

*What seems to be the author's main goal for writing this book or song?*

*What qualities from **Philippians 4:8** are found in this book or music?*

*What desires does this book or song encourage in my heart?*

*In what ways have I grown in knowledge of God, others, and God's world through reading or listening to this?*

*This book or music inspires me to...*

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week.**

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 24



# Television and Movies

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > Visual media has a unique ability to vividly captivate our hearts and minds.
- > Visual media provides opportunities to present biblical truths and themes, but also can be used as a tool of Satan to fuel sinful desires and thoughts.
- > We must carefully evaluate our viewing choices and habits through the truths of Scripture.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                    |                            |                        |
|--------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Philippians 4:8 | 5. 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 | 9. 1 Corinthians 10:23 |
| 2. Isaiah 5:20     | 6. Matthew 7:13            | 10. Galatians 6:7-8    |
| 3. Colossians 2:8  | 7. Jeremiah 17:9           | 11. Psalm 19:9, 11     |
| 4. Proverbs 14:16  | 8. 1 Corinthians 6:12b     |                        |

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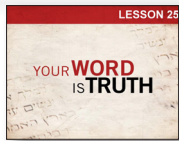
## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 25  | > "Talking to Kids About Media Discernment" article (one per student) |
| > Movie Reviews 1-2 (one set per classroom; optional)                             | > "It's Never Just a Movie or a Book" article (one per student)       |
| > Parent Memo for Lesson 25 (one per student)                                     |   |
| > "Media Discernment 101" article (one per student)                               |   |
| > "God's Word on Discernment and Nurturing Our Spirits" article (one per student) |   |

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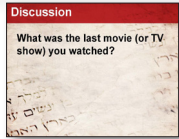
## OTHER VISUALS:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| > Bible  | > DVD player and television  |
| > <i>The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe</i> book by C.S. Lewis (You will be reading from Chapter 15 "Deeper Magic Before the Dawn of Time," beginning with the sentence: "As soon as the wood was silent again Susan and Lucy crept out onto the open hilltop." End reading with the sentence: "As it was all more lonely and hopeless and horrid than I know how to describe.") | > <i>The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe</i> DVD, produced by Walt Disney Pictures (You will be showing the scene from the movie that corresponds with the text that you read in class. Begin at 1:43:00 and end at 1:45:00.) |



(DISPLAY **LESSON 25.**)

## Small Group Discussion (5-7 minutes)



(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

Ask the students the following questions. Though some of their answers may surprise you, refrain from making judgments regarding the students' answers at this point in the lesson. Once the lesson material and the biblical guidelines for evaluating media choices have all been presented, you will have an opportunity to help the students reexamine their media choices.

*What was the last movie (or TV show) you watched?*

*Why did you decide to watch that movie (or show)?*

*Overall, how did you like the movie or show? Would you recommend it to your friends? Why?*

## Large Group Lesson



(DISPLAY **EXPOSURE.**)

Direct the students to this part of the journal to fill in the missing times.

Among all 8- to 18-year-olds surveyed, these are the average amounts of time spent with each medium in a typical day<sup>1</sup>:

- ✎ TV content = 4:38 (4 hours, 38 minutes)
- ✎ Music/audio = 2:31
- ✎ Computer = 1:29
- ✎ Video games = 1:13
- ✎ Print (reading) = 0:38
- ✎ Movies (theater) = 0:25
- ✎ Total media exposure = **almost 11 hours every day**

Very quickly highlight the following conclusions from the statistics:

*What percentage of the total of 11 media hours are spent in one medium—watching television? [more than 4½ hours] If you add up all of the visual media—television, computer, video games, and movies, the amount of time spent is 7 hours and 45 minutes daily—or almost half of your waking hours.*

*Compare the time spent with visual media (more than 7 hours) with the average time*

1. From "Generation M2: Media in the Lives of 8-to-18-Year-Olds," A Kaiser Family Foundation Study, 2009. (Figures for 2009 only).

*spent reading. (The average time spent reading daily is only 38 minutes.) Does this surprise you? Why or why not? Why is visual media used so much more than written media? (Allow the students to respond, and then direct them to the related question in the journal.)*

### Recommended Illustration:



(DISPLAY **BLANK SLIDE.**)

Read a short portion (no more than one minute) from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C. S. Lewis. Ask the students if they have read the book.

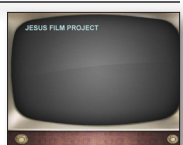
*The written word has a power to it. Well-written books such as this use descriptive words that draw us in so we feel like we are actually there. So what does your mind do as you read? [Your mind tries to imagine and create a picture of the characters, people, and events. It is active, and the imagination is engaged.]*

*But let's contrast this to a visual presentation of this same scene.*

(Play the corresponding three-minute or shorter scene from the **movie**.)

*How did watching the movie version compare with simply reading the same portion from the book? Which did you like better—the written form or the movie form? What elements of a movie add to the power and emotion of the story? [e.g., visual effects, color, real images, sound, and music] What does your mind do when you watch? [Your mind is more passive—instead of creating and imagining it is simply absorbing and processing.]*

The movie version is able to communicate in a way that involves more of our senses and emotions. We see dramatic visual effects and colorful images. The music adds to the mood of the scene. We are “drawn in” to the scene, and it’s almost as if we are there experiencing the story. And these realities about visual media can be used to convey the most important truths of all.

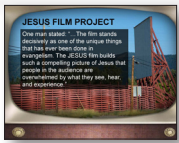


(DISPLAY **JESUS FILM.**)

- A film based on the Gospel of Luke
- Translated into more than 1,000 languages
- Since 1979, the JESUS film has been viewed by several billion people around the world.
- Three quarters of all churches planted in the last decade around the world used the JESUS film as part of the church-planting process.<sup>2</sup>

Christians used the unique and powerful qualities of visual media to tell the message of the gospel of Jesus.

2. Facts about the film from the JESUS Film Project at [www.jesusfilm.org](http://www.jesusfilm.org)



(DISPLAY **QUOTE.**)

One man stated:

*"... The film stands decisively as one of the unique things that has ever been done in evangelism. The JESUS film builds such a compelling picture of Jesus that people in the audience are overwhelmed by what they see, hear, and experience."<sup>3</sup>*

*However, think about what you watch on the television and in movies. Would you say that most of what you watch reflects an attempt to convey the message of the gospel? If it doesn't, does that make it wrong to watch? Why or why not? (Allow the students to respond.)*

Have the students turn to **Philippians 4:8**, and to the corresponding part in the journal.

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*Philippians 4:8—Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

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(DISPLAY **LION.**)

Movie: *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

- ☞ • *What are the key themes in the movie?*
- ☞ • *Do any of these themes convey elements of biblical truth?*
- ☞ • *Is there anything true, honorable, lovely, commendable, excellent, and worthy of praise in the movie?*

*Can you give me one or two examples of any themes in the movie that convey biblical truth? [There is evil that is set on destroying what is good. Aslan gives us a picture of Jesus' sacrifice for sin, etc.] Can you give an example of something honorable and commendable in the movie?*

Even though the movie is based on a fictional story, it has elements of biblical truth throughout. These include, good fighting evil, the recognition of truth versus lies, someone sacrificing his life to save others, etc. These things are commendable and worthy of praise. These themes serve as vivid illustrations of biblical truth, which may then inspire and challenge us to live out those truths in our own lives.

*However, that is not what Satan wants conveyed to the billions of people who watch television and movies. And that is not the kind of message the sinful heart is craving. So*

3. From the JESUS Film Project at [www.jesusfilm.org](http://www.jesusfilm.org)

*Satan takes advantage of the power of television, movies, and other visual media in order to spread his lies and try and destroy us. How does he do that? By taking our minds and hearts captive.*

### Illustration:

Ask the students if any of them have seen the hugely popular movie *Avatar*. If any of the students have watched it, ask them to quickly use one or two words to describe what they thought about the movie.



(DISPLAY **AVATAR.**)

🔊 **Review 1:** *Avatar* is not simply a sensational entertainment, although it is that. It's a technical breakthrough. It has a flat-out Green and anti-war message. It is predestined to launch a cult. It contains such visual detailing that it would reward repeat viewings. (Roger Ebert, *The Sun Times*)<sup>4</sup>

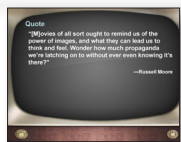
🔊 **Review 2:** *Avatar* is Cameron's long apologia [explanation and defense] for pantheism—a faith that equates God with Nature, and calls humanity into religious communion with the natural world...pantheism has been Hollywood's religion of choice for a generation now. (Ross Douthat, *The New York Times*)<sup>5</sup>

Nearly everyone admits that this movie has good special effects, which seems to be the main appeal for the first reviewer. However, those special effects mask messages that are full of empty deceit. One of these is pantheism—the belief that God and created things are one and the same. According to pantheism, God is not separate from other created things: God is a forest, God is an animal, God is the water, etc.

*Are God and created things one and the same? No, the Bible makes very clear that God is the Creator, and is separate from all things.*

Both of these reviews appeared in secular newspapers, which means even secular sources acknowledge there is a pantheistic message behind *Avatar*! Remind the students that Satan often disguises himself as an “angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14), and visual media offers a powerful and seductive way to disguise lies and sin to make them appealing.

*After watching Avatar, Christian pastor and teacher Dr. Russell Moore pointed out the following:*



(DISPLAY **RUSSELL MOORE.**)

*[M]ovies of all sort ought to remind us of the power of images, and what they can lead us to think and feel. Wonder how much propaganda we're latching on to without even knowing it's there.<sup>ⓧ</sup>*

4. From Roger Ebert, [www.rogerebert.suntimes.com](http://www.rogerebert.suntimes.com)

5. From Ross Douthat, [www.nytimes.com/2009/12/21](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/21)

*Have you ever asked the last question of your own viewing habits? How much propaganda—deceitful and harmful ideas—are you latching on to without even knowing it? How will you guard your heart and mind from this?*

### Illustration (Optional):



(Display **BLANK SLIDE**.)

MOVIE REVIEW 1  
AND 2

Hand out **Movie Reviews 1 and 2** to two students. Before they each read their review to the class, explain that both reviews were for the same movie.

**Movie Review 1:** This movie delivers the pleasures you'd expect from a movie extravaganza based on a Disneyland thrill ride, but also manages to provide more substantial rewards. The movie not only offers rollicking excitement, swashbuckling energy and splashy seagoing imagery, but also creates vivid, appealing characters through surprisingly strong performances, and disarms all resistance through its snappy sense of humor.<sup>7</sup>

*Based on this review, would you want to see this movie? Would it be something possibly commendable and worthy of praise? Yes, it sounds great! But now listen to the second review.*

**Movie Review 2:** Sparrow, Will and Elizabeth make liberal use of situation ethics: the end justifies the often questionable and downright unacceptable means. When all is said and done, crime goes unpunished and the main characters sail off into the sunset. Overshadowing the onscreen heroism and fun are disappointing closing remarks romanticizing—even legitimizing—piracy.<sup>8</sup>

*Have any of you guessed what movie this is? [The Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl] What did this second review notice about the movie? [bad ethics and making piracy look good]*

Explain that piracy, especially in the time period that the movie portrays, involved stealing, kidnapping, and even murder. Yet, the first reviewer made no mention that the main character and “hero” is actually a thief. Ask the students what might have clouded the first reviewer's perspective. Then quickly reread the following portion of the review:

*The movie not only offers rollicking excitement, swashbuckling energy and splashy seagoing imagery, but also creates vivid, appealing characters.*

Point out that because of the power of visual media—the colorful images, dramatic special effects, sound, and interesting characters—it is easy to be “taken for a ride” in which your senses are so engaged that you aren't even aware your mind has been taken captive by the message. In this case, it's a message that glamorizes sin. And before

6. From [www.russellmoore.com](http://www.russellmoore.com)

7. From [www.michaelmedved.com](http://www.michaelmedved.com)

8. From Rhonda Handlon and Bob Smithouser, as quoted on [www.pluggedin.com](http://www.pluggedin.com)

you know it, you are cheering for the bad guys because the movie has made sin appear good and fun.

Have the students turn to **Isaiah 5:20** and also the corresponding portion of the journal.

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*Isaiah 5:20—Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!*

---

*Think about a show or movie you have watched lately and ask yourself... Does it treat sin as something good and commendable, or funny? Do you end up cheering for that which the Bible calls evil?*



(DISPLAY **PHILIPPIANS 4:8.**)

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*Philippians 4:8—Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

---

*Visual media is a powerful tool that Satan can use to distort the truth about what is truly honorable, lovely, commendable, and worthy of praise. And if your mind is not alert, you can be deceived and fall captive to Satan's lies.*

Have the students turn to **Colossians 2:8**.

---

*Colossians 2:8—See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.*

---

*Have you ever watched a movie with these verses in mind? Do you realize that the movie might be a tool of Satan to take you captive to “empty deceit”?*

Explain to the students that you will now take a look at some biblical guidelines for watching television, movies, and video.

*The following guidelines are not meant to replace the guidance of your parents. Parents may hold differing convictions about what forms of visual media are “okay” or “not okay” for their family members to watch. These guidelines are not a substitute for your parents’ convictions. It is okay for you to be more cautious than your parents would be with what you watch, but it is never okay to defy the guidelines that your parents have set for your family, so keep that in mind as we discuss the following biblical guidelines.*



(DISPLAY **GUIDELINES.**)



Quickly read through each statement and choose a student to read the corresponding verses. Direct the students to follow along with the following statements and verses in the journal.

1. Carefully evaluate a show, movie, or video before making a decision to watch it; then continue to examine it while you watch it.

**Proverbs 14:16—**

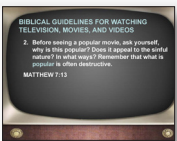
- One who is wise is cautious and turns away from evil, but a fool is reckless and careless.*

**1 Thessalonians 5:21-22—**

- ...but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.*

*First of all, don't be careless or reckless in what you watch. Some media has no redeeming value and is blatantly evil and harmful. Don't give Satan an opportunity to fuel wrong desires and thoughts in your life. Seek advice from godly, mature people before viewing anything. There are resources that review media from a Christian perspective and give wise counsel.*

*Next, carefully examine what you watch. Don't just sit and watch and go along for the ride by being a passive observer. Make sure your mind is at work testing and evaluating the message. Make sure you correctly understand what is truly good and what is evil. Sometimes it might mean that you need to turn off the TV or even leave the movie theater.*



(DISPLAY **GUIDELINES 2.**)

2. Before seeing a popular movie, ask yourself, why is this movie popular? Does it appeal to the sinful nature? In what ways? Remember that what is popular is often destructive.

**Matthew 7:13—**

- Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.*

*Think about this: What would you say is the biggest factor in choosing which programs and movies you watch? Is it because “everyone else is watching it”? Making good viewing choices will usually put you at odds with the culture, and even your peers. Don't make your choices based on the crowd. It's easy to do the popular thing, but it is also destructive.*



(DISPLAY **GUIDELINES 3.**)

3. Understand the desires of your sin nature, and don't be deceived by them. Keep in mind your particular temptations when you are evaluating and examining what you watch.

**Jeremiah 17:9—**

*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?*

Our sin nature craves the things of the world and all its excitement and entertainments. Don't let those sinful desires master your viewing habits.



(DISPLAY **GUIDELINES 4.**)

4. Raise the standard of your viewing habits.

**1 Corinthians 6:12—**

*...“All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be enslaved by anything.*

**1 Corinthians 10:23—**

*“All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful.*

### Illustration:

*What would happen if you drank several cans of soda pop every day? It may not be morally wrong, but it sure wouldn't be beneficial to your health! Replacing several of those cans of soda with plain water or fruit juice would be much more beneficial to your whole body. (Teachers may give a brief, appropriate, personal example of a time where watching a movie or show would have been permissible, but proved not to be beneficial. Please keep it brief!)*

*Do you ever think something like: “I just have to watch this program every week!” Or, “Yeah, I probably watch a lot of TV and play a lot of video games, but it's okay because I am not watching anything bad.”*

*Is that the standard you should use for evaluating your watching habits? Has a good program become a type of idol for you? Is what you watch helping you to grow in your relationship with God, your parents, and others? Or, is most of what you watch a waste of your time?*

*Keep in mind that this principle doesn't mean we need to rule out every show that makes us laugh, for example. Laughter can be medicine for the soul, and can therefore*

*be worthwhile and helpful! The question is: “What does this movie (or show) want me to laugh about?” If the laughter results from coarse or crude jokes, or dulls our minds and hearts to certain realities, it is not beneficial. However, good, clean comedy is a gift from God, and can benefit us!*

*Also consider time spent in media, and compare it to time spent investing in your relationships with God and others. Do you spend time on movies and the internet that should be spent in the Word, fulfilling your responsibilities at home and school, and building healthy relationships? Are your priorities right? Is media cutting out other more beneficial things too often? Ask yourself, “Does my satisfaction and joy come far more often from the internet and TV than from Christ? Where is my heart? My joy?”*



(DISPLAY **GUIDELINES 5.**)

5. Remember that what you watch will influence you.

### ***Galatians 6:7-8—***

🔊 *Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.*

*You might be thinking, “What’s the big deal? It’s only entertainment! It’s just a television show. It’s just a movie. So it’s got a lot of violence and bad language in it, that doesn’t mean I’m going to go out and murder someone, or start talking that way.”*

### **Illustration:**

Ask the students if they know of anyone who lives next to a freeway or airport.

*If you ask those people: “Doesn’t the noise bother you?” they will often respond: “No, you just get used to it and learn to tune it out.”*

When our minds hear a sound over and over again, it begins to “dismiss” the sound from our consciousness so it won’t continually bother or annoy us. The same thing can happen to our hearts and minds regarding evil—we can become “used to” evil and simply tune it out.

*Is there a problem with that?* [You might get to a place where you no longer recognize certain kinds of evil and sin, even in your own life.]

This is the danger demonstrated in **Galatians 6**. Maybe you don’t think your viewing habits—the amount you watch or the kind of things you watch—will have any consequences. If you have been careless and foolish, and continue to be so, you will eventually experience the destructive results of those choices.

Point out it might seem to some as if the above guidelines are meant to kill our joy and fun, since following them would seem to eliminate the great majority of viewing options. And that might be true for some who have not been careful. But it is better to watch and benefit from what is truly worth watching than to simply follow the world. And God has not given us these guidelines to kill our joy, but to increase our joy.

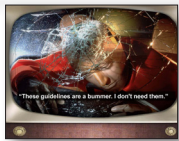
Read **Psalm 19:9b, 11** to the students:

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*Psalm 19:9b, 11—...the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether...by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.*

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### Illustration:



(DISPLAY **SEAT BELT.**)

*There was a time when cars didn't have seat belts, and you could move all over the car while driving. It was a lot more fun for kids. You could jump around and play in the backseat while your parents were up front driving. What they found out, however, was that in an accident, even a small fender bender,...*

*...unrestrained children could go flying and be seriously or fatally injured. That is why cars are now required to have seat belts,...*

*...and the law requires you to wear them while driving—not to kill your fun but to make sure that your fun won't be killed in the event of an accident. If you're never in an accident, it may seem unnecessary to always be wearing one. But the regular habit of wearing one makes sure that you are always on the "safe side," because you never know when you may be involved in an accident.*

*The above movie guidelines could also be seen as a seat belt for your mind and heart. They are not meant to kill your joy, but to make sure your joy won't be killed by the effects of harmful temptations, and sinful thoughts and desires. At times, these guidelines might seem restrictive, just like a seat belt. However, they may also serve to prevent serious injury. And you might think, "Well, I've never had a movie or show influence me in a wrong way. It's just fun entertainment." But what you might not realize is that you are heading for a fender bender without the safety of wearing your seat belt. So in the end, these guidelines can be viewed two different ways:*



*"These guidelines are a bummer. I don't need them." Or,...*

(DISPLAY **SEAT BELT 2.**)

*..."Wow, I am so glad for this safety feature!"*

*God's words are meant to be this wonderful, protective "safety belt". Yes, they may seem to be "restraining" at times, but the restraint is a loving and good joy protector! When we*

*are restrained and discerning in our viewing habits, we will ultimately reap rewards—greater joy, a clean conscience, a better relationship with God, parents, and others, etc.*

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the Small Group Application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** Visual media has a unique ability to vividly captivate our hearts and minds.

**Think About It:** *What is one of your favorite television shows or movies? What is it about that show or movie that you really like—the message, the acting, the special effects? Describe some of these. How do these things “captivate” your heart and mind? Can you give an example of how this can be a good thing? [e.g., it can really get your full attention] What about a bad thing? [e.g., it can cause you to lose sight of the message being presented]*

**Examine Your Heart:** *Think about your favorite show or movie again. In what ways has it captivated your heart and mind? Are you being captivated by emotional thrills? Violence? Coarse joking and laughs? How does this measure up to **Colossians 2:8** and **Philippians 4:8**? Review **Galatians 6:7-8**. Based on your media choices, what are you “sowing” in your life right now? According to Scripture, what can you expect to “reap”? Will the fruit that you reap be godly or worldly? Read **Psalms 139:23-24**. Pray for each other about these things.*

**Live It:** Encourage the students to carefully think about what captivates their hearts and minds when making viewing choices. Challenge them to take a break from recreational television, movies, video games, and computer viewing (including youtube) for a few days, or even a week. Use the extra time in meaningful reading, relationships, exercise, etc. What do they predict might be the results of doing this? How might doing this help to reveal what kinds of things are captivating their hearts and minds in relation to visual media.

- **Truth Statement:** Visual media provides opportunities to present biblical truths and themes, but also can be used as a tool of Satan to fuel sinful desires and thoughts.

**Think About It:** *Ask the students to recall a show or movie that presented biblical themes and truths. What were the themes and truths? Was this show or movie written or produced by Christians? How can even secular media sometimes present biblical truths? Give one or more examples: A nature program can vividly portray amazing truths about creation without acknowledging the Creator. Other programs or movies show the folly and consequences of bad choices, selfishness, and pride, without acknowledging that this is actually the natural consequence of sin. But have you also thought about whether or not a show or movie is actually fueling sinful desires and thoughts by making*

*them seem more appealing to you? How can even a seemingly “harmless” show do this in your heart? [e.g., a program where all the kids are wearing the latest fashions, or all live in big homes might serve to fuel a wrong desire to have more or better things]*

**Examine Your Heart:** *Have you carefully chosen and watched programs, movies, and videos with an eye for seeking to find biblical truths and themes? Do these serve to inspire and challenge you? In what ways? Why is it easier not to do this? How does visual media lend itself to making us naturally passive, and having our brain simply absorb what's being presented? Do you ever watch something and think about whether or not it is serving to fuel sinful thoughts and desires?*

**Live It:** Give the students an assignment for a television show or movie that they watch this week. Have them watch with a notebook and pencil in hand. At the top of a blank page, have them write out the words of **Philippians 4:8**. Then, as they watch, have them write down any characters, events, or themes that would measure up to the qualities in the verse. At the end of the show or movie, how much did they write? What did they use as their standard for determining what is honorable, true, commendable, etc.? Would what they wrote pass the Scripture test?

- **Truth Statement:** We must carefully evaluate our viewing choices and habits through the truths of Scripture

**Think about it:** *How do you go about making viewing choices? Have you been pretty casual about it? Who influences you the most, friends or parents? Have you ever sought advice from mature, godly people before viewing something? Does something that is rated “G” mean that it is “safe” to view without an uncritical mind? [For example, in Disney’s *Bambi*, animals are portrayed as innocent creatures with human feelings and thoughts, while man is portrayed as evil and destructive, hunting the poor, innocent animals. How does this present a worldview that is skewed? How might it cause children to wrongly understand the difference between animals and humans?]*

*Have you ever examined how much time you spend watching media, even good shows and movies? Why might that be an issue for your heart and mind? How might your mind, mental discipline, concentration, reasoning, and literary abilities be impacted? What is the main motivation for turning on the TV or computer? Why might this be harmful? If you are spending more than seven hours a day watching something, what are you not able to do as much of? Are you watching others live, or are you living?*

**Examine Your Heart:** *Have the students review the six biblical guidelines in their journal. Are there any they have questions about, or want to discuss further? Are there any they find helpful, convicting, difficult, or irrelevant? Why might they have a “gut reaction” against some of these? What might this be an indication of? Spiritual deadness, or a war within the heart and mind of the old sinful self and the new spiritual self? If you feel “spiritual deadness,” will continuing to feed your heart and mind with worthless or harmful viewing benefit your life? What does Galatians 6 say? If there is a war within you*

*heart and mind about these things, what tools are available to Christians to fight this battle?*

**Live It:** Send the following articles home with the students to share with their parents. Encourage them to talk with their parents or another mature Christian about their personal viewing habits. If their parents have not yet done this for them, have them ask their parents to work with them and write down specific rules regarding the amount of time spent watching various media options, and guidelines for what they watch.

"It's Never Just a Movie or a Book"

"God's Word on Discernment and Nurturing Our Spirits"

"Talking to Kids About Media Discernment"

"Media Discernment 101"

ARTICLES (ONE PER  
STUDENT)

Note: Encourage all students to complete this last "Live It" activity, as it is part of the "At Home" section of the journal for this lesson.

***Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week.***

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 25

Also, as listed above:

"Media Discernment 101"

"God's Word on Discernment and Nurturing Our Spirits"

"Talking to Kids About Media Discernment"

"It's Never Just a Movie or a Book"



# Sports and Athletics

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > Sports and athletics are to serve us in understanding and growing in the Christian life.
- > Sports and athletics are to be done for the glory of God.
- > We must carefully discern whether or not our participation in sports is serving us or mastering us.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                          |                              |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. 1 Timothy 4:7-8       | 3. Matthew 6:19-20           | 5. 1 Corinthians 10:31 |
| 2. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 | 4. 1 Corinthians 6:12, 19-20 |                        |

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## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 26              | > "Fathers and Sons and March Madness" article (one per student) |
| > Letter from the President (one for the class) |  |
| > Parent Memo for Lesson 26 (one per student)   |  |

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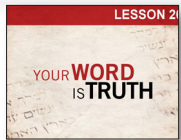
## OTHER VISUALS:

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| > Bible | > Optional Illustration: <i>Facing the Giants</i> DVD movie |
|---------|---|

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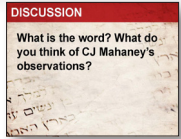
## PREPARATION:

If you plan to show the *Facing the Giants* movie clip for the optional illustration, be prepared to bring up the part from 41:23 to 44:27 on your DVD counter during the time indicated in the lesson text.



(DISPLAY LESSON 26.)

## Small Group Discussion (6-7 minutes)



(DISPLAY DISCUSSION.)

Explain to the students that you are going to read them an excerpt from a book by pastor and author C. J. Mahaney. However, as you read it you are going to leave out some key words, and use the words "cleaning" or "janitorial" in place of those words. As you read, the students should think about the context, and from it try to guess the words or terms the author actually used. Read it quickly, and without interruption.

*Take [cleaning], for example. You should know that I love all things [janitorial]. I myself have been active in strenuous [cleaning] all my life, so it's not like I'm some uncoordinated geek who's now seizing an opportunity to display his inner resentment toward people who are [janitorially] superior. That's not what this is about.*

*Here's what this is about: Nowhere is the word great mentioned more often in our culture than in the context of [professional cleaning]. If you watch any [janitorial show] this weekend and listen to the announcer's commentary, then like a mantra you'll probably hear the word great repeated throughout—great, great, great. Yet it may well be that nowhere in our culture is the absence of true greatness more evident than in [professional cleaning.] So be careful about cultivating an excessive love for [professional cleaning] in your child.*

Ask the students if they have guessed what topic Pastor Mahaney is addressing. Then quickly read it with the missing words added:

*Take athletics, for example. You should know that I love all things athletic. I myself have been active in strenuous athletics all my life, so it's not like I'm some uncoordinated geek who's now seizing an opportu-*

*nity to display his inner resentment toward people who are athletically superior. That's not what this is about.*

*Here's what this is about: Nowhere is the word great mentioned more often in our culture than in the context of professional sports. If you watch any game this weekend and listen to the announcer's commentary, then like a mantra you'll probably hear the word great repeated throughout—great, great, great. Yet it may well be that nowhere in our culture is the absence of true greatness more evident than in professional sports. So be careful about cultivating an excessive love for professional or collegiate athletics in your child.<sup>1</sup>*

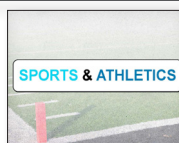
*What do you think of his observations? What do you think of his statement: "Nowhere is the word 'great' mentioned more often in our culture than in the context of professional sports." Have you ever observed this? Can you give an example? [e.g., "Wow, what a great catch! We'll be watching replays for a long time. What a great play!"]*

*Why is the word "great" used so much in sports? We are all looking for something to praise (worship). Sports is held up in our culture as something that portrays achievement—doing some amazing things with your physical body. An Olympic swimmer winning a record eight gold medals, a football team winning the Super Bowl, etc. They are doing things that many people cannot/will not ever do so we consider them "great."*

*What do you think of his statement: "Yet it may well be that nowhere in our culture is the absence of true greatness more evident than in professional sports." What do you think he means by this? Is his conclusion that sports are wrong or evil? [No.]*

1. Mahaney, C. J. *Humility, True Greatness*. (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Multnomah Books, 2005), 161-162.

## Large Group Lesson

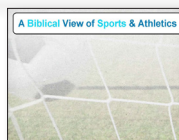


(DISPLAY **SPORTS.**)

*How many of you are involved in some kind of organized sport or participate in any type of athletics, whether it be soccer, basketball, swimming, or biking? (Have the students simply raise their hands to indicate this. Do not allow time for discussion.)*

*Can you list some of the positive aspects of being actively involved in sports and athletics? (Allow the students to give brief responses. Write these positive aspects on a whiteboard, and direct the students to write their own answers in the journal. Answers might include: teamwork, discipline, practice, exercise, fun, learning to win and lose, etc.)*

Explain that the Bible also sees some of the positive aspects of sports and athletics.



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL VIEW.**)

Each statement is taken directly from Scripture:

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🔊 *Bodily training is of some value (1 Timothy 4:8).*

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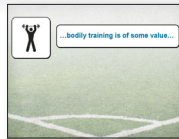
🔊 *Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things...So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body (1 Corinthians 9:24-27a).*

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*According to these verses, is there value in sports, athletics, and competition? Were any of these noted in our list?*

The Bible does see positive aspects of sports and athletics. However, something very important was left out of the above verses, namely the full context.

*What is meant by "context"? [e.g., how something appears in relation to the whole; understanding the true meaning based on how it is being used]*



(DISPLAY **TRAINING.**)

Have the students turn to...

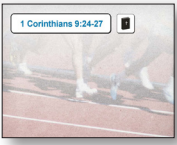
🔊 **...1 Timothy 4:7-8** to look at the context, and to the journal for the related question:

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*1 Timothy 4:7-8—Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; <sup>a</sup>for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.*

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*What is the point that Paul was really intending for us to understand from stating that “bodily training is of some value”? [Athletic ability is of some worth.] How is he using an understanding of training for athletics to make a more important point? [Bodily training is good but has limited value in comparison to godliness. As much as you must train for athletics, more so you must train for godliness.]*



(DISPLAY **1 CORINTHIANS 9:24-27.**)

Have the students turn to the Scripture passage, and also to the journal for the related question.

### **1 Corinthians 9:24-27—**

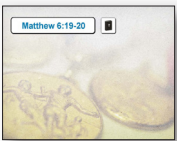
🔓 *Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.*

*What is the true context in which Paul was speaking? [the spiritual life, living the Christian life] How was he using the example of competition, bodily self-control, and discipline? [to help us understand the mind set that we are to have in living out the Christian life] What is the real prize being sought after? [eternal life, heaven]*

In New Testament times, the winner of an athletic competition often received a wreath made from leaves, which was placed on his head. But this reward was perishable.

*Some athletes train for more than four hours every day. They carefully watch what they eat, and develop a very disciplined training schedule in order to win a medal or title or championship. Paul uses this positive aspect of athletics to encourage Christians to take seriously how we approach the Christian life in which we are striving for a much greater, eternal reward.*

*Consider how much greater the eternal reward is than the temporary reward! For example, one athlete who won eight gold medals in one Olympics competition stated: “I have accomplished all. I will have these medals forever.”<sup>2</sup> Will these medals last forever?*



(DISPLAY **MATTHEW 6:19-20.**)

### **Matthew 6:19-20—**

🔓 *Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal...*

2. Quote from Olympic Swimmer Michael Phelps after winning his eight gold medal in the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, China, according to <http://sports.espn.go.com/oly/summer08/swimming/news/story?id=3538984>.

*Which reward is more valuable and important: medals or eternal life? Only the last one truly endures forever!*

*Think of how your pursuit of the Christian life might change if you approached following Jesus and walking in His truth with the same amount of discipline and determination as an athlete pursuing a gold medal or championship title!*

Being involved in sports (and also watching sports) can be great fun. Valuable lessons and skills can be learned, such as the importance of disciplining and training your body to do hard things and be self-controlled. Physical exercise is good for both the health of your body and your mind. Competition encourages you to strive and excel. Looking forward to the “prize winning” can help keep you focused. You can develop endurance, as you learn to press on even when you are tired or discouraged or lose a game.

*But according to the Bible, these lessons are meant to serve a greater purpose. And that purpose is the truth—the biblical view—of sports. Sports are meant to serve you in understanding and growing in the Christian life.* (Encourage the students to complete this statement in the journal.)



(DISPLAY **PURPOSE.**)

It is very important to understand the true role of sports. However, Satan does not want you to see sports in that way. So he twists God's good intention, and the sinful heart would rather believe his lies. And just as our beginning article pointed out, when this happens, sports no longer serves this role in someone's life or in our culture, but may have the exact opposite effect.

*What is the opposite of something serving you? [Allow the students to respond.]*

Hand the **Letter from the President** to a student (preferably a boy) to read to the class. Before he reads, explain that this is a portion of a letter that President Theodore Roosevelt wrote to his son, Ted, while Ted was away at school.

*White House, Oct. 4, 1903*

*Dear Ted,*

*... I am delighted to have you play football. I believe in rough, manly sports. But I do not believe in them if they degenerate into the sole end of anyone's existence. I don't want you to sacrifice standing well in your studies to any over-athleticism; and I need not tell you that character counts for a great deal more than either intellect or body in winning success in life. Athletic proficiency [ability] is a mighty good servant, and like so many other good servants, a mighty bad master.<sup>2</sup>*

*Was the president against his son playing sports? [No.]*

*However, what was the president concerned about? [that sports would have the wrong priority in his life]*

*What did the president regard of much greater importance than either intelligence or athletic ability? [character]*

*What did he mean when he said:*

🔊 *“Athletic [ability] is a mighty good servant...[but] a mighty bad master”?*

*The opposite...*

🔊 *...of sports serving you, is that it masters you. How could sports become your master? (Direct the students to complete this statement in the journal.)*

*What might this look like? [e.g., your life begins to revolve around your sports activities; you spend more time watching sports than studying; you have greater joy in playing sports than in obeying God or serving others; you think more about sports than about spiritual things; playing in the game is more important than going to church; you become powerfully addicted to watching and following certain teams and players; you are too tired after practice to do important things such as praying or reading your Bible, etc.]*

Note: This may be a good time to give the students a brief, personal illustration. Share with the students a time in which a sports activity began to “master” your time and energy.



(DISPLAY **1 CORINTHIANS 6:12.**)

Direct the students to the related questions in the journal for this section of the lesson.

### **1 Corinthians 6:12—**

🔊 *“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be enslaved by anything...*

*Is it lawful to play soccer? Is it lawful for you to play basketball? Is it lawful for you to watch the Super Bowl? Yes, all of those things may be lawful. But the more important question is not are these things lawful, but are they helpful? Are they serving to help you understand and grow in the Christian life? And, are you becoming enslaved by them?*

*Why should you care about this? Aren't sports something separate from “church stuff and God stuff”? Verses 19 and 20 go on to say:*

### **1 Corinthians 6:19-20—**

🔊 *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, <sup>20</sup>for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

2. Phillips, Doug, editor. *The Letters & Lessons of Theodore Roosevelt for His Sons*. (San Antonio, Texas: The Vision Forum, Inc, 2003), 35.

*Does it matter what you are doing with your physical body? Yes! If you are a Christian, your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and you belong to God—heart, mind, and body. And you are commanded to glorify God in what you do with your body.*

(Quickly display **1 CORINTHIANS 10:31**.)



### **1 Corinthians 10:31—**

☞ *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL VIEW 2**.)

- ☞ Sports and athletics have many positive aspects that are helpful to the body and mind.
- ☞ Sports and athletics are meant to serve a greater goal: helping us in understanding and growing in the Christian life.
- ☞ Sports and athletics are to be done for the glory of God, displaying His greatness and worth.

### **Illustration (optional):**

Play the clip from the *Facing the Giants* movie.

*Is that how most of the world views sports? In your beginning small group discussion time, what danger did Pastor Mahaney observe regarding sports in our culture? [It tends to glorify man instead of God.] What evidence can you point to that would justify this observation? [e.g., the number of people who fanatically follow sports teams and figures, but show little interest in spiritual things; the way sports figures boast about their accomplishments, taking the credit themselves for their abilities; etc.]*

More often than not, the following is expressed in sports and athletics:



(DISPLAY **LIES**.)

Sports and athletics...

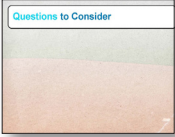
- ☞ Are only a means of harmless fun and entertainment
- ☞ Are simply for keeping in good physical condition
- ☞ Are a means to personal greatness
- ☞ Provide us with heroes to admire and praise

Sometimes, it is very easy to spot these lies as we see a sports figure flagrantly boast about something he has done, or as we watch people do outrageous things in order to



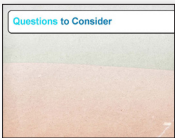
follow and cheer for their team. However, as with other lies of Satan, sometimes these lies are masked or disguised as seemingly good things.

*How can you recognize these lies for what they truly are? How do you know if you are believing these lies? One way is to ask yourself the following kinds of questions, whether you are actually participating in a certain sport or athletic activity, or simply spending time watching a sport:*



(DISPLAY **QUESTIONS.**)

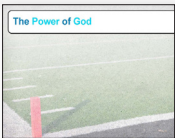
- ✎ *Is my participation in sports keeping me from things that are more important?*
- ✎ *Do I skip church for practices and competitions?*
- ✎ *What motivates my desire to play and compete in this sport?*
- ✎ *Do I get angry when my family interrupts my sports schedule?*
- ✎ *Do I give the credit for my ability to God? Do I turn the focus off myself and to God?*



(DISPLAY **QUESTIONS 2.**)

- ✎ *Do I encourage other players? Do I help them to be successful, even if I must be less successful?*
- ✎ *Is my participation serving to build my character in terms of godliness?*

Sports-related activities are a wonderful gift from God. God delights in His people using our wonderfully designed bodies in ways that show the greatness and wisdom of our Creator. There are valuable lessons that can be learned as you train and practice and compete. However, God wants you to see and understand the biblical worldview of sports—what the truth is. Sports are to serve you in understanding and growing in your knowledge, trust, love, and obedience to Jesus. And the goal of sports is that you do it for the glory of God—using sports as a means to show His greatness and worth.



### Optional End for Lesson

(DISPLAY **POWER.**)

Read the following comments from former professional football player Art Monk when he was inducted into the NFL Hall of Fame in August 2008:

- ✎ *But I understand and I know that I'm here not by, in, and of my own strength—but it's by the grace and the power of God upon my life, who I know gave me favor along the way, and who provided opportunity and room for me to use my gifts.*

*So I am very grateful to receive this honor, and I can stand here before you and say, “Hey, look at me, look at what I did.” But if I’m going to boast, I’m going to boast today in the Lord, for it’s because of him that I’m here and I give him thanks and glory and honor for all that he has done for me.<sup>3</sup>*

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the Small Group Application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** Sports and athletics can serve us in understanding and growing in the Christian life.

**Think About It:** *Have the students complete the “Sports and Athletics Inventory” in the journal. Have they thought about why they participate and enjoy a certain type of sport or athletic activity? What positive effect has it had in their lives? Have they ever thought about how these positive aspects may be applied to the Christian life? Can they give an example of this? (You may want to be prepared to share a few examples and any applicable Scripture. For example, the importance of teamwork points to **1 Corinthians 12:14, 25-26**.)*

*Would it be right for you to have a disdain for sports and athletics? [No! Of course not.] Do you look down on these activities? If so, why? Is it because you have a right attitude towards the wrong things you see expressed in many sports, or is it because you feel jealous or inferior, or are lazy and do not desire the physical and mental discipline required? What should **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** remind you of?*

**Examine Your Heart:** *Have you ever examined your motives for why you do or do not participate in a certain sport or other athletic activities (even exercise)? Do you look at your participation or viewing of sporting events as simply something fun to do with your time? Is that fun wrong? No, but should fun be the only and most important goal? How could **Romans 12:1-2** challenge you to view sports and athletics in a new and more important way? Will this outlook put you “in-step” with the culture?*

**Live It:** Challenge the students to make a conscious effort this week to discern how their participation or viewing of a particular sport can serve them in better understanding important aspects of the Christian life. Tell them to be prepared to share these in the next week.

- **Truth Statement:** Sports and athletics are to be done for the glory of God.

**Think About It:** Review **1 Corinthians 10:31**. Ask the students if they can think of ways in which playing or participating in an athletic activity would change with this desire and attitude. Talk about specific evidences that demonstrate that this is not the case, for

3. This quote was originally cited on Pastor C.J. Mahaney's blog at [www.sovereigngraceministries.org/Blog/post/Art-Monk.aspx](http://www.sovereigngraceministries.org/Blog/post/Art-Monk.aspx)

the most part, in our culture. [e.g., boasting, selfishness, poor sportsmanship, idolizing sports figures, time devoted to sports viewing versus more important activities, etc.] Can the students think of examples in which sports figures have glorified or were able to glorify God in their sport?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you approach sports as a means of self-accomplishment, boasting, and popularity? Have you considered texts such as **1 Corinthians 4:7**? How do you think that playing and viewing sports for the glory of God would change how you play or view an event?*

**Live It:** Challenge the students to look for evidences of God-glorifying moments in sports in others, and encourage them to think of how they can be intentional this week in bringing glory to God in their own sports participation.

- **Truth Statement:** We must carefully discern whether or not our participation in sports is serving us or mastering us.

**Think About It:** Have you ever wondered if sports and athletics are serving you or mastering you? What might each look like in your life? Is the time and energy you devote to sports, greater or less than the time and energy you devote to training your heart and mind for godliness? Have you ever asked your parents to evaluate this from their perspective? Read and discuss one of the following: **Psalms 145:3-7**, **Isaiah 42:8**, or **Jeremiah 9:23-24**.

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do the following “heart check” with your students by reading and talking about pastor C.J. Mahaney’s sampling of biblical priorities and practices he reviews with his son prior to each practice and game:*

Do you...

- Humbly receive correction from your coach and ask your coach how you can grow in character as well as athletic skill?
- Thank your coaches for the way they have served you. And thank the referees after each game?
- Encourage your teammates for their display of godly character and athletic skill--in that order of priority?
- Encourage your opponents during and after the game. If you knock someone over, extend your hand to help them up?
- Play the game passionately and unselfishly? Serve your team by playing aggressive defense...and passing the ball on offense...?
- Humbly respond when the referee calls a foul on you? Do not complain or disagree in word or by facial expression...?
- No inappropriate celebrating after you score; instead, recognize that others played a role...?

- Thank the team manager for the way he served and recognize the humility and servanthood he is displaying each game? True greatness is sitting on the end of the bench...?

**Live it:** Challenge each student to identify an area in which he needs to grow in having sports or athletics serve him instead of mastering him. Encourage the students to include their parents' counsel in identifying these areas. Then, make a plan of some practical steps that can be taken to grow in this area. One or more of the suggestions from Pastor Mahaney's list could be used.

- **Truth Statement:** We need to choose carefully who we look to for examples of greatness.

**Think About It:** Are you looking to sports for examples of true greatness? Will this serve you well? What types of "heroes" do you have? Do you typically admire godliness in a person even more than great athletic capability? Why is godliness to be admired over athletic capability? Read **1 Corinthians 11:1**. Why did he want the Corinthians to imitate him? Why do we tend to become like those we admire? Why should this tendency make us very careful in what it is about certain sports figures that we admire?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Have your sports "heroes" ever let you down in their conduct on or off the field? Does the world (popular culture) tend to separate ability and personal conduct when praising certain players and teams?*

**Live It:** Think of others who might be looking up to you: friends, brothers and sisters, classmates at school. Are you a godly example to these people? In what ways could you be a better example of godliness to these people this week?

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week.**

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 26

"Fathers and Sons and March Madness" article



# Work

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > Work is a gift from God that brings about desired benefits for ourselves and others.
- > God has given each person unique gifts and abilities, and calls us to use these in specific kinds of work and occupations.
- > All work is to be done with excellence, as for the Lord.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                     |                        |                          |
|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Genesis 1:1      | 6. Psalm 128:2         | 11. 2 Thessalonians 3:11 |
| 2. Genesis 2:1-2    | 7. 2 Thessalonians 3:8 | 12. 1 Corinthians 12:5-6 |
| 3. Genesis 1:31     | 8. 2 Corinthians 8:14  | 13. Colossians 3:23-24   |
| 4. Genesis 2:15     | 9. Proverbs 20:4       |                          |
| 5. Exodus 20:9, 11a | 10. Proverbs 21:25     |                          |

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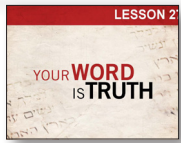
## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 27                                | > Parent Memo for Lesson 27 (one per student) |
| > Pictures (one set per small group; cut out individual pictures) |   |

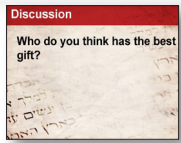
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## OTHER VISUALS:

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| > Bible   | > Scrub brush |
| > Small gift bag for every small group (place one set of the cut-out pictures into each gift bag) |               |

(DISPLAY **LESSON 27.**)

## Small Group Activity (4-5 minutes)

(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

GIFT BAG (WITH PICTURES INSIDE)

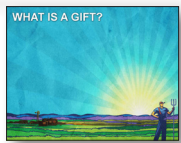
Place the **gift bag** on the table. Explain to the students that there are slips of paper in the bag with pictures of different kinds of gifts a person might receive. Each student will reach into the bag, without looking, and pull out a slip of paper. After all the students have a picture, each student should briefly state what he would or could do with his gift.

*Who do you think has the best gift? Why do you think so? Who do you think has the worst gift? Why do you think so? When asked what each of you would or could do with your gift, how many of you stated things that would just benefit yourself? How many stated things that would benefit yourself and others?*

## Large Group Lesson

Ask the students to raise their hand if they agree with the following statement regarding the picture they picked from the gift bag:

*The item I picked would be a wonderful gift.*

(DISPLAY **GIFT.**)

What's a gift?

- ☞ A gift is an undeserved blessing given in kindness.

*A gift is an unearned, and therefore, undeserved blessing—something given to you out of the kindness of the giver. When understood this way, would each of the items have been a gift, regardless of what they were? Yes.*

Even in understanding this, the students made judgments about what seemed to be the best or worst gift. For example, they may have thought the sports car was the best gift and the scrub brush was the worst gift. However, sometimes we wrongly make assumptions, because we don't see the potential benefits of something.

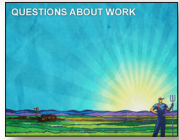
Hold up a **scrub brush** and ask:

*What do you associate with a scrub brush?* [cleaning, scrubbing the floor, doing chores, etc.] *Do you consider these activities to be a gift? Why or why not?* (Allow some brief responses.)

- ☞ Most people do not see work as a gift, especially a gift from God. That is because we often do not view work through a biblical worldview. And if we are to understand the truth



about work, we must see what the Bible has to say about it. In order to examine work from a biblical perspective, we are going to answer the following five questions:



(DISPLAY **QUESTIONS.**)

- 1. What is work?
- 2. When did work begin?
- 3. Why should we work?
- 4. What kind of work should we do?
- 5. How should we do our work?

*Let's start with the first question: what exactly is work, how would you define it? (Allow the students to respond, and direct them to the related questions in the journal.)*

Work involves **productive** and **purposeful** effort that produces a desired benefit or reward.



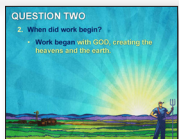
(DISPLAY **ANSWER 1.**)

- 1. What is work?

- Work is productive and purposeful effort or labor that produces a desired benefit.

Briefly explain that in this definition, “work” would include anything from extreme physical work as in a construction worker to the mental effort involved in being a computer programmer. Both are being productive and purposeful in their labors, either with their hands or with their minds in order to produce something.

*So, using this definition, would doing homework and chores be work? Yes. What other kinds of work do you do in your daily life? (Allow a few brief responses.)*



(DISPLAY **ANSWER 2.**)

- 2. When did work begin?

*What do you think is the biblical answer to this question? (Allow the students to respond.)*

- Have the students turn to the following text:

**Genesis 1:1—**

- In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*

*What was God doing in this verse and all of Chapter 1? Was it creative and purposeful? Yes.*

*Did it involve effort or labor? In other words, was it really “work” for God? Can you think of a text in **Genesis 2** that would prove that what God did was, in fact, work?*

If they have not yet pointed to **Genesis 2:1-2**, direct their attention to this text and have a student quickly read it:

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*Genesis 2:1-2—Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. <sup>2</sup>And on the seventh day God finished His work that He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had done.*

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The Bible begins by drawing our attention to God at work creating the heavens and the earth. Note that while God worked, His work did not deplete Him in the way that it depletes us, His creatures.<sup>1</sup>

*Was there a noticeable benefit or reward to God's work? Yes. The world and everything in it! How did God respond in **Genesis 1:31**?*

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*Genesis 1:31—And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.*

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God's work resulted in the desired benefit, a beautiful world. But there was another reward. God looked at His work, and was pleased and took pleasure in what He had done. So not only did God's work bring about a tangible reward, it also brought about a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment.

2. When did work begin?

🔊 Work began with God creating the heavens and the earth.

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*Genesis 1:1—In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

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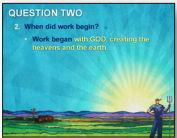
*But when did work begin for man? (Ask for a specific verse.)*

Choose a student to read **Genesis 2:15**.

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*Genesis 2:15—The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.*

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(DISPLAY **ANSWER 2B.**)

2. When did work begin?

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1. Isaiah 40:28 says: "...The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary..."

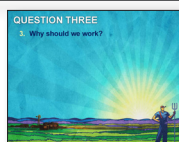
Work began with God creating the heavens and the earth.

☞ Man began to work in the garden, before the fall.

### **Genesis 2:15—**

☞ *The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.*

God is a God who works, and He is right and good in everything He does. Furthermore, God commanded man to work before sin entered the world. That means work is intended to be good, and should be not looked upon as something evil or to be avoided and looked down upon.



(DISPLAY **QUESTION 3.**)

3. Why should we work?

*Why did God intend for us to work? Why didn't He just create the man and woman to simply lie around in hammocks and enjoy the beautiful garden in leisure—just lazing around day after day? (Allow the students to respond.)*

## **Small Group Activity (5-7 minutes)**

Have the students return to their small groups and look at the “Small Group Activity” section of the journal. Choose students to read the verses and fill in the missing words. For numbers three and four, you may want the students to look at the context of the verses. Quickly discuss how

each verse might answer the question “Why should we work?” Then, have the students write a summary statement in the box titled “We should work because...” The verses (with missing words underlined) are as follows:

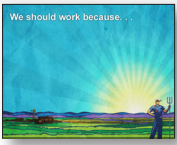
*Exodus 20:9, 11a—Six days you shall labor, and do all your work...For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth,...*

*Psalms 128:2—You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you.*

*2 Thessalonians 3:8—nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you.*

*2 Corinthians 8:14—your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need,...*

## Large Group Lesson



(DISPLAY **BECAUSE.**)

Ask for a few students to share their summary statements from the small group activity.



(DISPLAY **ANSWER 3A.**)

2. Why should we work?

☞ Because God commands us to work

**Exodus 20:9, 11a—**

☞ *Six days you shall labor, and do all your work,... <sup>11</sup>For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth,...*

*Could God have made us to merely lie around all day, relaxing? Yes. But God commands us to work. It is something that distinguishes us as His image bearers. God worked, so we are to work.*



(DISPLAY **ANSWER 3B.**)

3. Why should we work?

- Because God commands us to work

☞ Because it provides for our needs and gives us a certain amount of satisfaction

**Psalms 128:2—**

☞ *You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you.*

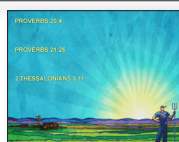
*Another reason we should work is because it is the normal and regular means through which God supplies our daily needs—tangible rewards. But as **Psalms 128** also points out, there is a sense of well-being that work gives to us. Just as God was pleased with His work in creation, we, as His image bearers, are intended to find a certain amount of satisfaction and pleasure in working.*

Give the students a few examples of the type of satisfaction we are to feel from work: for example, the satisfaction of mastering a piece of music, or scoring a goal for the team on a soccer field, or writing an “A” paper. Emphasize that work does not simply benefit adults with jobs or careers. God created work in such a way that it benefits everyone.

**Illustration:**(DISPLAY **DOG.**)

Ask the students what greyhounds are well-known for. [their speed] That is why some people race greyhounds. Explain that there are some well-meaning people who feel sorry for racing greyhounds. They think that it would be better for the greyhound not to have to work so hard and race. So they will buy “retired” greyhounds and do their best to give them a life of ease and rest. However, if this happens the greyhounds become very frustrated and even destructive.

*Why would they behave this way? Because everything in them is wired to run, run, run. They were made to run. And just like the greyhound is wired to run, we have been “wired” to work. And just like a greyhound, if we don't work, we will become frustrated and even destructive.*

(DISPLAY AND QUICKLY READ **SCRIPTURE.**)**Proverbs 20:4—**

🔊 *The sluggard does not plow in the autumn; he will seek at harvest and have nothing.*

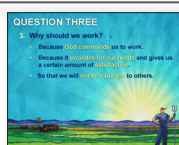
**Proverbs 21:25—**

🔊 *The desire of the sluggard kills him, for his hands refuse to labor.*

**2 Thessalonians 3:11—**

🔊 *For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies.*

The verses read in the small group activity point out two more reasons we should work.

(DISPLAY **ANSWER 3C.**)**3. Why should we work?**

- Because God commands us to work
- Because it provides for our needs and gives us a certain amount of satisfaction

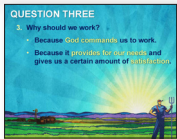
🔊 So that we will not be a burden to others

**2 Thessalonians 3:8—**

🔊 *...nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you.*

Another reason we should work is so that we would not be an undue burden to others. We all have needs that must be supplied. Either we will supply these needs through our own work, or others will need to supply them for us. If a person has the ability to work and provide for his own needs, he should do it. That is why adults go to work to earn a living.

*But suppose you are a child, and do not have the ability to work and provide for all your needs? Or what about a single mother, who is finding it difficult to provide for her children? Or what about a person who is physically disabled, or old and weak? Or what if a father has lost his job and is having a hard time finding a new job? These questions point out another reason we are to work.*



(DISPLAY **ANSWER 3D.**)

3. Why should we work?

- Because God commands us to work
  - Because it provides for our needs and give us a certain amount of satisfaction
  - So that we will not be a burden to others
- ☞ So that we can supply the needs of others

**2 Corinthians 8:14—**

- ☞ *your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need,...*

A final reason we should work is to have something to share with others who cannot work, or who cannot always provide for all their own needs. So work is not just to benefit ourselves, but also to benefit others. Quickly state the following kinds of examples:

- When a father goes to work on a daily basis and earns money, he works to provide for the needs of the whole family.
- When a mom cooks dinner she is working to provide dinner for the whole family.
- When a child washes the dinner dishes, he is working to benefit the whole family.

Point out that the above examples then lead to the next question.



(DISPLAY **QUESTION 4.**)

4. What kind of work should we do?

*First, let's think of this question just in terms of paid jobs or occupations in which adults would be engaged.*



(DISPLAY **Jobs.**)

This is a small sampling of some of the jobs or professions described in the Bible. (Do not spend time reading through the list. It is simply meant for the students to see the wide array of professions in which people were engaged.)

Midwife	Jeweler	Baker	Carpenter	Builder
Stonecutter	Musician	Secretary	Fisherman	Accountant
Tax Collector	Manager	Banker	Seamstress	Herdsman (rancher)
Jailer	Physician	Evangelist	Soldier	Merchant (salesman)
Teacher	Innkeeper	Pastor	Ambassador	Messenger (postman)
Butcher	Mason	Athlete	Farmer	Servant (janitor, waitress)
Lawyer	Governor	Police	Judge	Homemaker
Craftsman	Cook			

How does this list help to answer the question “What kind of work should we do?” Do you think there is one kind of job that would be best? If so, what would you base your answer on?

Have the students turn to **1 Corinthians 12:5-6**, and also to this part of the journal.

*1 Corinthians 12:5-6—...there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.*

*How can this verse help us to understand what kind of work a person should do?*

God has chosen to give people different interests and abilities, and He calls people to use these gifts and abilities in varieties of service or work. As the students grow and mature into adulthood, God will expect them to use these gifts and abilities in a specific kind of job or occupation—whether as a pastor or a garbage man, nurse or auto mechanic, banker or homemaker. Each occupation is important and necessary. And each person should work in the occupation that God has equipped and empowered him to do.

Hold up the **scrub brush** again and comment:

*So God empowers some people to do cleaning jobs, like janitors, and God empowers some people to be doctors. Each kind of work is important and necessary. Both require unique gifts and abilities. One is not better than another. They are simply different callings from God.*

SCRUB BRUSH



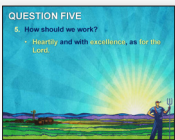
Have the students look at the **Jobs** slide again. Ask them if this list leaves them “off the hook,” since they are not yet adults and are not required to earn a living yet by working in a specific occupation.



(DISPLAY **Youth.**)

### 🔑 Obedient Son or Daughter=Student

Even children and youth are called to work. Childhood and young adulthood is a time of training and instruction. During this important time, you are to be learning what work is, why it's important, and how it should be done. In Bible times, children were expected to help their parents with various daily tasks that would not only help the family, but also prepare them for adulthood. Miriam helped her mother watch her baby brother Moses. Young David was a shepherd. Jesus most likely trained as a carpenter with Joseph. Your parents and others are also training you by assigning you various jobs and chores around the house, at school, and in church, that not only benefit you but others. These are important things to be learning during this time, and your attitude and how you do these jobs is also important. This leads to the fifth question.

(DISPLAY **ANSWER 5.**)

5. How should we work?

🔑 Have the students turn to **Colossians 3:23-24**, and also to this part of the journal.

🔑 *Colossians 3:23-24—Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.*

*Is this text addressed only to adults? No. It would apply to young people, too.*

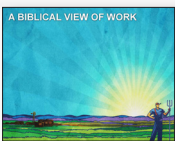
*Is this verse specifying certain types of work? No. For a young person, what might your work include? [e.g., school work, house chores, babysitting, lawn mowing, etc.]*

*What does it mean to work "heartily" at these things? [e.g., eagerly, with enthusiasm, energetically] If you are doing your work as for the Lord, how should that affect the quality of your work?*

5. How should we work?

🔑 Heartily and with excellence, as for the Lord

*If you do a job like scrubbing the floor heartily, as for the Lord, how will this be reflected in the quality of work you do? [You'll want to do the job well, with excellence.]*

(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL VIEW.**)

- ☞ Work is a gift from God: it distinguishes us as God's image bearers as it engages us in meaningful labor that brings about desired benefits for ourselves and others.
- ☞ God has given each person unique gifts and abilities and calls us to use these in specific kinds of work and occupations.
- ☞ All work is to be done with excellence, as for Jesus.

This view of work is very much at odds with the world. And Satan has three main lies that are meant to distort the biblical view of work.



(Display **LIES**, and direct the students to this part of the journal.)

- ☞ 1. Work is a necessary evil.

*Most people do not look at work as a gift from God. In fact, it seems like a curse, but one that is necessary if you're going to live. For example, maybe one of your jobs around the house is washing the kitchen floor. Your dad says you have to do it every week. Suppose you just finish doing a great job washing the floor, and then the dog runs through the kitchen with muddy paws. What a waste of time all your work was! It can seem futile at times.*

Remind the students that, as one of the results of the fall, the work Adam and Eve did in the garden became a drudgery and was subject to futility. Futility refers to something that feels like a waste of our time, because it doesn't last, for example, washing the floor only to have the dog ruin it in a matter of seconds. The curse can make our work feel meaningless, difficult, or boring. Jesus came to redeem work by giving it great purpose and meaning—even when the dog ruins the clean floor. However, Satan does not want people to see this important truth. He wants us to only view work through the curse, and see it as something necessary but evil. When people believe this lie, they might demonstrate it by the following kinds of attitudes:

- *I hate my job. It is so meaningless.*
- *I can't wait to retire so I can head to the lake and relax all summer.*
- *Why should I do this boring math homework? I'll never use it anyway.*
- *I worked so hard on this paper, and all I got is a "C." What a waste!*
- *I can't wait until school is done. I'm going to do nothing all summer but sleep in, play video games, and hang out.*

- ☞ 2. Work defines my worth.

The other extreme is to see work as a goal in and of itself, something that will bring you ultimate satisfaction. This lie of Satan, when believed, might be characterized by the following kinds of attitudes:

- *My work is what ultimately gives me my satisfaction in life.*
- *I will only do the kind of work I enjoy.*
- *I don't want to clean the bathroom, that chore should be for my sisters to do, not a guy.*
- *I don't want to do manual labor when I grow up. That is for people who are too dumb to do anything else.*

Some people make work a means to pursue idolatrous hopes and dreams. This kind of attitude might be expressed by:

- *I really want to be a doctor so that I can earn a lot of money and have prestige.*

*Another aspect of this lie is that work establishes my independence.*

### 3. Work establishes my independence.

*This lie claims that your goal in life is to see yourself as not dependent on others for anything. Instead, you “pull yourself up by your own two boot straps.” Work, therefore, becomes a means of showing others that you are self-sufficient. God does call people to work to provide for their own needs, but it should never be seen as the means of total self-sufficiency, or a way of proving that they don't need anyone's help. God did not create work to encourage this kind of attitude. However, Satan uses this lie as a means to subtly convince people that they are not dependent on God.*

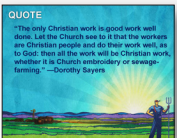
These are all lies of Satan. Yes, there is a curse on this world, and that curse does affect work. However, the gospel is meant to redeem work and give us a right understanding of it. For a Christian, although work will sometimes be difficult and demanding, it becomes transformed...



(DISPLAY **GOSPEL.**)

...when we rightly see it as a gift from God. Work is a means to be productive and reap the benefits of that productivity for ourselves and others.

- And, in doing honest work of any kind, and by doing it with excellence and as for the Lord, that work has great meaning and purpose. You can take out the trash, wash the dishes, and mow the lawn to serve and honor God.



(DISPLAY **DOROTHY SAYERS.**)

Dorothy Sayers was a Christian who was also a famous English writer. This quote states her perspective on Christians and work:

*The only Christian work is good work well done. Let the Church see to it that the workers are Christian people and do their work well, as to God: then all the work will be Christian work, whether it is Church embroidery or sewage-farming.<sup>2</sup>*

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the Small Group Application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** Work is a gift from God that brings about desired benefits for ourselves and others.

**Think about it:** *Have the students quickly review the five questions and answers from the lesson. Have they ever thought of work in terms of these truths? Are there any areas that have seemed more difficult to accept or apply? Which ones? For example, is it easier to see some kinds of work as a gift, but other kinds of work as drudgery? Can they give examples of the kinds of work that they think would be more satisfying than other kinds? Why do they view one kind of work differently than the other? What kind of benefits do they see in various kinds of work? Besides financial benefits, what are other kinds of benefits from work? [e.g., discipline, perseverance, humility, the joy of being able to help others, etc.] Have they been viewing work from a biblical perspective, or have they been believing a subtle lie of Satan? Discuss their responses to these types of questions by pointing them back to the biblical truths presented.*

**Examine your heart:** *When your parents assign you a particular chore or task, what is your general attitude—eager obedience, or something else? Do you view work and any reward you might receive only in terms of what will benefit yourself, or do you delight in doing something so you can help others, too? Do you look down on some forms of work as being inferior or “below” you? How might this be demonstrated in your life? How can God’s truth transform your heart and mind in this area?*

**Live it:** Challenge the students to put on “biblical lenses” this week, and be on the lookout for Christians who are involved in diverse kinds of occupations, both within the church (ministry work) and secular occupations. Encourage students to see the importance of each job as a gift from God, and specifically thank God for each. Also encourage the students to ask their parents for one or two jobs that they could do, over and above their usual chores, in order to benefit their parents and the whole family. Challenge them to do these tasks with a **Colossians 3:23-24** attitude. How can this kind of attitude be a positive motivator for doing an even seemingly menial job with excellence?

- **Truth Statement:** God has given each person unique abilities, and calls us to use these in specific kinds of work and occupations.

**Think about it:** *Ask the students if they have thought about a future profession or occupation. Do they only think in terms of what they would like to do, or do they also ask the question: “What would bring glory to God and good to others?” How might asking only the first question be deceptive? For example, would most students say something like, “When I grow up I want to work in sewer maintenance?” Why not? However, would*

2. Sayers, Dorothy. “Why Work?,” an essay published in *Creed or Chaos*. (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1949).

*it be good and right for God to equip some people, even Christians, to do this type of work? Yes! Are there any kinds of work God would not want a Christian or anyone else to do? If so, which kinds? [e.g., jobs and work that, by their very nature, require and involve sin] If God providentially brings you to a type of work that the world often sees as lowly and unimportant, will you submit to His will and do your work as for the Lord and not for men? What is the promise in **Colossians 3:23-24**? How can this help put all of our work in perspective? What do you think is meant by “the inheritance as your reward”?*

**Examine Your Heart:** Review Satan’s lies about work from the lesson. Have either of Satan’s two main lies regarding work crept into your own heart and mind? Are you using your time as a young person to carefully learn and train for what God may call you to do in the future? Are you asking God for His guidance? Are you open to all the possible ways He might be equipping you? Do you see the work that you are called to do now in the home, at church, and at school as not only an important means of preparing you for the future, but also as a means to benefit you and others right now? Do you see your whole body—your mind, eyes, ears, mouth, hands, and legs—as instruments for work? Are you viewing each in terms of their God-given abilities and empowerment?

**Live it:** Encourage the students to pursue their work this week as a means to discover some of the gifts and abilities God has given them in order to do creative and meaningful work that will benefit themselves and others. Have the students ask their parents or other mature Christians in their lives to point out evidences of any unique gifts and abilities they notice. Encourage students to interview a Christian who has a job in a career field that interests the student. Challenge the students to use a particular ability in doing work. For example, a guy who is strong and athletic could use that strength to help his dad with a demanding physical job. A girl who enjoys baking could offer to make dinner for the whole family. Young people can do good work right now!

- **Truth Statement:** All work is to be done with excellence, as for the Lord.

**Think About It:** Ask the students to think about a specific task they have done in the past week, either at school or at home. Did they do that task with excellence as if they were doing it for the Lord? Why or why not? Why is it difficult to think of some kinds of work in this way? Do they think it would be easier for a person doing “ministry” kinds of work to think in these terms as opposed to a person doing “secular” work? Why? How are **Colossians 3:23-24** and **1 Corinthians 10:31** meant to challenge our perspective?

**Examine Your Heart:** Does the quality of your work change based on whether or how much you are paid for doing a particular chore? How can **Colossians 3:23-24** transform the way in which you mow the lawn, take out the garbage, do the dishes, babysit, or do your math homework? Review **Proverbs 20:4**, **Proverbs 21:25** and **2 Thessalonians 3:11**. Do any of these verses reflect how you view or go about your work? What type of sinful desire may be at the root of laziness and idleness? If you don’t see laziness in yourself, would your parents and others agree with you? Most importantly, is Jesus pleased with your attitude toward work? Have you asked Him to change your mind and

heart in this area of your life? Read and discuss **2 Thessalonians 3:10**.

**Live it:** Encourage the students to live out **Colossians 3:23-24** in an area of work that they often find difficult, boring, or seemingly unimportant. Will the reward for living this out always be something immediately tangible? Why not? But what other type of benefit or satisfaction does Jesus promise when work is done in this way? Challenge the students to think of a job they could do as a surprise for their parents or someone else—something they were not asked to do, such as unexpectedly cleaning the kitchen. Have them imagine they are doing this job for Jesus. What was the outcome of doing this? What kind of satisfaction did they feel in a job done well? How did their parents respond?

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week.**

**Also, if you challenged your students to make a conscious effort to discern how their participation or viewing of a particular sport could serve them better in understanding important aspects of the Christian life, follow up on this topic as well.**

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 27





# Rest and Leisure

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > God has given us the gifts of sleep, rest, and leisure for the benefit of our bodies and souls.
- > Sleep demonstrates our dependence on God, and should encourage us to humbly submit ourselves to His good and sustaining rule.
- > Rest and leisure are a means through which we are to enjoy the many benefits that God has provided so that we might deepen our thankfulness to Him.
- > True, lasting rest and enjoyment can only be found in Jesus.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                    |                       |                         |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Isaiah 40:28-30 | 5. 1 Timothy 6:17b    | 9. 1 Corinthians 10:23  |
| 2. Psalm 121:4     | 6. Psalm 103:2        | 10. 1 Corinthians 10:31 |
| 3. Psalm 3:5       | 7. 1 Chronicles 16:11 | 11. Matthew 11:28       |
| 4. Exodus 20:9-11  | 8. Ephesians 5:15-16a | 12. Psalm 16:11         |

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## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 28
- > Parent Memo for Lesson 28 (one per student)

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## OTHER VISUALS

- > Bible

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## NOTE:

The author would like to acknowledge that the content of this lesson was greatly influenced by the following two sermons (found at [sovereigngraceministries.com](http://sovereigngraceministries.com)) :

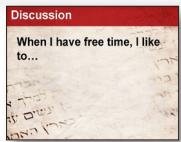
“A Biblical Understanding of Sleep” by C.J. Mahaney

“A Biblical Understanding of Leisure” by Jeff Purswell



(DISPLAY **LESSON 28.**)

## Small Group Activity (5 minutes)



(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

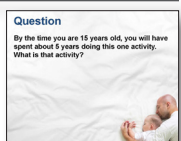
Have the students look at the “When I have free time, I like to...” portion of the **journal**. Have them write three things they enjoy doing in their free time. When they are finished, have them quickly share their answers.

involve physical activity, or inactivity? Did most involve other people, or not? Did most require significant expense, or were most activities relatively cheap? What was the most unusual response?

Briefly note if there seemed to be any common trends in the answers. For example, did most

Finally, ask the students if they would prefer to have more free time or less.

## Large Group Lesson



(DISPLAY **QUESTION.**)

By the time you are 15 years old, you will have spent about five years doing this one activity. What is it?

🔊 Answer: Sleeping

*Sleep consumes one third of our time. That is a lot of time. For example, by the time you reach age 60, you will have spent 20 years sleeping.*

*Why do we sleep so much of our lives away? (Allow the students to respond.)*

*Could God have created us so that we did not need sleep? Yes. So what is the purpose in creating us to need sleep?*



(DISPLAY **SCRIPTURE.**)

Have the students turn to **Isaiah 40:28-30**, and to the related questions in the journal for this passage and those that follow.

*Isaiah 40:28-30—Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. <sup>29</sup>He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. <sup>30</sup>Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted.*

*These verses contrast the Creator and the creature—namely, God and man. What key quality does God possess that man does not? [God never tires or grows weary; man does.]*

🔊 Read Psalm 121:4.

🔊 *Psalm 121:4—Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.*

*God never grows tired or weary, nor does He slumber or sleep. But we experience both of those things. What is this intended to remind us of? [We are not God. We are dependent creatures. We are weak and needy. Our strength comes from God, etc.]*

One of the reasons God created us to need sleep on a regular basis is to remind us of our position in relation to our Creator. We are weak and dependent creatures. All people need sleep. The most ardent atheist needs sleep, and so does a mature Christian believer. A strong, athletic person needs sleep, and a weak, older person needs sleep. Sleep is a testimony to every person that we are weak and dependent on God. Jesus willingly reflected the weakness of humanity by coming as a man who needed sleep.

🔊 There is another reason God made us to need sleep. Have the students turn to **Psalm 3:5**, and to the related questions in the journal.

*Psalm 3:5—I lay down and slept; I woke again, for the Lord sustained me.*

*What is meant by these words of David? Look at the context of this verse. What was happening in David's life? [Point the students to the Psalm's introduction: David was fleeing his son, Absalom. His enemies were pursuing him.]*

*What did David understand about God as he slept? [e.g., God was watching over him, keeping him alive and safe]*

*Think about what happens when you are sleeping. Oxygen keeps coursing through your lungs, even though you are not consciously trying to breathe. Your heart continues to beat. Outside your window, the moon draws the tides of the oceans in and out. The earth keeps spinning on its axis so that the sun rises the next morning. On the other side of the world, it is daytime and a million different prayers are being prayed and answered. People are born and die, and daily life continues for millions on the other side of the globe. Not one of these things is hindered because you are unconscious! God sustains and maintains you and the entire universe as you sleep.*

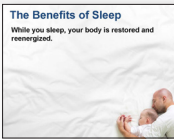
Another reason God created us to need sleep is so we would be reminded of His sustaining sovereign rule. While we sleep, He remains in control of our every breath and heartbeat. He remains in control of our surroundings. Sleep is intended to daily teach us to trust in God's sustaining power. When we lay down at night on our beds, we are to be reminded of our Creator's sustaining care. While we sleep, God is constantly alert and active in watching over our lives.



(DISPLAY **SLEEP.**)

Sleep demonstrates our dependence on God, and should encourage us to humbly submit ourselves to His good and sustaining rule.

When viewed this way, sleep is really a wonderful gift from God. Sleep is meant to benefit us spiritually by pointing us again and again to our dependence on God. But God intends that sleep also have some other practical benefits, both to our minds and bodies.



(DISPLAY **BENEFITS.**)

While you sleep your body is restored and reenergized.

- ✧ Sleep improves your ability to fight illness.
- ✧ Sleep improves your ability to concentrate and learn.
- ✧ Sleep improves your ability to control your emotions.
- ✧ Teens need about eight to nine hours of sleep each night.

Sleep is a display of God's grace on a broken and sinful world. While we sleep, our bodies experience a partial restoration from the harmful effects of the curse. The benefits of sleep are a gift from God in this way. Our tired bodies feel refreshed after a good night's sleep.

Sleep is a wonderful gift from God, not only designed for our spiritual benefit, but also as God's means of restoring our bodies. When Jesus came to earth and became fully human, He needed sleep to restore and reenergize His body. Therefore, we should humbly submit to this need and accept sleep as a gift from God, trying to get the necessary sleep that God intended for us.



(DISPLAY **PATTERN 1.**)

Nightly sleep is not the only good provision of God for our rest.

Have the students turn to **Exodus 20:9-11**, and to the related questions in the journal.

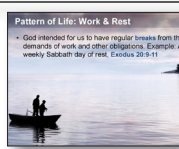
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*Exodus 20:9-11—Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, <sup>10</sup>but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. <sup>11</sup>For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*

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- 🔓 *Is the rest being referred to in these verses nightly sleep? No. It is a different kind of rest. It is a rest characterized by what? [not working]*
- 🔓 *What is the main reason given for this day of rest? What is it patterned after? [when God “rested” on the seventh day of creation]*

As we learned in the previous lesson about work, God does intend for us to work. But as seen by God's command to Israel in the Ten Commandments, God intended His people to also have a regular and consistent break from work. Unlike God, people become physically and mentally depleted from the demands of work—whether it be a job, school work, housework, etc. So God graciously commanded His people to take a Sabbath rest every week, and set it apart for the Lord. In the New Testament church, Christians celebrated Sunday as a special day of worship and rest, because of Jesus' resurrection. This day of rest was meant for God's people to enjoy what He had already provided for them and to deepen their thankfulness to God and fellowship with one another.



(DISPLAY **PATTERN 2**, and direct students to the related portion of the journal.)

- God intended for us to have regular breaks from the demands of work and other obligations.

Old Testament example: a weekly Sabbath day of rest (See **Exodus 20:9-11**.)

- 🔓 • God intended for us to enjoy what He has already provided for us, and to thank and praise Him for it.

**1 Timothy 6:17b—**

- 🔓 *[God] richly provides us with everything to enjoy.*

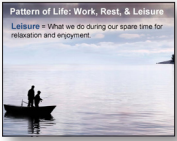
**Psalm 103:2—**

- 🔓 *Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.*

Until recent times, much of society in the United States reflected this regular pattern of work and rest—six days of work, and then a Sabbath day of rest. As an example, many stores and other businesses were not open on Sundays in order to give their workers a day of rest. Many families spent this day at church, and then together as a family relaxing and enjoying fellowship with one another, or doing some special activity together.

*Do you sometimes feel as if you are always “on the go”? That is not God's intention for us. There is some biblical truth to the old saying, “Stop and smell the roses.” Relaxation is a gift from God given to us for our benefit.*

With the coming of the industrial revolution to the United States, people were able to work less and have more than one day set aside for rest. In other words, apart from a Sabbath day of rest, we generally have more time available for “free time” or leisure. At the same time, however, the industrial revolution brought inventions, such as electricity, that have allowed people to extend the hours they are able to be busy at work or doing other activities, discouraging times of rest.

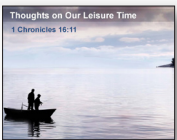


(DISPLAY **PATTERN 3.**)

## **Leisure = what we do during our spare time for relaxation and enjoyment**

- ✍ • God intended for us to have regular breaks from the demands of work and other obligations.
- ✍ • God intended for us to enjoy what He has already provided for us, and to thank and praise Him for it.

*Do you think God cares how you view this “free” or leisure time? Do you think God cares what you do during this time?*



(DISPLAY **LEISURE TIME 1**, and direct the students to the related portion of the journal.)

### **1 Chronicles 16:11—**

✍ *Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually!*

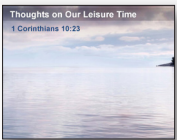
✍ Our leisure time is meant to bring us closer to God, not as a means of having a “break” from God.



(DISPLAY **EPHESIANS 5:15-16A.**)

✍ *Ephesians 5:15-16a—Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time.*

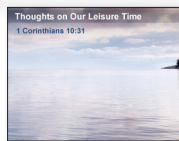
✍ Our leisure time should be carefully considered and wisely used. Leisure is not an excuse for avoiding responsibilities or wasting time.



(DISPLAY **1 CORINTHIANS 10:23.**)

✍ *1 Corinthians 10:23—“All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up.*

- ✎ Our leisure time should serve to build us up and enrich our lives. Leisure should not include activities that are worthless or harmful to our bodies and souls.

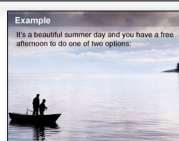


(DISPLAY **1 CORINTHIANS 10:31.**)

- ✎ *1 Corinthians 10:31—So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

- ✎ Our leisure time should serve to honor and bring praise to God. Leisure is not meant to satisfy our sinful desires.

*Based on these verses, would you conclude that God cares how you view leisure time and what you do during your leisure time? Yes. Your leisure time ultimately belongs to God, and the time should be used wisely. The time should include enjoyment of the good things God has richly provided for you. God wants you to be built up and enriched in your leisure activities. And whatever you do during this time, it should be done for the glory of God.*



(DISPLAY **EXAMPLE.**)

It's a beautiful summer day and you have a free afternoon to do one of two options:

- ✎ 1. Go fishing with your grandpa
- ✎ 2. Play video games by yourself

*In reviewing the "Thoughts on our Leisure Time" portion of the journal, how might you evaluate these two options?*

*What option might provide a more enriching and enjoyable experience? Why?* (Allow the students to respond. Make it clear that one option is not necessarily good and the other bad, but one might be a better option. Some benefits of the first option might include: enjoying the beauty and wonder of God's creation; spending quality time enjoying the company of your grandpa; being away from the distractions of home and school; having time to quietly reflect on the goodness of God in your life and give Him thanks, etc. Some benefits of the second option might include: mental stimulation, development of eye-hand coordination, etc.)



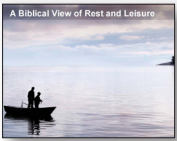
(QUICKLY DISPLAY **THINGS TO DO.**)

*Go for a hike. Take a bike ride. Play a game with friends or family. Read a book. Watch a movie. Bake a cake. Go to the zoo. Do a puzzle. Pursue a hobby. Go fishing. Sit and watch the birds. Gaze at the stars. Play with your dog. Go swimming. Plant a garden.*



*Take a nap. Watch a video. Paint a picture. Listen to music. Talk with a neighbor. Call your grandparents. Write a story. Shoot some hoops. Play the piano. Write a letter. Climb a tree. Go camping. Visit a museum. Watch a sunset.*

These are just a few of the many things God has given to us for our relaxation and enjoyment. Many people do these very things apart from acknowledging God or thanking Him. Rest and leisure are evidence of God's "common grace," meaning the good gifts He gives to all people, not just Christians. However, Christians are to enjoy and experience these gifts in a way that more fully benefits both our bodies and our souls.



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 1.**)

- ☞ God has given us the gifts of sleep, rest, and leisure for the benefit of our bodies and souls (Exodus 20:9-11).
- ☞ Sleep demonstrates our dependence on God, and should encourage us to humbly submit ourselves to His good and sustaining rule (Psalm 3:5; Isaiah 40:28-30).



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 2.**)

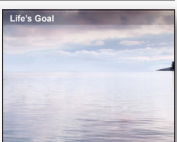
Rest and leisure are a means through which we are to enjoy the many benefits God has provided so we might deepen our thankfulness to God (1 Timothy 6:17b; Psalm 103:2).



(DISPLAY **LIES.**)

*Is this the way most people view sleep, rest, and leisure? As with any good gift from God, Satan would like us to believe otherwise.*

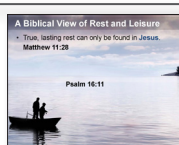
- ☞ Doing well in school and having fun with friends are more important than getting enough sleep each night.
- ☞ I deserve to just sleep in all summer and be lazy.
- ☞ My spare time belongs to me to do with as I please.
- ☞ The more leisure time I have, the happier I'll be.
- ☞ Rest and leisure are a waste of time—I need to always be working.
- ☞ If I take a day of rest, I'll miss out on the ability to earn enough money or get important projects done.



(DISPLAY **LIFE'S GOAL.**)

Especially in prosperous societies, rest and leisure become a lifelong goal for many people. Some people demonstrate this through laziness and seeking ways to avoid work so they have more spare time to pursue leisure activities. Sometimes our culture even encourages this mind set, especially for younger people:

- ☞ "These are your 'carefree' years to have fun and do as you please." Others demonstrate this by working long and hard with the goal of maximizing their leisure time at some future date, believing that...
- ☞ ...leisure is the ultimate reward for hard work. In either case, they do not rightly understand God's intention and purpose in these gifts. Ultimately, free time and leisure activities do not negate God's command for us to work, nor will they provide us with lasting satisfaction and enjoyment. This important reality points to another truth about rest and leisure.



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 3**, and direct the students to this statement in the journal.)

True, lasting rest and enjoyment can only be found in Jesus.

### **Matthew 11:28—**

- ☞ *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

### **Psalm 16:11—**

- ☞ *You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*



(DISPLAY **THINK.**)

*Think back for a moment to your responses to the “When I have free time I like to...” part of your journal. Have you ever thought of your leisure time as a gift from God, meant for your enjoyment to benefit your body and your soul—meaning your relationship with Jesus?*

*And think about your sleep this week.*

- ☞ *As you “hit the pillow” each night, try to picture yourself resting in the arms of Jesus, being watched over during the night by His almighty sovereign power. As you drift off to sleep, thank Him for this rest and trust Him to be in control of your life, your family, and the world as you sleep.*

*And finally, think about your schedule this week.*

- ✎ *Does it include a scheduled time of rest—a time set apart to restore your mind, body, and soul, a time that has no appointments, school work, sports practice, choir rehearsals, chores, or other obligations? Talk with your parents about how you can honor God in His provision for taking time each week for intentional rest that includes time to “bless Him and remember all of His benefits.”*

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the Small Group Application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** God has given us the gifts of sleep, rest, and leisure for the benefit of our bodies and souls.

**Think About It:** *Have you ever thought of your sleep, free time, and leisure activities as gifts from God? How should seeing these as gifts transform the way we approach them? For example, if you see your free time as something wonderful that God has graciously given to you, should you take more care and thought about how you think of that time and what you choose to do with it? Can you give an example? [For guys: Your grandpa gives you a pellet gun as a gift. Would his intention be that you go target shooting or hunting, or use it to rob a store? What options would be honoring to him, and which would not?]*

**Examine Your Heart:** *Have the students think back over the past week. Have them ask this question in their hearts: Have I viewed sleep, rest, and leisure activities as gifts from God? Does my attitude toward each reflect this? If yes, how might a person demonstrate this in his sleeping habits, the amount of time spent in leisure activities, and the kinds of activities pursued and enjoyed? Can you share an example of how a period of intentional rest has brought you closer to Jesus? In what ways?*

**Live It:** Encourage the students to do the following this week: Each night before they go to bed, spend a short time in prayer specifically thanking God for the gift of sleep and His sustaining care of themselves and their families while they sleep. They might even read and commit **Psalm 121** to memory during this time. When they get up in the morning, encourage them to offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God. Also encourage the students to do one of the other options listed in the “At Home” portion of the journal.

- **Truth Statement:** Sleep demonstrates our dependence on God and should encourage us to humbly submit ourselves to His good and sustaining rule.

**Think About It:** *Have the students consider how much of their lives have already been spent sleeping. Not only did God design us to need sleep, but also a lot of it! One third of our day is spent being totally oblivious to what is going on around us, and basically completely helpless. How should this point out the degree in which all people are weak, helpless, and dependent on God? Ask the students if they have ever heard someone*

say: “There are not enough hours in a day” or “I’ve got too much to do to sleep.”? What kind of attitude toward sleep does this reflect? What kind of attitude toward God and His wise provision does this show?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Think about your sleeping habits. Would you say that sleep is something you enjoy and welcome at the end of a busy day? Why or why not? Is it hard for you to go to sleep sometimes? What are the reasons? Are there things you could change if surroundings are a problem? [e.g., improving the darkness and quiet of your room; not consuming caffeine in the evening; getting more exercise during the day; etc.] Are there things you could do if troubles are the problem? [e.g., resolve a conflict with parents; pray and confess to God a lingering sin (**1 John 1:9**); pray about some issue that make you anxious (**1 Peter 5:6-7**)]*

*Have you ever asked your parents about your sleeping habits—whether you are getting enough or too much sleep? Do they see any negative effects of the lack of sleep or excessive sleep in your life? Do you notice these yourself? What are they? For example, do you find you are more irritable if you don’t get enough sleep? Or, do you find yourself wanting to sleep in until noon on the weekends, feeling that you have the right to be lazy? How can you humbly submit yourself to God’s design that, at your age and when healthy, you need about eight to nine hours of sleep every night? Are there things you will need to change in your life to do this?*

**Live It:** Encourage the students to talk to their parents about their sleeping habits, and then work together on a plan for the coming week to humbly receive God’s gift of sleep (found as an option in the “At Home” section of the journal).

- **Truth Statement:** Rest and leisure are a means through which we are to enjoy the many benefits God has provided so we might deepen our thankfulness to Him.

**Think About It:** *Think about your schedule from the past week. What kinds of things did it include? In general, does it seem as if every moment of your day is scheduled with something you have to do, and going somewhere you have to go? Is time intentionally set aside for rest and leisure? Does the rest include a Sabbath type of rest that seeks to set apart time to stop working—as in schoolwork, chores, sports and music obligations, etc.—for God, as shown in **Exodus 20:9-11**? (This is not meant to open up the debate about how the Old Covenant Sabbath applies to New Covenant believers.) How do you usually choose which types of leisure activities to do? Is it based on personal preference only? Do you consider family friendliness, or cost, or whether this activity enriches your life?*

**Examine Your Heart:** *Briefly, share with the students an experience of rest or a leisure activity that deepened your relationship with God. For example, maybe you went on a vacation to the Grand Canyon and were blown away with its beauty in such a way that it caused you to more fully be in awe of God. Or, maybe share how you and your family have felt the benefits of setting aside a time of weekly, intentional rest, which has re-*

*sulted in a growing love and trust of Jesus, and a deepening of other enriching relationships. Have you experienced similar blessings? Or, do you view rest as meaning “an excuse to be lazy and do nothing”? Do you see it as a means for restoring and energizing both your body and soul? What evidences would you look for in determining whether or not your life is demonstrating a right understanding of these gifts? [e.g., asking questions like, “Do I seem to have a constant craving to be always on the move? Do I have the right balance of work, rest, and leisure in my life?” Before thinking about doing a leisure activity or taking a rest, do I ask my parents if there are any responsibilities I have failed to complete? Do I ask myself whether I would invite Jesus along when doing this leisure activity?]*

**Live It:** Encourage the students to talk with their parents about their schedule for the coming week. *Does it reflect a proper balance of work, sleep, and rest? You may want to encourage them by sharing an example from your own life of how you needed to make changes in order to rightly balance these activities. Maybe you are prone to be a workaholic and needed to make changes in order to submit to God's good design for rest? Or maybe you tend to crave leisure and have had to make changes to limit the amount of time devoted to a specific activity?*

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week.**

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 28.

# Money and Possessions

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > Money and possessions are from God, belong to God, and are under His ultimate authority.
- > Money and possessions are temporary, and will not bring lasting comfort, security, or happiness.
- > Money and possessions can become a dangerous snare.
- > Money and possessions are gifts from God meant to be used for kingdom purposes, blessing us and others.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                  |                       |                   |
|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Luke 12:15-21 | 4. 1 Chronicles 29:12 | 7. 1 Timothy 6:10 |
| 2. Haggai 2:8    | 5. Matthew 6:19       | 8. Luke 12:29-33  |
| 3. Job 41:11b    | 6. Ecclesiastes 5:10  | 9. Luke 12:34     |

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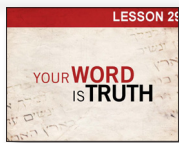
## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 29   | > “Training Your Children to Manage Money” article (one per student) |
| > Parent Memo for Lesson 29 (one per student)  |  |
| > “The Steward and the Master: Transferring the Title Deed to God” article (one per student) |  |

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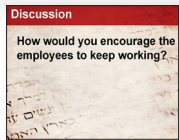
## OTHER VISUALS:

- |                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| > Bible                     | > Mouse trap (for optional illustration)—tape a \$1 bill or a quarter where the food would be placed in the trap) |
| > \$1 bill                  |   |
| > iPod™ (or similar device) |   |



(DISPLAY **LESSON 29.**)

## Small Group Activity (4-5 minutes)



(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

Read the following true story to the students:

*Many years ago a major American company had trouble keeping employees working in their assembly plant in Panama. The laborers lived in a generally agrarian, barter economy, but the company paid them in cash. Since the average employee had more cash after a week's work than he had ever seen, he would periodically quit working, satisfied with what he had made. What was the solution?*

How would you have encouraged the employees to keep working? (After giving the students an

opportunity to respond, finish reading the story.)

*Company executives gave all their employees a Sears catalogue. No one quit then, because they all wanted the previously undreamed-of things they saw in that book.<sup>1</sup>*

Are you surprised at the solution the company came up with? Why or why not? Do you see any parallels in our own culture? For example, what is the purpose of advertising and commercials? Do these ever influence you?

1. Green, Michael, editor. *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1989), 179.

## Large Group Lesson



(DISPLAY **STORY.**)

Have the students turn to **Luke 12:15-21** and the corresponding part of the journal, and choose a student to read the text.

*Luke 12:15-21—And [Jesus] said to them, “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”*

<sup>16</sup>*And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully,*

<sup>17</sup>*and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’*

<sup>18</sup>*And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. <sup>19</sup>And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have*

*ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’ <sup>20</sup>But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared,*

*whose will they be?’ <sup>21</sup>So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”*

*In what basic way is this story that Jesus told similar to the story you read in your small groups? [e.g., both involve the desire for things, possessions]*



Explain to the students that you are going to walk them through a careful examination of Jesus' words by asking some specific questions from the text.

*Verse 15 provides the main subject that Jesus is addressing in the form of a warning. What is the warning? [against covetousness] What is covetousness? [an unhealthy or misplaced craving for riches and possessions] According to the end of the verse, what is the basis for Jesus' warning?*

Point out that the parable in verses 16-20 is told to explain what Jesus' meant by verse 15.

*Look very carefully at verses 17-19. Do you find any repeated words? For example, how many times do you see the word "I" used? [six] How many times do you see the word "my" used? [four] (Direct the students to this part of the journal.)*

**LUKE 12:17-19**  
And he thought to himself, "What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?" Then he said, "I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. Then I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry!'"

(DISPLAY **VERSES 17-19.**)

*What do you think the repeated references to "I" and "my" convey? [e.g., selfishness and a sense of self-sufficiency on the rich man's part]*

*How would you describe the rich man's general sense of well-being in these three verses? Why did he feel secure and happy?*

*Look at verse 20. What two words begin the verse? ["But God"] What is important about these two words, especially after all of the references to "I" and "my"? [The man had only seen himself as being the source and determiner of his wealth and well-being. He did not understand that God ultimately was in charge of his life and his possessions.]*

*In the end, did the abundance of his possessions do the man any good? What does it mean when Jesus says the man was not "rich toward God"? [e.g., He was totally absorbed in himself and did not acknowledge God or give thanks to Him.] What does it mean to be "rich toward God"? [e.g., rich in good works, as in 1 Timothy 6:18; laying up treasure in heaven, as in Matthew 6:20; spiritual fruit bearing; etc.]*

*How does the parable serve to explain the meaning of Jesus' initial warning in verse 15? (Allow the students to respond.)*

**Luke 12:15-21 Summary**

(DISPLAY **SUMMARY.**)

- ☞ Warning: "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."
- ☞ Explanation: The parable of a rich fool → His riches did not last or bring ultimate security or happiness.
- ☞ Lesson: Do not covet riches or possessions, rather, be rich toward God.

These words of Jesus illustrate a common worldview regarding money and possessions. It is a worldview that was also illustrated in the beginning true story that was read in the small group time. It is a worldview that says the more money and possessions you have, the more comfortable and secure and happier you'll be. This view of money and possessions is sometimes called materialism and, as seen in both stories, it can be embraced by both rich and poor people.



(DISPLAY **WORLDVIEW.**)

### **Materialism =**

- ☞ The more money and possessions you have, the more secure, comfortable, and happy you will be.

This kind of thinking about money and possessions is what is meant by covetousness. A covetous heart sees the value and quality of life measured by the abundance of money and possessions. Therefore, it craves to have and own more and better things. And this worldview is the reason companies spend billions of dollars every year in advertising, and in developing slogans and images so you will buy their products.



(BRIEFLY DISPLAY **SLOGANS.**)

- ☞ It's the real thing. (Coke™)
- ☞ I'd walk a mile for a Camel. (Camel™ cigarettes)
- ☞ Diamonds are forever. (DeBeers™ jewelers)
- ☞ The ultimate driving machine (BMW™ cars)
- ☞ Double your pleasure, double your fun (Doublemint™ chewing gum)
- ☞ Breakfast of champions (Wheaties™ cereal)
- ☞ We bring good things to life. (GE™)
- ☞ You deserve a break today. (McDonald's™)

Many popular advertising slogans are designed to appeal to the covetous heart by promising a superior level of security, comfort, or happiness. For example:

- Diamonds are forever... therefore, they are a secure investment that will last forever.
- The ultimate driving machine... owning this car will bring you greater satisfaction and happiness.
- Breakfast of champions...successful people eat this cereal.



(DISPLAY **MATERIALISM**.)

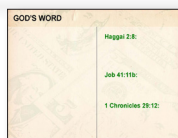
A lie of Satan = The more money and possessions you have, the more secure, comfortable, and happy you will be.

This view of money and possessions is a lie, just as the man in this parable found out in the end. And Jesus told this parable as a warning to us, so that we might have a biblical understanding of money and possessions.

Hold up the **\$1 bill** and ask:

*Who does this belong to? Is it mine?*

\$1 BILL



(DISPLAY **GOD'S WORD**.)

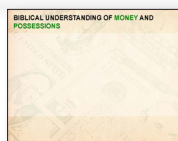
*Haggai 2:8—The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the LORD of hosts.*

*Job 41:11b—Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine.*

*1 Chronicles 29:12—Both riches and honor come from you [God], and you rule over all.*

*How do these verses contrast with the words of the rich man in **Luke 12**?*

*<sup>17</sup>...‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?..<sup>18</sup>...I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.’*



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 1**, and direct the students to also complete this statement in the journal.)

*1. Money + Possessions → Are From God, Belong To God, And Are Under God's Authority.*

*The next time you walk through your house, point to the various objects in a room and state: “The television is God's.” “The sofa is God's.” “The stove is God's.” “The refrigerator is God's.” “All the food is God's,” etc. How might this help you to see these possessions in a new way?*

Hold up an **iPod™** (or similar item)

iPOD™

*Do money and possessions last forever? Why not? What could happen to this (iPod™)? What happens when this iPod™ breaks down and stops working? Money, possessions, and wealth are only temporary... they will not last. Contrary to the slogan, diamonds are not forever.*



(DISPLAY **MATTHEW 6:19.**)

**Matthew 6:19—**

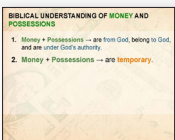
🔊 *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal,"*



(DISPLAY **JOHN WESLEY.**)

Upon hearing that his house had burned down, John Wesley said:

*No. The Lord's house burned to the ground. That means one less responsibility for me.<sup>2</sup>*



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 2**, and direct the students to also complete this statement in the journal.)

Money + Possessions → Are Temporary.

If something is only temporary can it give you lasting satisfaction and happiness?

Have the students turn to **Ecclesiastes 5:10.**

**Ecclesiastes 5:10—***He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income.*

Will having the “ultimate driving machine” bring you lasting satisfaction? No. Because when a newer and better car comes out, your car will no longer satisfy you...you'll want something better.

If you love your iPod™ now, how satisfied will you be with it when your friend gets a newer and better version?

(Direct the students to also complete the following statement in the journal.)

🔊 Money + Possessions → Cannot Satisfy.

2. As quoted in Randy Alcorn's book *The Treasure Principle: Unlocking the Secret of Joyful Giving* (Colorado Springs: Colo: Multnomah Books, 2005).

**Illustration (optional):**

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**MOUSE TRAP**

Display a **mouse trap** and ask:

This mouse trap also illustrates an important truth about money. What do you think it is?

Have the students turn to **1 Timothy 6:10**.

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*1 Timothy 6:10—For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.*

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*What do you think this verse means? Are money and possessions the root of all kinds of evil? No, it is the love and craving of money and possessions. They can act as an enticement so strong to the covetous heart that you will do anything to get more and more, endangering your very soul. For example, consider a person who neglects time with family, friends, and church in order to work all the time to acquire possessions he doesn't really need, or consider someone who pursues things more than he pursues God.*

🔑 (Direct the students to also complete the following statement in the journal.)

MONEY + POSSESSIONS → CAN BECOME A DANGEROUS SNARE

For the rich man in Jesus' parable, money and possessions became a dangerous snare and trap. And money and possessions have the potential to do this to both rich and poor people because the sinful heart is easily deceived by the lies of Satan.



(DISPLAY **LUKE 12:29-33**.)

Jesus spoke these words after telling the parable of the rich fool. These words demonstrate that although money and possessions may serve as a snare, there is the potential for them to serve as something else.

**Luke 12:29-33—**

🔑 *...And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. <sup>30</sup>For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. <sup>31</sup>Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you. <sup>32</sup>Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. <sup>33</sup>Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys.*

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*Does God know that you need some money and possessions for living? Yes. But what greater thing does God want to give His children? [His kingdom] What does God promise for those who seek after His kingdom? [to provide for all of our other needs] Because*

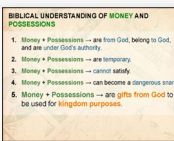
*God has promised to give His children all that they need, what are we encouraged to do in verses 32-33? [to be radically generous with others, storing up heavenly treasure—doing good works and deeds in faith] What might this look like in a person's life?*



(DISPLAY **R.G. (ROBERT) LeTOURNEAU.**)

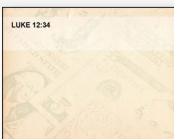
There was a very wealthy man named R.G. (Robert) LeTourneau.

- 🔑 *He was an engineer,...*
- 🔑 *...an inventor, and a businessman who made millions of dollars...*
- 🔑 *...through the sales of earth-moving equipment all around the world. But R.G. (Robert) LeTourneau was not like the man in the parable that Jesus told. He did not see his wealth as a means of security, comfort, or happiness. He saw his wealth and possessions as being from God, belonging to God, and under God's authority. He didn't love his money or possessions—he loved Jesus. And so he saw wealth and possessions as a means of advancing God's kingdom.*
- 🔑 *So he took 90 percent of every dollar he made and gave it away, especially for missions work in other countries so that the poor might be blessed, and the gospel of Jesus might be proclaimed.*



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 3**, and also direct the students to complete this statement in the journal.)

Money + Possessions → Are Gifts From God To Be Used For Kingdom Purposes.



(DISPLAY **LUKE 12:34.**)

**Luke 12:34—**

- 🔑 *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

When a person like R.G. (Robert) LeTourneau uses his money and possessions for kingdom purposes, he also demonstrates something very important. According to verse 34, what is this?



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 4**, and also direct the students to complete this statement in the journal.)

Money + Possessions → Provide an opportunity for Christians to demonstrate where their real treasure is—in knowing, trusting, and loving Jesus.

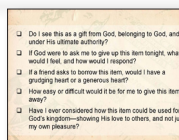
Most people in R.G. (Robert) LeTourneau's position of wealth would not be thinking in terms of using all that money to be radically generous with the goal of advancing God's kingdom. Or, in the example of John Wesley's house burning, respond in the way he did. But for every Christian, whether rich or poor or somewhere in between, how we view our money and possessions gives us an opportunity to daily demonstrate that we treasure Jesus more than things. And this is something to be really excited about, because Jesus will satisfy more than money or more stuff ever could. He is a treasure that will never be stolen, go out of date, break down, become boring, or be outdone.

*A certain brand of pop isn't the real thing, but Jesus is.*

*Diamonds aren't forever, but Jesus is.*

*Doublemint chewing gum may bring a few minutes of simple satisfaction, but Jesus brings lasting satisfaction even if your house burns down.*

*A company might make a great TV that brings your favorite shows to "life," but only Jesus can give you eternal life. And He won't need to be replaced by a new and improved model!*



#### {DISPLAY QUESTIONS.}

Have the students silently think about the following questions:

*Think for a moment about a possession you really enjoy, and examine yourself:*

- *Do I see this as a gift from God, belonging to God, and under His ultimate authority?*
- *If God were to ask me to give up this item tonight, what would I feel, and how would I respond?*
- *If a friend asks to borrow this item, would I have a grudging heart or a generous heart?*
- *How easy or difficult would it be for me to give this item away?*
- *Have I ever considered how this item could be used for God's kingdom—showing His love to others, and not just for my own pleasure?*

Emphasize that our world and culture are filled with lies about money and possessions. Satan has fooled millions of people with the deception that one's life consists in the abundance of his possessions. The sinful covetous heart believes these lies and constantly craves more and better things. That is why Jesus had so much to say about money. Jesus wants us to see the truth about money and possessions so we might be blessed by what He has generously given us, and then use it to bless others.



## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the Small Group Application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** Money and possessions are from God, belong to God, and are under His ultimate authority.

**Think About It:** Have the students imagine the following assignment: They are to write down a list of every possession in their home. How long do they think it would take to do this? Would most of the items be considered absolute necessities? Which could they live without? Which items would they miss most if their house burned down? Why?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you ever catch yourself talking like the rich man in the parable? In what ways do we reflect this attitude sometimes? Can you give an example? Have you ever made a conscious effort to remind yourself that everything you have is from God and belongs to God and is under His rule? Why is it sometimes hard for us to see the money and possessions we have as belonging to God? If we rightly view our possessions and money as being “on loan” from God, how should that change our perception of how we value these things?*

**Live It:** Challenge the students to do the above assignment in one room of their house, listing at least 25 things. At the top of the page, encourage them to write God's words from **Job 41:11b**, and then use the list as a prayer guide to acknowledge God's ownership and rule of these things.

- **Truth Statement:** Money and possessions are temporary and will not bring lasting comfort, security, or happiness.

**Think About It:** Review **Luke 12:29-34**. Why is it so easy for us to think that money and possessions will bring us happiness? How are earthly treasures a seductive counterfeit for heavenly treasures? How might advertising, catalogues, media, and shopping centers help fuel covetous desires? Can you give an example in which you really wanted something and then got it, but in the end were disappointed with it? How does this demonstrate the truth of the above verses? What might be the heavenly treasures promised in verse 33?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you believe God knows what you need? Do you trust Him to provide for those needs at the right time? Do you believe God is generous with His children, or do you see Him as being stingy? Think about the fact that God gave His most treasured possession in the whole universe so you could be His child—He gave His only Son. Where do you find your treasure, in things or in Jesus?*

**Live It:** Challenge the students to “live without” a favorite possession this week. How easy or difficult do they imagine that this would be before doing it? Ask them to report to you how it went during the next class period. Why was the assignment easy or difficult? If it was difficult, what does this show us about the subtle way in which Satan tries to

deceive us into finding our satisfaction in possessions? What steps can we take to rightly see and understand money and possessions?

- **Truth Statement:** Money and possessions are gifts from God meant to be used for kingdom purposes, blessing us and others.

**Think About It:** Read and discuss **2 Corinthians 9:6-11**. Why does Paul compare giving (as in money) to sowing seed? Who is supplying the seed? Does God expect that some of that seed (money) should be used for your own needs? But what else does God want us to do? What does God promise to those who give generously?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you think of money and possessions mainly in terms of “What can I buy for myself? How can I benefit from this?” Or, do you think in terms such as: “What might God want me to do with this \$20 Grandpa gave me? Is there a way I could use some or all of it to bless others? Is there a need God would want me to meet with it?”*

**Live It:** Challenge the students to talk and pray with their parents about doing one of the following:

Option 1—Decide on an amount of money over and above your regular giving to church to give away as a means of blessing someone, or meeting a ministry need within or outside of the church.

Option 2—Choose a possession you have and give it away as a blessing to someone.

Whatever option the students choose, encourage them to do it with their parents' guidance and after time in prayer so that it is done according to **2 Corinthians 9:7**.

- **Truth Statement:** Money and possessions can become a dangerous snare.

**Think About It:** Read **1 Timothy 6:17-19**. Is it wrong for someone to make a lot of money? But what does Paul warn them against and call on them to do? Now read **1 Timothy 6:6-9**. How are these verses a warning to poor and rich, and everyone else? Have you seen evidences of riches being a snare to people? Can you give an example?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Would you say that you are mainly content with what you have? If you are not content, what do you think is at the root of your discontentment? Do you compare what you have with what others have? Do you feel as if you deserve more or better things? Why are verses 6-8 difficult to apply to our own hearts? Are you wrongly equating things with satisfaction? If so, how can you grow in godly contentment instead? What will make Jesus look more appealing, fixing your eyes on His Word and promises, or fixing your eyes on more and better stuff?*

**Live It:** When tempted to covet what another has, the students will instead thank God for all he has given them. If they are tempted to look online or at the mall at things they

want, they will turn to God's Word and promises instead. Hopefully, they will find how freeing it is to simply be content and not worry about things!

***Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week.***

## **Send Home**

Parent Memo for Lesson 29.

"The Steward and the Master: Transferring the Title Deed to God" article

"Training Your Children to Manage Money" article

# Economics

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > Economics concerns the production and transfer of goods and services from one party to another for their mutual benefit.
  - > The Bible recognizes and honors economic concepts, such as the ownership of private property, the voluntary and honest transfer of goods and services for profit, hard work and productivity, and just relations between employers and employees.
  - > The Bible recognizes the existence of inequalities in both the abilities people possess and the benefits they receive in the process of economic activities.
  - > Economic concepts exist by God's design and should be pursued in a manner that acknowledges and honors God.
- 

## SCRIPTURE:

- |                      |                   |                             |
|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Exodus 20:15, 17  | 6. Proverbs 22:29 | 11. Colossians 3:22-23      |
| 2. Leviticus 25:14   | 7. Colossians 4:1 | 12. Matthew 25:14-18        |
| 3. Acts 5:4          | 8. 1 Timothy 5:18 | 13.1 John 3:17              |
| 4. Proverbs 14:23a   | 9. James 5:4      | 14.2 Thessalonians 3:10b-12 |
| 5. Proverbs 31:18-19 | 10. Luke 3:14b    |                             |
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## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

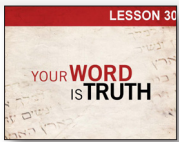
- > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 30
  - > Parent Memo for Lesson 30 (one per student)
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## OTHER VISUALS:

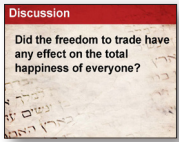
- > Bible
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## NOTE:

Each small group leader should provide his group with enough items for the opening trade activity. The items do not need to be expensive, and may include the following kinds of things: pen, marker, school folder, small note pad, pieces of fruit, vegetables, candy, etc. Make sure to include a variety of items to encourage the desire to trade. Be sure to also have a desirable treat to use for the final trade.

(DISPLAY **LESSON 30.**)

## Small Group Discussion (5 minutes)

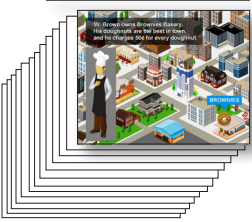
(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

Give everyone in your small group an item and explain they are each now the "owner" of the item. Ask each student if he is happy with his item. Quickly have them rate their personal happiness with the item on a scale of 1 to 10. Total the numbers to measure the "level of group happiness." Next explain to the students that they are free to trade with one another if they would like. Allow them about a minute to do this. When

the trading is done, ask them to rate their happiness again. Total this number.

*In the end, how many of you are happier with your final item than with your first? How many of you are less happy than with your first? Did the freedom to trade have any effect on the total happiness of everyone? If yes, how so? Did everyone's perceived happiness go up?*

## Large Group Lesson

(DISPLAY **STORY 1-12 SLIDES**, quickly reading each.)

1. Mr. Brown owns Brownies Bakery. His doughnuts are the best in town, and he charges 50 cents for every doughnut.
2. Across town from Brownies Bakery is Betty's Bakery. Betty also charges 50 cents for a doughnut. But her doughnuts aren't as good as Mr. Brown's.
3. Down the street, Bobby has been mowing Mr. Smith's grass. He earns \$10 every time he mows. Before going to the bank to deposit some of the money into his savings account, he stops by Brownies Bakery and buys a doughnut, and then goes to the bank to deposit \$7.
4. Brownies Bakery is having a hard time keeping up with the demand for its doughnuts, so Mr. Brown has an idea—he'll expand his business. But he doesn't have enough money to build a bigger bakery.
5. Mr. Brown goes to the bank for a loan so he can build a bigger bakery in order to make more doughnuts.
6. The bank has money on hand to loan to Mr. Brown. The bank explains its terms for loaning Mr. Brown the money. He will have to pay back the money, little by little, and the bank will also receive extra money as "interest" for loaning the money to Mr. Brown.

7. Mr. Brown agrees to the bank's terms, and the bank gives him the loan. Mr. Brown hires a construction company to build a bigger bakery. Twenty workmen begin building the bakery.
8. In the meantime, fewer and fewer people are buying doughnuts from Betty's Bakery, because she is not able to make doughnuts as good or as cheaply as Mr. Brown. Soon Betty's Bakery goes out of business.
9. The new and bigger Brownies Bakery opens, making even more great doughnuts. Business is so good that Mr. Brown needs to hire more workers to keep up with demand.
10. With the profits Mr. Brown makes from the bakery, he hires three more workers and also begins to pay off the loan from the bank.
11. Since Betty no longer has employment, she willingly takes a job from Mr. Brown, who makes her a manager of production because of her experience.
12. Because he is so busy running the bakery, Mr. Brown no longer has time to mow his own lawn. He hires Bobby to do this.

*Is this story similar in any way to your small group activity? In what way? [e.g., People were involved in trading one thing for another—a doughnut for money, mowing for money, construction work for money, a loan now for money plus interest later, etc.] As with the small group activity, people were involved in numerous voluntary trades with one another, with each party in the trade receiving some kind of desired benefit.*

*In the end, who benefited from the free "trade" of goods or services?*



(DISPLAY **BROWNIE BENEFITS.**)

- **Mr. Brown**
- **Betty**
- **Brownies Bakery customers**
- **Bobby**
- **The bank employees**
- **20 construction workers**
- **Brownie Bakery workers**

The purpose of the small group trading activity and this story is to introduce an important topic that many people do not understand well: economics.



(DISPLAY **ECONOMICS**, and ask the students if any can define what is meant by the term "economics.")

- 🔑 **Economics concerns the production and transfer of goods and services from one party to another for their mutual benefit.**

This definition is one way to understand economics. Both the small group activity and the story of the two bakeries illustrate key ideas in this definition. Economics involves the interaction of people who have goods or services to offer, who then trade those goods or services in order to gain different goods or services that they desire.

These kinds of transactions go on every day, both on a small scale and on a global scale. Although the Bible is not a textbook on “economics,” the Bible has much to say about economic concepts. For example, economics involves the following:



(DISPLAY **ECONOMICS INVOLVES.**)

Economics involves...

- 🔑 Private Ownership of Property
- 🔑 Buying, Selling, and Profit
- 🔑 Work and Productivity
- 🔑 Competition
- 🔑 Employers and Employees
- 🔑 Investment
- 🔑 Lending and Borrowing

*Does the Bible address any of these topics?* Yes, the Bible addresses all of these to one extent or another. Let's look at the first topic, “Private ownership.” *What is meant by this term?* (Allow the students to respond.)

In our fictional story of the two bakeries, private ownership was involved. Both Mr. Brown and Miss Betty “owned” a bakery, meaning that each had a bakery that belonged to him or her and was managed by him or her. Their customers own money with which to buy doughnuts. While it is true that God ultimately owns all things (Haggai 2:8), He has graciously given man stewardship of the earth and the things in it (Genesis 1:28-30). This stewardship is given to individuals by allowing us to have ownership over small portions of God's creation.



(DISPLAY **PRIVATE OWNERSHIP.**)

The Bible recognizes and honors private ownership.

***Exodus 20:15, 17—***

- 🔑 *You shall not steal.*



- 🔑 *You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.*

These two commands included in the Ten Commandments only make sense in terms of private ownership. Therefore, it is clear that God has intended for individuals to have ownership of things. Mr. Brown's bakery belongs to him. No one has the right to steal it from him, nor should we covet and be envious of his ownership. It is his. The Bible's recognition of private ownership leads to another important aspect of economics.



(DISPLAY **BUYING.**)

The Bible condemns defrauding others or dealing with property dishonestly.

The Bible recognizes and honors the voluntary buying and selling of goods, bringing benefit (profit) to both parties.

### ***Leviticus 25:14—***

- 🔑 *And if you make a sale to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor, you shall not wrong one another.*

*This text assumes that people are making voluntary transactions with one another. The command here is that, in doing so, you should be buying and selling in a way that benefits both the buyer and seller. This verse also means that these transactions should be done with honesty and fairness.*

*For example, suppose Mr. Brown advertises that he only sells doughnuts that are made fresh every morning. It would be wrong for him to then sell day-old doughnuts without his customers' knowledge—even if the day-old doughnuts taste the same as the fresh ones.*

### ***Acts 5:4—***

- 🔑 *While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was [the money you made] not at your disposal?*

*Peter spoke these words to a man named Ananias. Ananias had lied about his intention to give the church the profits he had made from the sale of some property. Peter was reiterating the fact that these transactions are to be voluntary. No one “forced” Ananias to make this sale—it was his property to do with as he desired. And when he did sell it, receiving a profit from the sale was not wrong.*

Consider the opening small group activity for a moment. Do you think you would have had a greater or lesser degree of satisfaction if you had not been allowed to freely trade your item? What about if your small group leader had forced you into making a certain trade?

The Bible recognizes and honors the voluntary trade and transactions of buying and selling. It also recognizes the concept of gaining profit in these transactions. Profits are simply benefits that one receives due to a transfer of goods or services.

For example, suppose the following:

- Mr. Brown can make 600 doughnuts a day, but needs money to pay his workers and have enough money left over to support his family.
- It costs 40 cents to make each doughnut. Mr. Brown charges 50 cents in order to make a profit on each doughnut.
- 600 people have 50 cents, but no doughnuts. These people would gladly give Mr. Brown 50 cents in exchange for a doughnut.
- Both he and his customers have entered into a voluntary trade that benefits both parties.



(DISPLAY **WORK.**)

The Bible recognizes and honors hard work and productivity, done with excellence, resulting in a profitable reward.

**Proverbs 14:23a—**

🔊 *In all toil there is profit,...*

**Proverbs 31:18-19—**

🔊 *She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night. She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle.*

**Proverbs 22:29—**

🔊 *Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings;...*

In a previous lesson, we learned the biblical view of work. God created people, both men and women, to be involved in productive labor. The fictional story of the two bakeries described many people involved in productive labor in which they receive various benefits. And men especially have been given the responsibility to provide for the needs

of themselves and their families by working. The fictional Mr. Brown has been given the ability to make excellent doughnuts. He works hard and manages his business well. His work brings benefits to himself, his workers, his customers, and his family.



(DISPLAY **EMPLOYER.**)

Our fictional story also illustrates the reality that some people are “employers” and others are “employees.”

*How would you describe the difference between the two roles?* (Allow the students to respond.)

*Is one role better than the other?* Explain your answer.

### Activity (3-4 minutes)

Have the students look at the “Employer—Employee” section in the journal. Have the students look up each verse and fill in the missing words. After they have been given time to do this, display the following slides.



(DISPLAY **EMPLOYER/MASTER.**)

### **Colossians 4:1—**

🔊 *Masters, treat your slaves [or servants] justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.*

### **1 Timothy 5:18—**

🔊 *For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer deserves his wages.”*

### **James 5:4—**

🔊 *Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.*

In Bible times, employers were referred to as “masters” who either had servants or slaves. In either case, the employer was responsible for paying the servant or slave with wages or other tangible benefits (e.g., food and shelter).

*Does God care how these employers treat their employees? Yes. How would you summarize these commands to employers?* [Employers are commanded to be just and fair and give their employees their deserved wages.]



(DISPLAY **EMPLOYEE/SERVANT.**)

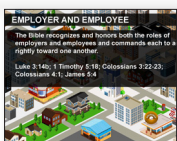
**Luke 3:14b—**

☞ *...be content with your wages.*

**Colossians 3:22-23—**

☞ *Slaves [or servants] obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.*

*How would you summarize these commands to those who work for another? [They are not to complain about their wages, and are to be good employees who do their jobs as instructed and with excellence.]*



(DISPLAY **EMPLOYER & EMPLOYEE.**)

The Bible recognizes and honors both the roles of employers and employees and commands each to act rightly toward one another.

**Luke 3:14b; 1 Timothy 5:18; Colossians 3:22-23; Colossians 4:1; James 5:4**

The Bible recognizes and honors the roles of both employers and employees. They are not equal roles in authority, but they are equal in importance. Without an employer, Brownies Bakery wouldn't exist and Mr. Brown's employees would not have jobs. And without employees, Mr. Brown would not be able to have the successful business that he enjoys. Both employer and employee are dependent on one another, bringing mutual benefits to both.



(DISPLAY **BIBLE 1.**)

*What does the Bible have to say about economics?*

Examples:

- ☞ The Bible recognizes and honors private ownership of property. (See **Exodus 20:15, 17.**)
- ☞ The Bible condemns defrauding others or dealing with property dishonestly. (See **Leviticus 25:14.**)
- ☞ The Bible recognizes and honors the voluntary buying and selling of goods, bringing benefit (profit) to both parties. (See **Leviticus 25:14** and **Acts 5:4.**)

(DISPLAY **BIBLE 2.**)

- 🔊 The Bible commands and honors hard work and productivity, done with excellence, resulting in a profitable reward. (See **Proverbs 14:23b**; **Proverbs 22:29**; and **Proverbs 31:18-19**.)
- 🔊 The Bible recognizes and honors both the roles of employers and employees, and commands each to act rightly toward one another. (See **Luke 3:14b**; **1 Timothy 5:18**; **Colossians 3:22-23**; **Colossians 4:1**; and **James 5:4**.)

There are many more examples of economic concepts that the Bible addresses, including investments, borrowing and lending, etc.

*Do you think that, in general, our culture views economic concepts from a biblical perspective? Can you give one of two examples?*

Just as with everything else in life, Satan does not want people to see and understand the truth about economics. There are many lies he puts forth that people find appealing:

(DISPLAY **LIES 1.**)

- 🔊 Individuals should not have the right to own goods and decide which transactions will be the best.
- 🔊 Sellers are mainly motivated by greed, and buyers are victims of that greed.
- 🔊 Profiting from the sale or transfer of goods and services is wrong.

(DISPLAY **LIES 2.**)

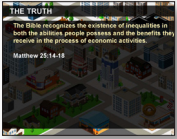
- 🔊 Employers are oppressive, and employees should seek to undermine their authority and profits.
- 🔊 People should be coerced into giving away their property so everyone has an equal share.

*The last lie points to an important point from our fictional story that we have not yet discussed.*

(DISPLAY **STORY 8.**)

8. In the meantime, fewer and fewer people are buying doughnuts from Betty's Bakery, because she is not able to make doughnuts as good or as cheaply as Mr. Brown. Soon Betty's Bakery goes out of business.

Some would look at Betty's situation and say something like, "This isn't fair. Mr. Brown's success is hurting Betty's business. Mr. Brown should be penalized in some way so that Miss Betty can stay in business." Would this attitude reflect what the Bible recognizes and honors concerning economic activity? Does the Bible state that everything is to not only be done fairly but that all outcomes should be equal?



(DISPLAY **TRUTH 1.**)

The Bible recognizes the existence of inequalities in the both the abilities people possess and the benefits they receive in the process of economic activities.

**Matthew 25:14-18—**

- ☞ *"For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money."*

Should we be surprised that not everyone came out with "equal benefits" in the story of the two bakeries? No. Mr. Brown apparently had a greater ability than Miss Betty to make doughnuts, so he received a greater benefit through his work. The Bible wants us to approach these inequalities in a compassionate and God-honoring manner.



(DISPLAY **TRUTH 2.**)

The Bible commands us to show compassion to those in need, and then to help and encourage them to use their abilities for beneficial productivity.

**1 John 3:17—**

- ☞ *"But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?"*

**2 Thessalonians 3:10b-12—**

- ☞ *"...If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living."*

Miss Betty might have some immediate needs right after losing her business, and these needs must be addressed. However, simply giving her money week after week will not

move her toward what the Bible recognizes and honors in terms of work and productivity. Encouraging her to see herself as a victim of Mr. Brown's success would not have helped her to understand how the Bible honors work done with excellence. As the story showed, Miss Betty ended up benefiting from Mr. Brown's success, too, in that it supplied her with a job that was better suited to her abilities.



(DISPLAY **STORY 11.**)

11. Since Betty no longer has employment, she willingly takes a job from Mr. Brown, who makes her a manager of production because of her experience.



(DISPLAY **BIBLE 3.**)

*What does the Bible say about economics?*

Examples:

- ☞ The Bible recognizes and honors private ownership of property.
- ☞ The Bible condemns defrauding others or dealing with property dishonestly.
- ☞ The Bible recognizes and honors the voluntary buying and selling of goods, bringing benefit (profit) to both parties.
- ☞ The Bible recognizes and honors hard work and productivity done with excellence, resulting in a profitable reward.



(DISPLAY **BIBLE 4.**)

The Bible recognizes and honors both the roles of employers and employees, and commands each to act rightly toward one another.

- ☞ The Bible recognizes the existence of inequalities in both the abilities people possess and the benefits they receive in the process of economic activities.
- ☞ The Bible commands us to show compassion to those in need, and then to help and encourage them to use their abilities for beneficial productivity.

Economic concepts are addressed frequently in the Bible, both in Old and New Testaments. The fictional story of the two bakeries shows the amazing way in which economic concepts, when conducted in a manner the Bible recognizes and honors, brings benefits to many people. And this story reflects millions and millions of transactions that occur every day, both on a personal level and on a global level. These beneficial transactions and activities are not an invention of man. Rather, they are by God's design and are a gracious gift to man. Therefore, if we go about these activities in a way that acknowledges and honors God, we are glorifying God in the process.



## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the Small Group Application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** The Bible recognizes and honors economic concepts, such as the ownership of private property, the voluntary and honest transfer of goods and services for profit, hard work and productivity, and just relations between employers and employees.

**Think About It:** *Think for a moment about our opening trading activity. Suppose that the activity was extended to include 100 people who all had varying types of items. How might that have influenced our “level of group happiness”? How does the Bible’s recognition of voluntary transactions serve to increase personal satisfaction? How does it also affirm personal responsibility? Think about the many transactions you have made in the past week. In what ways did you receive a benefit? In what ways did another party benefit? Suppose you have done a service for someone in which they paid you a certain amount of money. How would you feel, if the next time, that person hired someone else to do the same quality of job but for less money? How might you respond? Would your response show right understanding of what the Bible recognizes and honors concerning economics?*

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you sometimes feel as if these kinds of issues are outside the scope and instruction of the Bible? Has this lesson challenged you in any way? How so? Have you considered your own attitudes toward what you and others own? Do you notice any covetous feelings at times? Are you as concerned with being fair and just in your own dealings when selling something or offering some kind of service to someone, as you are with not being “ripped off” by another? For example, if you have a mowing job, are you more concerned that you get paid what you are owed than you are concerned about doing the job on time and with excellence?*

**Live It:** Encourage the students to be on the look-out in the coming week for the many ways in which economics is a part of their everyday lives. Have them make a list of the benefits they receive during the week through the God-given ability to own things and enter into voluntary trades of goods and services. Encourage them to think of a good or service they could offer this week in exchange for another good or service to the mutual benefit of both parties. *How did this specific transaction improve each person’s level of satisfaction?*

- **Truth Statement:** The Bible recognizes the existence of inequalities in both the abilities people possess and the benefits they receive in the process of economic activities.

**Think About It:** *In terms of economics, what kinds of inequalities do you see both in personal abilities and the benefits received? If someone makes more money through his particular kind of work, should that be seen as greed on his part? How does our culture sometimes wrongly exalt success or wrongly seek to punish success? [e.g., celebrating*

certain financially successful people or businesses regardless of their honesty or practices; the sense many people have in wanting to “tax the rich” in an exorbitant manner; etc.] *How did Mr. Brown's success prove beneficial to others? What might have happened if Mr. Brown was “penalized” for his success? For example, what if Mr. Brown had been taxed more heavily than Miss Betty so his profits were only equal to hers. Who would benefit from this? [Maybe only Miss Betty.] There are many places in the world that do not recognize and honor biblical economic concepts. When this happens, there usually is diminished personal satisfaction, less productivity and excellent work, and a lack of personal responsibility. From what you have learned in this lesson, what should a Christian response to the problem of poverty include, both on individual poverty and global levels? [i.e., emergency assistance, job training, creating businesses, looking for ways that resources could be used to produce goods, etc.]*

**Examine Your Heart:** *Our culture increasingly looks at economic concepts in terms of equality—everyone should receive equal benefits, no matter what he does or the amount of excellence he puts forth. Have you ever felt your heart drawn to this kind of thinking? Why does our sinful heart fuel this type of attitude? How is this not only dangerous to an individual but also to a family, and a whole society? How can you guard your own heart against this? Can you think of ways in which you have benefited from another's success? Do you thank God for this wonderful provision? When you see the excellence in someone else's work from which you, in turn, benefit, how can that become a point of God-honoring praise? How does your heart react to those who have not benefited to the extent you have? How does 1 John 3:17 challenge your heart? But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? How might a person demonstrate an “open heart” toward those in need?*

**Live It:** Encourage your students to make a list of economic inequalities they see in their lives and in the world. How might these realities become points of envy and covetousness? Pray about any attitudes that would not be honoring to God. Next, make a list of ways in which they have personally benefited due to these inequalities. [e.g., an excellent product produced by a company, or a job mowing or babysitting because of someone else's success, etc.] How can these serve as points of thanksgiving and God-honoring praise? How should this motivate us toward **Colossians 3:23**? Lastly, have your students consider a tangible way in which they can truly help those who suffer in poverty. You may want to direct them to ministries at your church that help those in need not only with emergency assistance, but also ministries that focus on job training and the creation of businesses, especially in Third World countries.

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week. Also, ask the students about their experience over the past week of “living without” a favorite possession. How did it go? Was it easy, or difficult? If it was difficult, what does this show us about the subtle way in**

*which Satan tries to deceive us into finding our satisfaction in possessions? What steps can we take to rightly see and understand money and possessions?*

## **Send Home**

Parent Memo for Lesson 30

# Human Suffering— Sickness and Disease

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > Suffering due to sickness and disease are the consequences of a world that is under God's curse because of sin.
- > God is sovereign over all suffering and all healing.
- > God designs to display His glory in and through our suffering.
- > God designs all suffering in a Christian's life to work for his good.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                       |                          |                         |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Romans 8:20, 22-23 | 6. Job 2:6-7             | 11. James 5:14          |
| 2. Deuteronomy 32:4   | 7. John 9:1-3            | 12. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 |
| 3. Psalm 145:9        | 8. 2 Corinthians 12:8-10 | 13. Romans 8:22-23      |
| 4. Exodus 4:11        | 9. Romans 5:3-4          | 14. Philippians 3:20-21 |
| 5. Deuteronomy 32:39  | 10. Romans 8:28          | 15. Romans 8:18         |

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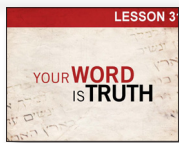
## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 31                         | > Parent Memo for Lesson 31 (one per student)              |
| > Story Cards 1-6 (one set per small group)                | > "When Lightning Strikes Twice" article (one per student) |
| > Optional video: "The Story of Zach Smith" (4:29 minutes) |  |

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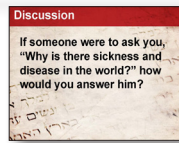
## OTHER VISUALS:

- > Bible



(DISPLAY **LESSON 31.**)

## Small Group Discussion (6-8 minutes)



STORY CARDS 1-6

(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

Hand out a **Story Cards 1-6** to six different students. One by one, have each student read his card out loud. *What is the common theme in each story?* [sickness, illness, pain, and suffering] Ask the students if they personally know anyone who has a similar story. Encourage them to briefly share these stories.

Story 1: A teenage girl dives into shallow water and breaks her neck. She is a quadriplegic for the rest of her life.

Story 2: A little baby boy is born without arms or legs.

Story 3: A young mother has a cancerous tumor and, after long painful months, dies and leaves behind a husband and four young children.

Story 4: An elderly grandmother has heart disease that no longer can be treated. She

dies while living in a nursing home.

Story 5: An infant girl is treated for an inflammation in her eyes. The treatment blinds her for the rest of her life.

Story 6: A young boy has severe food allergies and must eat a very restrictive diet.

*How prevalent are sickness and other debilitating diseases or conditions? Are just unbelievers affected by this kind of suffering? Why do you think Christians also experience sickness, pain, and physical suffering? If someone were to ask you, "Why is there sickness and disease in the world?" How would you answer him?*

## Large Group Lesson



(DISPLAY **HUMAN SUFFERING.**)

The story cards we read in our small groups were not hypothetical scenarios. They were all true stories, and the students were probably able to add stories of their own to these. Sickness, disease, and other disabilities are a reality of life. This kind of suffering affects all people—young and old, rich and poor—at one time or another and to one extent or another. And when suffering comes in this form, we have a natural tendency to ask "Why?"

*Imagine for a moment that a mother gives birth to a baby boy who has no arms or legs. The natural questions are "Why? Why did this happen? What went wrong? Why this terrible disability? Why my little boy?"*

*Or, imagine something like this: You have tickets to the big ballgame Saturday. Front row seats. This game will decide which team goes to the play-offs. Saturday morning you wake up with a terrible sore throat and a high fever. Your whole body hurts. You can*

*hardly move it hurts so much. No going to the ballgame today. Why get sick this day of all days? Why you?*



(DISPLAY **POSSIBLE ANSWERS 1.**)

- ☞ It's the result of natural processes and has no purpose or design.
- ☞ It's the result of bad “karma”—the consequences of past actions.
- ☞ It's the result of desires. Eliminating those desires through conscious effort will eliminate suffering.

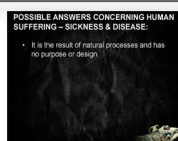


(DISPLAY **POSSIBLE ANSWERS 2.**)

It's a matter of mind over body: weak thoughts=weak body; strong thoughts=strong body.

- ☞ It's out of God's control. You must make the best of it.

Discuss a few of these possible answers as follows:



(DISPLAY **POSSIBLE ANSWERS ARGUED.**)

*An atheist would probably answer with the first point. Suffering is simply a natural experience and has no deeper meaning. Therefore, the goal is to use scientific knowledge to try to eliminate sickness and disease.*

- ☞ A Hindu might respond with the second point. For example, maybe in your previous life you were healthy and didn't care about the suffering of others, so now the consequence is that you must be sick in this life.
- ☞ Some people might answer with the last point: God simply will not or cannot control what ultimately happens to us. Although God might feel bad that we suffer, there is nothing He can do about it other than sympathize and help us get through it as best we can.

All of these answers to human suffering in sickness and disease are found in our culture. Some are exclusively found in certain religions or worldviews, but many times people are simply confused, because in the midst of painful suffering our emotions and feelings (rather than truth) drive our understanding. Therefore, it is important that we understand what the Bible has to say about suffering so we are rightly prepared when suffering comes. (Direct students to complete these statements in the journal.)



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL.**)

Have the students turn to **Romans 8:20** and **22-23** in their Bibles, and to the related portion of the journal.

*Romans 8:20, 22-23—For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it... <sup>22</sup>For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. <sup>23</sup>And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.*

These verses have been examined in previous lessons. They refer to the curse God has subjected the whole creation to because of sin.

- ☞ *"Subject to futility" means that things do not work as they should. There is decay, brokenness, and an inability to produce any lasting good. How would this "futility" apply to the human body? [There will be sickness, disease, and disabling conditions in our bodies.]*

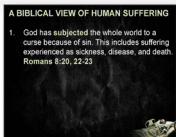
*In verse 23, what is meant by this phrase?*

*"...we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly..." [Christians...*

- ☞ *...will also be subject to experiencing pain and suffering in our bodies.]*

*According to these verses, should the stories we read in our small groups surprise us? Are sickness, disease, and disabilities just "natural processes"? No. They are the results of living in a world that is under a God-imposed curse.*

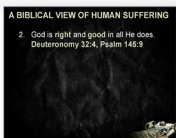
The "whole creation" is suffering under this curse, and that also includes "we ourselves"—meaning Christians. Christians living in a fallen world will also experience these "groanings" in our physical bodies.



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 1.**)

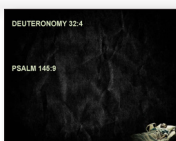
1. God has subjected the whole world to a curse because of sin. This includes suffering experienced as sickness, disease, and death. (See Romans 8:20, 22-23.)

Because of this truth, it would be wrong to believe that personal suffering is **always** a direct consequence of a particular sin or lifestyle. For example, the deadly disease of AIDS is often spread through sinful lifestyles. But a Christian doctor who worked in Africa died of AIDS as he worked trying to save the lives of AIDS patients. He contracted the disease as a result of doing good works, not sin. (Direct the students to the questions about this in the journal.)



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 2.**)

2. God is right and good in all He does.



(DISPLAY **SCRIPTURE 1.**)



**Deuteronomy 32:4—**

🔊 *...his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.*

**Psalms 145:9—**

🔊 *The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made.*

Sometimes people will accuse God of not being good in the midst of suffering. They will challenge the goodness of God by saying things like:

*"If God is good, then why is there suffering?"*

*"If God is good, why was my innocent baby born blind?"*

*"What have I done to deserve this?"*

*"Why do I have cancer? I have been a good person!"*

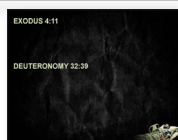
*"Why did I have a heart attack? I have always been careful to eat right and exercise."*

God is always good and right in what He does—this is objective and absolute truth. As sinners who have rebelled against our Creator, none of us deserve any good thing from God. All of us only deserve His wrath (Romans 3:23). Any measure of health we have is a gift of goodness from Him. Every moment we are alive is a good gift from Him. Therefore, the presence of sickness and suffering in our lives does not negate or diminish God's goodness or righteousness. (Direct the students to the question about this biblical truth in the journal.)



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 3.**)

3. God is sovereign over all suffering and all healing.



(DISPLAY **SCRIPTURE 2.**)

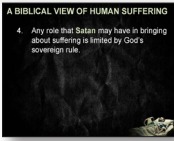
**Exodus 4:11—**

🔊 *Then the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?"*

**Deuteronomy 32:39—**

🔊 *See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.*

*Remember the story of the baby born without arms or legs? It is a true story. That boy is now a young man, and his name is Nick. According to these verses, who ultimately decided that Nick would be born without arms and legs? God did. Could He heal Nick? Yes! Can you give some biblical examples of God's healing power? (Encourage the students to give some biblical examples of Jesus' healing, and direct them to write some of these examples in the journal.)*



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 4.**)

4. Any role that Satan may have in bringing about suffering is limited by God's sovereign rule.

Another thing we need to understand about human suffering is the role Satan might play in it.



(DISPLAY **JOB.**)

The first two chapters of the book of Job, we are given a glimpse into heaven. We are told that Satan has been allowed into the presence of the Lord. The topic of discussion is God's servant Job. The meeting ends with God giving Satan permission to do the following:

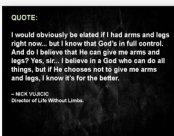
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🔑 *Job 2:6-7—And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, he is in your hand; only spare his life.”<sup>7</sup> So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.*

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We do not always know the specific role or the extent of the role Satan may play in bringing about a certain sickness or disability. For the most part, it remains a mystery to us. However, as the book of Job makes clear, Satan desires to strike people with suffering to bring about his evil purposes. But his ability to do this is always limited by God's sovereign will. (Direct the students to record this biblical example in the **journal**, and to answer the question about miraculous healing.)

*But if God is ultimately sovereign over illness, disabilities, and Satan, why does He allow suffering at all? Why not simply heal everyone?*



(DISPLAY **NICK VUJICIC.**)

These words were spoken by Nick Vujicic in an interview:

*I would obviously be elated if I had arms and legs right now...but I know that God's in full control. And do I believe that He can give me arms and*

*legs? Yes, sir...I believe in a God who can do all things, but if He chooses not to give me arms and legs, I know it's for the better.*<sup>1</sup>

*How could not having arms or legs be for the better? How could being blind be for the better? How could having cancer be for the better? How could being sick and missing a ballgame be for the better?*

Have the students turn to **John 9:1-3**, and to the related questions in the journal.

*John 9:1-3—As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.”*

*What mistaken view of the cause of this man's blindness did the disciples have? [that his blindness was due to his own sin or to his parents' sin] What was Jesus' answer? Why is this answer shocking? [that the reason for the man's blindness would be that God's works might be displayed through him]*

In this particular situation the “works of God” displayed included the miraculous healing of the man as Jesus restored his sight. But that kind of miraculous healing is the exception in this life, not the norm. God often chooses to show His greatness in our sickness and suffering. Explain that the apostle Paul talks about a “thorn in the flesh,” a “messenger of Satan” that was causing him to suffer. He pleaded with God to take it away.

Have the students turn to **2 Corinthians 12:8-10**, and to the related question in the journal.

*2 Corinthians 12:8-10—Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”*

*What did God design to display in and through Paul's suffering? [Christ's power]*

(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 5.**)

5. God designs to display His glory in and through our suffering.



1. Riley, Jennifer. “Limbless evangelist preaches joy in Christ.” *Christianity Today*. April 18, 2008. <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/limbless.evangelist.preaches.joy.in.christ/18137-2.htm> (accessed June 30, 2010).



(DISPLAY **HYMN.**)

*To God be the glory, great things He has done;  
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,  
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,  
And opened the life gate that all may go in.*

*Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the earth hear His voice!  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the people rejoice!  
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,  
And give Him the glory, great things He has done.*

Ask the students if any of them recognize this famous hymn. Do any of them know who wrote the words of this hymn? Fanny Crosby.

- ✎ From our examples early in this lesson, she was the infant girl who had an inflammation in her eyes. And the treatment she was given ended up blinding her for the rest of her life. In her blindness, she became a famous writer of thousands of hymns. It would have been an impressive accomplishment for a sighted person to write this many hymns. The fact that she did this without the help of her sight is a demonstration of God's power in her life. God designed to show His greatness in and through her blindness. Therefore, she even considered her blindness to be a gift meant to help her see God more clearly.

*If perfect earthly sight were offered me tomorrow I would not accept it. I might not have sung hymns to the praise of God if I had been distracted by the beautiful and interesting things about me.<sup>2</sup>*

(Direct the students to the question about Fanny Crosby in the journal.)



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 6.**)

6. For Christians, God designs all sickness, disease, and disabilities to ultimately work for our good.



(DISPLAY **SCRIPTURE 3.**)

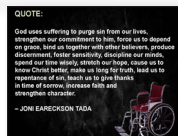
***Romans 5:3-4—***

- ✎ *More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope.*

2. This quote from Fanny Crosby, whose real name was actually Frances Jane van Alstyne, came from the Faith Hall of Fame, located online at: [http://www.eaec.org/faithhall-fame/fanny\\_crosby.htm](http://www.eaec.org/faithhall-fame/fanny_crosby.htm) (accessed August 9, 2010).

**Romans 8:28—**

☞ *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*



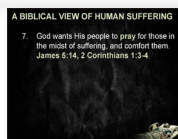
(DISPLAY **JONI EARECKSON TADA.**)

These words were spoken by Joni Eareckson Tada after she became a quadriplegic. She was the teenage girl from our earlier examples who dove into the shallow water and broke her neck. Up until the time of the accident, she had been a “carefree” happy teenager without much room for God in her busy life. But her accident changed everything.

*God uses suffering to purge sin from our lives, strengthen our commitment to him, force us to depend on grace, bind us together with other believers, produce discernment, foster sensitivity, discipline our minds, spend our time wisely, stretch our hope, cause us to know Christ better, make us long for truth, lead us to repentance of sin, teach us to give thanks in time of sorrow, increase faith and strengthen character.<sup>3</sup>*

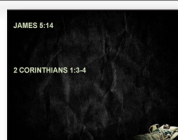
For Christians, suffering is meant to make us more like Jesus. Suffering is a means of God's sanctifying work in our lives. It reminds us that we are weak and frail and totally dependent on God. Sickness can help us to focus on the things that are really important and draw us away from the temporary pleasures of the world.

*So, let's say that you have tickets to the big ball game and get sick and miss it. It could be that God is using this in your life to protect you from making sports an idol in your heart. It may be that the time spent lying in bed ill will help you to see what is truly important. It can be a means in which God speaks to you about your dependence on Him. It can be a test of your trust in God or your willingness to accept His sovereign plan for you. It may be an opportunity to give testimony about trusting God even when things don't go as you hope.*



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 7.**)

7. God wants His people to pray for those in the midst of suffering, and comfort them.



(DISPLAY **SCRIPTURE 4.**)

3. Tada, Joni Eareckson, and Steven Estes. *When God Weeps: Why Our Suffering Matters to the Almighty*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1997) , 117.

**James 5:14—**

- ✎ *Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.*

**2 Corinthians 1:3-4—**

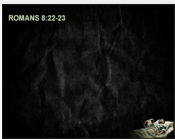
- ✎ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*

*Can you give an example of this from our church or from your own personal experience? Why is this important for us to keep in mind?*



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 8.**)

8. For Christians, sickness and suffering are only temporary.



(DISPLAY **ROMANS 8:22-23.**)

- ✎ *For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.*

*Is the pain of childbirth temporary or forever? It is only temporary. And in the end, what joy does the pain produce? A new baby.*

*According to verse 23, what great joy can Christians look forward to in our present suffering? [the redemption of our bodies]*



(DISPLAY **PHILIPPIANS 3:20-21.**)

- ✎ *Philippians 3:20-21—But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.*

Emphasize that while suffering due to sickness, disease, and other physical conditions is the norm in this world, for all believers a day is coming when there will be no more suffering. Every believer will have a body that is transformed to be like Jesus' glorious, resurrected body. And this transformation will be so wonderful that Paul said the following:

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*Romans 8:18—For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*

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VIDEO

End the lesson by doing one of the following:

- Show the short **video** “The Story of Zach Smith.”<sup>4</sup>
- Have a short personal testimony from someone in your church who has experienced physical suffering and has experienced the greatness of God displayed in and through his suffering.
- Read the following poem<sup>5</sup> by Martha Snell Nicholson:

*I stood a mendicant [beggar] of God before His royal throne  
And begged him for one priceless gift, which I could call my own.  
I took the gift from out His hand, but as I would depart  
I cried, “But Lord this is a thorn and it has pierced my heart.  
This is a strange, a hurtful gift, which Thou hast given me.”  
He said, “My child, I give good gifts and gave My best to thee.”  
I took it home and though at first the cruel thorn hurt sore,  
As long years passed I learned at last to love it more and more.  
I learned He never gives a thorn without this added grace,  
He takes the thorn to pin aside the veil which hides His face.*

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the Small Group Application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** God has subjected the whole world to a curse because of sin. This includes suffering experienced as sickness, disease, and death.

**Think About It:** Ask the students to see if they can think of a person they know who has not experienced sickness or disease. How does this demonstrate the truth of **Romans 8:20, 22-33**? Is it just humans who experience this? Just unbelievers? What should sickness and suffering bring to mind to all of us? [e.g., the seriousness of sin, a longing for God's curse to be removed, etc.]

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you grieve over the presence of sickness and suffering in the world? Is it simply a grief for the presence of physical pain and suffering, or do you*

4. Zach Smith went to be with the Lord shortly after the making of this video.

5. Snell Nicholson, Martha. “The Thorn,” a poem from *The Glory Forever*. (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1949), 17.



*grieve because of humanity's and your own sin? Do you long for the redemption of your body? Do you believe that Jesus died to first redeem your soul?*

**Live It:** As a group, pray that you would live the life God has given you to honor God. Pray that you would long for the day when Jesus will redeem both your body and soul. What can you do this week to encourage a hunger for God?

- **Truth Statement:** God is right and good in all He does.

**Think About It:** Review **Deuteronomy 32:4** and **Psalms 145:9**. Why are these truths sometimes difficult to believe in the midst of suffering? Do we sometimes define what is good and right based on our subjective feelings and comfort level? Why is this dangerous? Give the students an illustration. How many young children think the doctor is good and right in giving vaccinations? How do we sometimes reason like a young child when it comes to understanding God's character in the midst of pain?

**Examine Your Heart:** Challenge the students to think about the last time they were ill, or someone they loved was going through a time of sickness and suffering. *What thoughts first came to mind? What questions did you wrestle with? Did you question God's goodness, or thank Him for His goodness in all things? Did you ever feel, "I don't deserve this"? What would you really receive if you got what you deserve from God? How can this thought help you be more thankful to God even in the midst of suffering?*

**Live It:** Share with your small group a time where you saw the goodness of God in your suffering. This week, look for the many evidences of the goodness of God in your life. What are expressions of His mercy that you usually take for granted? How can you switch your perspective to an attitude of gratefulness for the mercy of God toward you?

- **Truth Statement:** God is sovereign over all suffering and all healing.

**Think About It:** Review **Exodus 4:11** and **Deuteronomy 32:39**. Why are these very hard truths for some people to accept? How do they seem to run contrary to the view of God many people want to envision? Do you think these verses are meant to discourage you, or give you hope? Taken along with **Deuteronomy 32:4** and **Psalms 145:9**, how can they serve to give hope to someone who is suffering? What confidence do they offer to a Christian? How might they serve to point an unbeliever who is going through suffering to cry out to God?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you accept sickness, disease, or other disabilities as something under God's sovereign rule? Do you have a hard time believing Jesus can heal someone of cancer? Do you believe Jesus has the absolute right and authority not to heal someone of cancer? Why is it sometimes difficult to submit to God's rule over suffering in our lives? Are you more concerned with temporary comfort in your life? In what ways is it difficult for you to acknowledge God's authority over every area of your life? Why do you think we all struggle with this? How can we grow in this area? What biblical examples could help us grow?*

**Live It:** Who is sick or hurting in your small group, class, or church? Take some time to pray for those who are sick or hurting. Pray for their healing, their hearts to trust in the sovereign goodness of God, and for God to glorify himself in their suffering.

- **Truth Statement:** God designs to display His glory in and through our suffering.

**Think About It:** Have the students try to think of people who have demonstrated God's goodness and power in the midst of sickness and pain. You may want to be prepared to share a personal example, or expound upon the lives of the people mentioned in the lesson or someone you know. What specific evidences of God's grace can be seen when people go through periods of great suffering? How does this serve to draw more and more attention to Jesus?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Think of the last time you were sick or were suffering from some kind of physical pain or disability. Did your thoughts and words demonstrate the goodness and power of Jesus to those around you? Did you have the attitude of Paul as communicated in **2 Corinthians 12:8-10**? How can your weakness display Jesus' power, even if you are not healed? Does suffering tend to make you a better person, or a bitter person? What is God's desire for you?*

**Live It:** If you have not experienced much physical suffering, prepare your heart to glorify God when you go through this in the future. Ask God to help you to see His goodness and sovereignty when you are hurting, and look for Scripture that will help you to do this.

- **Truth Statement:** For Christians, God designs all sickness, disease, and disabilities to ultimately work for our good and is only temporary.

**Think About It:** Read **Romans 5:3-4** and **8:28-29**. Ask the students to think about these verses in reference to their own lives. Read the quote by Joni Eareckson Tada again. Do they see evidence of this in their own lives? Do these qualities appeal to them or not? If not, what may it indicate? What is the condition stated in **Romans 8:28**? Why is this an important qualification? How does verse 29 help to define what "good" means? [e.g., to be conformed to the image of Jesus]

Read **Romans 8:18-25**. What is the context in which suffering and "groaning" is placed? What great event are these verses looking forward to?

**Examine Your Heart:** **Romans 8:28** is a promise for believers only. Is this a promise you are confident of? Does this promise remove pain and suffering in your life? No. But it gives significance and wonderful purpose to your suffering. What "seals" this promise for believers? Read and discuss **Romans 8:32**. Do you see your suffering as a gift from God for your good? Do you believe God wants to give you "all things"? Are you having a hard time trusting God to do this in your present circumstances? Are you eagerly waiting for the redemption of your body? Do you believe this will really happen? What will determine if this promise is true for you?

**Live It:** Make it your goal to memorize **Romans 8:28** this week. If you are a believer, prepare to look for ways in which this promise proves true this week. Share your experiences with your small group next week.

- **Truth Statement:** God wants His people to pray for those in the midst of suffering and work to comfort them.

**Think About It:** Review **James 5:14** and ask: Do you pray for those who are sick? Do you pray believing Jesus can actually heal them if He chooses? Or, are your prayers somewhat halfhearted? What kind of prayers would be pleasing to Jesus? Read **2 Corinthians 1:3-7**. Why would God be called a “God of all comfort”? In what ways has God comforted you? How does suffering identify us with Christ? Why is it important that we comfort those who are suffering?

**Examine Your Heart:** *When you or someone you love is sick and hurting is your first thought “doctor and medicine” or Jesus? What is good about the first two? What is best about Jesus? Why does God provide both? What do doctors and medicine demonstrate about the goodness of God to all people? But what if people are well in body but lack Jesus? Where do you put your trust when you or someone you love is sick?*

Are you a person who is quick to pray and comfort someone who is suffering? What might this comfort look like? How could your comfort be a blessing to someone who is not a Christian?

**Live It:** How can you comfort or serve someone who is sick this week? What could you do to help him experience the comfort of Christ while he is hurting? [e.g., pray with him, visit him at home, make him a meal, do some housework, yard work, or chores for him]

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week.**

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 31.

“When Lightning Strikes Twice” article

# Human Suffering— Disaster and Calamities

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > God is absolutely sovereign over disasters and calamities.
- > God is good, loving and righteous in all He does.
- > Disasters and calamities display both God's judgment and His mercy.
- > Ultimately, God does all things for His glory—to display His greatness and worth.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                  |                      |                        |
|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Job 9:5-6     | 6. Psalm 100:5       | 11. Romans 8:1, 20, 22 |
| 2. Psalm 135:6-7 | 7. Psalm 145:9       | 12. Romans 11:33       |
| 3. Isaiah 45:7   | 8. Romans 3:23       | 13. Romans 11:36       |
| 4. Amos 3:6      | 9. Romans 6:23       |                        |
| 5. Daniel 4:35   | 10. Deuteronomy 32:4 |                        |

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## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

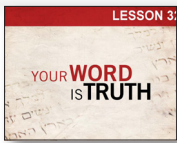
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 32            | > "God and the Tsunami: Theology in the Headlines" |
| > Parent Memo for Lesson 32 (one per student) | article (one per student)                          |

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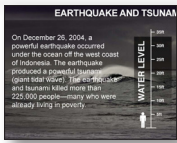
## OTHER VISUALS:

- > Bible

## Large Group Lesson

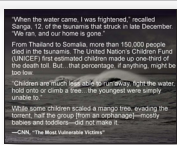


(DISPLAY **LESSON 32.**)



(DISPLAY **EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI.**)

On December 26, 2004 a powerful earthquake occurred under the ocean off the west coast of Indonesia. The earthquake produced a powerful tsunami (giant tidal wave). The earthquake and tsunami killed more than 225,000 people—many who were already living in poverty.



(DISPLAY **VICTIMS.**)

Read the following quotes from a CNN article titled “The most vulnerable victims,” written after the tsunami struck:

*“When the water came, I was frightened,” recalled Sanga, 12, of the tsunamis that struck in late December. “We ran, and our home is gone.”*

*From Thailand to Somalia, more than 150,000 people died in the tsunamis. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) first estimated children made up one third of the death toll. But...that percentage, if anything, might be too low.*

*“Children are much less able to run away, fight the water, hold onto or climb a tree...the youngest were simply unable to.”*

*While some children scaled a mango tree, evading the torrent, half the group [from an orphanage]—mostly babies and toddlers—did not make it.<sup>1</sup>*

In response to this unfolding tragedy, Christian commentator, Dr. R. Albert Mohler, Jr. said the following:



(DISPLAY **AL MOHLER.**)

*The magnitude of this disaster is multiplied when we realize that these very areas most devastated by the tsunamis are among the most impoverished and helpless regions of the earth. On December 26, families were washed away, children were ripped from their parents' arms, and suffering beyond description settled upon the earth. Why?*

1. “The Most Vulnerable Victims.” January 12, 2005, CNN.com.

*That question comes immediately to the mind of any sensitive person...<sup>2</sup>*

*In other words, why did this happen?*

*Why so much destruction?*

*Why so much suffering?*

*Why did it happen to thousands of poor people?*

*Why so many babies and children killed?*

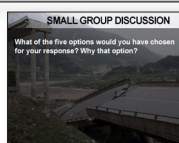
Tell the students that after the devastation a popular religion website conducted a poll<sup>3</sup> attempting to answer this question. It asked people what, if any, role God plays in natural disasters such as earthquakes or tsunamis. The poll offered the following options:



(DISPLAY **POLL.**)

- ☐ A. God is punishing us.
- ☐ B. God is testing us.
- ☐ C. The earthquake and tsunami were sent by God, but we don't know what the purpose was.
- ☐ D. Although I believe in God, the supernatural had nothing to do with this tragedy.
- ☐ E. God doesn't exist; disasters like this are just forces of nature.

## Small Group Discussion (4-5 minutes)



(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

Have the students discuss the poll in their small groups by asking them the following questions:

*What of the five options would you have chosen for your response? Why that option? Do you have any Scripture to support your response?*

*Is there an option you feel should have been included, but was not? For example, what about Satan? Might Satan have caused the earthquake? Can you think of a clear biblical example in which Satan's hand was involved in a "natural"*

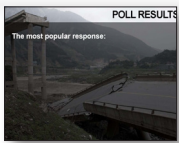
*disaster? [e.g., Job's children were killed by a great wind that collapsed the roof of the house, and fire from heaven came down and killed Job's servants and sheep—these disasters were all the work of Satan] So it is possible that Satan might have had a hand in this disaster, too, even though it was not an option stated in the poll.*

*What do you think was the result of the poll? What option received the greatest response? Why do you think that option was most popular?*

2. Mohler, Dr. R. Albert, Jr. "God and the Tsunami-Theology in the Headlines, Part One." June 3, 2005. [www.albertmohler.com/2005/01/03](http://www.albertmohler.com/2005/01/03) (accessed June 30, 2010).

3. Jacoby, Jeff. "Angry with God." January 12, 2005. [www.beliefnet.com](http://www.beliefnet.com). See also <http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/2005/10/By-The-Numbers-God-Didnt-Send-The-Hurricanes.aspx>.

## Large Group Lesson



(DISPLAY **POLL RESULTS.**)

The most popular response:

- ☞ D. Although I believe in God, the supernatural had nothing to do with this tragedy.

*Are you surprised that this would be the most popular response?*

*Do you think this response reflects truth? Why or why not? (Allow a few brief responses, and direct the students to this question in the journal.)*

When major disasters such as these happen, it draws attention to unavoidable questions like, “What is wrong with the world? Why did this happen?”



(DISPLAY **SCRIPTURE.**)

One by one, have the students look up each text in their Bibles. Choose students to read each text out loud:

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*Job 9:5-6—...he who removes mountains, and they know it not, when he overturns them in his anger, <sup>6</sup>who shakes the earth out of its place, and its pillars tremble;*

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*Psalms 135:6-7—Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps. <sup>7</sup>He it is who makes the clouds rise at the end of the earth, who makes lightnings for the rain and brings forth the wind from his storehouses.*

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*Isaiah 45:7—I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the LORD, who does all these things.*

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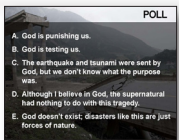


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*Amos 3:6—Is a trumpet blown in a city, and the people are not afraid? Does disaster come to a city, unless the LORD has done it?*

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*How would you summarize the main truths from these texts? (Allow the students to respond.)*



(DISPLAY **POLL 2.**)

- A. God is punishing us.
- B. God is testing us.

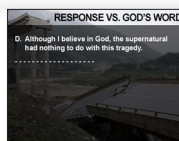


- C. The earthquake and tsunami were sent by God, but we don't know what the purpose was.
- D. Although I believe in God, the supernatural had nothing to do with this tragedy.
- E. God doesn't exist; disasters like this are just forces of nature.

*After reading the Bible texts, should any of the five possible responses be ruled out as false? If so which ones?*

- 🔊 [D and E] (Direct the students to cross out the false responses in the journal.)

Each of these slides contrasts the numbered response with the biblical truth that refutes it. Do not read each slide, simply display it for a moment for the students to observe.



(DISPLAY **RESPONSE 1.**)

D. Although I believe in God, the supernatural had nothing to do with this tragedy.

- 🔊 *Amos 3:6—Is a trumpet blown in a city, and the people are not afraid? Does disaster come to a city, unless the LORD has done it?*

- 🔊 *Isaiah 45:7—I [the LORD] form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the LORD, who does all these things.*



(DISPLAY **RESPONSE 2.**)

E. God doesn't exist; disasters like this are just forces of nature.

- 🔊 *Psalms 135:6-7—Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps. <sup>7</sup>He it is who makes the clouds rise at the end of the earth, who makes lightnings for the rain and brings forth the wind from his storehouses.*

- 🔊 *Job 9:5-6—...he who removes mountains, and they know it not, when he overturns them in his anger, <sup>6</sup>who shakes the earth out of its place, and its pillars tremble.*

Answers 4 and 5 are clearly ruled out by the truth of Scripture. According to Scripture, God sovereignly and absolutely rules over everything that happens in this world. God was not surprised by the earthquake and tsunami. Nor was He “wringing” His hands at the events as a helpless bystander. So, even though Satan may have had a hand in bringing about the earthquake and tsunami, as with the case of Job, Satan only acted with God's permission and under God's sovereign authority.



(DISPLAY **DANIEL.**)

Have the students turn to **Daniel 4:35**.

*Daniel 4:35—[All] the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he [God] does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, “What have you done?”*

*According to this verse, does anything happen apart from God's will? No.*

*[God] does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.*

*What does it mean that “none can stay God's hand”? [No one can stop God from doing what He intends to do. He is all-powerful.]*

Have the students look carefully at this verse. It not only states that God's sovereign will is effectively accomplished in heaven and on earth, but it also shows man's natural tendency to call God's wisdom and goodness into question. Ask the students if they can identify this in the verse. [To ask God “What have you done?”] This question is seemingly asked in a manner that is more an accusation than a heartfelt question. It implies that God has done something wrong. (Direct the students to the related questions in the journal.)



(DISPLAY **DISASTERS AND CALAMITIES.**)

- ☞ What have you done God?
- ☞ How could you have allowed so much destruction?
- ☞ What gives you the right to do this?
- ☞ Why did you unfairly target the poor and young?

Verses like **Daniel 4:35** pose a dilemma for many people because it seems as if acknowledging God's sovereign will in disasters would undermine or negate His love and goodness. “How can a good and loving God do this?” They think that either God had nothing to do with these disasters, or that He isn't good and loving.”



(DISPLAY **DISASTERS AND CALAMITIES: ARGUMENTS.**)

- ☞ How can a good and loving God do this?
- ☞ If God was sovereign over this, He isn't good and loving.

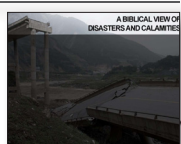
🔊 But He is good and loving:

🔊 *Psalm 100:5—For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.*

🔊 *Psalm 145:9—The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made.*

🔊 Therefore, because He is good and loving, He wasn't sovereign over this and didn't intend for it to happen.

This is why the fourth response in the poll was so popular: “Although I believe in God, the supernatural had nothing to do with this tragedy.” It appeals to the sinful human heart—a heart that wants to affirm a human understanding of God's love and goodness, while denying God's rightful sovereign authority in the world. The Bible clearly upholds the truth of God's absolute sovereign power and His goodness and love. Any explanation of disasters and calamities that denies God's absolute sovereignty or His goodness and love is a lie.



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL VIEW**, and direct the students to the Biblical View chart in the journal.)

- 🔊 1. God is absolutely sovereign over disasters and calamities (Daniel 4:35).
- 🔊 2. God is good and loving (Psalm 100:5; Psalm 145:9).

One possible way to try to understand how these two truths can correspond simultaneously was also listed in the poll.



(DISPLAY **POSSIBLE RESPONSE**.)

- 🔊 A. God is punishing us.

*Could we say that God brought about the earthquake and tsunami as punishment for sin? Can you give a biblical example in which God brought about a disaster as direct judgment for people's sin? [e.g., the worldwide flood in Genesis; the total destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, etc.]*

🔊 *Romans 3:23—for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

🔊 *Romans 6:23a—For the wages of sin is death;*

- 🔑 *Deuteronomy 32:4—[God's] work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.*

It is true that each person, whether young or old, rich or poor, is deserving of God's righteous judgment because we are all sinners. Therefore, when God sends disasters and calamities, no one can accuse God of unfairness or of doing something wrong or unloving. We all deserve much worse than even the worst calamity! As pointed out in the previous lesson, God is right in all He does.



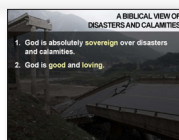
(DISPLAY **PUNISHMENT.**)

- 🔑 *Romans 8:1—There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*
- 🔑 *Romans 8:20—For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it,*
- 🔑 *Romans 8:22—For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together...*

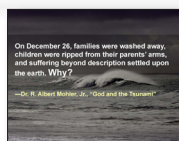
For those who are trusting in Jesus for their salvation, God's righteous condemnation has been decisively satisfied on the cross (**Romans 8:1**). However, in the previous lesson we also looked at verses from **Romans 8** and learned that sin also has a global and even physical impact. Earthquakes and tsunamis are an expression of the earth's being subjected by God to “futility” and are the “groanings” of a fallen world. So, as with sickness and disease, while disasters and calamities are, in one sense, an expression of God's right judgment on a sinful world, they are not necessarily punishment on a certain group of people for specific sins.

The earthquake and tsunami of December 2004 struck a part of the world that is known to be mainly Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim. In other words, the great majority of victims were unbelievers. However, there were also Christians living and working in those areas who were also swept away by the waves. They died along with the unbelievers. So, while it is true that God was sending His righteous judgment on unbelievers, He was also displaying His love and goodness in bringing His beloved children home to eternal life. Further, many non-Christians did not die, and therefore have further opportunity to repent and believe the gospel.

Since God is going to bring an eternal, end-time calamity upon unbelievers, it is actually merciful for him to provide a foreshadowing of this here on earth to awaken people to their peril!

(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL VIEW 2.**)

1. God is absolutely sovereign over disasters and calamities (Daniel 4:35).
2. God is good and loving (Psalm 100:5; Psalm 145:9).
3. God is righteous in all He does (Deuteronomy 32:4).
4. Disasters and calamities display both God's judgment and His mercy (Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, and Romans 8:1, 20, 22).

(DISPLAY **AL MOHLER 2.**)

*On December 26, families were washed away, children were ripped from their parents' arms, and suffering beyond description settled upon the earth. Why?*

*So how would you now answer the question: "Why did God send this calamity upon these people?" (Allow the students to respond. Right answers could include these truths: to provide a merciful warning to those he has made, perhaps to judge and punish some for their sin, perhaps to bring some of his people home to himself, to display the curse and the fallenness that is upon the world, for a myriad of reasons known only to himself)*

- Have the students turn to **Romans 11:33, 36.**

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*Romans 11:33—Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!*

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*What is meant by God's judgments being "unsearchable"? [You cannot "search them out," meaning you cannot understand them completely.]*

*What is meant by God's ways being "inscrutable"? [God's ways are not easily interpreted; they are mysterious.]*

*According to this verse, can we explain with absolute certainty the exact reasons God sent this particular earthquake and tsunami on these particular people on this specific date in history? No. God's judgments and ways are not fully known to us. However, look carefully at verse 36. There is something that we can know with absolute certainty. What is it?*

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*Romans 11:36—For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.*

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*How could God use such a terrible disaster for His glory?*

On January 12, 2010, a massive earthquake struck the country of Haiti, one of the poorest nations on earth. Here is what Dr. Mohler had to say about this tragedy that

killed more than 100,000 people:

*Christ would have us show the Haitian nation his love, and share his gospel. In the midst of this unspeakable tragedy, Christ would have us rush to aid the suffering people of Haiti, and rush to tell the Haitian people of his love, his cross, and salvation in his name alone.*

*Everything about the tragedy in Haiti points to our need for redemption. This tragedy may lead to a new openness to the gospel among the Haitian people. That will be to the glory of God.<sup>4</sup>*



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 3.**)

1. God is absolutely sovereign over disasters and calamities.
2. God is good and loving.
3. God is righteous in all He does.
4. Disasters and calamities display both God's judgment and His mercy.
5. Ultimately, God does all things for His glory—to display His greatness and worth (Romans 11:33, 36).

If possible, and if there is time, arrange for someone who has been through a disaster personally (flood, tornado, fire, etc.) to share briefly about how God was glorified in the situation they experienced.

Tell the students you want them to think about the following questions in preparation for small group discussion time:

*Knowing these truths, how should we respond to the terrible disasters and calamities in the world? What thoughts should come to mind? What desires and emotions should well up in our hearts? Does Jesus simply care that we have right thinking and feelings, or would He also call us to right actions?*

Ask a student to read the following quote (in the journal) from Dr. R. Albert Mohler:

*We must speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where the Scripture is silent. Christians must avoid offering explanations when God has not revealed an explanation. Finally, Christians must respond to a crisis like this by weeping with those who weep, by praying with fervent faithfulness, by offering concrete assistance in Christ's name and, most importantly, by bearing bold witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ—the only way to bring life out of death.<sup>5</sup>*

4. Mohler, Dr. R. Albert. "Does God Hate Haiti?" January 14, 2010. [www.albertmohler.com](http://www.albertmohler.com).

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the Small Group Application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** God is absolutely sovereign over disasters and calamities.

**Think About It:** Challenge the students to consider the implications of God's absolute sovereign rule and control over all things. Review **Daniel 4:35**, read **Isaiah 46:9-11** and, if possible, have the students relate some disasters that have made the news lately. What thoughts came to mind as they learned of these events? Why do some people want to acknowledge God's rule in some events, but not others? [e.g., acknowledging God's rule when it is a beautiful day outside, but denying God's rule during a hurricane] Why is it important that we see the truths of Scripture as absolute and objective? What happens when people filter texts like these through their own subjective feelings or “gut” reactions in relation to disasters and calamities?

**Examine Your Heart:** *How does your own heart respond to the calamities you see in the world? Do you get the feeling that things are out of God's control? If so, why do you feel this way? Do you have trouble believing God is truly sovereign over all things? (You may want to acknowledge that many Christians struggle with this, even though the Bible is very clear on the truth of God's absolute sovereignty.) Do you have a hard time believing God can be sovereign over terrible destruction and also be good, loving, and right in all He does? How can you submit your heart to His absolute truth?*

**Live It:** Encourage the students to subject their first thoughts to God's Word when they hear about or personally experience calamities. Recall **Romans 12:2**. Challenge them to memorize verses that affirm God's absolute sovereignty so they might be able to bring truth to mind in these situations. Also, encourage them to explore the book of Job this week by reading the texts and answering the questions listed in the At Home portion of the journal.

- **Truth Statement:** God is good, loving, and righteous in all He does.

**Think About It:** Review **Psalms 145:9** and have the students think of ways God had shown His goodness and love toward people before the earthquake and tsunami struck. *Did any of the people living in the devastated areas deserve this kindness from God? Why not? None of us deserve God's love and goodness. People often ignore God, and do not give thanks to Him when He demonstrates His love and goodness. And yet, these same people are quick to accuse God of not being good or right when He sends calamities and suffering! What good and loving things might God bring about through the suffering seen and experienced in disasters? How can it serve as a means through which the gospel is proclaimed and more eagerly embraced?*



**Examine Your Heart:** *Does your heart tend to question God's goodness and love in the presence of disasters, whether or not they impact you personally? Or, do you look at the pictures and stories of these kinds of tragedies and still hold to the truth of God's love and goodness, even when it is hard to see and understand? Can you say with heartfelt conviction, "God did that, and He is right in what He did. God did that, and He is still good and loving." Can you affirm something even when you cannot completely understand it?*

**Live It:** Encourage the students to think of ways God's love and goodness could be demonstrated to those who are suffering due to disasters. Why does Jesus want His people to care for and love people who are suffering, even those who are not Christians? [It brings Him glory and demonstrates His mercy to others.]

- **Truth Statement:** Disasters and calamities display both God's judgment and His mercy.

**Think About It:** Have the students recall a disaster that has been in the news recently, or one that happened in or near your area. *What evidences of God's mercy were demonstrated?* [e.g., someone was rescued; a home was spared from destruction; etc.] *What should be our response to these? Do they cause you to be thankful to God for His many kindnesses to sinful people—even to you? What evidences of God's right judgment were demonstrated? What should our response to these be? Do they cause you to grieve for terrible and right consequences of people rejecting God? Is physical suffering and death the greatest "judgment" that people have to fear?* Read **Matthew 10:28**.

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you want God to only display His mercy, but not His right judgment in the world? What might cause your heart to feel this way? Or, do you delight in watching God display His judgment on sinners but wish that He would withhold His mercy from certain people or groups of people? What might cause your heart to feel this way? Is either of these views in keeping with God's stated desire for all people? What should our heart feel toward those who are suffering due to tragedies?* Read and discuss **Romans 12:15, 2 Peter 3:9, and/or Romans 2:3-5**.

**Live It:** Encourage the students to think of ways they can be instruments of God's mercy to those who are suffering due to a disaster. Are there ministries within your church that directly help with the physical needs of people who are experiencing suffering? Talk about these with your students, as well about as other Christian ministries that focus on disaster relief. Discuss why it is important to meet physical needs in times of crisis and not just spiritual needs.

- **Truth Statement:** Ultimately, God does all things for His glory—to display His greatness and worth.

**Think about it:** Why is this truth hard for many people, even some Christians, to accept in the midst of events such as the earthquake and tsunami that killed more than 225,000 people and left millions more homeless? Read **Romans 11:33-36**, and then

read some or all of the following words from the song *God is God*<sup>5</sup> by Stephen Curtis Chapman:

*And the pain falls like a curtain  
On the things I once called certain  
And I have to say the words I fear the most  
I just don't know*

*And the questions without answers  
Come and paralyze the dancer  
So I stand here on the stage afraid to move  
Afraid to fall, oh, but fall I must  
On this truth that my life has been formed from the dust*

*God is God and I am not  
I can only see a part of the picture He's painting  
God is God and I am man  
So I'll never understand it all  
For only God is God*

*And the sky begins to thunder  
And I'm filled with awe and wonder  
'Til the only burning question that remains  
Is who am I*

*Can I form a single mountain  
Take the stars in hand and count them  
Can I even take a breath without God giving it to me  
He is first and last before all that has been  
Beyond all that will pass*

*Oh, how great are the riches of His wisdom and knowledge  
How unsearchable for to Him and through  
Him and from Him are all things*

*So let us worship before the throne  
Of the One who is worthy of worship alone*

Why do you think Chapman uses the image of God painting a picture to illustrate **Romans 11:33**? Why do you think he ends the song in worship? How is this a right response to the truths of **Romans 11:33-36**?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Is that your response to these truths? If not, what is preventing you from responding rightly?*

**Live It:** Take the time to pray about your heart in response to **Romans 11:33-36**. If any of the students in your group have been through a disaster (tornado, flood situation, etc), how could they see God's glory, mercy, or judgment carried out in that situation?

5. Chapman, Steven Curtis. "God Is God (Declaration)." (Brentwood, Tenn.: Sparrow Records, 2001).

*Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week.  
Try to follow up with them next week.*

## **Send Home**

Parent Memo for Lesson 32

"God and the Tsunami: Theology in the Headlines" article

# Evil

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > God is sovereign over all evil.
- > God hates evil and will punish those who do evil.
- > God caused the greatest evil to accomplish His greatest good—to show the immeasurable worth of His love for sinners by the death of His Son.
- > God wills what He hates in order to accomplish what He loves.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                      |                   |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Isaiah 1:4        | 7. 1 John 1:5     | 13. Acts 4:27-28  |
| 2. Jeremiah 7:24a    | 8. Psalm 5:5      | 14. Romans 5:8    |
| 3. Matthew 15:19-20a | 9. Isaiah 13:11   | 15. Ephesians 2:7 |
| 4. Romans 3:23       | 10. Mark 1:27     |                   |
| 5. Psalm 5:4         | 11. 2 Peter 2:4   |                   |
| 6. James 1:13-14     | 12. Genesis 50:20 |                   |

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## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 33   | > "Where is God?" message (one per teacher and small group leader)  |
| > Picture (2 copies per small group—one intact and one torn into half-inch pieces and placed into a bag or envelope) | > "Are There Two Wills in God?" message (one per teacher and small group leader)                            |
| > "Why is there Evil in this World?" video clip  | > "Is God Less Glorious Because He Ordained That Evil Be?" message (one per teacher and small group leader) |
| > Parent Memo for Lesson 33 (one per student)  |   |
| > "The Great Steel Cross" article (one per student)  |   |

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## OTHER VISUALS:

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| > Bible | > Be prepared to show the 3-minute and 8-second video "The Last Painting," found on ignitermedia.com by searching for the title. |
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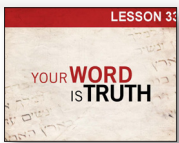
## FOR TEACHERS AND SMALL GROUP LEADERS:

Before teaching this lesson, we recommend reading one of the following messages by Dr. John Piper, found at [www.desiringgod.org](http://www.desiringgod.org), and included in the Curriculum Resources:

"Where is God?," delivered September 11, 2005

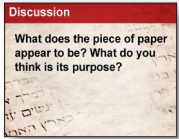
"Are There Two Wills in God?" article, January 1, 1995

"Is God Less Glorious Because He Ordained that Evil Be?," delivered July 1, 1998



(DISPLAY **LESSON 33.**)

## Small Group Discussion (6-8 minutes)



(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

Without explaining what you are giving them or its purpose, give each student a **torn piece of the picture** (don't tell what it is). (Purposely choose pieces that are not colorful and do not have distinctive parts of the picture.) Ask each student to quickly describe what he has been given by answering the following questions about it:

*What does the piece of paper appear to be? Does it appear beautiful, plain, or ugly?*

*What do you think is its purpose? Do you think that it will be useful or helpful to you?*

Next, pour the remaining paper pieces on the table and have the students examine them. Do

they now understand what the pieces appear to be? [pieces of a picture] Have the students spend a few minutes trying to assemble the torn pieces to form a completed picture (a cross). To help, show them a copy of the **completed picture** as it will look when properly put together. Ask if they can identify where their initial pieces fit into the bigger, completed picture.

Now that you have seen what the completed picture looks like, does it help you to better understand the appearance and purpose of your first piece? Suppose someone gave you a puzzle to complete but first told you: "I took out all the ugly pieces and the pieces that I thought wouldn't fit to make it easier for you." What will you tell them?

## Large Group Lesson

Quickly read the list of events without making any additional comments:



(DISPLAY **HISTORY 1.**)

On September 11, 2001, terrorists flew two planes into the World Trade Center twin towers in New York City killing almost 3,000 people.



(DISPLAY **HISTORY 2.**)

Ugandan President Idi Amin ordered the murder of 500,000 people.

- ☞ In Rwanda, radical Hutus slaughtered 800,000 people in only 100 days—many of them women and children.



(DISPLAY **HISTORY 3.**)

In Cambodia, a leader named Pol Pot was responsible for killing more than 1 million people.

- During World War II, Adolf Hitler sent more than 10 million people to their death—6 million were Jewish.

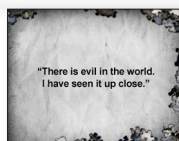


(DISPLAY **HISTORY 4.**)

Chinese leader Mao Zedong was responsible for the killing of an estimated 15 million people.

- Joseph Stalin, the leader of Russia, was responsible for the deaths of 20 million Russians.

*If someone asked you to use only one word to describe these events and the people who committed them, what would that word be? (Allow the students to quickly respond.)*



(DISPLAY **QUOTE.**)

The following statement was written by a newsman reporting on the events he saw in Rwanda after the brutal murder of almost a million people in 1994.

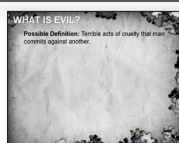
*There is evil in the world. I have seen it up close.<sup>1</sup>*

*Do you think “evil” is the word that best describes these events in history and the people who committed these acts? What do you think he meant by the word “evil”?*

### Illustration:

Pose the following scenario: Suppose that same reporter had witnessed a 2-year-old having a temper tantrum in a grocery store because his mom wouldn't let him have some candy. Would he have reported it by saying: “There is evil in the world. I have seen it up close.”? Ask the students why this would be highly unlikely. Point out that people usually use the term “evil” for events like those we’ve seen earlier on the PowerPoint® slides. In other words, evil is seen as men committing horrific acts of cruelty against others.

*However, is this what evil really is—horrific acts of cruelty that are committed by someone against another?*



(DISPLAY **WHAT IS EVIL?**, and direct the student to this question in the journal.)

Possible definition: Terrible acts of cruelty that man commits against another

1. Sievers, Leroy. “There is Evil.” *Los Angeles Times*, June 12, 2005.

🔑 Biblical definition:

🔑 *Isaiah 1:4—Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the LORD, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged.*

🔑 *Jeremiah 7:24a—But they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts,*

According to these two verses, should evil be seen merely as horrific acts that man commits against others?

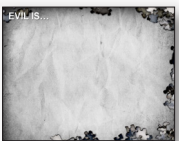
Quickly point out that evil needs to be defined in relation to God in two main ways. First, evil is characterized by wrong attitudes toward God. Secondly, evil is characterized by failure to obey His perfect commands.



(DISPLAY **EVIL IS...1.**)

🔑 Evil is wrong attitudes toward God: “They have forsaken the LORD, they have despised the Holy One of Israel.”

🔑 Evil is failure to obey God's commands: “But they did not obey...but walked in their own counsels...”



(DISPLAY **EVIL IS...2.**)

🔑 Evil actions flow out of the sinful heart: “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person...” (Matthew 15:19-20a)

🔑 Evil often expresses itself as a variety of wrong actions toward other people: lying about others, stealing, quarreling, disobeying parents...radical Hutus murdering 800,000 men, women, and children.

Though Satan is evil, he cannot force anyone to do evil against his will. “The devil made me do it” is not a valid excuse for doing evil. People commit evil through the sinful cravings of their own hearts. And though evil is first and foremost about wrong attitudes toward God and failure to obey His commands, the result is often directed toward other people. One way evil is expressed is in wrong actions toward others.

Based on this definition, Adolf Hitler has committed evil, and the 2-year-old having a temper tantrum has committed evil. This is because all people are by nature sinners



**(Romans 3:23)** and commit evil in the sight of the Lord.

*However, would it be easy for many people to explain why a 2-year-old is having a temper tantrum apart from biblical truth? Yes. For example, the mom might think: "He's tired and just needs a nap." Or, "He'll grow out of it someday." Or, "He just needs more time to learn that he can't have everything he wants."*

*But could the brutal slaughter of 800,000 men, women, and children in 100 days by Hutu radicals be explained away that easily? No.*

These kinds of horrific events point to important realities with which people must wrestle. They cannot simply be explained away by science or secular reasoning. You can't simply say: "Well, if Hitler just had a better education regarding the world's different races, he wouldn't have desired to kill 6 million Jews." These terrible evils that happen in the world serve to "unmask" an underlying problem many people would like to ignore—an underlying problem that can only be rightly understood through the truth of Scripture. There are many questions regarding evil that must be answered through the truth of Scripture.

### Small Group Activity (8-10 minutes)

Have the students turn to the "Looking at the Truth of Scripture" activity in the journal. Listed are several statements regarding evil and corresponding Scriptures. Read each statement and then assign students to quickly look up and read each text. After all the texts are read under each statement, discuss whether or not the statement measures up to the truth of Scripture. Then have the students rewrite each statement so it reflects the truth. (There are examples of how this truth could be written in parentheses below for the teacher's reference.)

1. God does evil, or can be blamed for the evil of others.

***Psalm 5:4***

***James 1:13-14***

***1 John 1:5***

(God does no evil. People do evil out of their own sinful desires.)

2. God ignores the evil that man does.

***Psalm 5:5***

***Isaiah 13:11***

(God hates evil and will punish those who do evil.)

3. God is not sovereign over evil.

***Mark 1:27***

***2 Peter 2:4***

(God is sovereign over evil.)

4. God cannot cause evil committed by Satan or man to work for His good purposes.

**Genesis 50:20**

**Acts 4:27-28**

(God causes evil to accomplish His good purposes.)

## Large Group Lesson



(DISPLAY **TRUTH ABOUT EVIL**, and direct the students to this portion of the journal.)

- ☞ God does no evil. People do evil out of their own sinful desires.
- ☞ God hates evil and will punish those who do evil.
- ☞ God is sovereign over evil.
- ☞ God ordains evil to accomplish His good purposes.

These truths cause some people to question God's Word, because some of these truths seem like they contradict each other. For example:

*If God is sovereign over evil and Satan, why didn't God prevent Satan from tempting Eve in the Garden of Eden, thereby sparing the human race from sin? Why would God allow evil to enter the world when it's the very thing He hates? How could there possibly be any good purpose in the horrific murder of 500,000 Ugandans or 6 million Jews or 20 million Russians at the hands of evil men?*

To give an answer to these questions do one of the following options:

### VIDEO AND PLAYER

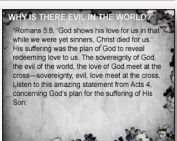
#### Illustration

Option 1: Play the video "Why is There Evil in this World?"

Option 2: (DISPLAY **WHY** SLIDES and the following explanation from Pastor John Piper.)

- ☞ *...the reason this terrorized and troubled world exists is to make a place for Jesus Christ the Son of God to suffer and die for our sins. The reason there is terror in the world is so that Christ could be terrorized. The reason there is trouble in the world is so that Christ could be troubled. The reason there is pain in the world is so that Christ, the Son of God, could feel pain. This is the world God prepared specifically for the suffering, agony, and death of His Son. This is the world where God made the deepest display of His love known in the suffering of His Son, Jesus Christ.*

(DISPLAY **WHY 2.**)

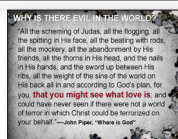


*Romans 5:8, 'God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' His suffering was the plan of God to reveal redeeming love to us. The sovereignty of God, the evil of the world, the love of God meet at the cross—sovereignty, evil, love meet at the cross. Listen to this amazing statement from Acts 4, concerning God's plan for the suffering of His Son:*



(DISPLAY **WHY 3.**)

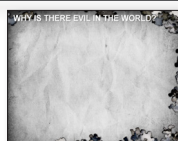
*'Truly in this city [Jerusalem] there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.'*



(DISPLAY **WHY 4.**)

*All the scheming of Judas, all the flogging, all the spitting in His face, all the beating with rods, all the mockery, all the abandonment by His friends, all the thorns in His head, and the nails in His hands, and the sword up between His ribs, all the weight of the sins of the world on His back all in and according to God's plan, for you, that you might see what love is; and could have never seen if there were not a world of terror in which Christ could be terrorized on your behalf.<sup>2</sup>*

After using one of these illustrations, pick up one of the bags of torn paper pieces that the small groups used at the beginning of today's lesson. Hold up one of the solid, dark pieces. Remind the students that, all by itself, this torn paper seems ugly and useless. However, when it is seen in the context of the completed picture, the way it fits into a beautiful picture makes sense.



(DISPLAY **WHY 5**, and direct students to this portion of the journal.)

*Why is there evil in the world?*

- ☞ To display the immeasurable riches of His grace toward us in Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 2:7b)

This truth can also be likened to a picture—a picture God Himself is completing. Intentionally included in that picture are “pieces” of evil, meaning the existence of evil and individual acts of evil, even horrific evil events committed by men against millions of people. Apart from seeing the completed picture, evil doesn't seem to make sense. It is mysterious to us. But when seen and understood from God's perspective, it all fits together perfectly and will accomplish His good and perfect will.



(DISPLAY **GOD WILLS.**)<sup>3</sup>

2. Quote from "Where Is God? The Supremacy of Christ in the Age of Terror," a sermon delivered September 11, 2005, as published at [www.desiringGOD.org](http://www.desiringGOD.org).

God wills what He hates in order to accomplish what He loves.

VIDEO AND PLAYER

- 🔊 The greatest evil done by man in all history was in putting Jesus to death.
- 🔊 The greatest love shown to man in all history was in God redeeming evil men through the death of Jesus.

End the lesson by showing the short (3-minute) video “The Last Painting,” which graphically ties in the beginning small group activity with the end of the lesson.

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the Small Group Application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** Evil is wrong attitudes toward God and a failure to obey His commands.

**Think About It:** Review the biblical definition of evil as presented in the lesson.

Evil is wrong attitudes toward God: ***They have forsaken the Lord, they have despised the Holy One of Israel.—Isaiah 1:4b***

Evil is failure to obey God's commands: ***...they did not obey...but walked in their own counsels...—Jeremiah 7:24***

This is not the way most people define evil in our culture. How do you think most people define evil? Why do many people only use the word in reference to horrific acts of cruelty against other people? However, how do these horrific deeds serve to expose the following kinds of lies:

- All people are basically good.
- Evil is just an illusion created by religions.
- People do bad things because they suffer from a lack of education, or because they are poor.

**Examine Your Heart:** Read ***Ephesians 2:1-5*** and ask: *How do these verses point to the extent and scope of evil in the world? Do you tend to think of evil simply in terms of “other people”? Do you think of evil simply in terms of people who commit terrible acts against others, such as murder? Do you acknowledge your own sin and the offense that it is to a holy God? Are you a person who “was dead in your sins” or are you a person who “is dead in your sins”? None of us can say to God, “Well, I am not evil like Stalin, or Hitler, so I am okay. I haven’t murdered anyone.”*

**Live It:** With your small group, make a list of the things you see around you that are evil as evil is defined in this lesson—attitudes that are against God, and disobedience to His commands. Review the list. Did most of the list involve horrible actions like murder? Did some things seem less evil than others—lying, for example)? What does this say about God’s standard in comparison to ours?

3. This statement is modified from one made originally by Joni Eareckson Tada, as quoted in her book *When God Weeps*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing, 2000). Her original quote is as follows: “God allows what He hates to accomplish what He loves.”

- **Truth Statement:** God wills that evil exists and is sovereign over all evil.

**Think About It:** Review the four truths about evil from the journal activity:

1. God does no evil. People do evil out of their own sinful desires.
2. God hates evil and will punish those who do evil.
3. God is sovereign over evil.
4. God ordains evil to accomplish His good purposes.

Encourage the students to share any struggles or questions they have about any of these truths. These kinds of struggles are common with many people because we, as finite and sinful people, are trying to understand the unsearchable and inscrutable ways of an infinite God (**Romans 11:33**). How can the beginning activity with the torn picture pieces, the comments by Dr. John Piper, and “The Last Painting” video help us to better understand these truths?

Review any corresponding verses under any statements that they find troubling or confusing. God's truth is objective and absolute, and we are called to submit our mind and feelings to God's truth and not try to shape and define God's truth by our feelings.

**Examine Your Heart:** *Are you trying to define God and His ways on your own terms? Why won't this work? Does your heart tend to accept hard truths or rebel against them? Does rebellion against God ever “win” in the long run? Do these truths about evil and God's sovereign power and purposes fill you with hope, or with anger or despair? If you are trusting in Jesus, are these truths filling you with an unshakable confidence in the midst of living in a world in which there is so much evil? Are there any verses that have been helpful to you in this way?*

**Live It:** Take the time to pray quietly about a situation that seems wrong, unjust, or unfair. Commit the situation to God and ask Him for the ability to trust His goodness and mercy to be at work in the situation, even though you may not see it now. Pray for God's will to be done and for righteousness to prevail.

- **Truth Statement:** God caused the greatest evil to accomplish the His greatest good—to show the immeasurable worth of His love for sinners by the death of His Son.

**Think About It:** Read **Ephesians 1:3-7** and **2 Timothy 1:8-9**. When did God plan the redemption of sinners through the death of His Son? Why is this significant in understanding why God willed for sin and evil to enter the world? Why might this truth be hard for some people to understand and accept? How does the existence of evil help to better demonstrate the immeasurable riches of God's grace in Jesus? (The following illustration may help: Suppose you buy a new flashlight and want to show your friend how powerful it is. Would you demonstrate its brightness in a room that is brightly lit or one that is dark? Why would the dark room better display the flashlight's power? Is it because the flashlight is actually dimmer in a brightly lit room? No. The power is still the same, but by being displayed in a dark room, we better see its true brilliance.) God has

decided that the fullness of His holiness, power, love, grace, etc. can best be displayed and admired in a world that includes the presence of evil.

**Examine Your Heart:** *Have you ever thought about the terrible suffering of Jesus at the hands of evil men? What kinds of evil acts were committed against Him? Why were these acts more offensive than any acts committed against others throughout history? Are you in amazement that God sovereignly predestined these acts so that millions of evil men, women, and children would be saved? What does this tell you about God? Are you trusting Jesus to sovereignly cause all evil in the world to accomplish His good purposes? Are you trusting God to cause any evil committed against you by others to work for your good?*

**Live It:** With your small group, pray about an evil situation in the world (e.g., Christian persecution, abortion, terrorism, human slavery, child labor, or child abuse, etc.). Pray that God would use the evil situation to accomplish good for specific people and individuals who are affected. Pray that God would show His good purposes to Christians who are affected by that situation. Is there anything you can do to reflect Christ to people suffering in this situation?

- **Truth Statement:** Jesus' response to evil provides a model for how Christians should respond to evil.

**Think About It:** How should Christians respond to evil? Read one or more of the following verses for discussion and practical application:

- **Proverbs 24:19-20**
- **Romans 12:9-21**
- **Ephesians 6:10-13**
- **1 Peter 4:12-19**
- **1 Peter 5:6-11**

**Examine Your Heart:** *Is your first reaction toward evil, whether the evil is committed against others or yourself, a biblical response? What kinds of struggles do you face when confronting evil? Does it sometimes seem as if evil deeds go unpunished? Which of the above Bible texts address this? Are you trusting that God will judge justly? Are you trusting that His timing for doing this is the right timing?*

**Live It:** Are there any situations in your life right now that don't seem fair or right? Without naming specific people, share the situation with your small group. How are you responding to that situation? What godly response would you like to have? Would you like your small group to pray for you?

- **Truth Statement:** The evil that exists serves to point us to God and to His solution to evil.

**Think About It:** How can the presence of evil events in the world, such as those related in the lesson, serve to point people to biblical truth, especially to the Gospel? Read the following from Pastor John Piper:

*A great evil happens—say the holocaust with 6,000,000 murders [of Jews]. Or the Stalinist Soviet gulag with many more than that sent to their deaths. In the midst of these horrors, the human soul, that had been blithely pursuing its worldly pleasures with scarcely a thought about God and with no serious belief in any absolutes like evil and good, or right and wrong—happily living in the dream-world of relativism—suddenly is confronted with an evil so horrible and so great as to make the soul scream out with ultimate moral indignation: No! This is wrong! This is evil!*

*And for the first time in their life they hear themselves speaking with absolute conviction. They have a conviction of absolute reality. They know now beyond the shadow of a doubt that such a thing as evil exists. They admit that all their life up till then was a game. And now they are confronted with the stark question: If there is such a thing as absolute evil—if there is a moral reality that is above and different from the mere physical processes of evolutionary energy plus time plus matter—then where does it come from, and what is it based on?*

*And many people discover in this moment of greatest evil that there is only one satisfactory answer: There is a God above the universe who sets the standards of good and evil and writes them on the human heart.<sup>4</sup>*

**Examine Your Heart:** Can you relate to his statements? Have evil events ever caused you to stop, take notice of the condition of the world, and desperately search for answers? Where do you search for the answers? Do you believe the Bible is the only reliable source for the truth? Do you like the answers you receive from God's Word? Why or why not? Have you the attitude of Job as expressed in **Job 42:1-3**?

**Live It:** Encourage your students to look for opportunities to share God's truths when evil events are revealed in the news and elsewhere. How can the students lovingly and gently share the gospel with people who are rightly troubled by the evil that they see in the world?

- **Truth Statement:** Christians are called to respond in godly ways to evil and to the suffering of others.

**Think About It:** Should Christians be indifferent to the evil suffered by others? Read and discuss one or more of the following: **Psalms 82:3-4; Proverbs 24:11-12; Luke 6:35-36.**

4. Quote from "Where Is God? The Supremacy of Christ in the Age of Terror," a sermon delivered September 11, 2005, as published at [www.desiringGOD.org](http://www.desiringGOD.org).



How can these verses be lived out in Christian love? What ways could they be practically applied? Can you give an actual example in which people were rescued from the actions of evil men?

**Examine Your Heart:** *When you see the suffering of others, are you moved to respond biblically and in Christian love? Are you typically indifferent or compassionate toward those who suffer evil at the hands of others? Why? In what ways could you grow in this area? Are there any opportunities in your life to help bring defense to the defenseless, or to protect someone else from evil?*

**Live It:** Pray that God would move your heart to help those who are suffering the effects of evil. List a few practical ways you could help or rescue someone who has suffered due to the evil actions of others (e.g., speaking out against abortion, sponsoring a Compassion child, speaking out against human slavery around the world, writing a congressman, or writing a speech or essay for school on one of these topics, etc.).

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week.**

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 33

“The Great Steel Cross” article

# Governments and Rulers

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > Since God establishes governments, and they rule under God's supreme authority, we are to submit to them.
- > Governments and rulers are to reward good conduct and punish wrong conduct.
- > We are not to subject ourselves to governing authorities in situations that would require us to sin as the only option.
- > Ultimately, all governments and rulers serve to accomplish God's good purposes.
- > Government is not to be seen as a substitute for God or individual responsibility.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                   |                        |               |
|-------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Romans 13:1-7  | 4. Deuteronomy 6:6-7   | 7. Psalm 20:7 |
| 2. Ephesians 4:25 | 5. Acts 5:29           |               |
| 3. Ephesians 5:11 | 6. 1 Corinthians 2:7-9 |               |

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## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 34
- > 10 Picture Symbol and 10 Description cards (cut along dotted lines and then cut cards in half to produce 40 separate pieces for each copied page; make enough additional copies so each student will receive at least two pieces; place all pieces in a bag) **Note: If you have a small class, you'll still want at least 40 separate pieces from each copied page.**
- > Parent Memo for Lesson 34 (one per student)

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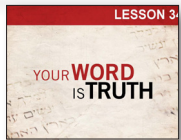
## OTHER VISUALS:

- > Bible
- > Driver's License

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## PREPARATION:

Note about opening activity: The activity described in this lesson works best with a larger class (20+ students). The main point is to demonstrate how, apart from structured governance of rules and leadership, chaos is the norm. For smaller classes, you could substitute a similar type of game that accomplishes the same goal, or simply have each student pick four or five pieces from the bag.

(DISPLAY **LESSON 34.**)

## Large Group Activity (approximately 4 minutes)

PICTURE SYMBOL  
AND DESCRIPTION  
CARDS

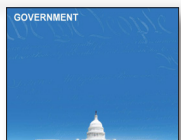
Quickly have each student pick out two pieces from the bag of **Picture Symbol and Description cards**. Explain that each piece is either half a picture of something, or half of a word description. The goal is for each student to find the other half of what he has on his card, and also find the corresponding pair of cards (either the words or the image, depending upon whether he has a word card or an image card). For example, if he has a picture with half a fire truck, he must find the person who has the other half of the fire truck picture and the people whose cards have the words “fire” and “truck.” A complete match will require a total of four separate pieces. The activity will be timed, and the students will have exactly one minute (or two minutes for a large class) to match all the descriptions and pictures. After each student has found his matches, he should bring the four matched cards to you. The adult leaders will not be allowed to help in any way. The only instruction provided will be the signal to begin and the signal to end.

*(After the activity): Did you experience any frustrations with this activity? What, if anything, made it difficult to complete in the allotted time? Can you think of anything that would have made the activity easier to complete? Would the addition of more people and more cards have made the activity more or less chaotic? Why?*

## Large Group Lesson

(DISPLAY **PICTURES + DESCRIPTIONS.**)

All the cards could be considered parts of a wider topic. Ask the students if they can identify the larger topic based on the pictures and descriptions.

(DISPLAY **GOVERNMENT.**)

Government is a very important topic. All people, in every part of the world, are affected by governments and by those who rule within those governments.

- ✎ *What would you say is the main purpose of government?*
- ✎ *Overall, would you say that governments are something good or bad?*

Just as with everything else, the Bible gives us the truth about how to understand governments and those who rule.

- ✎ Have the students turn to **Romans 13:1-5** and the corresponding portion of the journal. Choose one or two students to read the text.

*Romans 13:1-5—Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience.*

What is the main command in the text? [Verse 1: Let every person be subject to the governing authorities.]

What is the main and most important reason given for obeying this command? [Verses 1-2: Authorities exist under God's authority, so resisting them means resisting God.]



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 1** and direct students to this part of the journal.)

1. God establishes governments, and they rule under God's supreme authority.  
(**Romans 13:1**)

According to verse 1, ultimately was it the Founding Fathers and the Revolutionary War that established the government of the United States of America? No. Ultimately it was decisively instituted by God.

And according to this verse, do the voters of the United States ultimately choose who will become our next president? No. God is the one who decisively appoints the president and any other rulers, using the secondary means of voting to accomplish his purpose.

Explain that some people may object to the scope of these verses, because it doesn't exclude bad governments, especially repressive governments or those ruled by harsh dictators.

*Do you think Paul was unaware of the possibility of the existence of terrible governments and rulers? Was Paul simply being naive when he wrote these words of Scripture? (Allow the students to respond.)*



(DISPLAY **REALITIES.**)

- Was the dominant ruling power in New Testament times

- ☞ Was responsible for the persecution of the early church, which at times including putting Christians to death
- ☞ Promoted pagan religious beliefs

*Did Paul have a naive view of governments and rulers? No. He lived under Roman rule, the same rule that would eventually lead to his own death.*

Ultimately all governments and rulers are instituted by God—even those governments and rulers that deny and rebel against God's authority. And even the harsh and repressive government of Rome served to provide needed and positive benefits for the great majority of its citizens. Ask the students to quickly state any positive benefits that the Roman government provided for its people. After a few responses...



(DISPLAY **BENEFITS.**)

- ☞ Established laws for a more ordered society
- ☞ Developed better means of transportation
- ☞ Provided protection for its people
- ☞ Promoted advancements in knowledge and technology

The Roman road is an example of advancements in transportation, which proves that even an evil government can benefit its citizens. Recall the beginning activity. One of the reasons the activity may have been frustrating and even unsuccessful, was due to the lack of instruction and leadership. It was as if every student was left to simply figure things out on his own, each doing what seemed best in his own mind. In a small group, this might be easier to manage, but in societies with hundreds or thousands, or even millions of people, governments help to establish a certain amount of order that benefits society.

*Look again at verses 3-4 of **Romans 13**. According to these verses, what is God's intention for what governments and rulers are to do? [reward good conduct and punish bad conduct] What do the word's "God's servant" mean? [rulers who do this are rightly are carrying out God's role for them]*



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 2** and direct students to this part of the journal.)

1. God establishes governments, and they rule under God's supreme authority.
2. Governments and rulers are God's servants, established for our benefit, to reward good conduct and punish wrong conduct (**Romans 13:3-4**).

Display a **driver's license**. Point out that this is a legal, government-issued document. Ask the students if a license like this is simply given to anyone who asks for it.

## DRIVER'S LICENSE

*What are some of the qualifications for getting a driver's license?*

[You have to be a certain age and must fulfill certain requirements, such as driver's instruction, written tests, and driving competency.]

*Through this instruction, you learn about laws such as this...*



(DISPLAY **SPEED LIMIT.**)

*Why would this be “for your good”? Why not let anyone who wants to drive, drive? And why not let everyone drive at his own speed? (Allow the students to respond.)*

Governments and rulers are to put laws in place that serve to benefit people and create a more ordered and good society. Rulers and governments are to be God's servants in making laws and rules that **promote** right behavior and **discourage** wrong behavior. There are rulers who will distort and abuse this intention. But even evil rulers serve to maintain some kind of order in a society. There would be chaos if five-year-olds were allowed to drive, or if everyone could choose his own speed on the road.

### Illustration

Quickly relate the following true story: A 15-year-old boy stole a car and drove it on a busy city street. He was well beyond the speed limit and out of control. He hit another car, killing the mother who was driving and seriously injuring her two young children. The young man was arrested by the police and put in jail to await a trial. At the trial, he was sentenced to prison as punishment for his wrong conduct. Although the governing authorities could not stop his wrong behavior, they did demonstrate their rightful authority in punishing him.

### Illustration

Briefly relate an example of what happens when governing authorities are removed from a situation: During hurricane Katrina in the city of New Orleans, many police officers left the city for their own safety. Many people in the city stayed behind. What did some of those people do in the absence of governing authorities? They began looting—breaking into the abandoned stores to steal everything they could find. Governing authorities are intended by God to play an important role in restraining evil conduct.



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 3.**)

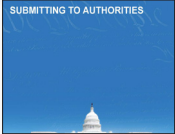
1. God establishes governments, and they rule under God's supreme authority.
2. Governments and rulers are God's servants, established for our benefit, to reward good conduct and punish wrong conduct.

*Therefore, because the first two statements are true, what are we—you and I—to do? Look at verses 1 and 5 again.*

Direct the students to the following portion in the journal.

- ✎ 3. We are to submit to the governing authorities, and strive to live peacefully under their rule (**Romans 13:2, 5; 1 Timothy 2:1-4**).

*According to verse 2, if you resist the governing authorities, who are you actually resisting? [God] According to verse 5, what should be another incentive for obeying the authorities? [avoiding God's wrath, and for the sake of your conscience—having a “clear” conscience]*



(DISPLAY **SUBMITTING.**)

*Why is submission to authorities a means of submitting to God?*

### Illustration

Briefly give the following example: Parents who are going out for an evening provide a babysitter for their young children. Before they leave, they tell the children to listen to and obey the babysitter. What is the main reason the children should listen to and obey the sitter? Should the children make the decision whether or not to obey based on how well they like or dislike the sitter? No. They are to obey because it's their parents' desire for them. If they disobey, they will ultimately have to answer to their parents, not the baby sitter. In a similar way, we are to recognize governing authorities as appointed by God. We are to submit to them because it is God's desire for us. And if we don't submit, we will ultimately have to answer to God.

After making these three true statements about governments and rulers and our response, Paul gives us a concrete example of how to apply these truths.

*Look at verses 6 and 7 of **Romans 13**.*

- ✎ *What example does Paul use? [paying taxes]*

Read verses 6-7:

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*Romans 13:6-7—For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.*

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*Why do you think Paul might have used the example of paying taxes?*

- ✎ *This form is from the United States federal government. By law, many Americans are required to pay a certain amount of tax—money—to the government every year.*

*In what way might taxes benefit society? [e.g., provide for important services, such as military defense, laws, law enforcement, roads, water & sewer, fire departments, etc.]*



*But many people do not like to be forced to pay taxes, having to give their hard-earned money to the government. I could think of a lot of ways I would like to use that money. What if I thought something like: "Wouldn't it be better if I lied a little bit on my income tax form so I could keep more of my money? I could then give more money to my church and to missions work."?*



*What do these verses say to that kind of thinking?* [Submit and pay your taxes!]

(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL VIEW SUMMARY.**)

1. God establishes governments, and they rule under God's supreme authority.
2. Governments and rulers are God's servants, established for our benefit, to reward good conduct and punish wrong conduct.
3. We are to submit to the governing authorities and strive to live peacefully under their rule.

## Small Group Discussion (6-7 minutes)

Explain to the students that you are going to now give them two scenarios to discuss in their small groups. Each scenario will provide a challenge to Biblical View 3 that you want them to think about and respond to in the journal.

**Scenario 1:** You are a science teacher in a public school and, by law, are required to teach evolution (Darwinism) to your students. The curriculum states: "Humans evolved from lower life forms over millions of years, through random and natural processes." *Should you submit and obey?*

Ask the students why this scenario seems to pose a challenge to Biblical View 3. *Should that view apply in this case? Why or why not?* Can they give any biblical examples or specific texts that would support their answer? Read the following texts as an example: **Ephesians 4:25** and

**Ephesians 5:11.** Is there a way you could teach about evolution in a way that also fulfills **Romans 13:1** to the best of your ability? [e.g., you could say, "According to the theory of evolution..." or "People who believe in evolution state that..."]

**Scenario 2:** A new law is passed in our country: Parents are no longer allowed to give their children any biblical instruction. *Should your parents submit and obey?*

*Why does this scenario pose a challenge to Biblical View 3? Should it apply in this case? Why or why not?* Can they give any biblical examples or specific texts that would support their answer? Read the following text as an example: **Deuteronomy 6:6-7.** *In this scenario, is there a way you could fulfill both **Deuteronomy 6** and **Romans 13:1**? Would one text take priority over another in this situation?*



(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

## Large Group Lesson

The truths in **Romans 13:1-7** are to be the "norm" for how we are to see and understand the role of governments, rulers, and laws. However, there are certain situations



when it would not be right to submit to them...when it would require us, as the only option, to sin.

(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL VIEW 4** and direct the students to this portion of the journal.)

4. We are not to submit to governing authorities in situations that would require us to sin as the only option. (**Acts 5:29**)

Give the following *brief biblical* examples:

- In the book of **Daniel**, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon made a law that everyone had to bow down and worship a golden image he had made. Three young men named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused because it would have been sinful, breaking God's command not to bow down and worship idols.
- In the book of **Exodus**, Pharaoh the king of Egypt ordered that all Hebrew baby boys be killed by the midwives—murdering innocent children. The midwives feared God and did not submit to Pharaoh's order.
- In the book of **Acts**, Peter and the apostles were preaching the truth of the gospel. The religious authorities ordered them to stop. But they would not, saying, "We must obey God rather than men." (**Acts 5:29**) God had clearly commanded them to preach the gospel.

For the most part, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego submitted to the authority of King Nebuchadnezzar. For the most part, the people of Israel submitted to Pharaoh. For the most part, Peter and the apostles submitted to the authorities. They all understood that God had established these governing authorities for the common good of society. They understood that God's intention was that these rulers make laws and govern in a way that promotes and rewards good conduct, and restrains and punishes bad conduct. However, governments and rulers do not always do this. This is a fallen world, filled with sinful people who act wickedly, and some of these people rule and govern. As we learned in the previous lesson on evil, history is filled with evidence of evil rulers and governments that rewarded wrong behavior and punished good behavior.

*So why does God establish governments and raise up leaders who sometimes promote what is wrong and punish what is good, doing the very things they are not to do?*

- 🔊 Have the students turn to **1 Corinthians 2:7-9**, and to the corresponding part of the journal.

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*1 Corinthians 2:7-9—But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"—*

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*What secret and hidden wisdom of God are these verses referring to? [the crucifixion of Jesus]*

Explain that Pontius Pilate was the Roman governing authority in Judea at the time of Jesus. Pilate had the authority to release Jesus after his arrest, or to sentence Jesus to be crucified. If Pilate had followed God's intention for government as stated in Romans, he should have rewarded Jesus for good conduct and released him. But, acting in his evil heart, Pilate sentenced Jesus to death.

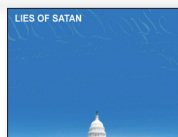
*However, in the end, what did Pilate's evil governance serve to do? [accomplished God's purpose and plan of saving sinners through the death of His Son]*



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 5** and direct the students to this part of the journal.)

5. Ultimately, all governments and rulers serve to accomplish God's good purposes (**1 Corinthians 2:7-9**).

All governments and rulers, whether good or evil, ultimately are established by and receive their authority from God. God intends that these governments rule for the common good of people by promoting and rewarding what is good, and restraining and punishing what is wrong. Therefore, whenever rightly required, we are to submit to their authority and recognize that even evil governments and rulers ultimately serve to accomplish all of God's purposes. However, people often do not view government with these truths in mind.



(DISPLAY **LIES**.)

- ✎ Government is ultimately established by the will of the people.
- ✎ Government has no authority over an individual's freedom.
- ✎ Government is a necessary evil.

There is one other important lie of Satan that needs to be addressed, too.

- ✎ Government exists to supply for your needs and to satisfy your desires.

*What do you think is meant by this last statement?*

Explain that many people increasingly look to government to meet all their needs and remove the need for personal responsibility. Use the following types of statements that demonstrate this thinking:

- If this man becomes president, my life will get better through his direct involvement in meeting my needs..
- Good government is what will bring me and my family happiness.

- Government will protect me from harm and disasters.
- The government is responsible for caring for and teaching my children.
- The government should make sure that I always have a job.
- I don't need to think about how I manage my money now, because the government will be there to care for me in the future.

Point out that in this type of thinking, people are actually seeing government as some kind of substitute for God, and also as an exemption from personal responsibility. There are even certain forms of government, such as communism and socialism, that encourage people to think this way—to look to the government as one's provider instead of God. That is why, throughout history, one of the first things a communist government would do is close churches and strictly limit any Christian witness. Government was to be seen as the ultimate provider and ruler in every aspect of life. But even in a non-communist country, such as the United States, people can put their trust in government instead of God. Every Christian needs to guard against this and not be deceived by the lies of Satan.



(DISPLAY **PSALM 20:7.**)

*Psalm 20:7—Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.*



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 6.**)

Briefly review the six truths, and direct the students to complete the sixth point in the journal:

1. God establishes governments and they rule under God's supreme authority.
2. Governments and rulers are God's servants, established for our benefit, to reward good conduct and punish wrong conduct.
3. We are to submit to the governing authorities, and strive to live peacefully under their rule.
4. We are not to submit to governing authorities in situations that would require us to sin as the only option.
5. Ultimately, all governments and rulers serve to accomplish God's good purposes.

6. Government is not to negate individual responsibility or to be seen as a substitute for God (*Psalm 20:7*).

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the Small Group Application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** Since God establishes governments and they rule under God's supreme authority, we are to submit to them.

**Think About It:** Read *Daniel 2:21a* and ask: Have you viewed governments and rulers through a biblical lens (e.g., do you mainly see governments and rulers as ultimately being derived by elections, revolutions, or military might)? How do some forms of government and some authorities do a better job of fulfilling God's intention for government (e.g., governments that pattern their laws more closely to biblical commands for determining right and wrong behavior regarding work, money, and moral conduct; rulers that see themselves as servants and not masters, patterning their leadership with biblical principles, etc.)? In what ways do we all benefit from the government that God has established in this country, state, and city? What do you think is involved in being a good citizen?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you have a heartfelt thankfulness to God for the government and authorities of your country, state, and city? If not, why not, and why does your attitude need to change in this area? Can you be thankful to God and yet, at the same time, be displeased with the way government and leaders fail to properly follow God's intention? How could you do this?*

**Live It:** Briefly describe the form of government that has been established under God in our own country. (The United States is a constitutional republic.) Have the students make a list of several reasons we should be thankful to God for this type of government (e.g., it is founded on a written constitution, outlining a governing structure that is intended to balance power; citizens have been given rights and are free to participate at many levels; allows many personal freedoms; etc.). Next, have the students make a list of a few influential government authorities, both those they tend to like and also those they do not like. Finally, read *1 Timothy 2:1-4* and *1 Peter 2:16-17*, and have a time of prayer for our government and its leaders.

- **Truth Statement:** Governments and rulers are to reward good conduct and punish wrong conduct.

**Think About It:** Review *Romans 13:3-4*. Ask the students to give specific examples of how our own government and authorities **rightly** demonstrate these verses (e.g., lawmakers write laws against stealing, murder, etc.; police act to arrest those who violate these laws; courts and judges determine guilt and which punishment should be ap-

plied—a fine, jail, death penalty, etc.). Now have the students give specific examples of how our government wrongly uses its God-given authority (e.g., laws that have made sin “legal”—abortion, same-sex marriage, the imposition of Darwinism (atheistic evolution) upon impressionable children, etc.). Read verse 4 again. What does it mean that “he does not bear the sword in vain”? When the authorities rightly bear the sword against a wrongdoer, what are they demonstrating? How can this be a good thing for the society as a whole?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you naturally “bristle” against authority? If so, why? [Sinful nature does not like to submit.] How can God use submission to governing authorities (even evil ones) help teach you have a more submissive heart toward God? Do you believe the truth of **Romans 13:2**, that if you resist God's appointed authorities you are really resisting God? Do you view our government in a skeptical way, or are you indifferent to it? Are you thankful to God for the many ways in which our government rewards good behavior and punishes bad behavior? Do you grieve and pray over the many ways in which our government rewards bad behavior? If not, why not?*

**Live It:** Encourage the students to make a prayer list this week that includes both things to be thankful for regarding government, and specific requests for our government and authorities, so that **1 Timothy 2:1-4** becomes a more frequent part of their prayer life. Challenge them to seek ways in which they could be a better and more active citizen, since God has uniquely placed them within a governing structure (at least in many parts of the world) that encourages citizens participation. For example, they could write a letter or e-mail to their congressman concerning an important topic such as abortion or same-sex marriage. Or, they could visit a local police or fire station and give these public servants a word of thanks for their service to the community, etc.

- **Truth Statement:** We are not to subject ourselves to governing authorities in situations that would require us to sin as the only option.

**Think About It:** Why are the words “as the only option” important at the end of the above truth statement? (You may want to use scenarios 1 and 2 to illustrate the difference. Scenario 1 leaves room for a Christian to be truthful and also submit to the state.) Why must Christians be very careful in discerning when to apply this principle? Sometimes obeying **Romans 13:1** might cause us to suffer. (For example, suppose the government decided to place a huge tax on all churches. Would this text still apply? What does verse 7 say?) Read **1 Peter 3:13-14**. Why is it better to suffer, even financially or physically, for doing what is right? Do you think Christians sometimes wrongly submit to governing authorities in order to avoid suffering? Can you give examples, both in the Bible and others, in which believers rightly disobeyed the governing authorities? (For example, Rahab refused to reveal the true whereabouts of the Israelite spies in **Joshua 2**, Corrie ten Boom hid Jews from the Nazis, etc.) Did any of these believers suffer due to their actions? (Corrie ten Boom was arrested and sent to a concentration camp.)

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you try to use the exception of the above truth statement to justify not complying with governing authorities—even in “small” things like following fishing regulations? Or, are you a person who tends to simply follow the rules without ever discerning whether or not the rules may actually be requiring you to sin? If you are more like the first example, who are you resisting? Does God care whether or not you submit to the fishing regulations? If you are more like the second example, who are you really fearing, God or man? If you fear man more than God, will it go well with you? How can you grow in these areas?*

**Live It:** Encourage the students to read and study one of the biblical examples found in the "At Home" portion of the journal. Challenge students to practice God-honoring submission this week to the authorities in their lives—parents, teachers, coaches, etc.

- **Truth Statement:** Ultimately, all governments and rulers serve to accomplish God's good purposes.

**Think About It:** Ask the students to recall Pharaoh from the book of Exodus. In what ways was he an evil leader? Read **Exodus 9:16**. What truth does this verse demonstrate? How did God do this through Pharaoh? Recall that throughout the Bible, God raised up governments and leaders (both good and bad) to accomplish His purposes. For example, He established the powerful Babylonians, and then sent them to conquer Judah as judgment for turning away from God. Ask the students if they can think of contemporary examples of this. Have you ever thought of how God might have raised up evil rulers and bad governments to accomplish His perfect purposes? Does God also raise up good governments and rulers to restrain evil ones?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you have a hard time believing how even a bad government is still better than no government? Do you become frustrated by the failure of all governments and rulers to ultimately do what is good and right? What condition is this evidence of? [our sinful hearts] How does your own heart reflect this in the little areas of your life over which you "govern"? Who is the only Ruler who always does what is right and just? Are you looking forward to the day when He will establish His perfect kingdom over all the earth, doing away with all other forms of government? Or, does that seem unreal to you?*

**Live It:** Spend time praying for Christ's rule in your heart by grace, through faith. Pray that God would help you to submit your heart to His rule. Are there any specific ways you can do that this week? If so, what are they?

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week.**



## **Send Home**

Parent Memo for Lesson 34

# War

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > War is a reality of living in a fallen and sinful world.
- > God has ordained that government bear the sword at times.
- > Christians have developed “Just War” criteria to help determine when it is biblically justified for governments to go to war.
- > Jesus will return to earth in the future and wage a final and victorious battle against evil.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                     |                   |                        |
|---------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Matthew 5:39, 44 | 4. Mark 12:31     | 7. Romans 13:3-4       |
| 2. Romans 12:19-21  | 5. Proverbs 24:11 | 8. Revelation 19:11-16 |
| 3. John 2:13-17     | 6. Isaiah 1:17    |                        |

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## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 35            | > “Who Would Jesus Bomb? War, Peace, and the Christian” article (one per student) |
| > Bumper Sticker Slogans (one per student)    | > “Did Jesus Teach Pacifism?” article (one per student)                           |
| > Parent Memo for Lesson 35 (one per student) |   |

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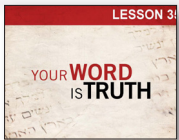
## OTHER VISUALS:

- > Bible

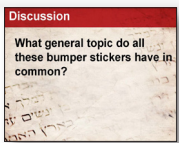
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## PREPARATION FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS:

If you plan to do the small group application using the “Who Would Jesus Bomb” article (listed above), take time before the class meets to highlight the paragraph that illustrates the feelings of “Chad,” and the paragraph that illustrates the viewpoints of “Jessica.”

(DISPLAY **LESSON 35.**)

## Small Group Discussion (4 minutes)

(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

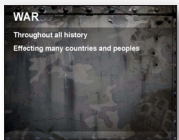
Hand out the Bumper Sticker Slogans for students to read:

- War is not the answer.
- Visualize world peace.
- Who would Jesus bomb?
- I am already against the next war.
- If you don't stand behind our troops, feel free to stand in front of them.
- So many terrorists, so few bullets.

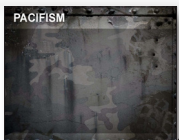
*What general topic do all of these bumper stickers have in common? Which stickers do you think reflect a pacifist message? Which seem to reflect a militaristic message? Of the eight stickers, do you have a particular favorite? If so, what is it and why?*

*Do you believe any of these bumper stickers reflect a biblical view of war? Why or why not?*

## Large Group Lesson

(DISPLAY **WAR.**)

As the slogans on the bumper stickers indicate, there are widely different views about war in our world. Throughout human history there have been wars—both great and small, worldwide and isolated. The Bible itself gives a historical narrative of many wars, particularly those involving God's chosen people of the Old Testament, the Israelites. In today's world, we are still faced with the experience of war, even in our own country. Therefore, it is important that we understand war from a biblical perspective.

(DISPLAY **PACIFISM.**)

🔗 Anti-war

- War is not the answer.
- Visualize world peace.
- Who would Jesus bomb?
- I am already against the next war.

These bumper sticker slogans express anti-war sentiments. A position that is 100 percent anti-war is called “pacifism.”

- 🔗 Pacifism is the belief that a state's use of war or violent force is never justified. Many people use the Bible, and especially the words of Jesus, to promote pacifism. As an example, the bumper sticker “Who would Jesus bomb?” is meant to point to important commands of Jesus.

- 🔑 Have the students turn to **Matthew 5:39, 44** and to the related portion of the journal.

*Matthew 5:39, 44—But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also...<sup>44</sup>But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,*

Do these two verses seem to support a pacifist position? At first glance, yes.



(DISPLAY **ROMANS 12:19-21** and direct students to this portion of the journal.)

- 🔑 *Romans 12:19-21—Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

Do these words from Paul seem to confirm Jesus' commands from Matthew 5? Yes.

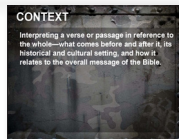


Now we are going to relate these commands from Scripture to a real-life event.

(DISPLAY **NANKING.**)

- 🔑 Japanese troops entered the city and began to brutally torture and kill Chinese civilians—unarmed men, women, and children. Some soldiers reportedly brutally and gruesomely murdered little babies. During a six-week time period, it is estimated that 300,000 civilians were killed.

*So pretend that you were living during this time period. Based only on the verses that we read, what should you tell the people in Nanking to do when they see their enemy murdering their baby? (Have students give some responses.) If we were to take these verses and apply them as a pacifist in this situation, what would happen? [evil would continue unchecked; many more lives would be lost]*



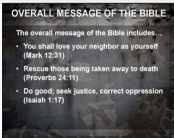
(DISPLAY **CONTEXT.**)

Context is the interpretation of a verse or passage in reference to the whole—what comes before and after it, its historical and cultural setting, and how it relates to the overall message of the Bible.

Jesus' words in Matthew are part of a lengthy sermon that is often called “The Sermon on the Mount.” Jesus is teaching His disciples about the kind of desires, words, and actions that should characterize the Christian life. In other words, Jesus is speaking to individuals about what our primary response should be toward those who do evil against

us. In New Testament times, a slap represented an insult more than an intention to do physical harm. Understanding this helps us put Jesus' words in proper context. For example, "When someone insults you, don't insult him back." So our first inclination in these kinds of situations should be "turning the other cheek" and not seeking to return the revenge for wrong done. The issue in Matthew is that of personal revenge. The issue in war is stopping or punishing evil. Aggression that can cost many people their lives, property, and livelihoods must be stopped so oppression will not continue. As we will see from the overall message of the Bible, stopping oppression is biblical and right.

- ✎ Can you give one biblical example in which Jesus responded to evil with violent force? [toward the money changers in the temple]
- ✎ Jesus, in righteous anger, drives the money changers out of the temple with a whip (John 2:13-17).



(DISPLAY **OVERALL MESSAGE** and direct students to this portion of the journal.)

The overall message of the Bible includes...

- ...You shall love your neighbor as yourself... (**Mark 12:31**)
- Rescue those who are being taken away to death; (**Proverbs 24:11**)
- Do good; seek justice, correct oppression; (**Isaiah 1:17**)

*So with these additional biblical truths in mind, would it have been loving for the Chinese parents in Nanking to hand over their other children to be murdered? No, of course not! Most husbands probably did everything possible to save their wives. Most parents probably tried to defend their children. That was good and right in this situation. To forcibly resist the oppressors would be a matter of self-defense and love of your family, not revenge.*

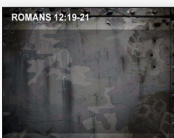


(DISPLAY **MATTHEW 5:39, 44.**)

- ✎ *Matthew 5:39, 44—But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also...<sup>44</sup>But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,*

- ✎ ≠ (does not equal) pacifism (violent response to evil is never justified)

Using Jesus' words in Matthew 5 as supporting pacifism would contradict the overall message of the Bible. These verses are not intended to apply to every situation, including and especially, war. Further evidence for this can be seen from Paul's words, too.



(DISPLAY **ROMANS 12:19-21.**)

- 🔑 *Romans 12:19-21—Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

- 🔑 Then, in the very next chapter, Paul goes on to say...

Have the students now turn to **Romans 13:3-4**, and the related questions in the journal.



(DISPLAY **ROMANS 13:3-4**.)

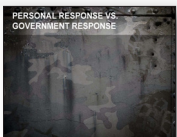
- 🔑 *Romans 13:3-4—For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.*

Recall our lesson on governments and rulers. God has established these earthly authorities in order to promote conduct that is good and punish conduct that is wrong.

*According to these verses, are governments and rulers to simply “turn the other cheek” when it comes to evil? No! How do we know this is the case?*

*What instrument or tool has been given to governments and authorities to carry out this duty and responsibility? [the sword]*

*According to this verse, is the government justified in putting murderers to death? (See **Genesis 9:6**.) That is what the “sword” represents—death. This is true when a nation confronts another nation and threatens the lives of its citizens, as in the case of the Japanese soldiers invading China and killing its people. The governing authorities have a God-given responsibility to use the “sword” in response.*



(DISPLAY **RESPONSE** and direct students to this part of the journal.)

- 🔑 Personal response to evil=Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” (**Romans 12:19**)
- 🔑 Government response to evil=For he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. (**Romans 13:4b**)

Notice the significance of **Romans 13:3-4** coming right after Paul's instructions in **Romans 12** regarding a Christian's response to evil done against the individual. Yes, it

is wrong for Christians to take personal retaliation against evil, but God has said that governments and rulers **should** respond to evil, at times through use of the sword. That is why police officers carry guns and judges have the God-given authority to sentence murderers to death. That is why nations have the God-given authority to have armies and weapons, and even go to war at times.

*Since God has given governments and rulers the power of the sword—even to go to war, does that mean that governments are right to always go to war? For example, it was the Japanese government that sent its army into China. Was it exercising its rightful authority in bearing the sword in this way? (Allow the students to give a few brief responses.)*



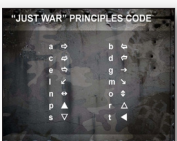
(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL VIEW** and direct students to the question in the journal about when governments are justified in waging war.)

- ☞ When is it right for nations to go to war against other nations and/or evildoers?
- ☞ The “Just War” Principle<sup>1</sup>

In an attempt to determine when it is biblically justified for a government to go to war, Christians from the time of the early church on have attempted to develop a criteria for what might rightly be considered a “Just War.” Although the “Just War” principles do not come directly from Scripture, they are based on the biblical view that God has given nations the authority to declare war.

## Small Group Activity (3-4 minutes)

Have the students turn to the “Just War Principles” activity in the journal. There are five conditions listed that must be met for a “just” or right war. However, there are key words missing, which are written in code.



(DISPLAY **CODE**.)

You will give the signal to begin. As quickly as possible, the students should use the Key Code slide to identify the missing words. This activity could be used as a contest to see which group finishes first with all of its students successfully identifying the missing words.

## Large Group Lesson



(DISPLAY **PRINCIPLES 1**.)

- ☞ 1. War must be seen as the last resort after all other reasonable efforts have failed.

1. There are many slightly differing variations of the “Just War” principles. This author has chosen to emphasize these five points.



- ☞ 2. Only proper governing authorities may authorize war.
- ☞ 3. War must be waged for the right reasons: to protect and defend citizens from harm, and to restrain and punish evil.



(DISPLAY **PRINCIPLES 2.**)

- ☞ 4. War must be fought in the right way: Military action should target enemy combatants and avoid, as much as possible, harming civilians.
- ☞ 5. The goal of war should be to restore and establish a righteous peace, not as a means of gaining goods or territories.

*According to these principles, should a country declare war before trying to talk or negotiate with a nation threatening it? No.*

*According to these principles, would it be right for the church to declare war against Islamic terrorists? No. The church has not been given the authority to wage military campaigns. The church has been authorized to carry the gospel, not the sword.*

*Would it be right for a nation to specifically target civilians by waging chemical warfare on a city? No.*

*Would it be right for a nation to win a war, and then subject the inhabitants to be its slaves as retribution? No. That would not be a righteous peace.*



(DISPLAY **WORLD WAR II.**)

- ☞ Nanking, China, 1937—Japanese troops target and kill an estimated 300,000 defenseless civilians.
- ☞ Nazi Germany armies begin to invade countries in Europe, and Hitler enacts his “final solution,” sending Jews to their death in concentration camps.
- ☞ The Japanese government orders an attack on Pearl Harbor.
- ☞ The United States goes to war against Germany and Japan.

*Back in 1937, the evil of the Japanese soldiers did not ultimately go unchecked. Nor did the evil actions of Nazi Germany under the leadership of Adolf Hitler go unchecked. God didn't look down on all of this evil and tell His established governments and rulers: “Maybe if you just keep talking to these countries, they'll stop the killing. Try being nice to them and turn the other cheek when they go on murdering people.”*

*That kind of response would not have been loving, good, or right to the people who were being oppressed and killed. Instead, God gave governments and rulers, including the United States, a powerful tool for responding to that evil: war!*

*In the 1930s and '40s, God stirred up nations for battle in order to restrain evil and pun-*

ish evildoers. God raised up armies from many nations for battle, which in history we now know as World War II. It was the most deadly war in all of history thus far. It was terrible, tragic, and extremely deadly—millions of soldiers and civilians died. However, the response of nations rising up and going to war against Japan and Germany represented a just war. And because it was a just war, it was right for thousands of Christian men in the United States to take up the sword and become soldiers on behalf of their country, in order to defend and protect millions of people by restraining and punishing evil.



(DISPLAY **QUOTES.**)

☞ To refuse to do what I can for those under the power of oppression is nothing less than a failure of Christian love, it is to refuse to love my neighbor as myself.<sup>2</sup>

☞ War is a severe mercy. But it is a mercy.<sup>3</sup>

War is a reality of living in a fallen world of sinful people. There will always be people with evil intentions—terrorist organizations that wage war against civilians, or governments that wrongly make war on other nations, threatening the lives of thousands or even millions of people. But God in His mercy will also, at times, choose to raise up other nations to justly wage war in order to restrain and punish evil. This is a mercy of God, but it is a severe mercy. Why?



(Slowly, one by one, DISPLAY **COST**, depicting some of the terrible consequences of war.)

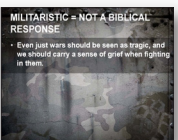
The victims of a Nazi concentration camp

☞ The aftermath of an atomic bomb being dropped on the city of Nagasaki, Japan

☞ Arlington National Cemetery—300,000 grave sites for military veterans and casualties from America's wars

☞ A flag-draped coffin of an American Marine killed in war

War is always horrible and tragic. Lives will be lost. Killing others in war, although it may be justified, is never to be seen as something trite or humorous. That is why the other two bumper stickers that had a militaristic message also did not rightly reflect a biblical view of war.



(BRIEFLY DISPLAY **MILITARISTIC**, and direct students to the related question in the journal.)

Even just wars should be seen as tragic, and we should carry a sense of grief when fighting in them.

Even though this is the world in which we live, Jesus doesn't want His people to be frightened or to feel despair concerning the reality of war (**Matthew 24:6**). There will come a day when there will be no more wars. A Warrior is coming who will, once and for all, avenge all evil and establish a righteous kingdom that cannot be defeated.

2. Schaeffer, Francis A. *Who is for Peace?* (Nashville, Tenn.: Nelson, 1983).

3. From a sermon titled "A Biblical Perspective on War," given by Pastor John MacArthur, ©2009 Grace to You, [www.gty.org](http://www.gty.org)



(QUICKLY DISPLAY AND READ **REVELATION 19:11-16**, and direct students to the related question in the journal.)

*Revelation 19:11-16—Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.*

*Who is this Warrior waging war? Jesus. These verses point to a future event when Jesus will return to this earth and wage war against all His enemies. And through that final war, He will fully establish His peaceful, righteous, and eternal kingdom.*

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the Small Group Application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** God has ordained that government bear the sword at times.

**Think about It:** How have you personally benefited from the fact that our own government has, at times, justly gone to war? Do you rightly see and understand that God has given governments the authority to carry out a just war? Do you have a hard time understanding the application of Jesus' words to His disciples from the Sermon on the Mount, and His ordaining that the government bear the sword in order to avenge evil? Have you ever imagined what the world would be like if God had NOT given governments the authority to restrain and punish evil? Why is it a mercy of God that He, at times, ordains nations to go to war against oppressors?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Are you thankful to God for this severe mercy? Does war make you long for peace? Or are you indifferent to the tragedy of war? If so, why? Is this attitude pleasing to Jesus? Is it loving toward those who are oppressed by evil rulers? Have you considered the cost and sacrifice of the thousands of military personnel, Christian or not, who have justly fought in wars as servants of our government in order to protect you? If not, why not?*

**Live It:** Encourage the students to carefully examine their perspective toward war. Has it been biblical? Direct them to pray that their thoughts and attitudes would be transformed by God's truth, and not conformed to the world's way of thinking. Encourage

them to pray also for the leaders of our government that they would rightly see and carry out their role in bearing the sword.

Also, if your church has any military personnel, especially those who are deployed in areas of combat, think of writing one or more of them a short note of encouragement, thanking God for their service as a representative of our country.

- **Truth Statement:** God has ordained that government bear the sword at times.

**Think About It:** Read and discuss **John 18:36**. What do you think Jesus meant by these words? What two “kingdoms” is Jesus referring to? [earthly governments and the “kingdom of God”] How does this verse imply that if Jesus’ kingdom was of this world, His servants would fight in the right kind of circumstances? How do these words from Jesus help to better understand **Romans 13:3-4**? What “kingdom” is Paul referring to here? [earthly civil governments] Why is it important that the church see itself as belonging to the “kingdom of God” above all else? How does this kingdom “wage war” [e.g., Ephesians 6, with spiritual armor and weapons such as the gospel, the sword of the Spirit which is the Word, etc.] However, are Christians also citizens of earthly kingdoms? Yes. So if your government wages a just war and calls upon its young men to serve, can a Christian man rightly bear the sword (gun, tank, plane, etc.) and fight on behalf of his earthly, God-ordained government? Yes. (See **Luke 3:14** showing that being a believing does not require leaving military service. Stress that fighting in wars is not necessarily sinful.)

**Live It:** Encourage the students to read and discuss the article “Did Jesus Teach Pacifism?” with their parents.

- **Truth Statement:** God has ordained that government bear the sword at times.

**Think About It:** Review the bumper sticker slogans we read at the beginning of class. Why do each of these slogans “fall short” of rightly understanding war, even a just war? For example, how does the slogan “So many terrorists, so few bullets” reflect a wrong attitude or demeanor? Why does a slogan like “Who would Jesus bomb?” reflect a wrong understanding of who Jesus is and what He is like, and therefore a wrong attitude toward war? Give each student a copy of Dr. Russell Moore’s article “Who Would Jesus Bomb? War, Peace, and the Christian.” (Before class highlight the paragraph that illustrates the feelings of “Chad” and the paragraph that illustrates the viewpoint of “Jessica.”) Choose a student to read each paragraph. In view of the lesson, do either Chad or Jessica have a right perspective? How would you discuss their views with them?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you tend to think like either one of them? How do you talk to people who differ from you? What kinds of arguments do you use? Are your words and the manner in which you speak truthful and loving?*

**Live It:** Encourage the students to take Dr. Moore’s article home to read and discuss with their parents.

- **Truth Statement:** God has ordained that government bear the sword at times.

**Think About It:** Review the five “Just War” principles. In what ways did World War II meet the criteria for a just war? Do you think all of the Allied governments and leaders acknowledged that, ultimately, their power and authority was God-given? Does God still use governments that reject this truth to be instruments for doing His vengeance on evil nations? Can you think of any biblical examples of this? [e.g., God raised up the Babylonians to overthrow the kingdom of Judah (Jeremiah 39); God raised up the Romans to destroy Jerusalem in 70 A.D., etc.] Does a Just War mean that every action will be just? For example, World War II met the Just War criteria, but not all actions by the Allies were just. There were times when civilians were wrongly targeted. When this happens, what must we keep in mind about this world and how governments will fight wars? As citizens of this country, what can/should we do to encourage our leaders and military to fight war justly?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you feel compassion for those who have suffered or are suffering as a result of war (even a just war) in their country? Are you as eager to see the gospel prevail in this country as you are to see righteousness established there? If not, why not? What spiritual realities are the same for people in those countries and for ours? [e.g., the need for a Savior from sin; the need to hear the gospel and to know the Scriptures; the need for Christians there to have fellowship; etc.]*

**Live It:** Spend some time praying for a country or people that America has had to go to war against, either in the past or more recently. Pray that the gospel would take root there, and that its people would know the peace of Christ’s forgiveness and mercy. Pray that your heart would desire the freedom of the gospel to reign in that country. Pray for enemy combatants: While killing them may be just, we should also be praying for their salvation!

- **Truth Statement:** Jesus will return to earth in the future and wage a final and victorious battle against evil.

**Think About It:** Review **Revelation 19:11-16**. Do you find this to be a shocking or troubling picture of Jesus? Why or why not? Why might some people be troubled by this scene? How does this picture of Jesus’ second coming differ from that of His first coming? What was the main reason for His first coming? [to give up His life for sinners] What is the main purpose for His second coming? [to bring to fullness His kingdom]

**Examine Your Heart:** *If you are a Christian, why should this truth give you hope and confidence in the midst of a world that seems constantly at war? If you are not yet trusting in Jesus, how should this picture of Jesus serve as a warning to you? Will you be able to wage a successful war against Him? Will Satan or all the armies of the earth defeat Him? No. Knowing this truth, what does God desire that you do in order to be saved from the wrath that is to come?*

**Live It:** Spend some time praying for Jesus' return, which will end all wars and establish His perfect kingdom.

***Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week. Also, if time permits, ask them about how they applied one thing from last week's lesson.***

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 35

"Who Would Jesus Bomb? War, Peace, and the Christian" article

"Did Jesus Teach Pacifism?" article

# The War of Worldviews

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > There is a war of worldviews taking place in the hearts and minds of people, involving the forces of Satan versus the Truth of God.
- > Satan has various schemes that he employs to deceive people.
- > God has given His people armor to withstand all of Satan's schemes.
- > Christians are to use the truth of the Bible in waging war against the lies of Satan.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                         |                      |                        |
|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 | 4. 2 Corinthians 4:4 | 7. 2 Corinthians 11:14 |
| 2. Ephesians 6:10-12    | 5. Ephesians 2:2     | 8. Ephesians 6:11, 13  |
| 3. John 8:44            | 6. 1 Peter 5:8       |                        |

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## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 36 | > Scheme Cards (one set per small group)      |
| > Skit (one set per classroom)     | > Parent Memo for Lesson 36 (one per student) |

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## OTHER VISUALS:

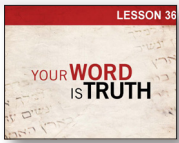
- > Bible
- > Envelopes (one per small group; place a set of Scheme Cards in each envelope)

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## PREPARATION FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS:

Before the lesson choose five students to perform the skit. You may want to give them the Skit beforehand so they have some time to familiarize themselves with the script and even practice it once before the lesson.





(DISPLAY **LESSON 36.**)

## Large Group Lesson



(DISPLAY **SKIT.**)

Have the students who were selected before class come forward and perform the skit.

FIVE COPIES OF SKIT

**Cindy:** Wasn't that a great social studies class! I think that we should organize a student protest against the war.

**Brad:** That's a great idea. We could make signs with slogans like: "War is not the answer!" and "Make peace, not war" or even "Send books not bombs!" I've been studying some great quotes from Buddhism that address war and violence. I'll look for some ideas.

**Jacob:** Remember Hitler and the concentration camps? Would you say that we were wrong to fight in World War II? Did you notice that the teacher didn't even mention World War II? Yes, war is terrible, but sometimes it's the only way for governments to deal with evil.

**David:** Are you guys crazy? That teacher is so wrong! Hey, if it was up to me, I would bomb every country who dares to threaten us. That would solve the problem, once and for all. No more Mr. Nice Guy.

**Cindy:** You are disgusting David! What a warmonger. War never solves anything, it only makes things worse. Jacob, how can you say that sometimes war is the only way for dealing with violence? You are always talking about how great Jesus is. If he's so great, why does he allow wars? You Christians are just a bunch of hypocrites!

**Brad:** What do you think, Laura? You haven't said anything.

**Laura:** I guess I don't really care either way...There are a lot of other things going on, and I don't pay attention to the news much. Did you guys know that the school baseball team is going to the play-offs?

Have the students return to their seats.

*Based on the skit, what do you think happened in the students' social studies class?*

*Did all of the students respond to the lesson in the same way? No. There were several different responses. Did it seem as if any student had a more biblical response to the topic of war than the others? [Yes. Jacob.]*



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL VIEW.**)

- ☞ War is a reality of living in a fallen and sinful world.
- ☞ God has ordained that governments bear the sword at times in order to restrain and punish evil.
- ☞ The Just War tradition states that there are certain criteria that should be met before a country is justified in going to war.

Recall that we learned about war in the previous lesson. War is a reality in this world, and God has given governments the authority to sometimes use war as a means of protecting people by restraining and punishing evil. That is the truth about war. But, as the skit demonstrates, not everyone will agree with this view of war. This is because there is another war going on—a war of ideas or worldviews. Although this war would seem to be less deadly and destructive, it is actually much more dangerous than physical wars, because the true enemy is much more powerful than any world dictator, army, or terrorist.

Have the students turn to **2 Corinthians 10:3-5**, and to the related questions in the journal.)



(DISPLAY **2 CORINTHIANS 10:3-5.**)

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*2 Corinthians 10:3-5—For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.*

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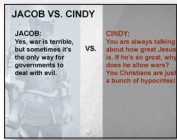
- ☞ To what kind of war do these verses refer? (Allow the students to give some responses, and then lead them through the questions below in order to interpret Paul's meaning.)
- ☞ How do we know that Paul is not talking about physical warfare? [weapons used are not physical or flesh weapons, and have divine or “God” power]
- ☞ What seems to be the “enemy” in these verses? [arguments and lofty opinions raised against the knowledge of God] In other words, these arguments and opinions are lies.



(DISPLAY **WAR OF WORLDVIEWS.**)

- ☞ Biblical Worldview → The Truth
  - ☞ Versus
  - ☞ All Other Worldviews → Arguments and lofty opinions against the knowledge of God
- The most important war that is being waged is not the one in [Iraq or Afghanistan] or in

any other country. These physical wars are only a symptom of a greater spiritual war—a war of worldviews. As the skit demonstrated, there was a war of ideas going on both in and outside the classroom. Those ideas were expressions of seeing and understanding something from either a biblical perspective or some other perspective.



(DISPLAY **JACOB VERSUS CINDY.**)

**Jacob:** Yes, war is terrible, but sometimes it's the only way for governments to deal with evil.

**Cindy:** You are always talking about how great Jesus is. If he's so great, why does he allow wars? You Christians are just a bunch of hypocrites!

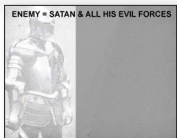
*Jacob and Cindy are expressing very different views concerning physical wars. But there is a greater war going on here—a war against the knowledge of God. How did Cindy demonstrate this? [e.g., “If Jesus is so great ...You Christians are a bunch of hypocrites...”] Cindy presented arguments that didn't just present a wrong view of physical wars, but a wrong view of Jesus. According to the verses we read from 2 Corinthians, these views are like enemy strongholds that must be brought down.*

*And according to Paul, Christians are to fight. But what is the particular “enemy” that Jacob must fight against in this example? And what kind of “divine” weapons should he use?*

✎ Have the students turn to **Ephesians 6:10-12**, and to the related question in the journal.

*Ephesians 6:10-12—Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. <sup>11</sup>Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup>For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*

*According to these verses, is Cindy the real enemy Jacob must fight against? No. Behind her opinions, arguments, and insults is a more powerful enemy: the devil and all his evil forces.*



(DISPLAY **THE ENEMY**, and direct students to this portion of the journal.)

- ✎ Satan hates the truth and is a liar (**John 8:44**).
- ✎ Satan has blinded the minds of unbelievers (**2 Corinthians 4:4**).
- ✎ Satan is at work in the lives of unbelievers (**Ephesians 2:2**).
- ✎ Satan seeks to devour people, even believers (**1 Peter 5:8**).
- ✎ Satan often disguises himself as an angel of light (**2 Corinthians 11:14**).

The war of worldviews is really a symptom of a greater war, a spiritual war fought in a spiritual realm, in the hearts and minds of people and in the heavenly places, meaning between God and Satan.

In previous lessons, we learned that there are two things at work that cause people to reject God's truth: Satan's lies and the sinful heart that would rather believe Satan's lies than the truth. Cindy's words were expressing this spiritual reality. Therefore, a Christian in the warfare he wages must understand this reality. Jacob is not waging war against Cindy, but the spiritual forces that are holding her captive to a wrong worldview, one that is a lie. This is really important for Christians to understand. Good soldiers understand that you must know who your real enemy is and how he fights before you go to battle against him.

*How does Satan fight? What are his tactics? Look at **Ephesians 6:12** again. [Satan uses "schemes."] What might these "schemes" be?*

The word for schemes used here comes from a verb that means "to stalk." It is almost like a hunter who carefully stalks his prey. Satan is very intentional. As in the Garden of Eden, he is cunning in how he crafts the lies that sinners readily believe and then express. He uses many kinds of schemes that are appealing and attractive to the sinful heart.

## Small Group Activity (5 minutes or less)

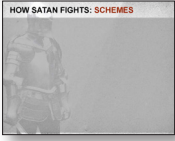
SCHEME CARDS IN  
ENVELOPE

Hand out a sealed envelope of **Scheme Cards** to each small group. The small groups are going to compete against each other in the following contest. When you give the signal to begin, they will open their envelopes. Inside each are six cards with scrambled words and one clue for each word. As quickly as possible, the students should work to correctly guess and write each word on the appropriate line in the journal in the section titled "Some of Satan's Schemes." End the contest when one group has successfully solved each Scheme Card.

The correct answers are as follows:

1. Arguments
2. Authority
3. Other religions
4. Popularity
5. Ridicule
6. Passivity
7. Persecution

## Large Group Lesson



(QUICKLY DISPLAY **SCHEMES 1.**)

These slides give examples of some of the schemes Satan uses to deceive people and blind them to God's truth. (To refresh the students' memories, you may want to have the students who performed the skit be prepared to quickly speak their lines when necessary for answering the questions stated after the corresponding scheme.)

### **Scheme 1: Arguments**

*People often express this scheme of Satan by presenting arguments that sound knowledgeable, good, and convincing. "War is terrible. Many innocent people are killed. That can never be right." This is something people want to believe. It sounds convincing especially if someone has good communication skills, and is very articulate and passionate as Cindy seemed to be.*

### **Scheme 2: Authority**

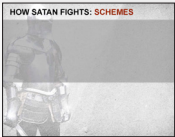
*This is similar to "lofty opinions" in the verses we read. Lofty opinions are "superior" or "impressive" opinions. Some lies seem more convincing because they come from people in high positions. For example, some of the students might have given more weight to the teacher's opinion than Jacob's views because of the teacher's elevated position. People might think: "Well it must be true because the teacher says so. He knows a lot more than Jacob."*

### **Scheme 3: Other Religions**

*Which student in the skit expressed finding answers about war in another religion? [Brad—Buddhism] Other religions are schemes of Satan, giving people what seem to be reasonable answers to life's difficult questions. Buddhism presents itself as a religion of peace and the striving for inner harmony. To Brad, it may seem like the best answer to the problem of war.*

### **Scheme 4 : Popularity**

*Many people want to be viewed with the "in crowd," and share whatever view is most popular with the majority of people. For example, it might be the popular thing at this school to be against war and to do things like protest. Satan knows this. Many of Satan's lies are popular and "cool" with the world, and the sinful heart craves this kind of acceptance.*



(DISPLAY **SCHEMES 2.**)

### **Scheme 5: Ridicule**

*Does anyone want to be made fun of or mocked? No. So people often ridicule those*

*who hold to the truth in order to make them feel as if they are the fools. This is a scheme of Satan. For example, did any of the students in the skit express ridicule? [Cindy and David]*

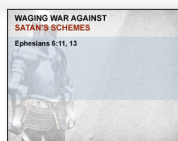
### **Scheme 6: Passivity**

*Did any student in the skit seem passive? [Laura, the last one] In what way did she express passivity? [She didn't seem to care at all either way.] Why would this kind of attitude serve as a tool of Satan? [The truth about something doesn't really matter. It doesn't affect me. All a person cares about is having a good time.] Passivity can give a person a false sense of well-being, that everything is okay. It is a scheme Satan uses to dull people to the true realities of sin in the world.*

### **Scheme 7: Persecution**


*Satan also uses this scheme to discourage the truth from being known, believed, and proclaimed. People don't like suffering. So Satan sometimes sends his servants to persecute and harm those who believe the truth. A teacher who refuses to teach that evolution is fact might lose his job. A Christian student who refuses to stop praying silently before lunch in the school cafeteria might be suspended. In some places in the world, a teenager caught reading the Bible can be threatened with being sent to prison.*

These schemes of Satan all represent “weapons” in the war of worldviews. God does not want us to be unaware of these schemes, or to downplay their power. Furthermore, each of us is a kind of soldier in this war—either a soldier in Satan's forces, or a soldier in God's forces. But unlike physical wars, Christians are not to wage war against the people whom Satan has deceived. Rather, we are to wage war against the schemes of Satan that they have come to believe in their sinful hearts.

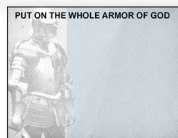


(DISPLAY **WAGING WAR.**)

***Ephesians 6:11, 13—***

 *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil...<sup>13</sup>Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.*

Have the students turn to ***Ephesians 6*** again, and to the related portion of the journal. *What is the armor of God? Look at verses 14-17 as we look at each piece.*

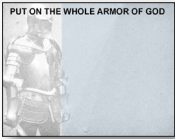


(DISPLAY **ARMOR 1.**)

Each of the following slides will describe a piece of real, physical armor that a Roman soldier during Paul's time would wear in preparation for battle. But Paul is only using

these physical descriptions to help us understand the spiritual armor necessary for waging war against Satan's schemes. Ask the students to state the spiritual armor that corresponds to each piece of physical armor.

- ✎ Spiritual Armor=  
Physical Comparison=Belt
- ✎ (Answer: Truth)
  
- ✎ Spiritual Armor=  
Physical Comparison=Breastplate
- ✎ (Answer: Righteousness)
  
- ✎ Spiritual Armor=  
Physical Comparison=Shoes
- ✎ (Answer: The Gospel)
  
- ✎ Spiritual Armor=  
Physical Comparison=Shield
- ✎ (Answer: Faith)



(DISPLAY **ARMOR 2.**)

- ✎ Spiritual Armor=  
Physical Comparison=Helmet
- ✎ (Answer: Salvation)
  
- ✎ Spiritual Armor=  
Physical Armor=Sword
- ✎ (Answer: The Word of God)

Have the students notice that the armor referenced by Paul consists mainly of defensive protection. There is only one offensive weapon listed.

*Why would Christians need so much defensive armor in the war of worldviews? Suppose Jacob from the skit is constantly being barraged with the schemes of Satan, whether at school, on his baseball team, or through television and advertisements. Schemes that lie concerning war, possessions, sports, abortion, government...what might Jacob be tempted to do when he feels in constant conflict with what the world believes? [e.g, feel discouraged, uncertain, hopeless, angry, etc.]*

Satan's schemes are not just aimed at non-Christians. They are also directed at all Christians. They are like flaming darts meant to harm us by causing us to question



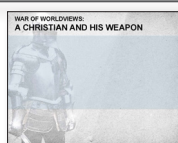
God's truth, become discouraged, or lash out in anger at those who disagree with us.

*For example, after Cindy had called Christians a bunch of hypocrites, what would Satan have loved for Jacob to have done in return? [insult her in return, or get angry at her] That temptation—to return an insult with an insult—is like a flaming arrow of Satan. That is why Christians need defensive armor in the war of worldviews, so we will stand firm against arguments, popular trends, ridicule, or any other scheme of Satan that would tempt us to sin in return.*

When confronting different worldviews that people express, we need to be mindful that there are powerful spiritual forces behind these lies—Satan himself. People who believe these lies are not just expressing “another opinion,” but are demonstrating an inner spiritual condition—a sinful heart that has been deceived by Satan.

*Suppose Jacob wants to try to persuade the other students that their views are wrong. What is the one offensive weapon pointed out in Ephesians 6? [the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, the Bible]*

Recall that we began the year by asking a very basic but important question: What's the truth? And we found that the Bible makes known God's absolute, objective, unchanging, and universal truth. The most powerful weapon in the war of worldviews is this Truth. It is like a sword.



(DISPLAY **CHRISTIAN AND HIS WEAPON**, and direct the students to the related statements to complete in the journal.)

- ☞ A Christian must know the power of God's truth.
- ☞ A Christian must trust in the accuracy of God's truth.
- ☞ A Christian must be prepared with God's truth.
- ☞ A Christian must learn how to use God's truth to combat the schemes of Satan.
- ☞ A Christian must wield God's truth in love.

Again, there is a war going on—a war of worldviews. Ultimately, it is a spiritual war fought in the hearts and minds of all people. It is the war of God's truth versus Satan's lies. It is the war of a biblical worldview versus all other worldviews. This battle is more deadly than all the physical wars throughout history, because the consequences are eternal: heaven or hell. The tragedy of Cindy's views is not that they are anti-war, but that they are anti-Jesus. The real tragedy is not that she doesn't have the right view of war, but that she doesn't have the right view of who Jesus is and what He has done to save her from the schemes of Satan.

*Whether you know it or not, you are in the battle. There are only two sides in this battle. Only one side will have the ultimate victory—God's truth. Embracing that truth can only be done by trusting in Jesus, who is the way and the truth and the life.*

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the Small Group Application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** There is a war of worldviews taking place in the hearts and minds of people, involving the forces of Satan versus the Truth of God.

**Think About It:** Ask the students to recall their first thoughts regarding the skit at the beginning of class. Did they identify with any of the students or with the general situation? Can they share a similar example from their own experience? At the time, did they respond at all? Was it simply a disagreement of equally valid opinions, “I like chocolate ice cream best” versus “I like vanilla best,” or did it reflect a true clash of worldviews? Why is it important that we discern between the two situations?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Challenge the students to put themselves in Jacob's shoes for a moment and then ask: "Try to imagine what your gut reaction to Cindy's words would have been. Based on that, do you think that you would be reacting in a way that rightly sees and understands what is really going on in Cindy's heart and mind? Would you be rightly understanding what is at work in your own heart and mind? Would a love for Cindy and a sorrow for her lostness come to mind, or would you have scorn for her attitude? Would you be more concerned about winning the argument for your own sake, or helping Cindy to see the truth?" Read and discuss **2 Timothy 2:24-26** or **1 Peter 3:15-17**.*

**Live It:** Encourage the students think about a classmate, friend, or neighbor who is not a Christian. Are there topics they discuss that demonstrate a “war of worldviews”? How could they be intentional this week in their prayers for that person? Challenge them to write down some specific things to pray for that person daily, especially for their lostness. Then write specific areas of prayer for their own hearts and attitudes that reflect the texts from **2 Timothy 2** or **1 Peter 3**.

- **Truth Statement:** Satan has various schemes that he employs to deceive people.

**Think About It:** Review the schemes Satan sometimes uses in the war against God's truth. Explain to your students that this is not an exhaustive list. Recall that sometimes Satan disguises himself as an “angel of light” so his schemes often appear good to people. See if the students can give one or two real-life examples of each. How might each be expressed both in the lives of believers and unbelievers? [e.g., lofty opinions—most scientists accept evolution as fact so other people believe them to be “experts,” and some Christians then think they must accommodate this with the Bible's view of creation]

**Examine Your Heart:** *As you look through the list of Satan's schemes in your journal, do find yourself more prone to some, but not others? For example, do you tend to be like Laura from the skit? More passive? Why might Christians struggle with different types of schemes over others? Do you feel intimidated by someone who seems to “know it all,”*

*so you tend to keep quiet? Are you afraid of being unpopular if you express a biblical view that is thought to be “uncool”? How can you grow in recognizing Satan's schemes and your own weaknesses?*

**Live It:** Have the students talk with their parents about a situation at school, with friends, or in a book or movie in which they struggled with standing firm in God's truth. Was an argument made that they knew was unbiblical but seemed very convincing? Did they remain passive out of fear? Encourage them to read **Ephesians 6:10-20** this week and turn it into a prayer.

- **Truth Statement:** God has given His people armor to withstand all of Satan's schemes. Christians are to use the truth of the Bible in waging war against the lies of Satan.

**Think About It:** Read **1 Peter 3:15-17**. Give the students different scenarios, and have them consider how they might respond in a way that would demonstrate that they are standing firm in the full armor of God, and using God's truth in a loving way. Here are some suggested scenarios:

*In your history class, the teacher makes the following statement: “Throughout history, the Christian church has been the main source for the oppression of women around the world.”*

*You are talking with a group of kids at school about whether or not marriage should only be between one man and one woman. One kid says, “Just because something is true for you, doesn’t make it true for other people. People have a right to live however they want.”*

**Examine Your Heart:** *What might prepare you to better respond to these kinds of situations? Imagine that you are an active duty soldier sent to a combat zone. Are you going to pay a little or a lot of attention to your weapon? Would spending more and more time playing video games prepare you for battle? How are you treating God's truth? Are you spending time reading it, meditating on it, and memorizing key passages? Do you know how to use it effectively in different kinds of situations? Are you ultimately relying on the power of God's truth, or the power of your own arguments to change the hearts and minds of people?*

**Live It:** Challenge the students to take on an unbiblical worldview they have encountered that has left them feeling inadequate in their attempt to defend a biblical position. Have them ask their parents or other mature Christians for guidance about how to better prepare themselves with the Word. Encourage them to use a concordance, topical indexes, and commentaries to explore texts that answer key arguments, as well as looking for good Christian resources that deal with worldview issues.

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week.**

## **Send Home:**

Parent Memo for Lesson 36

# The Triumph of Truth

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > Jesus has decisively won the war against Satan and his lies through His death on the cross.
- > Satan and unbelievers continue in a futile battle against God's truth.
- > Christians are to boldly proclaim the truth of the gospel.
- > Jesus will return and fully reveal the triumph of His truth.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                       |                          |                            |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Hebrews 2:14-15    | 3. Ephesians 6:13, 17-20 | 5. 2 Corinthians 2:14-15   |
| 2. Colossians 2:14-15 | 4. Psalm 119:160         | 6. 1 Corinthians 15:24-27a |

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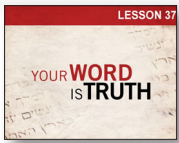
## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 37
- > Parent Memo for Lesson 37 (one per student)

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## OTHER VISUALS:

- > Bible



(DISPLAY **LESSON 37.**)

## Large Group Lesson

Read the following true story to the students:

*When Hiroo Onoda was 20 years old, he joined the Japanese army. He was trained as an officer and in 1944 he and his fellow soldiers were sent to a remote island in the Philippines to conduct guerilla warfare against the Allied armies.*

*Soon after arriving there, the island was taken by Allied forces. The Japanese soldiers who remained on the island, including Hiroo, fled into the jungle to hide while they awaited the Japanese army to come to their aid. They believed that they had to hold out and continue to train, gather intelligence, and fight until the Japanese army came with reinforcements. Hiroo and three other soldiers faithfully followed their orders for the next 29 years.*

*Was there a problem with their perseverance? Yes. The Japanese had surrendered in 1945. Hiroo and his fellow soldiers were fighting a futile battle—they would never win because their country had already been decisively defeated.*

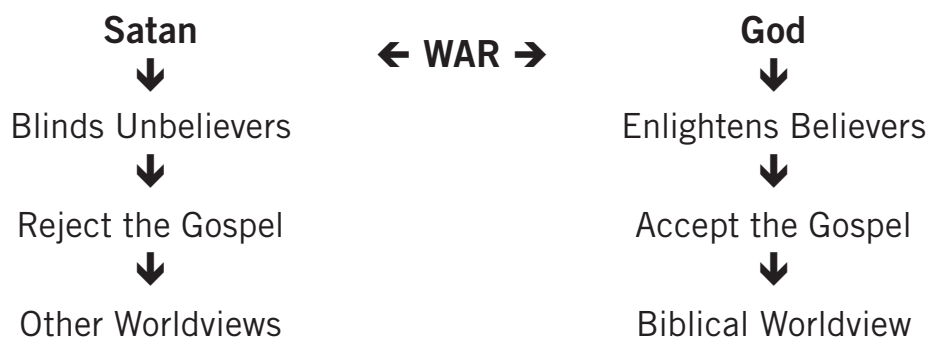
*At the end of 1945, U.S. planes dropped leaflets trying to convince these remaining soldiers that the Allies had won, but Hiroo and his fellow soldiers refused to believe this. More and more leaflets were dropped, but still these soldiers would not believe the truth.*

*So they spent over 29 years of their lives fighting. During these years, they caused trouble to the islanders, sometimes attacking them here and there, even killing some. But in the end, their fighting was futile. They were fighting in a war that had already been decided.<sup>1</sup>*



(DISPLAY **WAR OF WORLDVIEWS**, and direct students to the similar chart in the **journal**.)

1. Story summarized from: Rosenberg, Jennifer. "The War is Over...Please Come Out," published at <http://history1900s.about.com>.



In the previous lesson we learned that there is a very important war going on, one that is more important than all the physical wars throughout history. It is the war of worldviews, and it is being waged in the hearts and minds of people. The enemy, Satan, has blinded the minds of unbelievers to the truth of God, and sinners would rather believe these lies than the truth. In a sense, unbelievers are “held captive” to Satan's schemes and their own sinful desires.

*In what ways could you say that unbelievers are like Hiroo and his fellow soldiers? (Allow the students to give a few brief responses.) Why is their fight against the truth futile?*

🔔 Have the students turn to **Hebrews 2:14-15**, and to the related portion of the journal.

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*Hebrews 2:14-15—Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup>and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.*

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*Look back at **Hebrews 2:9**. Who is the “he” in these verses? [Jesus]*

*According to these verses, what specifically did Jesus do that decisively destroyed Satan's power over people? [died]*

*What did Jesus' death on the cross do for those held captive? [delivered them]*



(DISPLAY **COLOSSIANS 2:14-15**.)

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🔔 *Colossians 2:14-15—..the record of debt that stood against us...[God] set aside, nailing it to the cross. <sup>15</sup>He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in [Jesus].*

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*What was it that struck the decisive blow against Satan and sin? [Jesus' death on the cross on behalf of sinners]*

*Why was Jesus' death decisive against Satan?*



### Illustration

*Suppose you are in a store and have just bought a new DVD. However, before you get to the exit door, another shopper stops you and accuses you of trying to steal the DVD. Is there anything that you can show him that gives proof that you have paid for the DVD? Yes, you can show him your receipt. The receipt is decisive over the accusations of the other shopper. He might go on and on, trying to accuse you and cause trouble, but ultimately it won't work.*

Jesus' death on the cross provides a "paid in full" statement for God's people. Satan's accusations now ring hollow. Because of our sin, Christians had a debt—God's righteous condemnation—that has now been "paid in full" by Jesus' atoning death. The gospel has been proven true; it does what it promises to do. The truth of the cross is victorious over Satan's lies.

*So has Satan given up and waved the white flag of surrender? No. He is a liar through and through, so he fights on trying to continue to deceive as many people as possible. And sinners, whose hearts are darkened, continue the battle against the truth also—even though it is ultimately futile.*



(DISPLAY **WAR OF WORLDVIEWS 2**, and direct students to the sentence and diagram to complete in the journal.)

🔑 The war against Satan and sin has been decisively won by Jesus' death on the cross.

Unbelievers are very much like the soldiers who kept on fighting for 29 years after the war was decisively won. They do not know or refuse to believe that Jesus' has decisively won the war against Satan and sin. So they fight on against the truth in their sinful hearts, using Satan's schemes as their weapons. It is ultimately a futile fight, but they can still cause trouble in this world and in our lives. So although the war has been decisively won, the battle still rages. And sometimes it may seem that Satan and unbelievers even have the upperhand in the battle.

### Small Group Activity (5-7 minutes)

Have the students turn to the "Where Other Worldviews Seem to Have the Upperhand" activity in the **journal**. Recall some of the topics we have studied throughout the curriculum: the origin of the world, the environment, being a man or woman, marriage, abortion, other religions, television and movies, etc. Have the students think of specific things in our culture where it seems as if Satan and unbelievers are winning the battle against God's truth. For example: abortion is legal; more states are recognizing same-sex marriage; Islam is growing and becoming more prevalent; etc. Have the students write down at least seven examples in the space provided in the journal.

## Large Group Lesson



(DISPLAY **WAR OF WORLDVIEWS 3.**)

- ☞ The war against Satan and sin has been decisively won by Jesus' death on the cross...
- ☞ ...but battles against truth still rage in several areas of our culture: abortion, evolution, other religions, same-sex marriage, feminism, prejudice, evil, materialism...

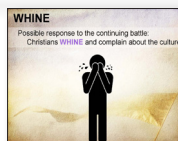
We do not yet see Jesus' decisive triumph fully revealed on earth. People's minds and hearts are still deceived by Satan's lies. Because of this, Christians live in a culture where other worldviews seem to have the upperhand. And sometimes Christians will be tempted to respond to these worldview battles in three ways that do not properly reflect the reality of Jesus' decisive victory.



(DISPLAY **WITHDRAW**, and direct the students to complete the statements in the journal for this and the next few slides as you quickly go through these points.)

Possible response to the continuing battle: Christians withdraw from the culture.

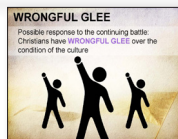
Sometimes Christians simply give up on the culture and walk away, leaving it to its terrible fate. This response is often based on an indifference to the desperate condition of unbelievers. "Let them continue on their path to hell. I'll have as little contact with the culture as possible." It would be like a person from a winning team refusing to help a person from the losing side to the hospital if he broke his leg during the game.



(DISPLAY **WHINE.**)

Possible response to the continuing battle: Christians whine and complain about the culture.

*Sometimes Christians continually whine and complain about the culture. "The lawmakers are just a bunch of anti-religious crooks. The newspapers are always biased. Hollywood movies are always bashing Christians. Schools discriminate against Christian students..." And they go on and on and on. It would be like a person on a winning team constantly reflecting on how unfairly they were treated during the game instead of looking at the victorious outcome.*



(DISPLAY **WRONGFUL GLEE.**)

Possible response to the continuing battle: Christians have a wrongful glee over the condition of the culture.

*Sometimes Christians are like bad winners who cheer over the condition of the culture. For example, there may be an unrighteous kind of delight when a hurricane hits an*

ungodly city. “It serves them right!” Or there may be a wrongful glee when the many sins of an idolized sports figure are exposed in the news. It would be like a winning team celebrating their opponent’s misery, instead of graciously celebrating their own team’s victory.

Do you believe that any of these responses reflect how Jesus would have us respond to a culture in which Satan’s lies sometimes seem to have the upperhand? (Allow the students to respond.)



(DISPLAY **EPHESIANS 6:13**, and have the students turn to the text in their Bibles.)

*Ephesians 6:13—Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.*

Does this verse give a picture of Christians withdrawing, whining, or expressing wrongful glee? No. It gives a picture of a soldier seriously prepared to do battle with evil. Even though Jesus has decisively won the war, He commands His people to take up the battle.

And what weapon has been given to Christians to do battle?

☞ [the sword, the Word of God]



(DISPLAY **God’s Word**.)

How does Paul suggest this weapon be used? In protecting our backside as we withdraw from the battle? In a whining manner? In a manner of unrighteous glee?

☞ Choose a student to read **Ephesians 6:17-20**.

*Ephesians 6:17-20—and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, <sup>18</sup>praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, <sup>19</sup>and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup>for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.*

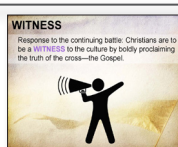
☞ How does Paul want Christians to wield the weapon of God’s truth? [with prayer and supplication]

☞ For what does he specifically request prayer in verse 19? [that he would be given the words to boldly proclaim the gospel]

☞ Why does he call himself “an ambassador in chains”?

When Paul wrote these words to the believers in Ephesus, he was under house arrest in Rome. If anyone had a reason to want to withdraw from the godless culture of the day,

it was Paul. He knew that ultimately Jesus had won the war, and that he was bound for heaven. And Paul would have had plenty of reasons to whine about how he was being unfairly treated by unbelievers. But he saw himself as something else—an ambassador.

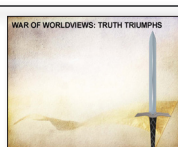


(DISPLAY **WITNESS**, and direct students to the statement to complete in the journal.)

Response to the continuing battle: Christians are to be a witness to the culture by boldly proclaiming the truth of the cross—the gospel.

Recall the beginning story of Hiroo. The United States did not simply ignore him. They dropped leaflets to communicate the truth to him and his fellow soldiers in hopes that they would finally surrender their futile battle and go back to their homes and families. In a similar way, Christians are to boldly communicate the truth to unbelievers who continue in a futile battle. Unbelievers need to hear the news that Jesus has decisively won the war through His death on the cross. Unbelievers need to hear the good news of the gospel:

*Jesus came to save you and give you eternal life. Surrender and put your trust in Him!*



(DISPLAY **TRUTH TRIUMPHS**.)

- ☞ The Sword of Truth is the Truth of the Cross
- ☞ The Truth of the Cross is the Triumph of Truth
- TRUTH TRIUMPHS
- ☞ The Sword of Truth is the Cross of Christ, and the cross of Christ is the victory of God!



(DISPLAY **PSALM 119:160**.)

- ☞ *Psalm 119:160—The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever.*

- ☞ Have the students turn to **2 Corinthians 2:14-15**, and to the related portion of the journal.

*2 Corinthians 2:14-15—But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. <sup>15</sup>For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.*

This triumphal procession Paul speaks of is something like being in a joyful victory parade. That should be the mind set of each Christian as we live in this world—with a

confident, happy boldness in Jesus demonstrated in how we live and speak. But until Jesus returns to fully establish His victorious kingdom, Satan still fights on, and so do all of those who are under his power. Christians are not called to withdraw, whine, or have a wrongful glee over those who are still held captive by Satan's lies. Rather, we are to spread the knowledge of Jesus everywhere, and pray that God would open the eyes of unbelievers to see and love the truth.

- 🔑 Have the students turn to **1 Corinthians 15:24-27a**, and to the related portion of the journal.

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*1 Corinthians 15:24-27a—Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.”*

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*Look back at verse 23. Who is the “he” in these verses? [Jesus] Does the world in which we live fully reflect the reality of all Jesus' enemies being under His feet? [No.] However, what is the future reality expressed in these verses? [Someday Jesus will destroy every rule, authority, and power.]*

Some day in the future, Jesus will return and destroy every rule, authority, and power that has battled against His truth. Every lie will be exposed and refuted. Every wrong will be set right. Everything will be subjected to His truth. Everything will conform to His truth. This reality should give every Christian a wonderful boldness to speak the truth in an increasingly hostile culture. We cannot lose because God's truth cannot lose. The war is decisively won!

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the Small Group Application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** Jesus has decisively won the war of worldviews through His death on the cross. Satan and unbelievers continue in a futile battle against God's truth.

**Think About It:** Ask the students what first came to mind when they heard the story of Hiroo. Did they feel pity for him or was their attitude, “What an idiot!” Why might Hiroo not have heeded the truth communicated on the leaflets? How do they think Hiroo felt when he finally came to accept that the war was over—28 years after the fact? Ask the students what is meant by the term “decisively” in the above truth statement. Why might unbelievers continue to fight a losing battle? [e.g., Satan has deceived them into thinking that their worldview is the real truth; pride; belief that their own way is right; rebellion against God's authority; fear; etc.] Why might unbelievers not heed the truth of Jesus when it is presented to them? Read and discuss **Colossians 1:9-14**. If a person is saved, how should Jesus' decisive triumph be expressed in his life?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you believe Jesus has decisively won the war of worldviews? Is your life like Hiroo's at all? Are you trying to fight a futile battle against the decisive victory of Jesus? Do you think you will win? How can Hiroo's story serve as a warning to you? What are the leaflets you have been ignoring? Is your own pride causing you to ignore Jesus' gospel? If you are trusting in Jesus, does His decisive victory rule your attitudes and actions? Are you concerned about the Hiroos of the world? Are you dropping leaflets of truth and hope on unbelievers, or anvils of condemnation? Are you being a bold soldier bearing the good news of the gospel or a fearful soldier? What kinds of things hinder you from more fully experiencing Jesus' decisive victory?*

**Live It:** Encourage the students to read **Romans 8:31-39** this week and then do the assignment in their journal.

- **Truth Statement:** Christians are to boldly proclaim the truth of the gospel.

**Think About It:** Review the first 3 Ws presented in the lesson—withdraw, whine, and whoop. Challenge the students to give some specific examples of how a Christian might demonstrate each of these wrong responses. [e.g., when evolution is taught in school, Christians might be passive and simply withdraw, not making a defense for biblical truth or interacting with anyone who believes in evolution] How does Paul's picture of a soldier, prepared for battle, challenge these kinds of responses? How should the fact that Jesus has decisively won the war of worldviews shape our attitude and demeanor? Why does Paul emphasize prayer in **Ephesians 6:18**? What must happen in order for unbelievers to give up their futile battle and believe the truth? [e.g., **2 Corinthians 4:6**—God must act.)

**Examine Your Heart:** *Which of the "W"s from the lesson would characterize how you most often respond to people who express unbiblical worldviews? Are you a little bit of all four? Why do most Christians struggle with responding rightly in the face of unbiblical religions, philosophies, arguments, and values in our culture? How could focusing on the gospel, specifically on Jesus' death on the cross in order to save you from your own blindness and futility, serve as a heart check for you? Do you only see God's truth as a sword? Why is it important that you also see His truth as a cross? How can you grow in being a bold, yet humble witness?*

**Live It:** Challenge the students to review the four Ws and do the assignment in the "At Home" section of the journal, which encourages them to prepare for and practice being a witness to the truth.

- **Truth Statement:** Jesus will return and fully reveal the triumph of His truth.

**Think About It:** Review **1 Corinthians 15:24-27**. What glimpses of this reality do we now see in the world? For example, how does the community of believers, the church, give a glimpse of this reality? [The church is a living illustration of God's truth, and what it looks like to live according to His rule.] If you gathered a group of 5,000 Christians



together for a day, would they have a distinctive “fragrance,” or conduct or appearance that would make them stand out against a group of 5,000 unbelievers? Why? What does the triumph of truth in the heart of a sinner accomplish in the here and now? [A life lived under God’s rule gives us a peek at God’s reign someday in eternity.] How do the lives of individual Christians give a glimpse of this? What do you think this victory will be like when it comes to its full completion? How can this give Christians endurance to press on even in the face of harsh opposition? How does this future reality serve as a warning for those who battle against the truth?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Does the reality of Jesus’ return fill you with hope and excitement? How do you express this reality in your daily life? Does it change the way in which you fight for truth? Does it give you a greater compassion and love for the lost? Does Jesus’ return seem sort of unreal to you? What makes it hard for you to believe? With what doubts do you struggle? Do you tend to just focus on the “here and now,” ignoring the future? Why can that be dangerous for your soul? Will “putting off” thinking about these things change the truth so that **1 Corinthians 15:24-27** reads something like, “When I decide for the end to come, Jesus will deliver the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power...”? Or, “Then comes the end, when Jesus delivers the kingdom to God after destroying every rule and every authority, except for me...For God has put all things in subjection to Him except me.”?*

**Live It:** Do one of the following:

- Consider areas of your life that you have not submitted to Christ’s rule. What is one area in which you would like to pray for God’s truth to reign in your heart? Ask your small group to pray for you.
- Consider those who do not know Christ and have not submitted to His rule. Is there anyone with whom you can begin to pray for opportunities to share the gospel? How might God use you to cause the truth to triumph in another person’s life? Share this with your small group.
- Consider what the world might be like when everything is fully subjected to Christ’s rule. What do you look forward to the most about this time? [e.g., no more struggle with sin, no more curse, no more suffering, no more opposition to God and His truth] Share this with your small group and spend time thanking God for the day that is coming.

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week. Also, if time permits, ask them about how they applied one thing from last week’s lesson.**

## Send Home:

Parent Memo for Lesson 37



# Boldly Proclaiming the Truth in Humility

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## MAIN IDEA:

- > The truth of the Bible is to be boldly proclaimed in a spirit of humility.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                   |                          |                         |
|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Colossians 4:6 | 3. 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 | 5. 1 Timothy 1:15       |
| 2. Ephesians 4:29 | 4. 1 Corinthians 1:1-5   | 6. Philippians 2:3, 5-8 |

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## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 38            | > "Is Faith Necessary?" article (one per student)                                    |
| > Skits 1 and 2 (one set per classroom)       | > "Taking the Swagger Out of Christian Cultural Influence" article (one per student) |
| > Parent Memo for Lesson 38 (one per student) |  |

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## OTHER VISUALS:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| > Bible  | > 1 or 2 plain doughnut holes (but mist with water and sprinkle these with salt before the lesson) |
| > 1 or 2 plain doughnut holes (or brush off as much sugar as possible if you can't find plain) |  |

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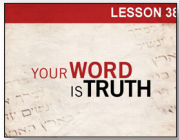
## PREPARATION:

Before the class begins, assign parts for Skits 1 and 2 to four students (two per skit). Ask them to read the skits and be prepared to perform their parts.

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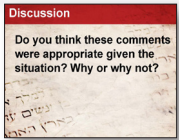
## PREPARATION FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS:

Reading the take-home article for this lesson "Is Faith Necessary?" by Pastor Kevin DeYoung will help you in leading your students during Small Group Application of this lesson.



(DISPLAY **LESSON 38.**)

## Small Group Discussion (4-5 minutes)



(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

Read the following news item to the students:

*On January 12, 2010, a major earthquake hit the country of Haiti. The devastation affected approximately three million people. It is estimated that anywhere from 100,000 to more than 200,000 people died as a result of the quake.*

A day after the quake, a well-known Christian television personality stated the following:

*Something happened a long time ago in Haiti, and people might not want to talk about it. They were under the heel of the French... And they got together and swore a pact to the devil. They said, "We will serve you if you will get us free from the French." True story. And so, the devil said, "OK, it's a deal." And they kicked the French out. You know,*

*the Haitians revolted and got themselves free. But ever since, they have been cursed by one thing after the other.*<sup>1</sup>

What do you think of his comments? Do you think that there was truth in them? Do you think they were appropriate given the situation? Why or why not?

Whether or not you think there might be truth in what this man said, it was probably an inappropriate time and manner for him to say what he did. Heaping condemnation on Haiti did not help to win anyone there for Christ. It did not help the truth to triumph. Today we're going to discuss **how** we use the sword of truth God has given us.

1. Quote was taken from [www.mediamatters.org](http://www.mediamatters.org), January 13, 2010, originally aired on the Christian Broadcasting Network.

## Large Group Lesson



(DISPLAY **SWORD.**)

Recall that God's truth has been the reoccurring theme throughout this year's study.

(Direct students to complete the following statement in the journal.)

- ✎ The Sword of Truth is powerful:
- ✎ • It is the objective, absolute, universal, unchanging, and knowable truth of God.
  - ✎ • It has the power to save sinners through the message of the gospel.
  - ✎ • It has the power to destroy Satan's strongholds.



(DISPLAY **ACCURATE**, and direct students to complete the following statement in the journal.)

The Sword of Truth is accurate:

- ☞ • Every word proves true.
- ☞ • It is trustworthy in guiding us in every aspect of life.

*Suppose you are a soldier and have been given a very powerful and accurate weapon. Will it do you much good if you forget it when you go out to battle the enemy? Will it do you much good if you carry it with you, but don't know how to use it?*

### Illustration



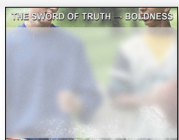
(DISPLAY **SOLDIER**.)

Quickly explain that when a young man goes to basic training with the United States Army, one of the things he is taught to do is carry his weapon with him at all times—everywhere! For weeks on end, that weapon is by his side. This is to train him to think and act as a soldier at all times, always being prepared for battle. His life will depend on that weapon, and it will be useless to him if he leaves his gun in the barracks as he goes out to the battle. But he is also trained how to use that weapon. And before he takes it out and actually shoots it, he learns all about its various parts. He has to take it apart and put it back together again, over and over, until he knows that weapon so well that he can take it apart and put it together again, blindfolded. Then, he learns how to use it. The whole process involves intentionality, discipline, and patient perseverance.

*Christians need to have a similar mind set when it comes to God's Word. The Sword of Truth needs to be with us at all times. It is not going to be helpful to us if it is only sitting on a shelf somewhere, left behind. And we need to become more and more acquainted with it, learning it inside out, just as a soldier gets to know and understand his weapon and how to use it.*

*In what ways can Christians go about “carrying” the Sword with them at all times, and also become trained in using it?* [daily Bible reading, memorizing Scripture, Bible study, paying careful attention to preaching and teaching, etc.]

God's truth is a uniquely powerful weapon in the fight of faith and the fight of opposing worldviews. That is why Paul compared the Word of God to a sword. Because of its power and its accuracy, Christians are to have an unshakable confidence in God's Word. Christians are to have the mindset of a soldier who knows that he has a weapon far superior to any of his enemies' weapons. And with that power and accuracy comes the responsibility of intentional, disciplined study and training.



(DISPLAY **BOLDNESS**, and direct students to the statements to complete in the journal.)

- ☞ Christians are to have an unshakable confidence in God's truth that produces boldness in the battle of worldviews.
- ☞ Christians have a responsibility to be prepared with God's truth through intentional and disciplined study.

- ☞ Christians must be trained in knowing how to use God's truth in fighting against the schemes of Satan.

### Illustration



(DISPLAY **SKIT 1.**)

Have the two students perform the short Skit 1 for the class.

**Joe:** *Hi Dustin. How is it going?*

**Dustin:** *Not real great. My grandpa died last night. It was really sad. I loved my grandpa a lot.*

**Joe:** *I'm really sorry to hear about that. Had he been sick?*

**Dustin:** *Yeah. He had a bad heart for quite a while. Yesterday he had a massive heart attack. My grandma called 911, but they couldn't save him. My grandma is really upset about it. At least I know that he is in heaven now. My grandfather always said that God lets good people into heaven, and my grandfather was a really good person.*

**Joe:** *It's not about how good you are. It's about whether or not a person is trusting in Jesus for the forgiveness of his sin. Did your grandpa trust Jesus?*

Have the two students return to their seats. Ask the class what they thought of the skit by asking the following:

*Was there a "war of worldviews" going on? Describe the opposing views? [opposing views of how someone gets to heaven]*

*Was the sword of truth wielded in this battle? What important truths were boldly proclaimed? [You don't get to heaven by being good, you must trust in Jesus.]*

*Is this truth accurate? Yes. For example, trusting in Jesus IS the only way to heaven. Is it a powerful truth? Yes. It is the message of the gospel and has the power to save sinners. Joe was prepared with the Word. The truth had been learned and was boldly spoken.*

*However, do you think that this truth, spoken at this particular time, would be well received by Dustin? Why or why not? (Allow a few responses.)*

Have the students turn to **Colossians 4:6**:



(DISPLAY **COLOSSIANS 4:6**, and direct the students to the related questions in the journal.)

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*Colossians 4:6—Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.*

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🔊 *In light of the skit, what important issue does this verse address? [the manner in which you speak truth]*

🔊 *What does the word “gracious” mean? [kind, gentle, loving]*

*In the skit, do you think that Joe's truthful words to Dustin were gracious in this situation? Why or why not? [e.g, he is still grieving his grandfather's loss; his grandfather is already dead and cannot respond to this truth and be saved, only making the loss more painful]*

🔊 *What do you think is meant by speech that is “seasoned with salt”?*

### Illustration

Quickly give one or two students the plain doughnut holes to taste. Ask if they enjoy the flavor. Many foods have salt added to them. Salt enhances the flavor of foods. Without salt, many foods would taste bland. Next, give one or two students the salted donut holes, without telling them that it is salt covering the donut and not sugar. Ask if they enjoy the flavor. Point out that salt is meant to enhance the flavor of foods, not to ruin the flavor. A good cook knows how much salt to add—not too little and not too much.

*Do you think Joe properly “salted” his comments to Dustin? Did stating these truths in this way at this time serve to enhance the appeal of the gospel, or serve to make it less appealing?*



(DISPLAY **EPHESIANS 4:29**, and direct students to the related question in the journal.)

🔊 *Ephesians 4:29—Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.*

*How could this verse apply to the situation posed in the skit? (Allow the students to respond.)*

Even though truth was spoken by Joe, it didn't fit the occasion very well. Someone who is grieving for his grandpa probably won't be encouraged to hear that his grandpa might not be in heaven after all.

*So does that mean Joe shouldn't have said anything to Dustin? Is the alternative to not speak any truth? How does that fit with being bold? How does that fit with the power of the gospel to save?*

### Small Group Activity (10 minutes)

In your small group, challenge your students to think of ways in which Joe could have responded to Dustin differently. Have the students discuss the following questions:

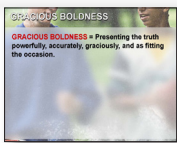
- *Is it likely that Joe and Dustin will see each other again? If yes, how might this change*

*how Joe responds at this particular time?*

- *Is there a way to demonstrate the truth of the gospel at this time without pointing out the obvious lie of Dustin's worldview? How could this be done?*
- *Are there biblical truths Joe could have communicated that would serve to point Dustin to the goodness of Jesus, that would not at the same time serve to condemn his grandfather?*
- *Do the students have any similar real-life examples or experiences to share? What did they learn from these experiences?*

## Large Group Lesson

Call on one or more small groups to briefly summarize how Joe might have responded to Dustin differently in this situation. Emphasize that these are areas in which all Christians can grow and become more and more discerning. Being bold and yet gracious, kind, and loving is not always easy.



(DISPLAY **GRACIOUS BOLDNESS**, and direct the students to complete the related statement in the journal.)

Gracious boldness = Presenting the truth powerfully, accurately, graciously, and as fitting the occasion

This does not imply hiding the truth or remaining silent. Proclaiming the truth in a gracious and fitting manner will often offend those whose sinful hearts are hardened.

- ✎ However, as Christians, we must not be **offensive in our manner** as we present truth. (Direct students to complete the preceding statement in the **journal**.)

For example:

*In the case of Dustin, a powerful testimony to the truth of the gospel may be Joe demonstrating sincere compassion to him as Dustin grieves. It may be Joe offering to help him with schoolwork in the next week. It may be attending the funeral as a sign of support and friendship. It may be asking Dustin how he can pray for him and his family. Over time, Joe may get more opportunities to verbally share the gospel. The truth might offend Dustin, but the way in which Joe shares the truth does not need to be offensive or insensitive.*

### Illustration



(DISPLAY **SKIT 2**.)

Have the two students come and perform the short Skit 2 for the class.

**Lisa:** *Our church is going to the state capitol to protest the ban on same-sex marriage. The state needs to realize that same-sex couples should have equal rights when it comes to marriage!"*

**Suzy:** *Your church is doing that? You can't be serious! The Bible is very clear about marriage: One man marries one woman. End of discussion.*

**Lisa:** *How can you be so closeminded about the issue? God is love, and I think that God cares more about people loving each other than about outdated rules. Besides, what gives you the right to decide what is true for other people?*

**Suzy:** *Well, I would sure make a better decision about what is true in this issue than your pastor or your church does! How can you possibly believe something so stupid?*

Ask the students what they thought of this particular skit. *Was truth boldly proclaimed? Will this truth likely to be offensive to Lisa? Why? However, what seemed to be the overall demeanor of Suzy as she presented the truth? [pride] Do you believe that presenting the truth with this type of demeanor will make Lisa more or less likely to consider the truth?*

Have the students turn to **1 Corinthians 1:26-31** and **2:1-5**, and to the related questions in the journal.

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*1 Corinthians 1:26-31—For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. <sup>27</sup>But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; <sup>28</sup>God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, <sup>29</sup>so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. <sup>30</sup>And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, <sup>31</sup>so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."*

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*Who are the foolish, weak, lowly, and despised people Paul references in these verses? [Christians] What point does Paul stress in verse 30? [because of God, Christians are in Christ, not through any qualification of their own] Therefore, what type of demeanor should Christians have? What might this look like as Christians present the truth?*

Continue reading:

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*1 Corinthians 2:1-5—And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. <sup>2</sup>For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. <sup>3</sup>And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, <sup>4</sup>and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, <sup>5</sup>that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*

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*What does Paul want us to understand by these words?*

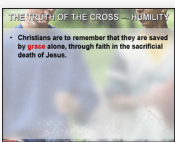
*Does Paul want Christians to have a boastful attitude as they boldly proclaim the truth? Why not? (Allow the students to respond.) Of what should we be constantly reminded?*



(DISPLAY **HUMILITY**, and direct the students to complete this statement in the **journal**.)

- ☞ Christians are to remember that they are saved by grace alone, through faith in the sacrificial death of Jesus.

- ☞ *1 Timothy 1:15—The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.*



(DISPLAY **HUMILITY 2**.)

- ☞ Christians are to remember that the goal of presenting truth is that sinners might put their faith in Jesus.
- ☞ Christians are to remember that ultimately it is God's power that saves and brings people to love the truth.

*How might taking these truths to heart have served to change Suzy's demeanor as she spoke with Lisa?*



(DISPLAY **PHILIPPIANS 2:3, 5-8**.)

- ☞ *Philippians 2:3, 5-8—Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves...<sup>5</sup>Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup>but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup>And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*



(DISPLAY **SWORD AND CROSS**.)

- ☞ The Sword of Truth → Boldness
- ☞ The Truth of the Cross → Humility

Christians are to take these two truths to heart as we proclaim God's truth to a sinful and broken world. These truths should shape our desires, attitudes, and demeanor. We are to boldly proclaim God's truth, in every area of life, and do so with humility, looking

to Jesus as our example. He counted Himself as nothing, and His love and concern for sinners took Him to the cross—to death. Christians are called to have this same attitude. For example, when we proclaim the truth we must die to pride, to being seen as “right” or superior, and to thinking of our own agenda.



(DISPLAY JOHN PIPER QUOTE.)

*Being Christian exiles in American culture does not end our influence; it takes the swagger out of it.<sup>2</sup>*

*What do you think that he means by this quote? What is “swagger”? [boastful self-exaltation, showing-off, strutting in an arrogant manner]*

Confronting the lies of Satan in the midst of a culture that seems to increasingly reject God's truth calls for great boldness. It is what God has called every Christian to do—boldly witness to and proclaim the truth. This truth will be offensive to those whose sinful hearts are hardened. But our demeanor in presenting the truth should not be offensive. The message of the cross should give every Christian great humility as we present the truth: We are sinners, saved by grace. Apart from this we, too, would not know or love God's truth.

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the Small Group Application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** Christians are to present God's truth boldly and in a spirit of humility.

With your small group do one or more of the following:

- Review the skit with Lisa and Suzy and discuss ways in which Suzy could have taken the above truth to heart and presented the truth differently to Lisa.
- Recall a real-life experience in which God's truth was presented boldly and humbly. Encourage the students to recall experiences of their own. *How did they share the truth? What frustrations may they have had in sharing the truth boldly? Were they prepared with the truth? What struggles do they face in presenting the truth in humility?*
- Have the students imagine the following scenario: You are sitting with a group of students at school. You know that one of the students is a Muslim and another one has parents who are Buddhists. You do not know about the other students. One of the students asks you: “Do you think people of other faiths can go to heaven?” How would you respond with boldness, in a spirit of humility?
- Read **Philippians 2:5-8** again. Point out to the students that Jesus' example of humility is one that we need to follow as we boldly proclaim truth to others. Jesus died for his enemies. Are we willing to lay down our lives in smaller ways

to bring others to God? For example, can we love someone hard to love, or be humble when it hurts?

- An additional text that may help in the above discussion is **1 Peter 3:15-16**.

***Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week. Also, if time permits, ask them about how they applied one thing from last week's lesson.***

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 38

"Is Faith Necessary?" article

"Taking the Swagger Out of Christian Cultural Influence" article

# Are You Walking in the Truth?

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## MAIN IDEA:

- > Saving knowledge of the truth is characterized by loving, believing in, and obeying Jesus, and being progressively changed by His truth.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                               |                        |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. 1 Timothy 2:4-6            | 3. 1 John 1:5-7        |
| 2. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10, 13 | 4. 1 John 2:3-4, 16-17 |

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## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 39   | > "The Crowd or the Cross" video              |
| > Review Quiz (copy one per student) | > Parent Memo for Lesson 39 (one per student) |

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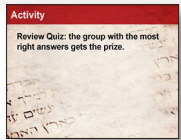
## OTHER VISUALS:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| > Bible   | > Be prepared to show the 3-minute and 1-second video title "The Crowd or the Cross," found on <a href="http://ignitermedia.com">ignitermedia.com</a> by searching for the title. |
| > Large bag of candy or other prize for the winning small group (prize should be appealing enough to serve as a strong incentive for completing the opening activity) |   |



(DISPLAY **LESSON 39.**)

## Small Group Activity (10 minutes)



(DISPLAY **ACTIVITY.**)

*CANDY (OR OTHER PRIZE)  
REVIEW QUIZ*

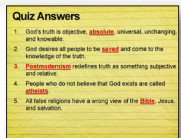
Show the students the large bag of **candy** (or other prize). Today's lesson will begin by doing a review quiz in the small groups. All the questions are from topics covered in lessons 1-38. The group that completes the most correct answers will receive the prize.

Hand each student a **Review Quiz**. The students in each group can work together and answer the questions, but each student should write the

answers on his own paper. You should designate one copy as your group's official "answers." (Note: If all 38 lessons have not been taught, you may want to warn the students that they might not be able to answer every question correctly. **Small group leaders are not allowed to help the students with their answers.** Give the students adequate time to complete the quiz.

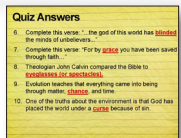
## Large Group Lesson

Quickly go through each question and corresponding answer. While you are doing this, each small group should be noting each answer that is correct. Questions and answers are as follows:



(DISPLAY **ANSWERS 1.**)

1. God's truth is objective, absolute, universal, unchanging, and knowable.
2. God desires all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.
3. Postmodernism redefines truth as something subjective and relative.
4. People who do not believe that God exists are called atheists.
5. All false religions have a wrong view of the Bible, Jesus, and salvation.



(DISPLAY **ANSWERS 2.**)

6. Complete this verse: "...the god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers..."
7. Complete this verse: "For by grace you have been saved through faith..."
8. Theologian John Calvin compared the Bible to eyeglasses (or spectacles).
9. Evolution teaches that everything came into being through matter, chance, and time.
10. One of the truths about the environment is that God has placed the world under a curse because of sin.

## Quiz Answers

11. God has designed each man to be a servant-like leader, provider, and protector.
12. God has designed each woman to be a willingly submissive helper and nurturer.
13. Marriage is a picture of Jesus' amazing love for His church.
14. Paul describes the church as a pillar and buttress of the truth.
15. Self-esteem is the wrong view that your worth is self-derived.

(DISPLAY **ANSWERS 3.**)

11. God designed each man to be a servant-like leader, provider, and protector.
12. God designed each woman to be a willingly submissive helper and nurturer.
13. Marriage is a picture of Jesus' amazing love for His church.
14. Paul describes the church as a pillar and buttress of the truth.
15. Self-esteem is the wrong view that your worth is self-derived.

## Quiz Answers

16. Complete the verse: "Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare."
17. Ethics is a set of moral principles and values used to determine what is right or wrong in a given situation.
18. Prejudice is sinfully prejudging people based on wrong and prideful distinctions.
19. The sinful heart is prone to develop and use technology for evil purposes.
20. Our speech is important because our tongue can "set a forest ablaze."

(DISPLAY **ANSWERS 4.**)

16. Complete the verse: "Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare."
17. Ethics is a set of moral principles and values used to determine what is right or wrong to do in a given situation.
18. Prejudice is sinfully prejudging people based on wrong and prideful distinctions.
19. The sinful heart is prone to develop and use technology for evil purposes.
20. Our speech is important because our tongue can "set a forest ablaze."

## Quiz Answers

21. Visual media has a unique ability to captivate our hearts and minds.
22. Complete the verse: "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap."
23. President Theodore Roosevelt once cautioned: "Athletic [ability] is a mighty good servant...[but] a mighty bad master."
24. Work is a gift from God and should be done heartily and with excellence.
25. Money and possessions are gifts from God to be used for kingdom purposes.

(DISPLAY **ANSWERS 5.**)

21. Visual media has a unique ability to captivate our hearts and minds.
22. Complete the verse: "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap."
23. President Theodore Roosevelt once cautioned: "Athletic [ability] is a mighty good servant...[but] a mighty bad master."
24. Work is a gift from God and should be done heartily and with excellence.
25. Money and possessions are gifts from God to be used for kingdom purposes.

## Quiz Answers

26. God designs to show His glory in and through our suffering.
27. God is absolutely sovereign over disasters and calamities.
28. Evil is characterized by wrong attitudes toward God and a failure to obey God's commands.
29. The goal of a "just war" is to restore and establish a righteous peace.

(DISPLAY **ANSWERS 6.**)

26. God designs to show His glory in and through our suffering.
27. God is absolutely sovereign over disasters and calamities.
28. Evil is characterized by wrong attitudes toward God and a failure to obey God's commands.
29. The goal of a "just war" is to restore and establish a righteous peace.

## Quiz Answers

30. Complete the verse: "We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God."

(DISPLAY **ANSWERS 7.**)

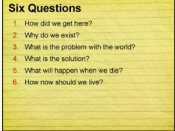
30. Complete the verse: "We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God."

31. In Ephesians, Paul describes the Word of God as a sword.

32. The truth of the Bible is to be boldly proclaimed in a spirit of humility.

Have each small group tally the number of correct answers. (Answers must match exactly). Give the prize to the winning group.

At the beginning of our study we said that there were six important and essential questions every person asks in his mind and heart. Ask the students if they can quickly recall these six questions.



(DISPLAY **SIX QUESTIONS**, and direct the students to write where indicated in the **journal**.)

1. How did we get here?
2. Why do we exist?
3. What is wrong with the world?
4. What is the solution?
5. What will happen when we die?
6. How now should we live?

*Suppose that you had been given these six questions on a quiz. How confident are you that you could correctly answer each question?*

Quickly pose each question, and then call on one or two volunteers to give a short answer to each question. Ask the class where they would need to go to verify with absolute certainty whether or not each response was true.



(DISPLAY **TRUTH**.)

Briefly review the following main ideas:

- ☞ God is the source of all truth.
- ☞ Truth is objective, absolute, universal, unchanging, and knowable.
- ☞ The Bible communicates the most essential truths that all people must come to know and to which they must respond.
- ☞ God desires that all people be saved.
- ☞ Jesus alone is “the way and the truth and the life.” He is the one Mediator between God and man.

*Suppose you got every answer on the review quiz correct. Suppose you are able to correctly answer the six important questions that were posed. Suppose you could have filled in the correct statements on the truth visual. What does that mean? Should you get some kind of prize?*



Tell the students that you are going to read a portion of a true story about a young man who grew up in a Christian home.

*From the time Luke (not his real name) was born his parents surrounded him with gospel truth. Luke's father was a leader in their local church and was a wise, loving, happy, and godly father. He not only taught Luke biblical truth, he also demonstrated the Christian life through his words and actions.*

*Luke's mother was also a strong believer—visibly devoted to Jesus and to her family. She homeschooled Luke throughout his childhood. Luke was daily taught from the Scriptures and was encouraged to memorize hundreds of Bible verses—which Luke eagerly did. His parents intentionally and carefully taught him to see and understand everything in life through the truth of Scripture.*

*Luke's family was also very involved in their local church. They made attendance at Sunday worship a high priority. From a very young age, Luke sat with his parents in the corporate worship service where they listened to the pastor faithfully teach the whole counsel of God from week to week. Luke also went to Sunday school and Wednesday night classes, and participated in other church activities.*

*Because of all these influences in Luke's life, by the time he was 13 years old he could clearly and accurately explain the gospel. He knew how to study the Bible for himself. He openly prayed, worshiped, and did Christian ministry. His teachers were impressed with his biblical knowledge and ability to answer even the most difficult questions.*

*Does Luke sound like the "perfect Christian"?...But things aren't always as they seem. How so?*

*In Luke's later teen years, he slowly but surely, lost interest in the things of God. The Bible, prayer, worship, church, and ministry became less and less important in his life. His heart became increasingly drawn to what the world had to offer. He sought out new friends who were not Christians with whom he could explore a life of sinful pursuits. He thought that these pursuits would make him truly happy.*

*Luke is now living a life completely contrary to the gospel. He no longer considers the Bible to be absolute, authoritative, unchanging truth to which he must submit. He has embraced the lies of Satan, instead the truths he had been so carefully and lovingly taught. His heart and life are now entrenched in sin—much to the pain of his godly parents.*

1 Timothy 2:4-6

What did Luke mean “know”? Might he have done well on our quiz and in answering the six important questions? Yes, he had grown up in a wonderful Christian home. He had been taught the truth. But what did he really “know”?

(DISPLAY **1 TIMOTHY 2:4-6**, and direct the students to the related question in the **journal**.)

🔑 *1 Timothy 2:4-6—[God] desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all,*

What specific “truth” is Paul emphasizing in these verses? [the gospel truth—that Jesus died on the cross to be the one Mediator between God and sinful men] *But what does Paul mean by coming to “knowledge” of this truth?*

It is extremely important to know the truth, as in acknowledging and being able to articulate the truth about Jesus and the gospel. The message of the gospel as communicated in the Bible is the only way a person can be saved (**Romans 10:17**).

But Paul wants us to understand that the “knowledge of the truth” he speaks of here is not a mere acknowledgement or ability to articulate the truth—something Luke, from the story, was able to do. It is a saving knowledge of truth. “Saving knowledge” means that this knowledge isn’t mere head knowledge; it demonstrates that someone has actually placed his faith in Christ for salvation. It is loving and embracing the truth. It is characterized by several qualities elsewhere in Scripture. Paul makes this clear in other texts.

1 Thessalonians 2:9-10, 13

(Ask the students turn to **2 Thessalonians 2:9-10, 13**, and to the related questions in the journal.)

(DISPLAY **2 THESSALONIANS 2:9-10, 13**.)

*2 Thessalonians 2:9-10—The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.*

🔑 *What does Paul say in reference to the truth here? [unbelievers refuse to love the truth] So the implication is that believers—Christians—are characterized by what? [loving the truth]*

🔑 *Is it possible to know something as truth, but not love it? Can you give me a few examples? (Allow the students to respond, and you may want to give them a quick example: I know that vegetables are good for me, but I don't like eating them.)*

- 🔑 *So the question becomes: “Do you love Jesus as your Lord and Savior? Do you have a personal, ongoing, and growing relationship with Him? Or, is Jesus just some kind of distant Person that you have knowledge about?”*

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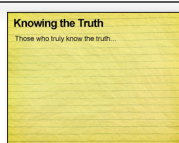
*2 Thessalonians 2:13—But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.*

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*What does Paul say in reference to the truth here?* [A person is saved through belief in the truth.]

- 🔑 *What do you think it means to “believe” in the truth? Is it merely an acknowledgment of true facts? No, because this verse also talks about sanctification, and we will see how that relates to salvation in a minute.*

### Illustration



- 🔑 Some people are so terrified of airplanes that they refuse to fly in them. Even though statistics show that it is much more dangerous to ride in a car, some people trust riding in a car more than flying in an airplane. So, even though they might acknowledge the facts, they still refuse to fly because they are not willing to place their personal trust or confidence in airplanes. Though they say they believe the facts, in reality, they are leaning on their own understanding and feelings to guide them.

(DISPLAY **Know 1.**)

Those who truly know the truth...

- 🔑 ...love the truth.
- 🔑 ...believe in the truth by placing their confidence in it.
- 🔑 *So the question becomes, “Are you believing in Jesus? Do you understand that you need a Savior? Are you placing your full confidence in Him alone? Are you trusting that He is who He says He is, and that He has accomplished what He says He has on your behalf?”*

*How do you suppose you could determine whether or not someone really has this kind of saving knowledge of the truth? Is it something that can simply be determined by taking a classroom quiz?*

Think back to the story of the young man from the Christian family. At the beginning of the story, it seemed like the ideal situation. But then the story took an unexpected turn.

*In Luke’s later teen years, he slowly but surely, lost interest in the things of God. The Bible, prayer, worship, church, and ministry became less and less important in his life. His heart became increasingly drawn to what the*

*world had to offer. He sought out new friends who were not Christians with whom he could explore a life of sinful pursuits..*

*Were you surprised that the story went this direction? Why or why not? (Allow the students give a few responses.)*

(Have the students turn to **1 John 1:5-7**, and to the related question in the journal.)

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*1 John 1:5-7—This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup>If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. <sup>7</sup>But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.*

---

*What main point does John want us to understand in verse 6? [If you say that you are saved, but don't practice the truth, you are lying.] What does it mean to “practice” the truth?*

(Read **1 John 2:3-4**, and then have the students summarize the verses where indicated in the journal and complete the related statement.)

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*1 John 2:3-4—And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. <sup>4</sup>Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

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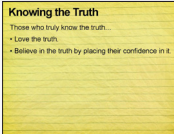
(DISPLAY **Know 2.**)

Those who truly know the truth...

- ...love the truth
- ...believe in the truth by placing their confidence in it
- ☞ ...obey the truth
- ☞ ...are progressively transformed by the truth (sanctification)
- ☞ John is not talking about perfection here, as if he means: “If you don't keep every commandment, you're not a Christian.” Rather, he is referring to an intentional inclination of the mind and heart that sets itself toward obedience to God. This intentional inclination does not come about accidentally. It comes as a Christian's mind and heart is increasingly shaped and transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit and the truth of the Word. A Christian is actively involved in this process of sanctification.

So the questions are:

*Do you desire to obey Jesus and follow Him? Do you feel the Holy Spirit slowly changing your desires and thoughts so that they are increasingly becoming shaped by God's truth?*



In the story, a clue to the young man's true heart condition was expressed through his actions. Although he knew the true facts regarding the Bible and the gospel, his heart did not really love these truths, and that was clearly evidenced by his actions.

(Have the students turn to **1 John 2:16-17**)



1 John 2:16-17

(DISPLAY **1 JOHN 2:16-17**)

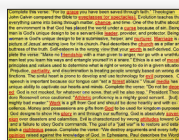
*1 John 2:16-17—For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. <sup>17</sup>And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.*

In this passage (and throughout John's epistle), the term “world” refers to the “system of rebellion and pride that seeks to displace God and His rule.”<sup>1</sup> It would include all worldviews that are not biblical worldviews. It would include any belief that seeks to find the answers to life's questions apart from the truth of the Bible.

*You might be thinking: “Well, I don't really care about the truth. It's all a bunch of boring rules of “do's and don'ts.” So you look to the world and it seems to deliver some kind of appealing “prize”—popularity, comfort, fame, fun, freedom—or simply being able “do your own thing without anyone bugging you.” And that is exactly what Satan wants you to believe! But it is all a lie and is passing away.*

*Or you might be thinking, “Hey. I know the truth. My parents are Christians. I come to church. I got all the answers right. I read the Bible, pray, memorize Scripture, and keep out of trouble.” But the questions you need to ask may be:*

☞ *Do I really love the truth? Is it characterized by a personal, heartfelt relationship with Jesus? Is this relationship growing and changing my heart and mind?*



(DISPLAY **REVIEW QUIZ**, and quickly click through the nine animations to see the transformation from the quiz questions to the picture of the cross and the words “Follow Me.”)

(Play the optional video clip “The Crowd or the Cross.”)

VIDEO AND PLAYER

(Be sure to end the lesson by praying for the students. You could pray for them to come to know and understand Jesus as He is revealed in the book of John: as the Bread of Life (**John 6:35**); the Door (**John 10:9**); the Good Shepherd (**John 10:11**); the Resurrection and the Life (**John 11:25**); the Way, the Truth, and the Life (**John 14:6**); and the Vine (**John 15:5**). Consider ending by reading **John 15:9-11**.)

1. From *The Reformation Study Bible (English Standard Version)*, general editor R.C. Sproul (Lake Mary, Fla.: Ligonier Ministries, 2005) 1,829.

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the Small Group Application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth statement:** Those who truly know the truth will demonstrate love for the truth.

**Think About It:** Have you ever played a game with someone you could tell was just following the rules, but wasn't really excited about playing the game? What gave away his true attitude about the game? Suppose someone was watching to see if you really love the truth of the Bible—specifically that you really love Jesus. Would he find any evidence that you really love the truth about Jesus? What evidence might he find? Or, what evidence would you be looking for in another person?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Do you feel a real love for Jesus? If you do, does it sometimes feel as if it changes from day to day—sometimes really weak and sometimes strong? Does it make you wonder about whether or not you really love Jesus? Why might our subjective feelings deceive us? Do you ever pray about this and ask Jesus to speak to your heart? Do you read and think about Scriptures such as **John 6:37** and **Romans 10:9**? Have you ever asked other mature Christians to point to evidences of Jesus' love in your life that you may not be clearly seeing? If you don't feel as if you have a love for the truth, what do you think hinders you the most? Do you have questions about the Bible or Jesus that you feel haven't been addressed? If so, what are they? Have you found a better substitute for Jesus? If so, what is it and why do you find it more attractive?*

**Live It:** Offer a time of silent prayer for the students. If you think it might be helpful for them to find a quiet place away from the other groups in the room in order to pray and consider, allow them to spread out a little bit without talking to one another. Encourage them to bring their Bibles and journals with them as they think and pray for a few minutes. Make yourself available to any students who would like to talk more seriously about salvation and what it means to love the truth.

- **Truth Statement:** Those who truly know the truth will believe in it and place their confidence in it.

**Think About It:** Read and discuss the warning from **Romans 2:4-8**. Give the students the following type of example to think about: Suppose your friend went to a new movie that just came out and spent \$10 for the ticket. The next day he said the following to you: "Don't waste your money seeing that movie. It was terrible." Would you be likely to heed his warning? How can Luke's story serve as a warning to those who think the Christian life is simply about knowing the right stuff and doing "church things"?

**Examine Your Heart:** *Ask the students to state some truths about Jesus that make Him alone worthy of our full confidence and trust. Then ask: Is God's truth—especially the gospel of Jesus—something you feel confident in personally? Are you willing to bank your life on it? If you are placing your trust in Jesus and in His commands, will that*



*make you “in step” with the world? Have you counted the cost of what it means to trust in Jesus alone and not other things or other people—not even confidence in yourself?*

**Live It:** Ask students to share any testimonies they have about how a saving relationship has changed their lives. Do not pressure students, but encourage any willing students to share. If students are slow to talk, you could begin by sharing how a saving relationship with Christ has changed your life. Encourage students to complete a home assignment of writing down their answers to the question that Jesus posed to his disciples, “Who do you say that I am?”

- **Truth Statement:** Those who truly know the truth will obey the truth and be progressively changed by it.

**Think About It:** *Have the students try to think back several years ago to what they were like as eight-year-olds. What kinds of things have changed about them since that time? Did these changes happen suddenly, or was it mostly a slow, steady process? How did they cooperate or take an active part in those changes? (For example, they grew taller and gained weight.) How did they help that process to happen? What were the factors, outside of themselves, on which they were dependent? Point out that sanctification is something like that. It is a process in which Christians cooperate with God in becoming more and more conformed to Jesus. Both the Holy Spirit and the Word are necessary in this process. It is not about being perfect in obedience (in this lifetime), it's about direction, or intentional inclination. Are you growing in obedience even if it may seem like a slow process? Have you asked your parents to see if they have seen you grow in godly obedience? Read and discuss one or more of the following: **John 16:13; John 17:17; Romans 12:2; and 1 Peter 1:13-16.***

**Examine Your Heart:** *Read **Psalm 19:7-11** and **1 John 5:3-5**. Do these verses describe what you generally feel about God's commands? Are there some commands that feel burdensome at times? Why? Do you believe that obeying a command that initially may feel like a burden can actually become a joy? Do you have a specific example you could share? When this happens in your heart, what is it proving about God's truth? Do you share this with other friends and family so they can see the joy and reward of obedience to the truth—and not see God's commands as something designed to kill our fun?*

**Live It:** Pursue joy in Christ this week! Think consciously about how each biblical command you obey lends itself to happiness. List the “happiness” benefits of obedience with your small group.

**Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Try to follow up with them next week. Also, if time permits, ask them about how they applied one thing from last week's lesson.**



## **Send Home**

Parent Memo for Lesson 39

# Delighting in God's Truth

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## MAIN IDEAS:

- > God's truth is meant to bring us lasting joy.

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## SCRIPTURE:

- |                     |                      |                 |
|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Psalm 19:7-11    | 3. Proverbs 22:17-18 | 5. John 8:31-32 |
| 2. Psalm 119:24, 43 | 4. Jeremiah 15:16    |                 |

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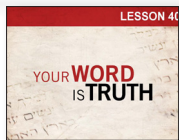
## CURRICULUM RESOURCES:

- > PowerPoint® Slides for Lesson 40
- > Parent Memo for Lesson 40 (one per student)

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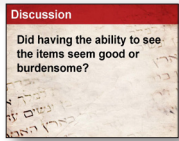
## OTHER VISUALS:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Bible</li> <li>&gt; 2 items for each small group for the opening activity, including one edible food and one inedible or toxic item (e.g., box of pudding mix and box of fabric dye; box of candy and box of mouse poison; chocolate syrup and dish soap; etc.) <b>The aim is to have the edible and inedible item hard to distinguish when the students have their eyes closed and can only feel the items.</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; An apple and a box of rat poison</li> <li>&gt; Recommended: Bring a sweet treat to share with the students. You could point out that the Word of God is meant to be even sweeter to us than the treat!</li> </ul> |
|---|---|



(DISPLAY **LESSON 40.**)

## Small Group Activity (5-7 minutes)



PUDDING AND  
FABRIC DYE (OR  
OTHER ITEMS)

(DISPLAY **DISCUSSION.**)

Explain that you want the students to close their eyes and keep them closed until you instruct them otherwise. Tell them that you are going to pass around two items for them to try to identify. The only clue you will give them is that one item would be good to eat, and one would be dangerous to eat. After all the students have felt each item, have them open their eyes. Discuss the following:

- *How accurate were their guesses?*
- *Would they have wanted to eat the items without first knowing for sure what they actually are? Why not?*
- *Is there value in accurately knowing what you are eating?*
- *Did having the ability to see the items seem good or burdensome?*

## Large Group Lesson



(DISPLAY **PSALM 19:7-11.**)

Have the students turn to the “Examining God’s Word” activity in the **journal**, and make sure that they each have a pen or pencil.

Choose a student to read the text:

🔊 *Psalm 19:7-11—The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; <sup>8</sup>the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; <sup>9</sup>the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. <sup>10</sup>More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. <sup>11</sup>Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.*

*Look carefully at the different terms the psalmist uses in reference to God's Word. What are they? Circle each of these terms in your journal. (You may need to give the students the first one so they know exactly what you want them to notice.) [law, testimony, precepts, commandment, rules]*

*What qualities are we to associate with God's truth? Draw a rectangle around each of these terms. [God's truth is right, pure, clean, enduring forever, true, righteous, gold, honey.]*

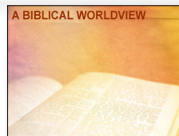
*When you look at these words, what are they meant to convey?*

*Look at the verses again. What type of effects is God's Word able to bring about? [rejoicing the heart, enlightening the eyes, tastes sweet, gives warning, brings about great reward] (Direct the students to the related question in the **journal**.)*

*Underline these terms. [e.g., something perfect, trustworthy, valuable, and pleasant]*

*What was your first thought about the item you opened in the small group activity? Were you eager to eat it, or horrified at the thought of eating it? How might your reaction relate to the different reactions that people can have to God's Word?*

*How might the opening small group activity have demonstrated the truth of these verses? Did having the ability to see allow for a reward and a helpful warning? (Allow the students to give a few responses.)*



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL**.)

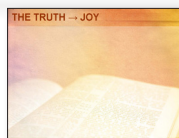
🔊 A biblical worldview = Seeing and understanding all of life through the truth of Scripture.

The main topic of study throughout the past 39 lessons has been truth, God's truth. As theologian John Calvin pointed out, the Bible is like a pair of spectacles or eye glasses through which we are to view everything in life including the physical world around us, relationships, our daily experiences, culture, and world events. The truth of the Bible provides the only objective, absolute, universal, and unchanging lens through which we can rightly see the way things really are.

*But it is also important to see that these “glasses” are meant to increase our joy. That is why the psalmist describes God's truth as being valuable like fine gold and sweeter than honey.*

*The truth is meant to give you joy!*

The Truth ➔ Joy



(DISPLAY **Joy 1**, and direct the students to complete this statement in the journal.)

Have the students turn to each verse, and complete them as shown in the journal.

**Psalm 119:24—**

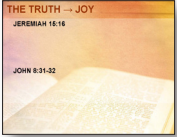
🔊 *Your testimonies are my delight; they are my counselors.*

**Psalm 119:43—**

🔊 *And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, for my hope is in your rules.*

**Proverbs 22:17-18—**

- 👂 *Incline your ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply your heart to my knowledge, <sup>18</sup>for it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, if all of them are ready on your lips.*



(DISPLAY **Joy 2.**)

**Jeremiah 15:16—**

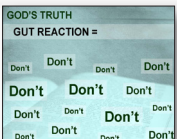
- 👂 *Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart, for I am called by your name, O LORD, God of hosts.*

**John 8:31-32—**

- 👂 *So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, <sup>32</sup>and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

*What seems to be the main theme that all these verses have in common? Why do these verses compare God's truth with hope, delight, joy, freedom? (Allow the students to respond.)*

As we have studied the truth concerning different topics this year, some students may have had the following gut reaction at times...



(DISPLAY **DON'T.**)

*The Bible is just a list of “don't” rules...don't do this, don't love sports too much, don't watch this movie, don't be self-centered, don't make bad friendships, don't use your cell phone to gossip, don't discriminate, don't be lazy, don't, don't, don't...!*

*However, as our beginning small group activity illustrated, having sight to see the way things really are is meant to give us true joy, as we are able to see what is really good and sweet for eating, and what will bring us lasting harm.*

APPLE  
RAT POISON

**Illustration**

Display the **apple** and the **rat poison**. Have the students imagine that the box of rat poison was one of the items in their small group activity. Would it have been a joy killer for their small group leader to have said: “*Don't ever eat this. Here, eat this delicious apple instead.*”? No! And God's truth is much more satisfying and delightful than an apple, or any other food you can think of! God's truth is meant to warn us against the lies of...

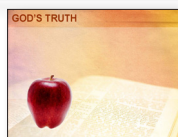


(DISPLAY **RAT POISON.**)

...Satan, and present us with that which is truly good for us, which will bring us lasting happiness.

- ☞ Example: “Sports' greatness will bring lasting happiness”
- ☞ Dangerous and destructive

*For example, Satan might hold out the lie that being great at soccer is what will make you happy. But that lie is like a poison. So when the Bible tells you the truth that athletic rewards are somewhat beneficial, but only temporary, it is not a warning meant to kill your joy. Rather, it is a warning meant to point you to true and lasting happiness.*



(DISPLAY **GOD'S TRUTH.**)

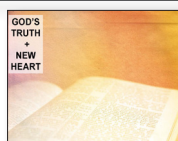
- ☞ Sports and athletics are to serve us in understanding and growing in the Christian life. Sports and athletics are to be done for the glory of God.
- ☞ *Seeing the truth about sports is meant to increase your joy, not kill it. For example, the Olympic runner Eric Liddell understood this truth. It did not kill his joy in running and competing. It gave him greater joy in running because his running became a means of displaying the greatness and worth of Jesus, not as a means of gaining some temporary medals or praise from people.*

*That is why he could say: “When I run fast I feel [God's] pleasure.”*

*What do you think he meant when he said those words? Do they reflect someone whose joy was killed because the Bible warns against making sports your means of achieving personal fame? No. Those words reflect a great and lasting joy that was demonstrated in his ability to run fast. Because he had a biblical view of running, he saw his ability as a gift from God to be used for the glory of God. That is why he felt God's pleasure when he ran. He felt God cheering him on, knowing that as God's child, his reward was not simply a gold medal but the reward of eternal life.*

*When all is said and done, what will bring a person more happiness—an Olympic medal, or the God of the universe saying to you, “Run for My glory. I gave you speed to run. Run fast, train hard, and run well. Run in the Olympics but do it in a way that honors Me. Run knowing that your reward is not some temporary medal but the reward of hearing Me say, “Well done good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Master.”?*

*Besides the eternal benefit, how else does the truth increase our joy? (Allow students to respond.) [e.g., lasting reward rather than temporal; glorifying to God; happiness in doing His will; obedience to God is best for us, whereas living for self is destructive; etc.]*



(DISPLAY **BIBLICAL 2.**)

God's truth + New heart

- ☞ → Trust in Jesus
- ☞ → A Biblical worldview in seeing and understanding all of life
- ☞ → Lasting joy

Review the themes presented on the cross visual and the slide:

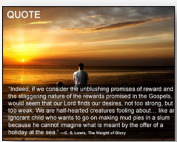
God is the source of all truth.

The Bible communicates God's objective, absolute, unchanging, and universal truth.

Trusting in Jesus is the only way in which blinded sinners can come to know, believe in, love, and obey the truth.

Those who trust in Jesus are to have a biblical worldview by seeing and understanding everything in life through the truth of the Bible.

God's truth is meant to increase our joy and bring us true and lasting happiness.



(DISPLAY **C.S. LEWIS QUOTE.**)

*Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about...like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea.<sup>1</sup>*

*The truth of the Bible is “unblushing” and “staggering” in its promises and rewards. It is like offering a poor, overworked, bored person a holiday at the sea.*

*Are you like the contented child, making mud pies in a dirty, grimy, dangerous slum? That is what it means to not know, trust, and love God's truth in your life. It's an ultimate happiness killer.*

*Or do you desire to take God up on His staggering offer of a “holiday at the sea”?*

## Small Group Application

*The following examples are possible discussions for the Small Group Application time. Select the topics that are most applicable to your group. (See Introduction for more information.)*

- **Truth Statement:** God's truth is meant to bring us lasting joy.

**Think About It:** Discuss today's truth statement by asking your students if this statement reflects their general attitude toward God's truth. It might be helpful to review specific themes or topics covered in the past lessons. For example, you might ask:

1. Lewis, C.S. *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*. (New York: Touchstone, 1980), 26.



- *Did any topics stand out as specifically challenging or helpful?*
- *Did any topics or subjects feel burdensome and seem like a list of “don’ts”? Did today’s opening activity help to put this in better perspective? Can you think of other examples in which getting what we think we want turns out to ultimately kill our joy?*
- *Can you give an example in your own life where God’s truth proved to be delightful—a joy builder and not a joy killer? Is this always evident right away?*
- *In what ways does Satan try to make lies seem like they will bring lasting happiness? Can you give any real-life examples of this?*
- *What are you doing to develop an appetite for God’s truth? Will you find God’s truth to be good and joy producing if you don’t “taste it”?*
- *With your small group, list as many benefits as you can that come with obeying the truth. Which ones were mentioned in the lesson? Which additional ones can you think of?*
- *Who are some of the happiest Christians you know? Is this attractive? Why? Does the Christian life feel like a burden to these people, or a joy? Why?*
- *Sometimes obedience is easy, and sometimes it is harder. What is meant by the phrase “lasting joy”? How is the joy of obeying God different from the temporary “joy” that the world offers? Which is easier? Which brings more happiness in the long run?*

Spend time praying with and for your students. As a suggestion: Before you begin, go around and ask each student to state one key truth that made the most impression on him during the course of the study, and also one prayer request of what he would like God to do in his life in relation to this.

***Encourage students to apply one thing from the discussion to their lives this week. Also, if time permits, ask them about how they applied one thing from last week’s lesson.***

## Send Home

Parent Memo for Lesson 40

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## APPENDIX I

# Additional Resources and Helps

## Books

Mahaney, C.J., editor. *Worldliness: Resisting the Seduction of a Fallen World*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2008).

- This is a good practical book that further develops some of the topics in the curriculum.

MacArthur, John. *The Truth War: Fighting for Certainty in the Age of Deception*. (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 2008).

- This is an excellent title for those who want to further explore the importance of holding fast to truth within the church.

## Magazine

- For up-to-date news and commentary from a Christian perspective:

*WORLD Magazine*, in print and available online at [www.worldmag.com](http://www.worldmag.com)

## Websites/Blogs

- There are also numerous Christian websites/blogs that offer excellent articles, links, etc. on various worldview topics that would be helpful for teachers, mentors, and parents. Here are a few recommended sites:

**AlbertMohler by Dr. R. Albert Mohler**  
([albertmohler.com](http://albertmohler.com))

**Between Two Worlds by Justin Taylor**  
([thegospelcoalition.org/blogs](http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs))

**The Counsel on Biblical Manhood & Womanhood** ([cbmw.org](http://cbmw.org))

**DeYoung, Restless, and Reformed by Kevin DeYoung** ([thegospelcoalition.org/blogs](http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs))

## Focus on the Family—Entertainment

([focusonthefamily.com/entertainment/mediawise.aspx](http://focusonthefamily.com/entertainment/mediawise.aspx))—This site has many excellent articles related to media and discernment and is strongly recommended for every parent.

**Monergism** ([monergism.com](http://monergism.com))—This site offers many helpful resources on apologetics.

**Moore to the Point by Dr. Russell Moore**  
([russellmoore.com](http://russellmoore.com))

**Sovereign Grace Ministries Blog by C. J. Mahaney** ([sovereigngraceministries.com/Blog](http://sovereigngraceministries.com/Blog))

**Stand to Reason** ([str.org](http://str.org))



## APPENDIX II

# Additional Materials You Will Need

*The following resources are not provided with your Classroom Kit for Your Word is Truth. Most are common household items, but a few might require some planning and preparation. We recommend that you look through this list before starting this curriculum to make sure that you have everything required for teaching.*

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**FOR EVERY LESSON**

- Bible (English Standard Version is recommended)
- Whiteboard and markers

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**LESSON 1**

- Tape
- Whiteboard and markers
- Your driver's license (or other picture ID with the date of your birth)
- Current calendar
- Simple calculator
- Accurate ruler for measuring inches

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**LESSON 4**

- Digital camera with lens covered and batteries removed

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**LESSON 5**

- Various small objects, each in an opaque bag or container (one per small group; objects should be interesting and varied, requiring students to use a wide range of descriptive observations)
- Optional: additional measuring and observation tools (e.g., ruler, tape measure, etc.)
- Video clip from *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*
- Video player and screen

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**LESSON 10**

- Bindfold (one per small group)

- Small container of letter tiles from a game such as Scrabble® for every small group (if you prefer to print and use the Letter Tiles Sheet included as a PDF in the Curriculum Resources (DVD or downloads), you won't need the letter tiles, only the small containers)

- *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed* video clip

- Video player and screen

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**LESSONS 13**

- Power drill with drill bit and complementary screw
- Sewing needle

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**LESSONS 14**

- Name brand candy or treat

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**LESSONS 16**

- Hand mirror
- Volunteer for the second scenario

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**LESSONS 17**

- Blindfolds (two per small group)
- Pencil, pen, or marker
- Doughnut or cookie
- Garlic clove or onion
- Plastic storage bag or container

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**LESSONS 18**

- \$5 bill
- Mp3 player (or Christian music CD)
- A simple compass

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**LESSONS 19**

- Be prepared to show the 40-second video clip "Imagine Spot 1—Rejected by NBC and CNN," found on youtube.com by searching for the title. (Note: If it isn't possible to play

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the video in class, the teacher should watch this video before the class and be prepared to describe it to the class as part of the lesson presentation.)

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**LESSONS 20**

- Exotic fruits (two or three)
- Knife
- Plate
- Napkins

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**LESSONS 22**

- Be prepared to show the 2-minute and 46-second video “Smart,” found on igniter-media.com by searching for the title.

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**LESSONS 23**

- Blank sheets of paper (one per student)
- Cell phone

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**LESSONS 24**

- Old book (originally written more than 100 years ago, such as *Pilgrim’s Progress* by John Bunyan)
- Textbook
- CD player or other means of playing music
- Two instrumental (no words) music selections (one should demonstrate music that is calming, with a soft, slow rhythm; the second should demonstrate music that is energetic, with a loud, fast rhythm)
- Optional: bowl of cereal to which other small, inedible items have been added, such as paper clips, safety pins, dog food, etc.

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**LESSONS 25**

- *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* book by C.S. Lewis (You will be reading from Chapter 15 “Deeper Magic Before the Dawn of Time,” beginning with the sentence: “As soon as the wood was silent again Susan and Lucy crept out onto the open hilltop.” End reading with the sentence: “As it was all more lonely and hopeless and horrid than I know how to describe.”)
- DVD player and television

- *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* DVD, produced by Walt Disney Pictures (You will be showing the scene from the movie that corresponds with the text that you read in class. Begin at 1:43:00 and end at 1:45:00.)

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**LESSONS 26**

- Optional Illustration: *Facing the Giants* movie (with equipment to show a clip; be prepared to bring up the part from 41:23 to 44:27 during the time indicated in the lesson text.

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**LESSONS 27**

- Small gift bag for every small group (place one set of the cut-out pictures into each gift bag)
- Scrub brush

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**LESSONS 29**

- \$1 bill
- iPod™ (or similar device)
- Mouse trap (for optional illustration)—tape a \$1 bill or a quarter where the food would be placed in the trap)

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**LESSONS 30**

- Each small group leader should provide his group with enough items for the opening trade activity. The items do not need to be expensive, and may include the following kinds of things: pen, marker, school folder, small note pad, pieces of fruit, vegetables, candy, etc. Make sure to include a variety of items to encourage the desire to trade and to have a desirable treat for the final trade.

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**LESSONS 33**

- Be prepared to show the 3-minute and 8-second video “The Last Painting,” found on ignitermedia.com by searching for the title.

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**LESSONS 34**

- Driver’s License

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**LESSONS 36**

- Envelopes (one per small group)
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**LESSONS 38**

- 1 or 2 plain doughnut holes (or brush off as much sugar as possible if you can't find plain)
- 1 or 2 plain doughnut holes (but mist with water and sprinkle these with salt before the lesson)

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**LESSONS 39**

- Large bag of candy or other prize for the winning small group (prize should be appealing enough to serve as a strong incentive for completing the opening activity)
- Be prepared to show the 3-minute and 1-second video title "The Crowd or the Cross," found on [ignitermedia.com](http://ignitermedia.com) by searching for the title.

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**LESSONS 40**

- 2 items for each small group for the opening activity, including one edible food and one inedible or toxic item (e.g., box of pudding mix and box of fabric dye; box of candy and box of mouse poison; chocolate syrup and dish soap; etc.) The aim is to have the edible and inedible item hard to distinguish when the students have their eyes closed and can only feel the items.
- An apple and a box of rat poison
- Recommended: Bring a sweet treat to share with the students. You could point out that the Word of God



## APPENDIX III

# How to Teach without PowerPoint®

It is possible to teach this study without the use of PowerPoint®. It will take some additional thought and effort when preparing the lesson, but it can be done.

## Visual Resource Helps

For classrooms that are not able to use the PowerPoint® shows, we have provided additional visuals in the Curriculum Resources (DVD or downloads). This is not an exhaustive collection, but it does contain images or charts that would be hard to replicate by hand on a whiteboard or chalkboard. These resources are formatted as a color PDF file, which you have permission to print.

## Lesson Preparation

As you prepare to teach each lesson, carefully read through the lesson and note which slides do have replacement paper visuals (typically anything that is a graphic), and which slides don't have replacement paper visuals. Practice teaching the lesson with the provided visuals. Note places in the lesson when you will want to write something on a whiteboard or chalkboard, and gather any of the materials you need to do this.

For larger visuals (the Cross chart, worldview charts, etc.), prepare a wall space or secure tag board on which they can be constructed and taped in place. Practice using these visuals ahead of time so you know how to put them together during the lesson.

## Lesson Presentation

As you teach the lesson, use the provided visuals as appropriate, and compensate as needed for visuals that aren't provided.

## Using Visuals

- Display all visuals that have been provided in paper format as appropriate.
- Construct larger visuals and charts on a wall space or tag board.
- Provide other visuals/props as you deem appropriate for your classroom situation.

## Interacting with the Journal

Journal interaction must be more intentional and directed when PowerPoint® is not available. Students will not have slides to reference, so you may want to compensate for this in a few ways:

- Let the students know when something you are about to say will be addressed in a question or other response in the journal. (Most of the time, the lesson will include reminders for you to do this, since this prompting is always helpful, even when the answers are included on a PowerPoint® slide.)
- Repeat the completed journal statement/key word more than once, and say it slowly. Pause briefly to give students time to write it down.
- If a word is new or difficult to spell, write it on the whiteboard or chalkboard.
- Provide each small group leader with a copy of the journal, which they should complete before each class session (answers are included in the leader's edition). This will provide each small group with an "answer key" at the end of each lesson.

Ask small group leaders to be ready at the end of the teaching time to give their students any of the answers they missed. Let the students know that they can ask you or the small group leader for answers afterward, so it is okay if they miss some

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answers during the lesson presentation. Not every student will be able to keep up with you, but this option will enable you to keep teaching through the content and to help with the notes later.

### **Interacting with the Bible**

Most of the time only the Bible reference, but not the complete Bible text, is displayed on PowerPoint®. This is intentional so that the students must look up the text in their Bible. In this case, speak the reference two or three times to help students remember what passage they are looking for, and then wait for the majority of the class to locate the passage before reading it. Direct the discussion of those passages by referencing specific phrases or verse numbers.

There are also Bible passages that are displayed on PowerPoint®, because they are meant to be simply read through quickly and are not to be extensively discussed. In this case, you could handle the situation by...

- locating and marking them in your own Bible ahead of time. Then read them aloud from your Bible to the class.
- writing and passing out the references to willing small group leaders and students before the class begins. They should locate the assigned passage in their Bible, and be ready to read them aloud to the class at your instruction.

**Note:** When asking students to read, please remember that not all students are comfortable reading aloud to others.

Even though you may ask others to read, it is still a good idea for you as the teacher to have all passages marked in your Bible so that you can follow along as they are reading. Some translations differ, and some readers have quiet voices, so you may need to read the passage again to the class before continuing with the lesson.

## APPENDIX IV

# Training and Tips for the Classroom

## Teaching in a Junior High Classroom

Junior high students can easily intimidate teachers who feel they must entertain bored students or “relate” on their level. Rather than being intimidated, remember the keys to effectively teaching. First, recognize the serious call to teach significant truth to your students. Prepare your heart and mind with the Word before you teach. Second, demonstrate a genuine love for your students. Pray for them. Respond to their sincere questions and comments by speaking the truth in love, with kindness and graciousness. Keep leading your students to the Savior and His life-giving truth.

### Before You Go to the Classroom

When preparing to teach, you should study the lesson material thoroughly, reading each Scripture and practicing each illustration. Organize the visuals in the order in which they are to be used so the lesson can flow smoothly. If you are planning to use PowerPoint® during the lesson, practice moving through the PowerPoint® show seamlessly while presenting the lesson material. When using any form of electronic media, it is important that you not allow “the screen” to be the focus of the lesson, but maintain good eye contact with the students and keep the human interaction the focus of the lesson time.

*The most important preparation, however, is spiritual preparation.* It is difficult for teachers who are acquainted merely with the information in the lessons to inspire life-changing results in the students. Although heart change is the work of the Holy Spirit, learners respond to the faith and the transparent, sincere heart of a teacher. To that

end, it is of supreme importance to pray for God to make the lesson real in your own life, to touch your heart with His character, and to enable you to respond in faith to the truth of the lesson. Then you will be able to share out of the abundance of the heart, not merely from reading the lesson and presenting the material.

As the Holy Spirit leads, present biblical truth with God-centered language, and enthusiasm and sincerity so your learners can hear, see, and feel the true heart of God and respond to it. Such teaching can only come from thinking through, meditating on, praying, and embracing the truths of Scripture.

### In the Classroom

Here are a few suggestions for making your teaching more effective:

- **Know your students.**—Make it your goal to be able to call on each one by name. Take an interest in them and discern where they are at spiritually. Introduce yourself to them and let them get to know you. From time-to-time you may want to hold some social activities for the class in order to focus on fellowship. Students are more likely to respond to people they know and trust, who have demonstrated genuine love for them. Critical and spiritual interaction is easier to foster when your students feel they know you and know that you care about them.
- **Start and end the lesson with authentic, worshipful prayer.**—Set the tone for your teaching time by opening with prayer, asking for God’s help, and acknowledging your dependence on Him as you all seek to learn from His Word. End with prayer for His help to change your hearts and transform your lives. Pray for yourself and for your students. Heartfelt prayer can help put

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an end to silliness and focus the mind on what is being said.

- **Teach from the Bible.**—It is critical that we teach students to continually look to the Word in all things. That is the point of this study: seeing all of life through the truth of Scripture. When looking up a Bible passage, read it from your Bible rather than from the text of the lesson pages. Encourage each student to bring his Bible to class so he can actively participate in the study. Make sure you continually refer the students to the text.
- **Use a variety of teaching methods.**—Follow the different teaching styles offered in the lessons. While some lecture is appropriate, be sure to include other methods such as question/answer, demonstration, illustration, role playing, testimony, discussion, discovery (e.g., looking up Scripture passages and asking the learner to explain them). When possible, involve the whole class in looking up passages, asking them to compare things or to fill in charts, etc.

**Note:** Junior high students can be self-conscious, so be careful not to embarrass individual students. Plan any up-front participation carefully. If you are in doubt about a student's comfort level in front of the class, discuss participation in a role-play or illustration before class, giving the student a clear picture of what he is expected to do.

- **Encourage students to discover answers.**—Junior high students may be reluctant to participate if they are unsure of the answers to your questions, so promote a positive atmosphere of learning together. As the teacher, you will need to put them at ease and communicate that they are valued members of the class. Encourage discussion and questions from the students that promote the lesson themes and limit tangents. Age-appropriate, thought-provoking questions will encourage participation more than questions with obvious answers.
- **Wait for the answers.**—Allow students time to think and to muster the courage to answer the question, and resist the temptation to fill the silence with your answer. If the students seem

like they need help, ask them more leading questions to guide their thinking.

- **Encourage personal application of truth.**—This can be done in a large group (“Now what does this truth mean for us in everyday life?”), in a small discussion group, or through a personal exercise given to the members of the class. When appropriate, give examples of what personal application of the truth might look like in your own life.

## **Partnering in Teaching: Team Teaching**

The lessons can be taught by one person, or by two people alternating different sections. An advantage of alternating between two teachers is that the responsibility of mastering and preparing the material is shared. Also, by working as a team and sitting with the students to hear part of the lesson presentation, the teachers may be more in tune with how the students are responding. This is a great way to train teachers in a mentoring relationship, or to allow two experienced teachers to share the teaching responsibility.

Another way to team teach is for two teachers to teach the material on alternating weeks, giving each teacher two weeks of preparation time for a lesson. One benefit of this method is that it provides a built-in substitute teacher who is familiar with the curriculum and lesson format.

Team-teaching partners should be chosen very carefully as it is important to have partners who work together well. Team teachers should be able to welcome each other's comments and suggestions, have similar teaching philosophies, and have schedules that allow them to meet or discuss the lesson together during the week.

## **Small Group Leading in a Junior High Classroom**

Application discussion is vital after presentation of the truth, because it is in this time that the students are most personally challenged to embrace the truth with their hearts and respond to it in their lives in faith. Truth is not meant to merely re-

main head knowledge, but is meant to transform the heart.

Because application discussion seeks personal response from the learners, we believe that it is best done in a small group setting—one adult leader (a spiritually mature adult) with about four to eight youth of the same gender (due to distractions, it is best not to encourage co-ed groups). As a small group leader, it is preferable that you stay with the same group throughout the course of the study and seek to build trusting relationships with the students in your group. Hopefully, this will involve not only in-class interaction, but outside interaction as well. You should strive to connect with your students outside of class, encourage them in and with the Word, pray for them regularly, send notes of encouragement to them—in short, “mentor” them.

### Preparing for the Classroom

You should have a Leader’s Edition (which includes the preface, introduction, lessons and appendix for this study, but not the classroom handouts, parent memos, take-home articles, teaching visuals, or video clips) and a Student Journal. Using both of these resources, you should carefully and prayerfully read the lesson. Note when there is small group discussion or activity in the lesson, and prepare to interact with your students at those times. Prepare yourself to take notes in the journal during the class time.

Then, read the application section. **Note:** Each application section gives you a number of discussion options, each based on a truth statement introduced in the lesson. The goal is not to complete all the discussion options. Rather, pray that the Holy Spirit will give you discernment to select and prepare the appropriate questions for the students in your group. Aim to help students focus on the heart issues—do they love or reject the truth, and are they applying truth to their attitudes, actions, and words? Note any additional questions you would like to pursue with your students. The best “skill” a small group leader can have is to lead out of the overflow of what God has taught him as he has studied the lesson.

Think through and be willing to share appropriate experiences from your own life that may be helpful to your students.

### In the Classroom

As you come into the classroom prepared, there are several things you can do as a small group leader to help your students learn more effectively:

- **Know your students.**—Make it your goal to know not just their names, but also their personalities, and to discern where they are at spiritually. If possible, introduce yourself to their parents and ask for their feedback and prayer requests for their students. From time-to-time, you may want to hold social activities for your group to build relationships and fellowship within the group. Students are more likely to respond to people they know and trust, who have demonstrated genuine love for them. Critical and spiritual interaction is easier to foster when your students know you better and know that you care about them.
- **Participate in the class.**—Help your students to focus and follow the lesson by your own example. Take notes in the Student Journal during the lesson. This will not only be helpful for discussion later as you and your students process the material, but it will also let your students know when they should be taking notes. If there is a time of worship, be authentic in your singing and prayer. If students are to look up a Scripture passage, look it up in your own Bible (or help students find it in their Bibles). Direct student attention to the lesson that is being taught. Complete small group discussion or activities during the lesson in a timely, efficient manner, and let the teacher know when you are done so the lesson presentation may continue.
- **Start and end the application discussion time with prayer,**—Set the tone for your teaching time by opening with prayer, asking for God’s help and acknowledging your dependence on Him as you all seek to learn from His Word. Leave time at the end of your discussion time to share prayer requests and pray for one another.



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As students feel comfortable and led, give them opportunity to pray aloud for one another.

- **Point to the Bible.**—It is critical that we teach students to continually look to the Word in all things. That is the point of this study: seeing all of life through the truth of Scripture. When looking up a Bible passage, read it from your Bible rather than from the text of the lesson pages. Encourage each student to bring his Bible to class so he can actively participate in the study. Make sure you continually refer the students to the text. Continually challenge them to find out what the Bible says in answer to their questions.
- **Guide the discussion.**—Do not let students wander away from the lesson or the application discussion during small group time. Learn how to direct your students back to the lesson and the questions. Fellowship with them when appropriate; teach and learn with them during class time. Work to develop skills in conversation with your students, and to be able to take deep biblical truth and apply it to their lives. Learn to be a patient listener, and pray for wisdom to be able to discern each student's heart response.
- **Encourage students to discover answers.**—Junior high students may be reluctant to participate if they are unsure of the answers to your questions, so promote a positive atmosphere of learning together. Personal questions may also take more time for them to think through. Do not rush the application discussion. Rather, encourage discussion from the students that explores the lesson themes, and limit tangents. Age-appropriate, thought-provoking questions will encourage participation more than questions with obvious answers.
- **Wait for the answers.**—Allow students time to think and to muster the courage to answer the question, and resist the temptation to fill the silence with your answer. Give the Spirit time and space to work in their hearts. Do not avoid hard questions; always bring them back to the heart issue. (Do they embrace or reject the truth?)
- **Share yourself with them.**—Perhaps one of the most powerful tools for teaching is your

own life. As you work through this study, pray that God will use the truth in it to convict and transform your life and heart. As appropriate, share with your students what God is doing in your life through this study, and share parts of your testimony with them.

## **Creating a Place for Discussion in the Classroom**

As you seek to engage your students in discussion, be purposeful in how you can use the room arrangement to foster more interaction. Because discussions are a part of the lesson time, your students should sit with you during the lesson in a setting where small group discussion can easily take place. Since the teaching time will switch between the teacher and the small group leaders throughout the lesson, the groups need to be able to assemble and disassemble quickly. Below are a few suggestions for room set-up:

- Place chairs in sets of horseshoe-shaped arrangements.
- Place groups at small tables with chairs on three sides of the tables. This will make the arrangement U-shaped. (The longer side should be placed parallel to the front of the classroom.) This makes the easiest transition from looking at the front of the class for the teacher presentation and turning to the small group for the discussion.
- Place groups at small tables with chairs on four sides of the tables set in the same manner as above. During the teacher presentation, chairs should face the front of the classroom. At the small group time, those with their back toward the table can quickly turn their chairs around for the small group discussion, and then back again for the teaching time.

## **Leading Worship in a Junior High Classroom**

If your program allows for class time beyond what is needed for the lesson and the application discussion, you may consider using some of the extra time for class worship in song and prayer.

However, please note that time should never be taken away from the lesson and the application discussion (the most important parts of the study) for singing.

The goal of worship time is to lead others to experience the greatness and worth of God, out of which expressions of song, praise, and prayer flow naturally. This time should be lead by a worship leader, a mature adult gifted in leading students to make much of God through song.

### **Important Note Regarding Sunday School**

**Worship:** This time of worship is never to be a replacement for the corporate worship experience. Always encourage your students to attend the corporate worship service. Sunday school is not a replacement or equivalent to corporate worship with the larger body of Christ.

## **Preparing for Worship**

Each week the worship leader should prayerfully read through the lesson. As you read, ask the Spirit to give you wisdom and discernment to knowing how to lead the students in a worship session that will prepare their hearts for the truth of the lesson. Purposefully develop a flow of worship that will encourage students to embrace the truth and glory of God. Consider the following suggestions as you prepare:

- **Develop a repertoire.**—Develop a core repertoire of meaningful hymns and songs. Whenever possible, include God-focused songs that are a regular part of corporate worship so students can become active participants in the wider church body worship.
- **Focus on God and theme.**—Select worship songs and hymns that will lead students to worship God (songs that are centered on God), and that will support the truths taught in the lesson. Songs should provide students with both deep theological truths and channels to express their worship of our great God.
- **Introduce Scripture and prayer.**—Worship time is meant to be more than just singing songs. It is meant to be a time to embrace and exalt the glorious God. In order to remind participants of this, adding in a Scripture read-

ing and season of prayer (either leader-lead or corporate participation) can be helpful. You could lead students in expressions of praise such as, “Thank you Lord for...” or, “We praise You for...”. (insert praise items from the lesson or personal items of praise from the students).

- **Have a plan.**—Have an intentional flow to your worship time. You may want to begin with more rousing songs and praises, and move to more quiet and reflective songs and prayers as the worship time draws to an end. Or you may want to start with reflective songs, and build toward energetic worship.
- **Be ready to explain.**—As you select songs and scriptures, be mindful of any words or concepts that may need to be explained or defined. Think through how you can explain these things in a concise, clear manner, and offer the explanations when appropriate.
- **Check time.**—As you prepare, be mindful of the time, and stay within the parameters allotted for worship to avoid cutting into lesson time.
- **Don't give it away.**—If you are having a time of worship before the lesson, do not give the lesson topic or themes away during the worship time. As tempting as this might be, most of the lessons were designed so that the students will go through a process of discovery to get to the lesson topic. If you would like to more greatly link the worship time to the themes of the lesson, think about having the worship time after the lesson.

## **Leading Worship**

- **Come to class early.**—Arrive at your classroom early with time to set up as needed. Take a few minutes to pray and to quiet your heart as you prepare to lead students in worship.
- **Begin and end with prayer.**—As you begin to lead in worship, set the tone by praying. This helps to quiet the students and remind them of the purpose of this time. It also helps to set the tone for the lesson to begin.
- **Be sensitive to the Spirit's leading.**—Always be in pray that you would be sensitive to the

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Spirit's leading if changes need to be made as you are doing worship.

- **Be aware of your students.**—As you lead, be mindful of what kind of response is coming from your students. If there is confusion, stop and clarify. If there is a wrongful overall attitude, you may want to stop and pray with them about it. Encourage them to approach worship with a right attitude.
- **Be aware of unbelief.**—It is very likely that not all of the students you are leading in worship have come to saving faith in Jesus Christ. Understanding this is important as you observe their attitudes and participation during the worship time. Encourage both believers and unbelievers to look to Christ continually. Pray that, through observing genuine worship, unbelieving students will be attracted to the greatness and worth of Jesus.

## **Fostering a Community of Worship**

- **Encourage teachers and mentors to model.**—Encourage the other leaders in your classroom to intentionally and genuinely participate during worship time. Ask them to set an example for their students of authentic worship.
- **Include students in leadership.**—To help draw the youth into worship, you may want to encourage those who can sing or play instruments to be part of a class worship team. Practice with the team apart from the class time to prepare and instruct them in leading worship.

## APPENDIX V

# Sample Classroom Schedule

The two most important components to any Sunday school classroom are the lesson time and the application time. These are the two pillars of any study, and they should be the focus of the program when it comes to scheduling the program hour.

- It is recommended that **40-45 minutes** be dedicated to the teaching the lesson. This includes the small group discussion at the beginning of the lesson, as well as any small group discussion that happens in the middle of the lesson text.
- After the lesson has been taught, allow **20-30 minutes** for small group leaders to work with their students in the small group setting, discussing the lesson through the small group application questions at the end of the lesson. They should also conclude this discussion time with prayer.

Thus, there is material provided to fill approximately **1 hour and 15 minutes** of class time.

In light of differing amounts of time that individual programs have available, we recommend the following schedule:

**Transition Time**—This is the time when students are arriving to the classroom. There are a number of ways this time can be used. Typically, students meet with their small group for fellowship and/or follow-up on the previous week's application and prayer requests. Class projects could also be worked on during this time (for example, writing letters of encouragement to church leadership, missionaries, or church members facing difficult times).

**Note:** Avoid using transition time to play silly games, as they do not help prepare the students for a serious study of the Word.

**Worship Time**—As time allows, include a time of worship through song and prayer in your classroom schedule. Students should stay seated with their small groups during this time, as they will be interacting as a small group during the lesson time that immediately follows. Purposefully structure the worship to reinforce the lesson themes that will be presented, but do not announce the lesson topic or themes before the lesson time.

## Important Note Regarding Sunday School

**Worship:** This time of worship is never to be a replacement for the corporate worship experience.

Program Timeframe	Transition Time	Worship	Lesson	Application
2 hours	15 minutes	15 minutes	45 minutes	30 minutes
1 hour 30 minutes	5 minutes	10 minutes	45 minutes	30 minutes
1 hour 15 minutes	5 minutes	10 minutes	40 minutes	20 minutes
1 hour	0 minutes	0 minutes	40 minutes	20 minutes

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Always encourage your students to attend the corporate worship service. Sunday school is not a replacement or equivalent to corporate worship with the larger body of Christ.

**Lesson Time**—After worship has concluded, attention should be directed to the lesson. This may include small groups completing a small group discussion starter during the first 5-10 minutes of lesson time. During this time, the teacher should present the material provided, carefully following the lesson and limiting personal or student tangents. Teachers should watch the clock carefully to leave ample time for small group application.

**Application Time**—After the lesson presentation has concluded, students should once again focus on their small groups. Small group leaders should answer and clarify student questions about lesson content, but should seek to spend the majority of the time on the application questions and topics (using the Small Group Application material at the end of the lesson). The last 10-5 minutes of this time should be spent sharing prayer requests and praying together as a group.

## APPENDIX VI

# Adapting for School Use

This curriculum was designed and written for a church setting. However, the material is adaptable to a Christian or homeschool setting. In fact, Christian schools and homeschools are in a unique position to use a study of this kind, since teachers are with their students more often. Here are some suggestions for using this curriculum in a daily school structure:

**Monday:** Do the lesson presentation only. If you have children of varying ages, give the older children responsibilities such as reading key Bible passages and helping their younger siblings. Parents will need to decide to what age the curriculum can be extended.

**Tuesday:** Discuss one or two application discussion threads. Challenge students to choose one truth from the lesson to apply to their lives this week.

**Wednesday:** Discuss one or two more application discussion threads. Review the key points and Scripture from the lesson. Encourage students to follow up with the journal suggestions. You may want to make an additional assignment related to the lesson, or ask how they plan to implement heart changes in their lives. Pray for one another.

**Thursday:** Have a sharing and prayer time with the students. Ask them which lesson truth they have chosen to apply to their lives this week.

**Friday:** Discuss the At Home section of the Student Journal. Complete one of the activities or discussions listed there.

In a school setting, tests on the content would also be appropriate.





# Truth:78

Truth78 is a vision-oriented ministry for the next generations—that they may know, honor, and treasure God, setting their hope in Christ alone, so that they will live as faithful disciples for the glory of God. Our mission is to inspire and equip the church and the home for the comprehensive discipleship of the next generation. We are committed to developing resources and training that are God-centered, Bible-saturated, gospel-focused, Christ-exalting, Spirit-dependent, doctrinally grounded, and discipleship-oriented.

## Resources and Training Materials

Truth78 offers the following categories of resources and training materials to equip the church and home:

### Curriculum

We publish materials designed for formal Bible instruction. The scope and sequence of these materials reflects our commitment to teach children and youth the whole counsel of God over the course of their education. Materials include curricula for Sunday School, Midweek Bible programs, Backyard Bible Clubs or Vacation Bible School, and Intergenerational studies. Most of these materials can easily be adapted for use in Christian schools and education in the home.

### Vision-Casting and Training

We offer a wide variety of booklets, video and audio seminars, articles, and other practical training resources that highlight and further expound our vision, mission, and values, as well as our educational philosophy and methodology. Many of these resources are freely distributed through our website. These resources and training serve to assist ministry leaders, volunteers, and parents in implementing Truth78's vision and mission in their churches and homes.

## Parenting and Family Discipleship

We have produced a variety of materials and training designed to help parents in their role of discipling their children. These include booklets, video presentations, family devotionals, children's books, articles, and other recommended resources. Furthermore, our curricula include take-home pages to help parents apply what is taught in the classroom to their child's daily experience in order to nurture faith.

### Bible Memory

Our Fighter Verses Bible memory program is designed to encourage the church, families, and individuals in the lifelong practice and love of Bible memory. The Fighter Verses Program utilizes an easy-to-use Bible memory system with carefully chosen verses to help fight the good fight of faith. There is a preschool version (Foundation Verses) for younger children with a verse pack, coloring book, and visuals packet. We also offer study and devotional guides, coloring books, and journals that correspond to the Fighter Verses.

**For more information on any of these resources  
and training materials, please contact us.**

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