

Teacher's Guide

The
ANSWER



LESSONS 196-208

GROWING GOD'S WAY

THE
Answer

www.apostolicfaith.org

A Bible study resource for use at home and church.

SEARCH



Lessons 196-208

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Note: At times, the lessons are taught out of sequence to coincide with holidays. See the accompanying datesheet for the current lesson schedule, which is also available online at www.apostolicfaith.org.

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Teacher's Guide

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The Teacher's Guide has been written as a help for you—the teacher. This guide is a resource of background information, supplementary Scriptures, responses to SEARCH questions, supplemental questions, plus other information that will be helpful.

This guide is for those who teach either junior or senior levels. You may not find it practical to use all the material provided for each lesson. Each one must choose what would be applicable to his or her class. In addition, we hope the suggestions for each lesson will help stimulate your thought processes toward lively discussion within the class.

In order to be prepared for junior-level teaching, it will be necessary to obtain the students' book. This will enable you to relate the text to the story given in The ANSWER.

Included in the material covering each lesson will be space for filling in your opener, additional discussion notes, and your wrap-up. A vital part of your teaching is being prepared before class starts. The students can tell if you have come unprepared.

This guide should be taken to your Round Table and also to class to assist you in your teaching. It is not a substitute for your own research of the lesson, but it is to enhance your study each week. May God bless you as you endeavor to help others SEARCH through the Scriptures to find the ANSWER.



Christian Maturity



Making Memory Meaningful

EVERY WEEK THE STUDENTS are given a new key verse. How many of them learn it before the next Sunday? And, more important yet, how many of them retain it in the weeks to come?

Scripture memorization is a vital part of Christian growth. So what is the best way to motivate young people to memorize these portions of God's Word?

There is no simple answer to that question, for there probably isn't one best way. A variety of methods is needed to keep students interested. A beginning point would be to make sure the class understands the Scripture. Young children, especially, cannot memorize unrelated words easily, and the verses won't be helpful unless the meaning is understood.

One little girl when told to be careful when crossing the street, protested, "But the Bible verse we learned said not to be careful!" What could she have been referring to? That was her understanding of Philippians 4:6, a verse which begins, "Be careful for nothing. . . ." Be sure the verse is clearly explained on the students' level!

The students should have an overall grasp of the concept that the Bible is truly God's message to us. Visualize this truth by comparing God's Word to a letter, an invitation, an advertisement, a rule book—any number of ways recognizable as a form of communication through

the written word. Once the students realize this, they can be led to see why God wants us to know and use the Scriptures.

Several methods can be utilized in helping the students discover the meaning of individual verses. The teacher may wish to discuss any unfamiliar words, perhaps jotting down a synonym on the chalkboard. Junior students can look up the words in a dictionary.

Another possibility is to illustrate the verse. This can be done through provided visuals. For example, to illustrate the verse, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus," the teacher could show a group of pictures of things God has given us. It could also be done through suggesting a situation which defines the meaning. For instance, in explaining Ephesians 4:32, "Be ye kind one to another," the teacher might say, "Suppose a new student came to our Sunday school class—someone who didn't know any of us. Can you think of some ways you could be kind, as the verse says?" Dramatization of the verse is another method of illustration.

Once the meaning of the verse is clear to the students, the teacher can use a variety of ways to aid in memorization. For group study, the students can be divided into two teams and each team assigned alternate phrases in the verse. Or the separate phrases of the verse can be printed on long, horizontal strips of paper to be arranged

A few tips . . .

- Memory work can and should be enjoyable.
- If passages are learned thoroughly through a variety of methods, they can be retained as a part of long-term memory.
- Discuss unfamiliar words and rephrase the verse to help clarify meanings.
- Ask questions to make sure your students understand.
- Put memorized passages to use as recitations or part of worship service
- Review is essential.

on a board. Then remove one strip at a time, allowing the group to fill in the blanks orally.

Hand movements can be very effective in aiding memorization on a junior/primary level. Signals which stand for key words in the verse are done simultaneously with the spoken verse.

Juniors might enjoy a "Pop-up Session." The teacher says the first word or phrase of the verse. Whoever thinks they know the next word, stands. The teacher nods at one of them, and that person says the next word and then nods to another classmate to continue the verse. This is repeated until the whole verse has been said.

Contests can be great motivators for encouraging students to learn their key verses. Consider giving points for recitation of past verses as well as the new Scripture for each Sunday.

Learning activities can be built around a key verse. Students illustrate a particular verse, and then use their work to decorate the walls of the classroom or a bulletin board. Or each student chooses one verse of the quarter to illustrate, and then the results are put together into a book.

Many Bible verses have been set to music, or can be sung to the tune of a familiar song. Singing biblical passages can be a very effective method for aiding memory work.

Is it worth the effort? It is! Scriptures learned as a child may well be the foundation for life-long attitudes, principles, and a start toward Heaven.



Telling A Telling Story

“I LIKE THAT PREACHER,” the little boy confided to his mother following a service. “He always tells a good story.”

Out of the mouths of babes? The little boy’s comment states an important truth: that a well-chosen illustration is one of the most potent tools a teacher can use. Look about you at the teachers who seem always to be successful in holding the interest and attention of their classes. How do they present an abstract truth as a living, meaningful reality? They illustrate the deep spiritual lessons with stories and anecdotes from real life.

Just why are illustrations so valuable? First, they help impress truth. Truth is not always impressive when stated as theory. For instance, the phrase “God answers prayer” will remain just a theoretical truth to many of your students—unless you illustrate it with a specific example of answered prayer.

Secondly, illustrations aid memory. A story often lingers in the mind long after the concept behind it is forgotten. The story works as a “memory hook” to bring the mind back to the concept or biblical principle that was taught through it.

Next, illustrations lend emotional impact. An intellectual treatment of the Scriptures has its place. But illustrations have a way of touching the heart. They are a persuasive tool in the hands of a spiritually sensitive teacher.

Finally, illustrations aid in applying Christian principles to life. They help the teacher

span the gap between the first century settings and twentieth century life.

In planning the use of illustrations in a lesson presentation, certain principles govern their use. First of all, they should be used sparingly. Too many illustrations in a lesson are like too many accessories with an outfit—they end up distracting rather than adding. They should be short. Remember they are the means to the end, not the end itself—the “windows,” not the house. And they should be relevant to the point. A good illustration that is out of place is a bad illustration.

Where can good illustrations be found? Everywhere! In fact, the best and most meaningful stories or anecdotes are usually those that spring from your personal, everyday life. Learn to think illustratively, and you will constantly see valuable illustrations in the reality of daily living. Zero in on points or concepts that will be easily understood by the age group you teach.

The Gospel is exciting! The Word of God is full of life and drama and it is vital for the teacher to have an interesting illustration so the concept taught will not be forgotten. Bringing out the dynamics of the Scriptures is what using illustrations is all about. It is applying the spiritual truths of God’s Word to our daily living.

Use stories frequently in your class. They will transform your teaching. And they will help you present the Christian life as it really is—an exciting adventure!

Bulletin Boards That Teach

AN INTERESTING BULLETIN BOARD . . .

- Says that the teacher cares about the students.
- Brightens the classroom.
- Influences attitudes and motivates students to action.
- Stimulates discussion and arouses curiosity.
- Clarifies new words and concepts.
- Introduces new ideas and information.
- Commemorates special occasions and holidays.

WHERE TO LOOK FOR IDEAS

- There are many books available from Christian bookstores or school suppliers that have design ideas for bulletin boards.
- Make a trip to your public library, school libraries, and classrooms. Study their bulletin boards and take notes for later use.
- Watch for ideas on greeting cards, calendars, posters, post cards, note paper, and in children's books and magazines.
- Magazines, newspapers, and mail advertisements have not only design
- A magazine picture file is a valuable resource for pictures and ideas for ideas but also patterns.
- Do you have a camera? Take pictures of other people's bulletin boards as well as your own bulletin board. Keep them for future reference.
- Children's coloring books are a great source of patterns.

GUIDELINES

- Plan in advance. Make a simple sketch.
- Decide on a central theme or idea.
- Keep it simple. Leave plenty of open space so that you don't have a cluttered board.
- Use just two or three main colors for letters, border, and background.
- Make the design appropriate for the age level you teach.
- Use short captions, preferably ten words or less, that are easily read from a distance.
- Involve your students. Let them help prepare the bulletin board.
- Display their handiwork from time to time.
- Keep boards at the students' eye level.
- It helps to plan a display you can add to or change often to keep students interested.
- Change your board immediately when it's out-of-date. No Christmas decorations in February please!



Theme Thoughts

Christian maturity comes as a result of taking a realistic, practical, and God-directed approach to both the opportunities and the problems of life. That is why the admonitions found in the Bible are of proven value: They apply to the everyday experiences we face.

How to gain Christian maturity is the thrust of the lessons to be studied during this quarter.

The basic point to remember in considering the precepts of this unit is that trusting Christ, submitting to Him as our Lord and Savior, comes first. With this thought in mind, we begin the unit by focusing on the reality of Jesus' presence with us and in us.

The second lesson deals with the subject of Christian growth, establishing that God's Word outlines certain ways and means of spiritual development, and that spiritual growth is necessary.

With these two lessons as the foundation for the quarter, we move into a consideration of specific areas such as decision-making, resisting the devil, avoiding physical and spiritual pollution, self-discipline, and how to deal with personal problems.

This quarter ends with a lesson on looking at the outcome, in which the students will be encouraged to see the importance of measuring their daily actions by whether these actions will draw them closer to God or move them away from Him.

Our goal this quarter is to help the students reach the point where they can say with Paul, ". . . in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:37).

Jesus' Presence With Us and In Us

TEXT: John 15:1-9; Ephesians 3:14-21

KEY VERSE: Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. — John 15:4

Some of Jesus' last words to His disciples were, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Though we cannot see Him today with our physical eyes, we can know we have Him in our lives by the presence of His Spirit in us. We have the daily assurance that He can dwell within each heart. The focus of Paul's writing from which we draw part of our lesson today is the value and the necessity for the believer to have the presence of Christ and His indwelling Spirit as a moment-by-moment reality. The essence of the Christian life for Paul was union with Christ, the basis for our hope of Heaven. Paul expressed it this way: "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

1. What is it necessary for us to do in order to have the definite knowledge of Jesus' presence in our lives? See John 14:23, Acts 3:19, and Revelation 3:20.

2. Once Christ's presence is in our lives, we must ensure that He will continue to abide with us. John 8:31 indicates that we must continue in His Word. What do you think the word *continue* means in this context?

3. Name some of the promised blessings Jesus' presence brings to those who continue to love, obey, and follow Him.

John 14:27

John 15:11

Acts 1:8

1 John 5:14-15

3

RESPONSES

1. We must repent, open our heart's door to Him, and invite Him into our lives. We must love Him, keep His commandments, and obey His Word. Have the class consider that the only way this is possible is to be truly saved (born again), which results in a Christian life.

2. Your students should recognize that it means to go into the Word by reading it, and then allowing it to regulate our lives so that we live in conformity with His Word. The students should see that we must unceasingly seek His will in our lives, and bear Christian fruit (John 15:16). Many Biblical examples can be brought out showing God's presence and blessings to the believers who continued to follow and obey Him (Enoch, Abraham, Job, Daniel, etc.); likewise, the removal of His presence from those who did not (Saul, Asa, etc.).

3. John 14:27 — Peace

John 15:11 — Joy

Acts 1:8 — Spiritual power

1 John 5:14-15 — Answers to prayer

Bring out that peace and joy are things that the people of the world seek with all their hearts, but they are found only in Christ and in having His presence continually.

4. The word *fellowship* denotes a "mutual affection and an enjoyment of another's presence." A Christian has a beautiful fellowship with Jesus, and with God the Father. Christians are also instructed to be of one mind, in complete unity, and to enjoy fellowship with one another (1 Corinthians 1:10; 1 John 1:3,7). If Christ's Blood cleanses us from all sin, we have Christ's presence in our lives and it will be natural to love one another as He loves us.

5. "We walk by faith, not by sight." The students should know that by faith Christ lives in our hearts, and it is confirmed by His love in which we are grounded. God said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." You may want to ask your class how, in the light of the above Scriptures, it is possible for a Christian to backslide and lose his fellowship with God. Following your discussion the class should conclude that one backslides by disobeying God's Word. God never turns His back on us, but many people have turned away from Him.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. Paul and John describe our relationship with Jesus in 1 Corinthians 1:9 and 1 John 1:3 as being one of fellowship. How would you describe Christian fellowship?

5. At times when we cannot actually feel the presence of the Lord, what confidence can we receive from God's Word that He is, indeed, still with us? See 2 Corinthians 5:7 and Hebrews 13:5.

6. There is a definite contrast between the circumstances shown in Matthew 18:20 and 2 Timothy 4:14-17, and yet Christ was present in both instances. Describe what is taking place in each case, and what we can learn about Christ's presence from these Scriptures.

7. God has promised to be with us in every situation. Look up the following Scriptures and explain how each verse shows us God will be there: Psalm 46:1; Isaiah 43:2; Mark 13:11; Hebrews 4:15,16.

8. What effect did the presence of the Spirit of the Lord have on those of the Early Church in the Book of Acts (Acts 13:33; 5:12)? What effect did the Spirit have on the lives of the listeners?

9. In order for the Gospel to be spread, the disciples had to move into other parts of the world. What initiated these moves?

10. When we have the reality of Christ's presence with us now, what is our hope for the future? See John 14:3, 1 Corinthians 13:12, 1 Thessalonians 4:17, and 1 John 3:2.

6. Comparing and contrasting the two situations should bring out that God is with us when we are in the company of other believers, and He is also with us when we feel we are standing alone or experiencing resistance from those around us. Jesus' presence is in the heart of the believer, and is not confined within the walls of a place of worship. Ask your class to relate examples of times when Christ's presence was manifested in a special way when they were going through hard trials.

7. Psalm 46:1 — Our refuge in trouble
Isaiah 43:2 — Protection in affliction and danger
Mark 13:11 — Wisdom from Above
Hebrews 4:15-16 — Grace in time of need
As the students discuss each verse emphasize how the Lord had promised to be a "very present" help to us, whatever the need may be. His Spirit will give wisdom and guidance when we look wholly to Him. Bring out that God has promised that none of these trials of life can overcome us if we trust in Him.

8. The disciples felt oneness, encouragement, and inspiration in the fellowship they were experiencing. The grace of the Lord was upon them. They rejoiced in the victories the Lord gave. Some of those who listened marveled, taking note that the disciples had been with Jesus. Although some opposed the disciples, they could not deny what had been done. Discuss with your students that we are living in the time of the Latter Rain and that the Spirit of God is available to those who seek for His enduement. He will work in our lives today even as He did in the lives of the disciples.

9. Your students should see that the spread of the Gospel into other parts of the world began when the Early Church at Jerusalem encountered great persecution. There was much opposition as the disciples scattered everywhere, spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Should we expect any less today? God will allow whatever is necessary for His aims to be fulfilled. It is our part to follow His ways, and to remember that He will never leave us, nor forsake us.

10. We shall be like Christ, for we shall see Him as He is, and will be in His presence forever. Bring out the glorious hope this is for the Christian; that regardless of what we may have to go through here, it will be worth it all when we see Jesus face to face.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

How does a person receive the Spirit of Christ into his life?

Is Jesus' presence with every Christian?

Does a Christian have to guard against losing the Spirit of Christ?

Do some Christians have more of the Spirit of Christ in their lives than other Christians? Explain your answer.

What are the benefits of having the Spirit of Christ in one's life?

What means did Jodi use to change her friend's opinion?

How does the ANSWER story reflect the benefit of having Christ with us and His Spirit to lead and guide us?

THINGS TO DO

Bring a puppet to class and leave it on your desk or table in plain view of the students, until ready to use. During this period it will remain "lifeless." Do a brief demonstration with the puppet and compare its dependency on the hand within to the Christian's dependency on Christ within. Both are necessary to instill "life" with a purpose.

Bring a foreign language book to class and show it to your students. Explain that Scripture can be like a foreign language if we do not have Christ's Spirit to open up our understanding.

Have your class prepare a list of qualities that they would like in a close friend. Compare this list to the list of qualities of Christ. Does Jesus match up to their list? Would He make a good friend? Write the list on a blackboard where all can see and more easily compare.

Prepare a word association game for your class. Choose approximately five words that tell how you might feel if God is not with you and five words that tell how you might feel if He is with you. Write each word on large flash cards. As you show each word, have the students

tell you what the word brings to their mind. The negative words may evoke a negative association and the positive words may draw a positive response. This activity should encourage discussion regarding our feelings and responses with or without God in our lives. Sample words:

POSITIVE:

Guided
Faith
Peaceful
Comforted
Loved
Wise
Obedient
Secure

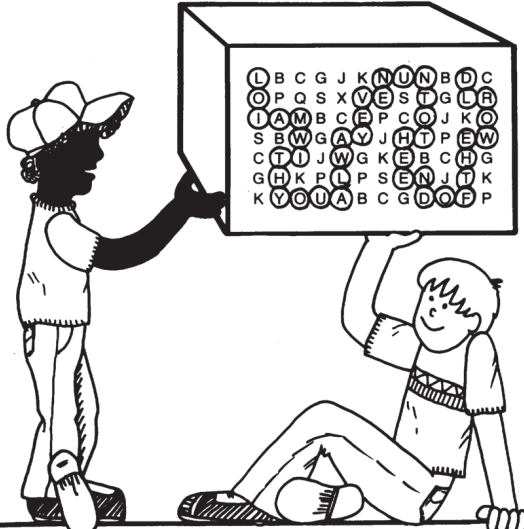
NEGATIVE:

Fearful
Hate
Critical
Deceitful
Jealous
Suspicious
Resentful
Angry

Answers for ANSWER

Is He With You?

Knowing that Jesus is with you all the time is a real comfort. Your key verse is a promise that He is with those who love Him. Write the key verse on the lines provided below. Then try to find it in the maze. The letters of the first three words have been circled for you. Just follow the verse through and mark it the same way, circling the letters of each word.



L	B	C	G	J	K	N	U	N	B	D	C
O	P	Q	S	X	V	E	S	T	G	L	R
I	A	M	B	C	E	P	C	Q	J	K	O
S	B	W	G	A	Y	J	H	T	F	E	W
C	T	J	W	G	K	E	B	C	H	G	
G	H	K	P	L	P	S	E	N	J	T	K
K	Y	O	U	A	B	C	G	D	O	E	P

L O, I A M W I T H Y O U A L W A Y, E V E N

U N T O T H E E N D O F T H E W O R L D.

Growth

TEXT: 2 Peter 1:1-11; 3:17-18

KEY VERSE: Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. — 1 Peter 2:1-2

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: 1 Samuel 2:26; 3:1-21

RESPONSES

1. In the first verse of our text, Peter addresses his remarks to “them that have obtained like precious faith.” As your class mentions this, continue the discussion with the knowledge that “without faith it is impossible to please him” (Hebrews 11:6). Bring out that faith is needed before a person can be born again. Thus, spiritual growth begins with faith.

2. The two things mentioned are *grace* (the unmerited favor of God) and *peace* (one of the evidences of being born again). In discussion, develop the thought that we do not deserve forgiveness for our sins, but because of God’s love He extends grace and mercy. Continue by referring to Romans 5:1, showing we have peace after we are justified (born again). This gives us the foundation on which we can begin to grow.

3. Our faith must be focused on Jesus Christ and His power. Discuss the students’ responses of ways this can be done: prayer, church attendance, the study of God’s Word, etc. Emphasize that learning to know Christ through the study of His Word is very important, for “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). Direct the discussion to the fact that as we read the Word we recognize other spiritual needs in our lives: sanctification, baptism of the Holy Ghost, divine healing, etc. As we exercise faith to attain these, spiritual growth takes place in our lives.

Spiritual growth is possible only by faith in the divine power of God. The precious promises help us toward our goal of being partakers of His divine nature and being a part of the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Diligently using our faith in those promises in every action and decision of life will add growth in the virtues mentioned as God multiplies grace and peace. Growth, victory, and an abundant entrance into eternal life will be the results. What rewards for our effort!

1. In our text the Apostle Peter writes concerning “growing in grace.” From what starting point does spiritual growth begin?

2. What two things mentioned in verse 2 of our text are evident in the heart of one who is born again? How do you think these contribute to our spiritual growth? See Romans 5:1.

3. To grow spiritually, where must we keep our faith focused? What are some ways this can be done? See Hebrews 12:1-2.

5

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. According to our text, what assistance does God give to help us grow spiritually?

5. List the seven increments of Christian graces that we are to add to our faith, and give a spiritual definition of each.

6. What will be the results of adding these to our lives?

7. If a Christian does not add these graces to his life, what will be the spiritual result?

8. Write a goal that you have for your spiritual growth. One reference that could be used is Ephesians 4:13-15.

4. Verse 4 brings out that the precious promises of the Word of God were given that we might be partakers of the divine nature. Peter was assuring Christians that by believing the promises of God and meeting the requirements of those promises, they would grow spiritually. Using a circle response (refer to page 34 of the Teacher's Handbook), ask each student to specify one of God's precious promises. Zero in on how these promises help us grow, bringing out that most of them offer encouragement or a motivation for continuing to serve God and to do our best for Him.

5. VIRTUE — courage to conform to a standard of right: moral excellence
KNOWLEDGE — the intelligence to know Christ and His Word
TEMPERANCE — moderation, wanting to please God
PATIENCE — long-suffering, waiting by faith for God's promise
GODLINESS — holiness, pursuing His divine nature
BROTHERLY KINDNESS — showing love to others by our actions
CHARITY — divine love perfected through His power
Discuss the definitions as given by your class. Endeavor to help them realize that they must apply these to their personal lives if they hope to grow spiritually.

6. From verse 8 we understand we will be fruit-bearing, and verse 10 assures us that if we add these to our lives we shall never fall. Continue the discussion with the thought that we must be doers of the Word and not hearers only. *Adding* implies "action taken, a conscious effort expended." The fullness of these graces will not be gained all at once, for this will require repeated exertion. Ask your students to draw a parallel between this and the continued efforts expended to strengthen a particular physical muscle.

7. The result will be spiritual blindness and backsliding. Discuss with your class how neglecting the pursuit of these will cause spiritual disaster. Continue the discussion, focusing on God's mercy. If one does backslide or lose the love of God from his heart and life, there is a way to return to God. This is through repentance.

8. Suggest the development of a plan as to how each one could measure his spiritual growth. One thought might be to set a goal which could be reached within the duration of this quarter. Each goal should be something personal, not necessarily one to be shared with the entire group. Summarize the lesson and objective by bringing out that, no doubt, we all want to be a part of the Body of Christ. We need to grow spiritually as individuals and, in so doing, help to bring about a growth to the whole body of believers.

6

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

How do we gain the knowledge of God and Jesus that will multiply our grace and peace?

What do you think is meant by “giving all diligence”?

How would you define the following: faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity?

How do these qualities contribute to Christian growth?

Compare growing spiritually with the growth of a tree. All the parts must develop properly to prepare it to meet obstacles. Strength in the trunk and deep roots to withstand wind, deep roots to derive necessary moisture in dry times, bark to resist insects and disease, are all very necessary.

Did you ever feel unhappy about something someone did to you? What does Matthew 6:12,14,15 teach us about forgiveness?

How does seeing the need for forgiveness and being able to forgive tie in with the subject of our lesson—spiritual growth?

What will happen if one does not grow spiritually?

What are some of the things that help us grow spiritually?

How do daily prayer and Bible reading relate to our growth as children of God?

In our ANSWER story, Trisha, in telling her mother what Tony did, added, “I’ll never _____.” Why was it the wrong thing to say?

What did Tony offer his sister because he had broken her doll?

THINGS TO DO

With your students’ help, list on a blackboard the things that contribute to spiritual growth (Bible reading and study, prayer, petition, praise, church and Sunday school

attendance, Christian associates, etc.). Everything we “devour” either helps us grow or is unhealthy for us. We need a balanced “diet” of the right food to keep us spiritually strong.

Bring some plants to class, both diseased and healthy ones. Parallel the plants’ needs for proper nutrition to the Christian’s need for proper spiritual nutrition.

Show your class some pictures of several kinds of food, including desserts and snacks. Have the students choose what they would like to eat for a meal. Is it all nutritious? healthful? Discuss what “foods” Christians need for maintaining good spiritual health.

Answers for ANSWER

Add These and Grow!

God wants you to gain strength in your Christian life. Below are some things that, if added to your life, will help you grow into the kind of person God can use. There are eight different types of paths below. Each one contains a word of something you need. Start with the bold letter and follow through the line to find the word. Write the words on the lines provided.

F Faith

V Virtue

K Knowledge

T Temperance

P Patience

G Godliness

B Brotherly

C Kindness

P Charity

TEXT 2 Chronicles 26:1-15; Psalm 37:3-11

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE 2 Timothy 4:6-8

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain that living a successful Christian life in the eyes of God is not necessarily the same as achieving success in the eyes of the ungodly. True success is found by trusting God and doing that which is right in His sight, and this will count for eternity.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? — Matthew 16:26

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. — Joshua 1:8

ANSWER

TITLE:

SEARCH

TITLE:

Good Success Success

REFERENCE INFORMATION

Uzziah, King of Judah, reigned fifty-two years. He was thought to have been part-time co-regent with his father Amaziah, and “he set himself to seek God.” As long as he sought God, God caused him to prosper. He had a huge army with the best military equipment and was victorious over the Philistines, Arabians, and Ammonites. He brought the nation to a time of great prosperity. After these successes he became arrogant and strayed far from God at the end of his life. God smote him with leprosy, which was with him until his death.

People have differing opinions as to what the word *success* means. We know success is the opposite of failure. But what is failure? A person may be a failure in the eyes of a materialistic society, while God looks at that person with commendation for what, in His eyes, is great success! Worldly success is one thing, while spiritual success is quite another. Worldly success is judged without reference to God or eternity. Spiritual success is judged by God from the perspective of eternity, without reference to the world’s evaluation.

YOUR OPENER

Success

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 26:1-15; Psalm 37:3-11

KEY VERSE: This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. — Joshua 1:8

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE: 2 Timothy 4:6-8

RESPONSES

1. Uzziah did right in the sight of the Lord and he sought God. God has promised that if we seek Him and do right in His sight, He will be found of us and give us the desires of our heart. Ask the class what they think good success is and how it is to be attained. The key verse fits in very well here. Also have the students read 2 Chronicles 31:21 and Psalm 1:3 to further establish the fact that those who do right in God’s sight and seek Him will have good success. Emphasize that this may not be good success from the worldly point of view, but it will be prosperity in God’s assessment and in eternal values.

2. As God gave Uzziah victory over his enemies, He has promised to give the Christian complete victory over sin and Satan. The Christian has been born into the family of God, which is distinguished by each one’s love for the other. As Christians we look to our new family for assistance in our Christian walk as well as help in time of need. While God has not promised the Christian vast material wealth, he has security within God’s Word for all his needs. God has provided an armor so that His servants may be able to wage a successful spiritual warfare.

3. The purpose of this question is to help the students relate Psalm 37 to life today. Ask your students to share some instances they know of personally. Bring out in discussion that it is in our everyday affairs that God has promised success if we truly trust and obey Him. The point should be made that success is not experienced through self-confidence or self-esteem, as is taught in many of our schools, but through the power of God. All glory for our successes and deliverances must go to Him.

Success is a word with a variety of meanings. To some, it means “a job, friends, a family, and enough possessions to meet their needs and gratify their desires.” To others, it signifies “recognition for superiority in terms of beauty, intelligence, or athletic or artistic talent.” These latter equate success with popularity, fame, influence, political power, or rare creativity. God’s value system, however, is just the opposite of the worldly viewpoint. God views success from the perspective of eternity, since we are all going to live forever somewhere! He sees us not as evaluated by the world, gauged by our public image or our private enterprise, but instead by the extent of our commitment to Him. Solomon, who sought success in every possible channel of life, finally came to this realization. After pronouncing all of his many worldly successes as vanity (without real meaning), he writes: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

1. Point out two things that Uzziah did early in his reign that brought him good success. How does Uzziah’s example apply to us today? See Matthew 7:7-8.

2. God gave Uzziah good success in that He gave him victory over his enemies; He gave him helpful, intelligent associates; He gave him much cattle and vineyards; He gave him weapons of warfare. How can we parallel these things to success in the Christian life today? See Luke 10:19; Ephesians 6:13-17; Philippians 4:19 and 1 John 1:7.

7

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

3. David, the author of Psalm 37, had proven God's care in both good and bad circumstances. God gave him success over the lion, the bear, Goliath, and in many other situations because David trusted in Him. Relate an example from your own experience or knowledge of someone whose success came directly through God's help.

4. Later, David endured much persecution and was hunted as if he were a criminal. In what way might this difficult experience have contributed to David's eventual success (Psalm 37:7-11)? How might dismal and disappointing circumstances contribute to our eventual spiritual success (1 Peter 4:12-13; 5:10)?

5. Psalm 37:3-11 may be spoken of as a formula for success—spiritually and materially. Very simply stated, this formula is: Our part performed + God's part guaranteed = success. From these verses, list the phrases which describe our part and God's part.

6. Arrange the following items in priority as to how you think they should be to assure success in your life: education, occupation, home and family life, recreation and social activities, individual spiritual life, church-related activities.

7. What was the Apostle Paul's main goal in life (Philippians 3:8-11)? What assurance did he have that he had attained this? See 2 Timothy 4:6-8.

4. It taught David to trust and commit his way unto the Lord. He was also persuaded that God would take care of Saul in His own way and time. As Christians, we can be sure that any situation the Lord allows to come our way will result in spiritual success if we take it patiently. Ask the students how we grow strong in faith and God's grace. Help them to understand that their testing time is a schooling for spiritual success. Help them relate their Christian trials to David's testimony of God's deliverance—the more dismal and disappointing the circumstances, the greater the victory and the more we learn to trust God and maintain faith in Him. It is in the school of hardship that we learn to depend heavily on the Lord.

5. Our Part Performed: "Trust in the LORD, and do good."
God's Part Guaranteed: "So shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."
Success requires action. But action without direction can result in futility. No less a man than Paul the Apostle stated, "So fight I, not as one that beateth the air" (1 Corinthians 9:26). To determine direction for our actions requires setting priorities and goals.

6. This exercise should be a springboard for discussion on priorities in life. The order may vary. However, spiritual life must come first. Biblical rules must govern our priorities or spiritual success will always evade us. You could make reference to the first commandment: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," and brainstorm with the class a list of things that could be "gods" in our world today. The point should be made that many things, though not sinful in themselves, can lead us into sin if our priorities are wrong. And sin always leads not to success, but to failure.

7. The Apostle Paul determined to know Christ, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His suffering. He stated his assurance of attainment in these words: "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day." Summarize the lesson by bringing out the change of priorities in Paul's life. After Christ's call, the Apostle followed Jesus with all his heart. He was willing to suffer many hardships and privations that he might do the will of the Lord. Relate the readiness of Paul to face all obstacles in order to please Christ, to the attitude that we should have in order to obtain spiritual success today.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

How would you define *success*?

How does the world gauge success?

Compare the rewards for worldly success and Christian success.

Explain the key verse, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

In the first part of Uzziah's life, why was he so successful?

What are some of the things that will help to make a person successful in this world?

What are some things that will help one to be a successful Christian?

Our ANSWER story mentions a promise for "good success." Can you find that promise in your Bible?

THINGS TO DO

Bring some pictures of Bible characters who would be classified as successful in God's eyes but not in man's, and discuss these. Also bring a few pictures of famous, successful people in the world today who obviously aren't serving God, and discuss how their success is only temporary while godly success is eternal.

To illustrate that no one is too small, too big, too young, too old, too sick, or too busy to be successful, show your students a paper chain with links of different sizes and textures. God can use all ages, sizes, and types of people in His Kingdom—all have important jobs to do. Each link holds the chain together. Each supports the other and, as long as they hold on, they are a success. In the Sunday school, the church, or in God's Kingdom, each person is important. Don't ever be tempted to let go or give up!

What is success? How do you achieve it? Follow the rules and trust the "creators" to know what they are talking about. (Show a cookbook.) How do you make a "successful" cake? Measure ingredients correctly, blend

as stated, use correct pans, bake at correct temperature. If you do everything right except one, you will not have success. (Show a map.) A person skilled in making maps can help you get where you want to go. But, if you won't turn where you should, you will get lost and no one but yourself will be to blame.

Do a brainstorming session with your class on the subject, "What Is Success?"

Use flash cards on which you have written a variety of Bible names: Saul, Moses, Paul, Jacob, Ruth, Joseph, Peter, Judas, Esther, John, Job, etc. As you show each name ask your students, "Was this person a success in God's eyes? The world's eyes?"

Answers for ANSWER

Sweet Success

To Christians, success comes when they trust God and do what is right in His sight. Without looking up the key verse, see if you can complete the verse at the bottom of the page, using the words from the list. Then write them in the correct places in the crossword.

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For WHAT is a MAN PROFITED, if he SHALL gain the WHOLE WORLD, and LOSE his OWN SOUL?

TEXT Judges 6:11-40

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain why it is of utmost importance to base their decisions upon God’s Word and His will for them. They will recognize the necessity of allowing God to guide in the decisions affecting their future and their Christian testimony, and will realize that God is willing to reveal His will to those who seek Him.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER Who is on the LORD’s side? let him come unto me. — Exodus 32:26

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live. — Deuteronomy 30:19

ANSWER

TITLE:

SEARCH

TITLE:

A Choice for God Decision-Making

REFERENCE INFORMATION

The title of the Book of Judges, from which today’s lesson is taken, was derived from special rulers—judges appointed by God to assume governmental control after the death of Joshua. These rulers directed the affairs of state in Israel from the death of Joshua until the crowning of Saul as king.

The authorship of the Book of Judges is unknown. Some scholars suggest that each judge kept a diary or executive log which was later compiled into the form that it now appears in the Bible. According to Clarke’s commentary, the dates for the period of the judges was between 1443-1120 B.C.

YOUR OPENER

Decision-Making

TEXT: Judges 6:11-40

KEY VERSE: I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.
— Deuteronomy 30:19

RESPONSES

1. Gideon was faced with deciding whether or not he could do what God commanded him, realizing the many difficulties that confronted him. As do many people, he was thinking only of his own ability, not God's. God had promised to deliver the Midianites into his hand. If Gideon had decided wrongly that he could not fulfill God's command, he would not have gone up against the enemy. What are the consequences if a Christian makes the wrong decision? a right decision? How might family, friends, or associates be affected? How is their testimony affected? The students should realize through this discussion that decisions have a far-reaching effect.

2. Discuss the events surrounding his decision. First, God's will was revealed to him by the angel's appearance and message. Then Gideon asked for and received a sign. Next, God led him to victory over the Baal worshipers. Then came the miracle of the fleece. Point out that Gideon's decision was reinforced by the evidences of God's presence.

3. Yes. Scripture teaches us that God desires to lead man to the knowledge of His will. Some examples: Psalm 40:8; Psalm 143:10; Proverbs 2:3-5; Jeremiah 29:13; Matthew 12:50; James 1:5. Point out that God doesn't intend to conceal, but rather, reveal His will. Stress that He wants to guide in every decision.

Making the right decisions in spiritual matters will add to one's growth in Christian maturity. The most important decisions may not always be the ones made with great deliberation and forethought. They may be the spontaneous ones made every day. How necessary it is to seek God's guidance in decision-making, because each decision, great or small, leads us either closer to or away from Jesus.

1. What was the decision that Gideon was faced with making? Of what consequence was it if he made the wrong decision? See Judges 7:19-23.

2. Name the four happenings upon which Gideon based his decision to do what God commanded him.

3. Can one know God's will in making a decision? Support your answer with Scripture.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. What is the spiritual meaning of putting out a fleece? Do you think this is a good way to make a decision? Explain your answer.

5. Why is God concerned with even the lesser decisions we make on a day-to-day basis?

6. What sources are helpful in making good decisions? What sources are harmful in making good decisions? See Psalm 1:1,2.

7. Do you think it is possible to make every decision based upon God's Word? For instance, will God's Word tell a person which school to attend or which friends to associate with or which job to accept? Read Matthew 6:33, and explain your answer.

8. Reflect back over the past year concerning any major decisions you have had to make. What were the processes you went through in order to make those decisions? Were there times when you should have done something differently?

4. First let students give their definitions of putting out a fleece. What is the right way? Can a fleece be moved or changed? (It can be, and sometimes is, but then it is no longer indicative of God's will.) Ask for some examples from the students' lives. Bring out that if they are truly seeking God's will and leave a fleece in His hands, it can be an effective way to make a decision.

5. Allow time for your students to express their thoughts. The conclusion should be reached that sometimes a wrong decision in a small matter could lead to serious problems, and what appeared to be a minor matter could have drastic and far-reaching effects. Ask your students for a Biblical example of this. One possibility might be Ruth's decision to follow Naomi.

6. Stress that the greatest source of guidance is God's Word. God's Word teaches the importance of seeking the advice of godly parents, elders, and pastors. It also warns from making decisions based upon counsel from the ungodly and spiritually lean.

7. Let students explore these questions. Scriptures for discussion could include 1 Corinthians 6:20 and 10:31. The conclusion should be reached that every decision can be based upon God's Word. He will guide them in making the right decision if they really are willing to seek His leading.

8. This question is not necessarily for class discussion, but rather to encourage each individual to take inventory. To wrap up your lesson, help your students see the importance of placing Christ first in every decision.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What did God call Gideon to do? Why?

Why do you think Gideon sought signs from God?

Why is it so important for us to seek the Lord concerning our future?

What sort of decision-making do you do from day to day?

In order of importance, from the smallest to the largest, name several decisions you may need to make. Is God consulted in even the smallest decisions? Why or why not?

How does one know God's will? How does God show you what He wants you to do?

When should we go to God for guidance?

What are the consequences for trusting or not trusting God with your decisions?

When considering consequences, what is more important, immediate or long range? Why?

In our ANSWER story, what Bible verse helped Randy make his decision? How can that verse help us?

THINGS TO DO

Play "Hide and Seek" with God's Word. Write out several verses which tell us that God will be there when we need Him: "Seek, and ye shall find," "Ask, and it shall be given you," etc. Hide them in your class. (Remember where and how many are hidden!) Remind your students that when decisions need to be made they should seek God's will. Tell them that parts of God's Word are hidden in the class and they should "seek" for them. Give the students a certain time limit and then "reward" them for "seeking and finding" (candy bar, etc.). God's rewards are great when you make the right decisions.

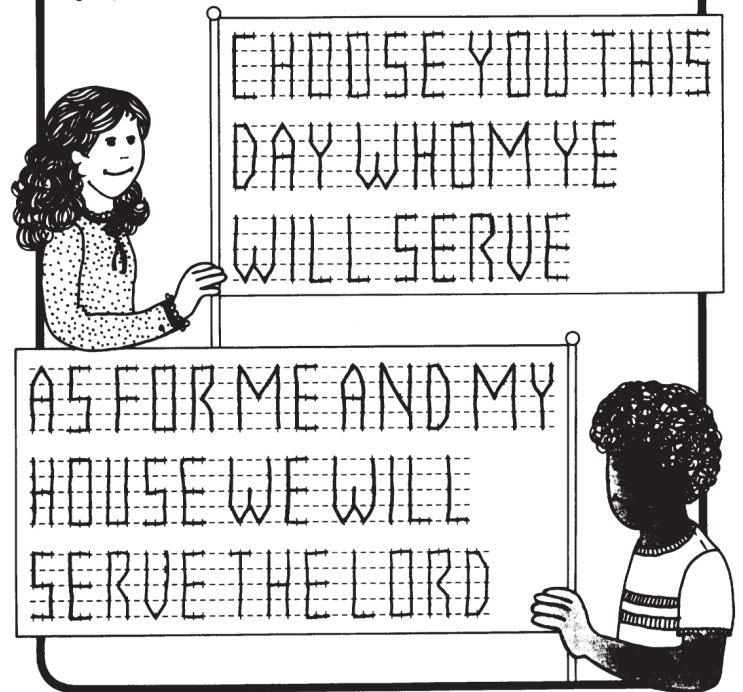
Use two large cotton balls, one wet and one dry, to introduce the lesson on Gideon and the fleece of wool.

Bring some evidence of how the world handles decision-making. These may include clippings on current issues dealing with seemingly difficult decisions (mercy killings, nuclear weapons, abortion, etc.). Why do world leaders find these issues so hard to settle? Encourage class to offer their thoughts. Help them to understand that solutions to problems, small or great, need to be based on God's Word. Few of these leaders depend on God or seek His guidance.

Answers for ANSWER

What's Your Choice?

Decisions, decisions, decisions! What should I do? Where should I go? You'll have many decisions to make during your lifetime and if you let God help you, you'll know you've made a right choice. On the banners below are a challenge and a right decision. To find out what they are, connect the + signs with a pencil but don't cross over any - signs. (The first letter has been done for you.) What will your decision be?



TEXT 2 Timothy 2:19-26; Psalm 15:1-5

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Ephesians 5:27; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 1 Peter 1:22-23

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain why it is necessary to keep uncontaminated physically, mentally, and spir-itually by things which would pollute and eventually destroy them.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.
— Matthew 5:8

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.
— Philippians 4:8

ANSWER

TITLE:

SEARCH

TITLE:

“Dear Christian, . . .” Avoiding Pollution

REFERENCE INFORMATION

Pollution is defined as “defilement or impurity.” It comes from the Hebrew word *ga'al* or Greek word *aligema*. The Bible makes many references to pollution, i.e., food offered to idols (Acts 15:20,29), evil in the world (2 Peter 2:20), imperfect offerings or those brought with a wrong

motive (Malachi 1:7,8). An altar was to be of unhewn stone: to cut was to pollute it (Exodus 20:25). Several Greek and Hebrew words translated “pollute” refer to ceremonial or moral defilement, profanation, or uncleanness.

YOUR OPENER

Avoiding Pollution

TEXT: 2 Timothy 2:19-26; Psalm 15:1-5

KEY VERSE: Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

— Philippians 4:8

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Ephesians 5:27; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 1 Peter 1:22-23

In our world today, we hear of air pollution, noise pollution, water pollution, etc. The contamination of our environment is an important concern, but of far more serious nature is the onslaught of moral, physical, and spiritual pollution which is attaching itself to the human race at an increasingly rapid rate. These forms of pollution, if the Christian allows them to be attached to his life, will have a devastating effect—the eternal loss of his soul.

1. Our spiritual foundation, as stated in 1 Corinthians 3:11, is Jesus Christ. According to our text, what are the two sayings on the seal of the foundation?

2. If you are a born-again Christian, you are a part of Christ's church in the world today. In reference to Ephesians 5:27, what characteristics is Christ looking for in His church? What does this mean in terms of the kind of life we live?

3. In our introduction, we are warned to beware of physical pollution. What are some of the things in our world which would contaminate a person physically? What must we do to avoid these pollutions?

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

RESPONSES

1. The two sayings are: "The Lord knoweth them that are his," and, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Discuss with the students the importance of this first verse of our text, in light of the three verses prior to the text. The Apostle Paul brings out that, regardless of what others might say or how much their minds might be polluted by things that are untrue, it is possible for each individual to be secure on God's foundation. Words alone do not create this relationship, but deeds and actions, as well as faith in God. It is comforting to the individual that the Lord knows them that are His. We read, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16). Ask the students what the text says the Christian is to do if he desires to remain on the true foundation.

2. Ephesians 5:27 brings out that the Church of Christ is "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle," and that it is holy and without blemish. This indicates that a Christian can be kept free from contamination or pollution by any impurity of the world. Discuss with your class the fact that although we are in the world and surrounded by evil on every hand, we can remain free from these ungodly elements through the power of God. See John 17:16.

3. As your students discuss this question, they will probably mention such things as drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, etc. We know that these are harmful to the physical body, which is the temple of God. See 1 Corinthians 3:16-17. In considering how to avoid these pollutions, your students should see the necessity of choosing the right friends, avoiding, whenever possible, the places where evil influences are prevalent, resisting the temptation to "try it once," etc.

4. The vessels of honor indicate those who are serving the Lord faithfully. The vessels of dishonor represent any who are not living according to God's Word. Our text admonishes a man to purge himself from being a vessel of dishonor, and he will become a vessel of honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use. Ask the students how much moral, physical, or spiritual pollution God allows in His vessels of honor. The vessels of gold and silver in God's great house are free from those things that defile. Jesus Christ cleanses from sin, but it is the duty of the individual to keep himself unspotted from the world.

4. What do you think are the meanings of the expressions, “vessels of honor” and “vessels of dishonor”? How can one change from being a vessel of dishonor to a vessel of honor?

5. A definition of *lust* is “overmastering desire.” This could include a lust for power, fame, or money, as well as unlawful sexual gratification. According to our text, what is the antidote for youthful lusts? Why are lusts harmful? See 1 Peter 2:11.

6. James 3:16 discusses two pollutants that can assail the Christian. What are these, and how can they be avoided?

7. What does the Bible say is the root of all evil (1 Timothy 6:10)? Why is this pollutant so subtle?

8. Listed in our text in Psalm 15 are eleven qualifications for heavenly citizenship. Make a list of all the conditions you can find.

5. The text admonishes us to flee youthful lusts, and to follow righteousness, faith, charity, and peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. The Apostle Peter warns that fleshly lusts war against the soul, showing the danger of this sort of pollution. What does the Spirit say, through the Apostle James, about lusts (James 1:14,15)? He said that one is tempted to evil through his own lust, and that when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin, and sin when it is finished brings forth death. Have the class present their considerations on how this type of moral and spiritual contamination can best be avoided. Additional Scriptures to clarify this point can be found in Romans 6:12-13; 13:14; Galatians 5:24; Ephesians 4:22-24; 1 Timothy 6:9 and Titus 2:12.

6. The two pollutants mentioned in this verse are envying and strife. Class discussion should bring out that both of these come from earthly wisdom. Self-promotion, jealousy, a contentious spirit, and pride are their basis. James 3:16-17 draws a sharp contrast between earthly wisdom and the beautiful qualities of the wisdom from Above. Seek and receive the wisdom from Above, which “is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” In other words, if we keep our hearts filled with the things of God, the things of the world will not enter in to contaminate.

7. The love of money is the root of all evil. This pollutant is very subtle in that it promises so much satisfaction, yet in itself it cannot fulfill the need of the human heart. Ask someone in the class to read 1 Timothy 6:9, then have the class rehearse the steps into defilement of those who would be rich. First they fall into temptation and a snare, then into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. Ask the class to point out a better way of life. Perhaps somebody will mention Jesus’ promise that if a man seeks first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, all the necessary things of life will be added. Another might mention, “godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come” (1 Timothy 4:8). Remember the words of the song: “God’s way is the best way; God’s way is the right way; I’ll trust in Him alway.”

YOUR WRAP-UP

8. Discuss with the class that it is easy to see that the conditions listed are not moral or spiritual defilements, but are positive actions which are exemplified by the person who is living a Christian life. Doing the opposite of any of these qualifications would pollute the soul of the doer. Summarize the lesson by discussing the importance of a Christian’s living according to God’s Word, and not allowing any sort of moral, physical, or spiritual pollution to attach itself to his life.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

Name some pastimes and places a Christian should stay away from, for the good of his own soul.

What pollutes a soul?

If you want to avoid the pollution of sin, what must you do?

What are some of the things that could pollute you?

In our ANSWER story, what was the first thing the devil suggested that Christian do?

How might the friends you choose be a key factor in whether or not you are polluted by the world?

Name the pointers the devil suggested to Christian to help him change the way he lived.

THINGS TO DO

Bring a tape recorder and camera to class. Discuss their uses. Bring out the point that they have one thing in common—they are all designed to capture sounds or images to be kept and reviewed in the future. Make a parallel of this to our minds. Like the recorder and camera, our minds record what we hear and see. If we expose ourselves to evil things, and don't try to avoid them, our mind will record and replay these sights and sounds. Before we know it, we could be destroyed spiritually.

Bring a bowl of water mixed with mud, or a small plastic bag of garbage. Ask the students if they would choose either of these for a meal. Naturally, they would say no. Explain that they should react the same way to evil and corrupt things which will hurt them spiritually.

Bring to class two large hearts. One should have pictures of things that would pollute a child's heart, the other pure and white. The pictures could be cut out of a maga-

zine or drawn. Discuss with your class how both hearts may have the same temptations, but one of the hearts yields to the temptations while the other is able to resist. Explain how the pure heart resists temptation.

Bring to class pictures or news clippings of things that pollute young people. Pass them around to be read or explained by the class. Show how things that pollute the mind or body may also pollute the soul.

Answers for ANSWER


We Can Win

Victory over the devil! That's what we want. Jesus has given us a way to have this victory. To find out what it is, cross out all the letters in the box at the bottom of the page that are also printed in the verse box. Begin with the first letter, T. There will be eight letters left over. Circle these, then unscramble them and place them in the right order in the Victory box (two words). This is what gives us victory over the devil. If you need a clue read Revelation 12:11.

VERSE

The Lord shall deliver
me from every evil
work, and will pre-
serve me unto his
heavenly kingdom.

II Timothy 4:18



VICTORY!
H I S B L O O D

A large box containing a grid of letters and symbols for a word search. The letters are scattered among many 'X' marks. Some letters are circled: H, B, L, S, O, O, I, D.

Dealing With the Devil

TEXT: Matthew 4:1-11

KEY VERSE: Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

— James 4:7

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 6:1-18

RESPONSES

1. He deceived Eve. Ask your class what the word *deceive* means. Discussion should bring out that to deceive someone is to mislead him into believing something that is not true, to deliberately misrepresent the facts. The devil will do the same to us today if we do not ask the Lord for wisdom and guidance with which to withstand him.

2. He deceived Eve by questioning God's Word. Through his subtlety (or slyness) he convinced her that God did not really mean what He said. Similarly, he questioned Jesus' deity as the Son of God, and again misrepresented God's Word. Show that both Eve and Jesus knew what God had said, but whereas Eve listened to and obeyed Satan's lies, Jesus used the Word of God three times to withstand him, and Satan had to leave Him. We can use the Word of God to defeat Satan just as Jesus did.

3. 2 Corinthians 11:14 — Satan comes as an angel of light. Satan's false prophets and ministers abound in the world today, posing as ministers of righteousness. See 2 Corinthians 11:15. Help your group recognize that we should be very careful what we listen to on the radio and what we read in religious books. If it doesn't agree with the Word and Spirit of God, it is false.

1 Thessalonians 3:5 — He comes as a tempter to cause us to follow our human desires. Emphasize that the devil has had centuries of experience in seducing people and he knows just which method will be most successful in touching our weakest point. For example, he tempted Jesus to make the stones into bread when He was hungry after being without food for forty days.

1 Peter 5:8 — He comes as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

Revelation 12:10 — He comes as an accuser of the brethren.

Satan, the devil, is a very real being and is the prince of the darkness of this world. He contends with the Lord and with the Christian. We must be aware of his power, but always take confidence in the fact that the God we serve has supreme power, and that Satan's eventual doom is sure. "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

1. The devil has been causing men to sin all through the years of time. What tactics did he use with Eve in the Garden that will likely be similar to those he will use with the inhabitants of the world after the Millennium (Genesis 3:4-5; 2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:14; Revelation 20:7-8)? How do they compare with his tactics today?

2. What deception did the devil, as a serpent, use on Eve to cause her to sin (Genesis 3:1,4)? In a similar vein, what temptation did the devil use to try to overcome Jesus in the wilderness?

3. In what forms will Satan come to us today in an attempt to overthrow our faith in God?

- 2 Corinthians 11:14
- 1 Thessalonians 3:5
- 1 Peter 5:8
- Revelation 12:10

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. God has promised to give us victory over the temptations of Satan. However, His promises are conditional. He expects us to take action. Using the following Scriptures, what action must we take and what is God's specific promise as we do so?

Ephesians 6:11

James 1:12

1 Peter 5:8-10

5. What spiritual qualities must we have and exhibit in order for us to be victorious in our fight with the devil? Luke 10:19-20 and Revelation 12:11 list two very important qualities. Tell what these are, and then mention some others.

6. 2 Corinthians 2:11 tells us we are not ignorant of Satan's devices, and he need not get an advantage over us. How can we determine if a trial or test or thought is from the devil or from the Lord? See James 1:13.

7. Satan is called the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2) and his realm is one of spirits, not one of flesh and blood that can be seen (Ephesians 6:12). What lessons can we learn from the story of Job regarding the debate between God and Satan over men's souls? See Job 1:7-10; 2:3-10.

8. Jesus said that He has all power in Heaven and in earth (Matthew 28:18). He defeated the devil every time he came against Him, even to being victorious over death through His Resurrection. Since we receive our spiritual power from Jesus, what confidence can we have in our encounters with the devil?

4. Ephesians 6:11 — Put on the whole armor of God, so we will be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

James 1:12 — Endure temptation in order to receive the crown of life.

1 Peter 5:8-10 — Be sober, vigilant, resist steadfast in the faith and He will make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

Bring out that it is possible for us to do these things when our purpose and desire is to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. See Ephesians 6:10.

5. The Scriptures given bring out that we must be Christians, with our sins covered by Jesus' Blood and our names written in Heaven. Our words and lives must be a testimony before others that we love the Lord. As your class discusses other qualities which will help us in defeating the devil, they may bring out such things as courage, faith in God, determination, and knowledge of the Word.

6. Allow time for your students to discuss this thought. They should conclude that if it is temptation to do evil or if it deviates in any way from the Word of God, they can be sure it is not from the Lord. If it will bring a negative result or be harmful to others, it is from the devil. If there is a thought that brings confusion and distress to your spirit, you can be confident that it is not from the Lord, for the Word tells us that "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace" (1 Corinthians 14:33).

7. The Lord knew He could trust Job implicitly. Though the Lord allowed the devil to afflict him grievously, yet He had a hedge about him, and Satan could go only as far as the Lord would let him. God has promised to provide for us a way of escape from each temptation of the devil (1 Corinthians 10:13). It can be brought out that many times today the devil uses affliction and sickness to try to overthrow the Christian's faith, but the Psalmist declares that "the LORD delivereth him out of them all" (Psalm 34:19).

8. Discuss the students' answers together. Using 1 John 4:4, summarize the entire lesson by bringing out the fact that through Jesus our ultimate victory over Satan is sure. His final end is with his followers in the lake of fire and brimstone. See Revelation 20:10.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

In last week's ANSWER story, who wrote the letter to Christian?

This week's ANSWER story has another letter to Christian. Who wrote this letter?

What are some of the ways in which Christian defeated the devil?

In our text for this lesson, who did the devil tempt?

What were some of the things the devil suggested to Jesus?

What are some of the things the devil might suggest to you or your friends?

What do you do when some of these suggestions come to you?

THINGS TO DO

Show your class a picture of a lion. Discuss the characteristics of a lion. Ask the students what precautions they would take if they knew a lion was after them. Read 1 Peter 5:8 and discuss how we can follow Christ's example and overcome the devil by using promises from the Bible of God's care and protection. (Job 11:19; 2 Timothy 4:18; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9; Revelation 12:11) We are promised that if we resist the devil he will flee from us.

Show your students a hard hat, such as used by construction workers. Explain that this hat is used to protect the worker's head from falling objects. We need to protect our head (mind) at all times from the devil. Our "mind protector" is Christ. If our mind is always set on doing the will of God, then there is protection against the devil's attacks and we can go on living and working for the Lord.

Wear a pair of dark sunglasses to class. Tell your students that these represent the "glasses" Satan tries to make you wear. They "color" your outlook so that you can't see things as they really are. Don't be tricked into

wearing Satan's glasses. Remember, he just wants you to keep the SON out of your eyes! Listen to Jesus and He will keep your vision clear.


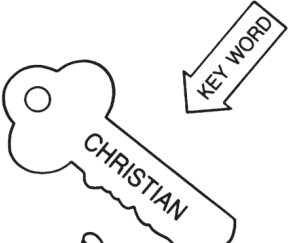
Using verses from Ephesians 6:13-17, make a match-up chart to use with your lesson. Have the class read these verses, realizing that this armor is needed in dealing with the devil. Close all Bibles and show your students the charts. Have them match up each part of armor with its purpose. Example:

Breastplate	Faith
Shield	Salvation
Helmet	Righteousness


Answers for ANSWER

What Are You Like?

A Christian will have all the character qualities listed below. You'll have a hard time reading them as they are, so take the letters from the Key Word and fit them where they go in each word. Cross out each letter as you use it because you can only use it once!

K L ND
 U N DERST A ND L NG
 H O NE S T
 PU R E
 C A RING
 POLI I E



Taking a Stand

TEXT: Numbers 13:17-33; 14:22-24

KEY VERSE: If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. — John 15:19

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Matthew 16:24-27; Romans 12:1,2

Who should we believe? Which report is true? Who should we follow? These questions must have been heavy on the minds of the Children of Israel when they heard the conflicting reports from the twelve men who had returned from spying out the land of Canaan. Their trust in God's promise had been overcome by doubt and fear. We, too, are faced each day with the challenge of distinguishing between right and wrong. And, many times, the consequences of wrong decisions are as grave as they were for the Children of Israel. Let's not forget God's promises to us.

1. The history of the Children of Israel, no doubt, would read differently if the people had followed Caleb and Joshua rather than the other ten spies. Explain the reason why it makes a difference to us whom we follow in our day.

2. It is not always easy to make the correct differentiation between truth and error, especially when the pressure is great from those around you to pursue a course other than the right one. For example, would it have been easy for you to make the right choice between the conflicting reports given by the twelve spies in our text? On what should the Children of Israel have based their decision?

3. Ten men said Israel couldn't take the land, while Joshua and Caleb insisted that it could be done. Because they took their stand for what was right, they were the only two of their generation who entered the Promised Land. What spiritual lesson can we learn from this?

RESPONSES

1. As you discuss this question, help the students to conclude that it does make a difference who they follow. Within sight of the Promised Land, the Children of Israel turned back. For those who turned back, the opportunity to enter never returned. Following the wrong crowd can make the difference between spiritual life and spiritual death.

2. Your discussion should bring out that it is imperative to make the right choices. Looking back, the distinction seems more obvious to us than it did to the Children of Israel. Nevertheless, any situation can be measured by God's Word. Here, God had told the people what they should expect: a good land and a promise that God would help them take that land. God will likewise reveal His way to us by His Word. The Children of Israel should have based their decision on what God had told them, rather than the problems the majority of the spies reported.

3. Discussion should bring out that our decision to take a stand for what is right in spite of any opposition will have important spiritual ramifications. When we do what is right before God, no matter what others do, we can be sure of an eventual eternal reward, even though we may suffer ridicule or persecution for a time.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. Imagine the feelings of Joshua and Caleb when they realized that the people were siding with the other ten spies. There may be situations in our lives which cause us to be uncomfortable but force us to take a stand. For example: In a high school science class, the question is asked if anyone believes in the Biblical account of creation. No one raises his hand—but you believe. Will you raise your hand? Your face turns red, your palms are sweaty, beads of perspiration are on your brow, and you raise your hand. You hear a ripple of laughter. The teacher rolls his eyes. Give another similar situation that could necessitate standing up for the Lord. Name some emotions that might accompany taking this stand, and give possible reactions to it.

5. It is important to remember scriptural promises in these times when we must take a stand. Read Philippians 4:13 and explain how this verse could help.

6. Define the word *world* in the context of 1 John 2:15-17. What are the consequences of daring to be different from the world?

7. How can we obtain the spiritual strength to take a stand for what we know is right? See Psalm 27:1 and Isaiah 40:29-31.

8. Give a Biblical example of a person who took a stand even though opposed by those around him.

4. Allow time for your class to share their situations. The point of this question is to show that the Biblical account has its parallel in our lives. You may wish to broaden the application by bringing out that at times, when we take our stand, it may encourage others to take the same stand.

5. As your students discuss this verse, they should conclude that God's strength is ever-present and available for us. Though we may be "alone" in terms of associates around us who agree with our position, if we have God, we are invincible. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31).

6. Your students' definitions of the word *world* should bring out that in this context the word means "earthly affairs which are obstacles to the cause of Christ." As your students name some of the consequences, they possibly will include the thought of being ridiculed or rejected by the world, or having God's blessing and protection. Help your class see that being distinct by taking a stand for Christ does bring a separation from the world. This may even lead to being hated by the world. John 15:18,19 relates that Christ, too, was hated. Even though others may turn from us, we can be assured that Christ will be there to honor our stand for Him. See Daniel 3:24-25.

7. Just knowing what is right or wrong does not necessarily give us strength to do right. Spiritual strength comes from seeking God and waiting upon Him. God's promise is that if we call upon Him in prayer, He will hear us. If we wait upon the Lord, He will renew our strength. The closer we walk to God, the more strength He will give and the deeper in our hearts will be the purpose to do what is acceptable to Him. The Psalmist found the Lord to be the source of strength. Discuss with the class that Paul's prayer included the plea that Christians would be strengthened with might by God's Spirit in the inner man. See Ephesians 3:16.

8. In discussing the examples brought by your students, split your class into pairs. Have one student offer an example, and the other tell whether he thinks that Bible character's decision was a good one or not, and why. Conclude your class session by stressing our need to remain true to the calling of Christ Jesus in spite of the ridicule from "the crowd." We have the confidence that "the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself" (Psalm 4:3).

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

Everyone follows in some manner. Who should we follow?

What are some reasons people follow “the crowd”?

What connection do you see between the ANSWER story and the Bible text for this lesson?

How do you think Caleb and Joshua may have felt as they stood against the ten other spies?

Can you think of some occasion when you, or someone you know, had to say or do the opposite of what others did? What was the reason?

What were the results of Caleb and Joshua’s decision? of the ten other spies’ decision?

Why might it always be a good idea to think of the possible results, or consequences, before a decision is made?

Even if it may sometimes be difficult to take a stand for Christ and have everyone see that you are different, how might God use this very thing to His own glory?

In our ANSWER story, what made John Nelson especially remember Kelly?

How was it proven to Kelly that “it really did pay to take her stand for Jesus”?

THINGS TO DO

Take several marbles to class (one different from the rest). Take several pencils to class (one different from the rest). Take several pens to class (one with different colored ink). Or use any set of items you have that includes one which is different from the rest. Use these examples to explain that Christians stand out and are different from everyone else.

Almost everywhere you look you can find someone who is wearing a T-shirt that has a message printed on it. How can you show that you are a Christian without wearing a sign that says you are? Ask your students to pretend

this next week that they are wearing a T-shirt that has the word CHRISTIAN across the front and an arrow pointing up, toward the face. How will they act?

Take a puppet to class. Show how the puppet does everything you make it do. A puppet is manipulated by someone. We must be an individual and follow Christ—not be manipulated by the devil like a puppet. We must choose to do good and refuse to be like the sinful crowd.

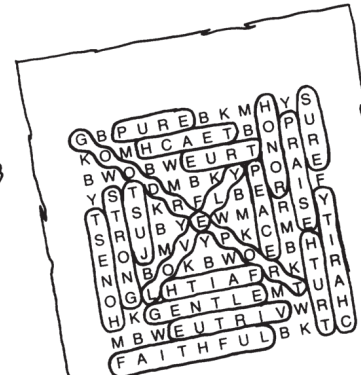
Take a number of different shoes to class. Have one that is polished and clean or, perhaps, even looks new. Explain how everyone is different, but Christians are especially different because they are clean and pure, a quality which makes them stand out.

Answers for ANSWER

Free To Be Clean

Air pollution happens when things get mixed with our air and make it dirty. People have a hard time seeing and breathing. It makes life unpleasant. There are many things that can pollute our spiritual life, but we can be free of them if we keep our mind on the things of God. The words on the list below are things that will keep our life clean and pleasant. Find them in the wordfind.

JUST	TRUE	TEACH	HONEST	PRAISE	CHARITY
PURE	FAITH	TRUTH	HONOR	STRONG	FAITHFUL
SURE	PEACE	GENTLE	LOVELY	VIRTUE	GOOD REPORT



Willing Service

TEXT: Acts 26:1-20

KEY VERSE: If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land. — Isaiah 1:19

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE: John 21:15-17

RESPONSES

1. Your students will, no doubt, mention that Paul experienced a real change when he met Jesus on the road to Damascus. He was willing to stand before the king because he had been instilled with a burning desire to spread the Gospel. Discuss with your class how a genuine experience of salvation is the necessary prerequisite for any effective service for God.

2. As your class talks this over, reinforce the thought of the preceding question, that the first step is to surrender our lives to God and receive salvation. But the need for surrender goes beyond this as we begin serving the Lord. Ask your class to list some of the things Paul gave up or surrendered when he became a servant of God. Then discuss some of the things we might be called upon to surrender as we continue in giving ourselves fully to God for His service.

3. The call of God is all-important in our lives. Romans 11:29 brings out the fact that this call cannot be repented of. That means that it will remain constant, even though it may go unanswered. The students should see that one cannot keep neglecting his call from God and just tell God he is sorry. 1 Corinthians 9:16-17 lets us know that we are to fulfill our call willingly. As your students bring out their thoughts, endeavor to lead them to understand the seriousness and yet the blessing of being willing servants.

4. Acts 1:8 brings out the fact that receiving the Holy Ghost brings power for service into the life of a Christian. This power enables one to witness more effectively for God. Bring out in discussion the importance of having the baptism of the Holy Ghost to fulfill the call to service.

Paul, even though having been in prison for a long time, was not hesitant to do service for God by giving his testimony. As he stood before King Agrippa, the account of his conversion and how he answered God's call gives us a beautiful example of a complete change, total dedication and sacrifice. We are called by the same Christ to the same Gospel. Willing service for the salvation of souls in every phase of the Lord's work brings eternal reward.

1. Paul told King Agrippa that at an earlier time in his life, his ambition had been to put the followers of Jesus into prison, see them persecuted and even put to death. His attitude had been one of anger toward the followers of Jesus. Explain what brought about the change in his attitude, and tell why you think Paul was so willing to give his testimony before the King. Refer to Acts 9.

2. The word *surrender* means "to give up claim, or to yield to another." How do you think this word relates to service for God?

3. There are some important principles established in Scripture concerning the call of God. Read Romans 11:29 and 1 Corinthians 9:16,17, and note what points you find in these verses.

4. Reading verse 16 in our text, we find part of Paul's call was to "witness." What spiritual experience will help us fulfill this part of our call? See Acts 1:8.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

5. When Jesus sent His disciples into the cities, they were told that the conditions they would face might not always be pleasant. They were sent as lambs among wolves. They were to carry no provisions. They were not guaranteed a welcome. Why were they sent? How did things turn out for them? What was their attitude upon their return to Jesus? See Luke 10:1,17 and 22:35.

6. Willing service to God is more an attitude than an obligation. If the question is posed, "Are you willing?" what is your response? If the response is, "If I have to . . ." or "I guess I can . . .," the attitude is saying, "I really don't want to." In today's society we are told not to commit or box ourselves in because life is too short. But this is a trick of the devil to keep us from serving the Lord. Psalm 40:8 contains a key word which reflects a certain attitude that we should maintain as we serve the Lord. Note the word, and describe how you think it applies to our Christian service. Then briefly describe how an opposite attitude might affect our service.

7. The magnitude of needs in the spreading of the Gospel, may sometimes seem almost overwhelming. We need to be aware that our duty is not universal, but rather personal and individual. God does not command us to "Go and do everything," but He marks out a special path for each of us. Once we have committed ourselves fully to Christ and have told Him we are willing to do whatever He gives us to do, how can we know just what that service should be? Proverbs 3:5-6 will give you some direction in noting your answer.

8. In today's society we often find that those in lesser circumstances are in a position of serving those who are more affluent. Matthew 23:11 establishes a Biblical perspective which is somewhat different. In your own words, elaborate on true greatness as brought out in this Scripture.

YOUR WRAP-UP

5. The disciples were sent to introduce Jesus Christ and were told that there was a great harvest of souls to be gained. They were sent to the cities where He would come later. When Jesus questioned some of them afterwards, they said they had lacked nothing in the way of supplies. Upon their return, the disciples were filled with joy, having experienced that even the devils were subject to them through Jesus' name. Bring out in class discussion that without doubt the highest calling and occupation ever to thrill and hold the heart of man is the call of God to the winning of souls. When followed, not only does this unique call contain the greatest of earthly joys, but it also brings the promise of eternal reward.

6. The key word is *delight*. Ask your class for a definition of this word, concluding that it means "to give great joy or pleasure." As your class discusses this, they should be led to see the joy that comes through wholehearted devotion to the Lord. When one is willing to be of service for Him, it is because that one considers it to be a high privilege. If one is serving unwillingly, no doubt the attitude will be grouchy and complaining, and thus will dampen the spirits of those around him. Encourage your students to do their best to show the joy that Jesus gives when the Lord is served willingly for the right purpose.

7. The Scripture in Proverbs shows the necessity of looking to the Lord for direction, rather than trusting our own understanding. In our enthusiasm to do something for the Lord, our efforts could be misdirected and thus unprofitable, unless we are certain they are in accordance with God's plan for us. Ask your class to mention some ways this guidance might come. They will likely bring out that direction may come through sermons or testimonies, through the request of our pastor or person in spiritual authority, through the recognition of a need and accompanying impression that this is an area we should fill, etc.

8. Your students will probably conclude that to be great in God's sight will necessitate our being a willing servant of all, including those that society would deem to be of lesser degree. Jesus gave His followers a perfect example of genuine greatness. He left His Throne in Heaven to descend to a human plane to serve mankind. List some of the humbling circumstances in which He ministered to His followers. Conclude your lesson by bringing out how we, as God's followers, must be willing to serve in any circumstance or situation as the need presents itself.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What does it mean to you to “serve the Lord”?

What are some of the ways in which a person can serve the Lord?

What might hinder a person from being used in the Lord’s service?

When can a person “retire” from serving the Lord?

What did Jesus want Paul to do for Him? What was Paul’s response? Why?

What does *surrender* mean? What must we surrender to God if we want to be born again? What must we surrender to God when we want to be used as Paul was?

Easy or difficult, there is only one right path to take when God has something for us to do. Paul gives a clue in verse 19 of our text. What is it?

In the ANSWER story, what did Jason’s parents say God was calling them to do?

What was Jason’s first response?

How did Jason reach his final answer to his parents?

THINGS TO DO

Tie a string around a dollar bill and take it to class. Give it to one of the students, but don’t let go of the string. No matter how many times you tell him it belongs to him, he will see it is not fully given as long as you hold the other end of the string. Explain that in the same way anything we “give” to God isn’t truly given if we make conditions or leave “strings attached.”

Have two of your students act out the parts of a youth worker and his pastor. The youth worker tells the pastor that he really wants to be used in the Lord’s service, but every time the pastor asks the young man to do a job for the church (janitorial work, pass out fliers, etc.), the young man has an excuse. After the role-play, ask your students how they can show, not just say, they are willing to be used in the Lord’s service.

Hymn Response: Have your class evaluate the words of a hymn of “service.” Example: *Only One Life*, by Merrill Dunlop and Avis B. Christiansen. Possible questions for this song: What does the songwriter want to do with his

heart’s devotion, according to the first verse? According to the second verse, how does the songwriter feel about his time? What does he want to do with his time? In what specific service does the songwriter wish to participate, according to the last part of the second verse?

Illustrate to your students the importance of never saying, “I can’t do anything. I’m of no use.” Show them a horseshoe nail (or at least a very large nail). Read them this famous little saying:


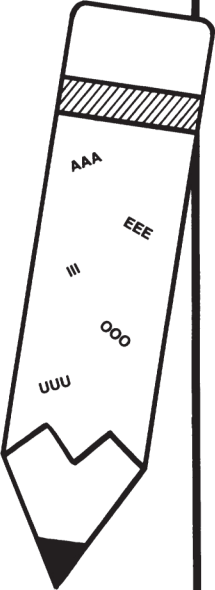
“For the want of a nail the shoe was lost;
For the want of a shoe the horse was lost;
For the want of a horse the rider was lost;
For the want of a rider the battle was lost;
For the want of a battle a kingdom was lost—
And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.”

Talk about how important each person is to God. Ask each of them to decide if they are willing to be a “nail” in Christ’s service? Souls need to be won for God’s Kingdom. We don’t want anyone lost for want of willing service.

Answers for ANSWER

Can Jesus Use Me?

Serving Jesus makes a person feel so good. Are you willing to work for Him? Below are sentences and questions with some letters missing. The sets of vowels that are listed will complete them. Use one set of vowels per sentence or question. What are your answers to the questions?

W <u>Q</u> rk f <u>Q</u> r the L <u>Q</u> rd.
Be w <u>I</u> ll <u>I</u> ng to serve H <u>I</u> m.
S <u>E</u> .rv <u>E</u> J <u>E</u> sus.
Do you c <u>A</u> .re wh <u>A</u> t h <u>A</u> ppens?
Can Jes <u>U</u> s <u>U</u> se yo <u>U</u> ?

Personal Problems

TEXT: Genesis 37:3-36; Psalm 105:16-22; 1 Peter 4:12-19

KEY VERSE: For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. — 2 Corinthians 4:17

Receiving salvation is not a guarantee that the Christian will face no difficulties. In fact, the Apostle Paul exhorted early Christians to continue in the faith, cautioning them that “we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). But for those who remain true to God there is a deliverance and an answer to every troublesome problem. In this lesson we see how the hand of the Lord was over Joseph and moved in his behalf though he faced hard trials and personal difficulties. His story has been an example to Christians through the ages.

RESPONSES

1. Your students’ responses may include the thought that Joseph was the favorite of his father. He had two dreams which he related to his family, causing his brothers to envy him. Their jealousy led to hatred, and a desire to kill Joseph. Although his life was spared, Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers, and then taken to Egypt. Who of us have problems to match these?

2. Romans 12:10 — preferring our brother over ourselves
Romans 12:14 — non-retaliation
Galatians 5:14 — show love
Galatians 6:1 — meekness
Colossians 3:13 — patience, forgiveness
As your class discusses each of these attitudes, ask them to explain why and how these affect our dealings with other people.

3. His response was, “Here am I.” It was notable in that Joseph obeyed without questioning or demurring. As your students discuss this, they should realize that it may have been a difficult thing for Joseph to do, but he did do it! Sometimes human inclinations may not be in accordance with the scriptural way to handle a problem, but to have God’s approval we must conform to the instructions given us in His Word.

1. After reading the Genesis portion of our text, list the problems that were facing Joseph at this time in his life.

2. The problems faced by Joseph seemed to revolve, for the most part, around his relationships with other people—just as the problems facing us often do. The Scriptures give us many guidelines which direct our responses and reactions to others. Look up the following verses and note the attitudes we should maintain toward others to alleviate or minimize differences.

- Romans 12:10
- Romans 12:14
- Galatians 5:14
- Galatians 6:1
- Colossians 3:13

3. What was Joseph’s response when his father asked him to journey to Shechem to inquire after his brothers’ welfare? In view of the fact that his brothers hated and envied him, what was notable about Joseph’s answer and what lesson can we learn from it?

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. In Genesis 37:15, we find Joseph facing a completely different type of problem. Identify his difficulty, and explain how a solution was provided.

5. Verses 19 and 20 reflect the contempt Joseph's brothers felt for him. As Christians today, we must sometimes face contempt for ourselves and for our beliefs. How are we to react to this and what will occur if we follow the admonition given in Scripture? See Matthew 5:11-12 and 1 Peter 2:19-20.

6. God, in His infinite wisdom, may allow trials to come for various reasons. Looking at Psalm 105:16-17, for what reason did Joseph have to go to Egypt?

7. Hebrews 12:11 brings out another reason we may need to go through some times of trial and testing. Identify the reason and explain what benefit it will bring.

8. In 1 Peter 4:19 there is a qualifying phrase which defines to whom this instruction is given. What is the phrase and why is it important?

4. Joseph was lost, "wandering in the field." Help came through a man who found him there. The man knew of the brothers' whereabouts and directed Joseph to Dothan. The point of this question is to establish that God is not limited in the types of problems He can solve, or in the methods He chooses to use. Ask your students to cite examples—either Biblical or from their own knowledge or experience—of when God used unusual ways to provide a solution to a problem. Some Biblical examples might be: Gideon's band with their pitchers, lamps, and trumpets; the increasing of the widow's oil; the earthquake which brought Paul and Silas's release from prison.

5. We are to rejoice and to bear it patiently. If we do so we are promised a great reward in Heaven. Help your students see that God is not unmindful of what we are going through. He, too, suffered false accusation and persecution, yet left us a beautiful example of how to respond to unjust treatment.

6. Joseph was sent by God to be an instrument in saving the Children of Israel. Stress that God delivered Joseph from being killed by his brothers. By getting him safely down to Egypt, he was later in a position to provide for his family when the seven-year famine came. Ask your students at what point in this long chain of events do they feel that Joseph could recognize God's plan. The resulting discussion should bring out that many times we will not see God's plan revealed immediately. We may need to carry on, simply trusting Him to eventually work some good from the situation, even though we cannot see at the moment what that good might be.

7. Trials sometimes come as a form of chastening, but the verse tells us that this will yield "the peaceable fruit of righteousness." Discuss with your class the meaning of this phrase.

8. The qualifying phrase is, "according to the will of God." Discussion of this phrase should focus on the necessity of being sure we are in the will of God when we face a trial. Using 1 John 3:20-21, conclude your class session with the thought that the first step in overcoming our problems is making sure our position is in accordance with God's Word and that we are following His leading. Without that assurance, we have no promise that the trial will result in our gain in any way.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

When a person is saved will there be any more problems? Why?

What are some of the personal problems that might arise in one's life?

How can a personal problem hinder your spiritual growth? How can a personal problem help your spiritual growth?

If you knew someone who was going through a very difficult situation, what are some words of encouragement you could give to that person?

In our ANSWER story, Mandy refused to pass a note for Cranston. If she had, she might have saved herself a lot of trouble. Was her decision a good one or not?

What do you think about doing someone a favor such as Mandy was asked to do? What about going to a party where others will be doing questionable things, even though you don't do any of the wrong things yourself?

When Mandy was living what she believed, why do you suppose God allowed her to go through so many difficult situations? Why didn't He stop Cranston's tormenting her?

THINGS TO DO

Make a list of hypothetical situations the students might face that will test their Christian walk. Write these on pieces of paper and pass them out to the students. Have the students read them aloud, one by one. Encourage them to suggest ways these problems could be handled in a Christian manner.

Show your class some magazine or newspaper articles revealing behaviors that show people's personal problems. Discuss how the Lord could help in these personal problems if given a chance. Even Christians have problems but the Lord is there to deliver them no matter what the problem is.

Bring to class a "quick cure" or "get rich quick" advertisement. After showing the advertisement to your class, explain that some people expect the Gospel to be a "quick cure" for all their problems or a way to obtain temporal

success. What does your class think about these views of the Gospel?

Divide your class into three groups (or any appropriate number). Have each group list some of the problems that arise in people's lives:

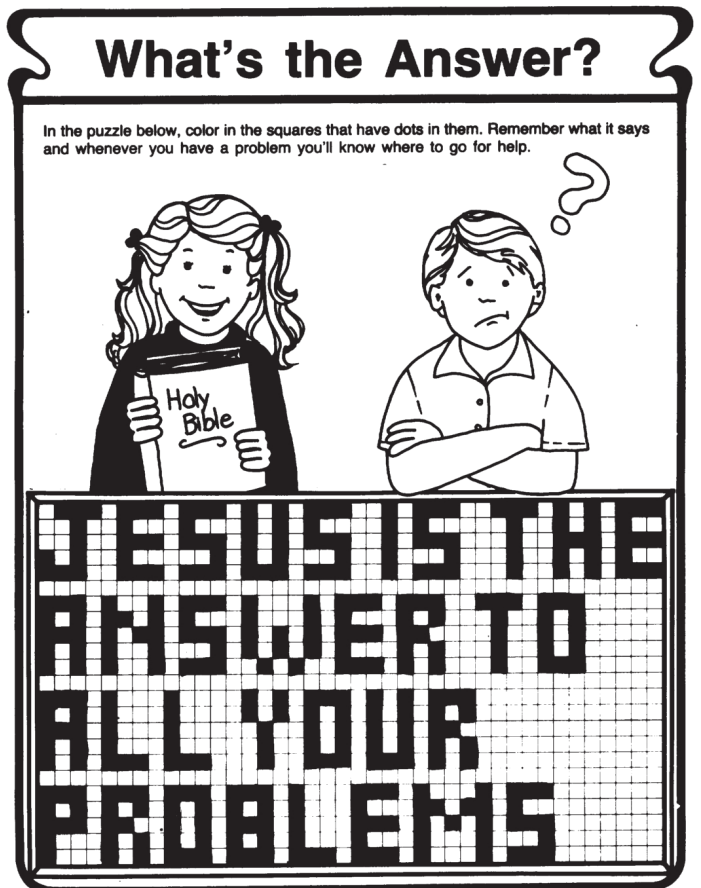
GROUP ONE: What are some of the minor problems that arise in one's life?

GROUP TWO: What are some of the major problems that might arise in a person's life?

GROUP THREE: List several catastrophes that might occur in a person's life.

After the students have had several minutes to write down their thoughts, have each group share their list with the class. Ask your students which of the listed problems definitely will not occur in a Christian's life.

Answers for ANSWER



TEXT 1 Kings 18:17-46

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Daniel 3:8-30; 1 Peter 2:19-21

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain that God can give them the ability to keep their composure and react in a manner directed by the Lord, even in circumstances which bring great stress.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. — Psalm 46:1

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. — Psalm 91:2

ANSWER

TITLE:

Answer to Stress

SEARCH

TITLE:

Reaction to Stress

REFERENCE INFORMATION

The story of Elijah begins at 1 Kings 17:1, a dramatic entrance on the pages of Biblical history where he confronts the wicked King Ahab with a prophecy of drought. From that time on, there is hardly a recorded event in Elijah’s life that wasn’t stressful. He flees Ahab and hides out by the brook Cherith where God directed him and promised to provide for him. When the brook dries up, he goes to Zarephath where God said a widow would provide for him. There he finds her supplies reduced to a handful of meal and a little oil. On Mt. Carmel, Elijah challenges the prophets of Baal to prove the true God.

Praying for rain that the drought might be ended, Elijah’s faith in God is sure.

In all these occasions and more, Elijah himself is tested by God and passes the tests, proving to the generations following, that there is no circumstance or stress in our lives for which God will not provide a way of escape, just as He did time and again for Elijah. The final deliverance was by a chariot of fire when he was taken by a whirlwind up into Heaven.

YOUR OPENER

Reaction to Stress

TEXT: 1 Kings 18:17-46

KEY VERSE: I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

— Psalm 91:2

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Daniel 3:8-30; 1 Peter 2:19-21

RESPONSES

1. Elijah had to face King Ahab to tell him the rain was being stopped; he had to hide himself; his own source of water dried up; the child of the woman who befriended him died; for a second time he faced King Ahab; and then he defied all the false prophets of the land. Discuss these situations with the class and ask if any have had times in their lives that were as trying as those of Elijah. Emphasize that he met each of these stressful situations by obeying and waiting for God to answer. God answered every time. He will not fail us today. He will take us through each trial if we trust Him as Elijah did.

2. God said He would send rain upon the earth. Elijah went to the top of Mt. Carmel and prayed seven times. After the seventh time, there was a cloud "like a man's hand," and then there was a great rain. Ask your class to discuss the effect that waiting has on one during a stressful situation. How do you suppose Elijah felt when he prayed again and again and yet saw no sign of an answer until the seventh time? Your class should conclude that, though the stress may be greater when we have to wait, continued prayer will bring the answer in God's perfect time.

3. Answers may include courage, faith in God, and determination. These attributes are tested in a stressful situation. In the face of the stressful situation the three Hebrew children were confronted with, they believed that God would deliver them from the fiery furnace. But they determined they would not bow down and worship the image even if God did not save their lives. Later, Daniel had the same purpose when he was thrown into the lions' den. In both cases, God answered miraculously. God has promised to give grace for each trial, that we may be able to bear it.

4. Jesus did not fight back or threaten revenge, but followed His own teaching from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:39). What He suffered was even more painful than our fiery trials.

Were the heroes of faith in the Bible any different from the present-day child of God? Scripture tells us in James 5:17 that Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are. He was an example of how a Christian, even today, can react in times of stress and pressure.

1. As we read the story of Elijah, what are some of the stressful situations in which he found himself? How did he handle each of them? Particularly note 1 Kings 17:1,3,7,17; 18:17-24.

2. What did God promise Elijah when he faced Ahab after the 3-1/2 years of drought (1 Kings 18:1)? What did Elijah do when this didn't happen immediately?

3. What attributes were shown by the three Hebrew children when they refused to obey the king's edict to bow down to his idol? See Daniel 3:16-18.

4. What did Jesus do when He was falsely accused and reviled for doing good? Since He was the Son of God, do you feel the stress and pressure He went through was any less serious than what we may feel? See Hebrews 4:15 and 1 Peter 2:21-23.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

5. How do most people react when they are reprovved for something and realize they may have deserved it? How do most people react if they are accused of something of which they are completely innocent? Justified or unjustified, reproof can cause stress. In what way should a Christian react to stress? See 1 Peter 2:18,20.

6. What are some of the situations that may arise in our present-day society that can induce stress and tension in one's life?

7. What are some ways people have tried to combat stress in their lives, as compared with what a Christian can do?

8. What does the Bible instruct us to do when the cares, anxieties, and pressures of life come upon us? See Matthew 6:25; Philippians 4:6-7 and 1 Peter 5:7.

9. What kind of Christian witness are we displaying when we meet the crises and tests of life as God would have us meet them?

10. The outcome of giving in to stress can be physical distress and in some cases a total breakdown. According to Philippians 4:7,8, there is something we can do to counteract the pressures and stresses of this life. List several stressful-type situations that might come to us and, using this Scripture, explain what you could do to lessen the stress.

5. Have your students share their answers. Show that God is able to give us patience to take criticism, even if it is completely unjustified. Peter said that as Christians we should follow Christ's steps, and God will bless us as we do.

6. Discuss with the class the different answers received. Some may seem of a minor nature, such as rush-hour traffic or a long supermarket line, but these can be very real if there is a time deadline awaiting you. With the student, it may be an important test in a hard subject. With a child it may be difficulties in the home between the parents or siblings. With the parents it may be the threat of unemployment or other financial problems. Explain that many stressful situations can be avoided, but that which is unavoidable can be taken to the Lord in prayer.

7. Some use depressants, sedatives, tranquilizers or stimulants; others go to psychiatrists; a few take their own lives. A Christian has the privilege of going to the Lord, of fixing his mind on the Lord and finding in Him peace and tranquility. See Isaiah 26:3. Discuss how the Christian's method is far superior. See next question.

8. The Bible tells us plainly that we need not let these things overcome us, but that we can take all our anxieties to the Lord. As we trust Him, He will give us victory over all of our cares. See Hebrews 4:16.

9. Ask the students for their impression of a Christian who goes through the hard places without losing his patience or composure. Explain that they can react to similar situations in the same way if they look to the Lord for His strength in their lives. The class should conclude that this kind of witness is one who will attract others to Christianity.

10. You may want to read this Scripture aloud to your class and then ask for some of your students' answers. Your discussion should conclude that God has promised that His peace will keep their hearts and minds as they look to Him and think on those things which are uplifting. God's promised peace is the exact opposite of worry and anxiety.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

How many false prophets did Elijah have to face on Mount Carmel? What was the purpose of that confrontation?

Can we be prepared in advance for stressful situations? If so, how?

How would you define stress?

How can stress affect you?

Stress is very much a part of the modern world. How do you feel a person should cope with it?

What are some avenues that the world uses to try to relieve stress? Psychiatry, alcohol, tobacco, tranquilizers, drugs. Are any of these solutions, or do they compound the problems?

In the ANSWER story, what were Jim's two secrets for handling stress?

Can you think of situations you sometimes face where Jim's first secret would help you? Is there any situation where the second one wouldn't help? Explain.

THINGS TO DO

Present to your students some names from the Bible where godly persons were calm in stressful situations. Some examples might be: Daniel, the three Hebrew children, Paul and Silas, and Elisha. Have students volunteer what the situation was. This could be followed with a list of ungodly persons and how they responded to stressful situations.

On strips of paper, write down some of the main events from the text of this lesson. Mix up the pieces of paper and have the students put them in the correct sequence.


List some situations that could cause stress. Have the students give ways to handle the situations from the world's and also from the Christian's point of view. Give examples of things that cause stress. You may use the following list, or compose your own, using suggestions from students. After reading each situation, discuss how a person might ordinarily react and how the Lord can help one to respond in the right way.

1. Someone knocks books out of your arms as you go down the hall at school.
 2. Your teacher gives you an unfair grade on a paper you turned in.
 3. Someone very close to you is lying at the point of death.
 4. When you pick up your paycheck, your boss tells you not to come to work the next day.
 5. Your "friends" are making fun of you because you won't attend a party where drugs will be used.
 6. Kids in the lunchroom make fun of you because you prayed over your lunch.
 7. A very close friend or relative is having spiritual trouble and you know you must reach out to them.
- Another way this could be done is with role playing, revealing the non-Christian reaction to these situations. Then discuss how to handle the situations as a Christian, using God's Word as your reference.

Answers for ANSWER


Keep Your Cool!

In your Bible, find the promises listed below. Read them and write the word from each verse that will fit into the puzzle. Each word is something God has promised to give you.



A Christian stays
PEACE
JOY
COMFORT
DELIVER
in the heat!

PROMISES
C — Psalm 29:11
O — Isaiah 51:11
O — Isaiah 66:13
L — Psalm 91:15



TEXT Luke 19:12-28

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE 1 Chronicles 29:1-17

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain how God expects those who claim to be His followers to utilize the resources and abilities He has given them for His service.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER Keep that which is committed to thy trust. — 1 Timothy 6:20

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. — 1 Peter 4:10

ANSWER

TITLE:

SEARCH

TITLE:

Used of God

Being a Faithful Steward

REFERENCE INFORMATION

The word *steward* is a translation of the Greek word *oikonomos*, meaning “a house manager.” Great confidence was placed in these officials to whom was often entrusted the entire management of princely households. Paul describes Christian ministers as the stewards of God over His church (Titus 1:7). Believers are also said to be stewards of God, of God’s gifts and graces, as in our key verse, 1 Peter 4:10.

Our text deals with the relationships between “a certain nobleman [who] went into a far country to receive

for himself a kingdom, and to return” (an obvious reference to Christ), and his “servants.” The word translated *servant* is the Greek word *doulos* which means “slave” or “bondman,” but can also mean “servant of a king.” In following Christ, we have become willing slaves or bondmen of our Lord and Savior, and have given ourselves up wholly to His will and dominion. In so doing, Christ, in turn, has made us “stewards of the manifold grace of God.” To be a good steward we must manage carefully and faithfully those gifts and graces (talents) which have been given to us.

YOUR OPENER

Being a Faithful Steward

TEXT: Luke 19:12-28

KEY VERSE: As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. — 1 Peter 4:10

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE: 1 Chronicles 29:1-17

RESPONSES

1. The nobleman is representative of Jesus Christ. The nobleman went away to receive a kingdom, and then returned. Christ, after His resurrection, ascended to His Throne at the right hand of the Father, and we are now awaiting His second coming. See Acts 1:11.

2. The servants represent Christians. In following Christ, they have become willing slaves or bondmen of their Lord and Savior. They have given themselves up wholly to His will and dominion. As His disciples they are, in fact, His servants.

3. Unlike the parable given in Matthew, each one of these servants was given an equal amount of money—one pound. While our gifts or talents from the Lord may vary according to our abilities, we all have been given at least “one pound,” one gift or talent, which we can use for Christ. Note verse 7 of 1 Corinthians 12 which says that the “manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man.” This is an opportunity to discuss with the students that God has given different gifts to different ones in the Body of Christ. Some of the gifts mentioned are as follows: governments (administration); words of wisdom (counseling); helps (helping people); words of knowledge (teaching); gifts of healing (working of miracles); prophecy (interpretation of the Word—preaching); discernment of spirits (different kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues). To these, looking at the whole of Scripture, we could add intercessory prayer, testimony, musical ability, and others.

Jesus told the parable about the nobleman who was to go away, become a king, and return. This was one of Jesus’ last teachings to His disciples, taking place just before His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and less than a week before His crucifixion. Christ’s purpose was to educate His disciples regarding His departure to Heaven, their responsibility to carry on His work after He went away, and His eventual return. Our study will concentrate on our responsibility as Christ’s disciples to be faithful in using what He has given us for His service.

1. The word *nobleman* means “person of noble blood, usually princely.” Give evidence as to whom you think the nobleman represents in this parable. See Hebrews 12:2.

2. The word *servant* is translated from the Greek word *doulos* which can mean “slave, bondman, or servant of a king.” In the New Testament epistles, *doulos* often denotes “one who gives himself up wholly to another’s will, or dominion.” With these facts in mind, identify whom the servants in this parable represent.

3. The nobleman had ten servants. Each servant was given one pound. List the various gifts or talents which you think the pounds might represent. Refer to 1 Corinthians 12:4-11,28.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. Paraphrase the nobleman's statement to his ten servants, "Occupy till I come."

5. Who are the citizens referred to in verses 14 and 27 of our lesson? How would you support this conclusion?

6. Verse 15 tells us that having received his kingdom and returned, the nobleman called his servants to determine how much each man had gained by trading. Describe some of the "gains" one can experience in working for the Lord.

7. Verses 20-26 deal with the other servant and his great error. Identify this error and interpret its meaning.

8. The nobleman, in verse 17, pronounced the servant whose pound had gained ten pounds as "faithful." Consider and note several actions which we could take to ensure a reward in eternity as a faithful steward of Jesus Christ.

YOUR WRAP-UP

4. Give your students an opportunity to give their answers. You might then explain that in the original Greek, the word *occupy* means to "carry on a business," often specifically, "to carry on the business of a banker or trader." A prospering business increases its assets and strives to engage a clientele of regular customers. Just so, the Christian is engaged in promoting Christianity. One marginal New Testament reading of this Scripture is, "Use this till I come." The students should understand that they must "take action" with whatever talent they have been given.

5. Your students will likely respond by saying that these "citizens" represent those who reject Christ. Verses 14 and 27 obviously refer to a group of people other than the nobleman's ten servants. You may wish to elaborate on this answer by bringing out that since Christ's own citizenry were Jews, the reference first of all was to the Jews who rejected Christ as their Messiah. Because all have sinned, the whole world participated in Christ's death in that He died for all. Thus those who accept Him become Jews by faith, and those who reject Him take their part with the Jews who earlier rejected their Messiah. See Romans 11:13-24.

6. Your students' answers might include such things as power in prayer, testimony, and musical ability. Discuss each answer. Using the "pound" of intercessory prayer, they can witness conversions of the unsaved for whom they have earnestly prayed. They may never see some of these people as their prayers might have been specifically answered in another part of the world. As surely as they engage their prayer pound in intercession for lost souls, just so surely God will multiply that pound for eternity. Our testimony is another pound which must be used for the Lord—every Christian has a testimony. The students should realize that God has given some the responsibility to help people, others the gift of administration, others a musical talent. Whatever their calling, they will endeavor to develop it so as to give their best to the Lord. The point should be made that as they do this they will gain as well as others.

7. This servant laid up his pound in a napkin. He failed to use it. We find that the nobleman confiscated that pound upon his return. This left the servant with nothing but the nobleman's displeasure. The students should be impressed with God's "rule" for His gifts to us: Use Them or Lose Them!

8. Your students' responses to this question can be developed to bring out the importance of faithfulness. Wrap up the lesson by emphasizing once more that God expects those who claim to be His followers to utilize the resources and abilities He has given them for His service.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What is a steward of the Lord?

Considering yourself a steward (or follower) of the Lord, what would you say God expects of you?

What is the reward if you are found faithful in your stewardship?

In reading the text, how did the first two servants differ from the other one?

Do you feel it is equally important for us today, to use what God has given us, as it was for the servants in our lesson? Why?

Do you believe this lesson applies to the way we work in school or on the job?

Why was Julie, in the ANSWER story, not able to go to the young people's concert?

The Lord used Julie even when she had to stay home because of illness. What did this prove to her?

THINGS TO DO

Compute with the class a lifetime of cumulative interest at 10% on \$20.00, assuming the lifetime to be 70 years. If you have the right calculator, you will easily arrive at the total principal plus interest after 70 years as \$1,047,856 plus; subtract \$20.00 to get the interest! Liken the interest shown here to the gains which we can achieve by devoting a lifetime to the service of God.

Invite a missionary to visit your class (a worker who visits nursing homes, the ships, people on the streets, etc.). Ask him to explain the great joy there is in contacting people with the Gospel.

Show your students articles that have been started but not completed: embroidery or other needlework, model airplane/car, painting, etc. Explain to them that God tells us in His Word to go on to perfection. This means to complete the work He has called us to do. When we let our interest lag, we look, in God's sight, like this incomplete work, an incomplete person. The Lord doesn't want us to be quitters so He urges us to be "stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." We can be encouraged by this reminder: "that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Discuss with your students the fact that every Christian should be faithful in the job they do for the Lord. Show them a clock or watch, with hands (not digital), and tell them that when you look at this clock or watch you can

see the hands. They are important because they show you what time it is. The small parts that are inside don't show, but are just as important. Without them the hands couldn't do their job. Perhaps you are a "spring" in God's work. Your job may be small and unnoticed but you are important. If you aren't doing your part, others will notice and the work for God will be slowed down or may even stop. Remember, no matter what job you may have, it is very important that you do it well. Then others will see Jesus through you.

Using a chalkboard or a magic marker board, have students help you list some of the resources and abilities that God has given us. Next to each word write some way these can be used for God. For example:

HANDS — Bake cookies for visiting seamen.
Write letters to missionaries.
Clean house for a sick person.

MOUTH — Read Bible to an elderly person.
Tell of Jesus' love.


ARTISTIC — Help put up teachers' bulletin boards.
Help decorate for church dinners.

MUSICAL — Sing for Jesus.
Play an instrument in church.


Answers for ANSWER

Using What He Gave Me


If we are going to be good helpers for Jesus we must use what He has given us. He has given us the ability to do all the things listed below plus many more. Match each of the actions with the Scripture that tells about it. The first is done for you.




Read Bible Often




Resist the Devil




Sing Praise to God




Tell Others About Jesus




Pray Every Day




Learn the Scriptures




Do Good Deeds



Go to Church



Seek Wisdom of God



Love the Lord Very Much

James 4:7
Ephesians 5:19
Proverbs 3:13
I Timothy 4:13
Acts 22:15
Luke 18:1
Psalm 34:14
II Timothy 2:15
Hebrews 10:25
Matthew 22:37

TEXT Philippians 3:7-15

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain that Christians must exercise restraint or discipline over their behavior, bringing their thoughts and actions into conformity with the Word of God.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. — Romans 6:12

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls. — Proverbs 25:28

ANSWER

TITLE:

Win the Race!

SEARCH

TITLE:

Self-Discipline

REFERENCE INFORMATION

Self-discipline means “training of oneself or bringing oneself under control or into conformity.” In a spiritual sense, it would mean teaching oneself to obey God’s Word, and bringing all thoughts and actions into conformity with God’s rules of conduct for a Christian.

Men will discipline their bodies, driving themselves to the extreme in order to accomplish some goal. For ex-

ample, some years ago a group of men determined to climb Mt. Everest, which has an altitude of 29,000 feet. In preparation for this rigorous endeavor, they climbed and lived for a time at an altitude of 27,000 feet. They said that dozens of others could do the same “if only they liked.” In the spiritual realm, how many have the purpose and determination to discipline themselves in order to attain Christlikeness?

YOUR OPENER

Self-Discipline

TEXT: Philippians 3:7-15

KEY VERSE: He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls. — Proverbs 25:28

Without a willingness to discipline oneself, and bring thoughts and actions into conformity with the Word of God, one cannot be a disciple of Jesus. Self-discipline, then, must be practiced not only by ministers and missionaries, but by everyone who desires to make Heaven his home. This means more than just forsaking sin and sinful pleasures. It includes a willingness to develop oneself spiritually and to make sacrifices for the Lord and His work.

1. Just as the physical heart is endangered by excessive fat from overeating, so is the spiritual life en-dangered by overindulgence in the affairs of this life. Explain how this could happen. See Luke 21:34.

2. How do the goals of Christians differ from those of non-Christians? What verse in our text indicates that Paul had realized this?

3. Referring to question 2, how do the means of reaching these goals differ? How are they alike?

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

RESPONSES

1. In discussing this, the students should conclude that one must not only resist sinful pleasure, but must continually guard against being engrossed in the cares of life so that the Lord's coming will not come upon him unawares. If one's time and money are taken up with accumulating the things of this life and the heart becomes set on these things, the cross of Christ is abandoned.

2. You might wish to open the discussion of these questions by asking your class to identify some of the goals of non-Christians versus Christians. The student should see that men's approval and earthly fame are not the goals of a Christian. His aim is to please God who has called him with a holy calling. Paul indicated this in verse 7 where he brings out that the things which at one time were important to him, he now "counted loss for Christ."

3. Many earthly goals are reached by carnal means; heavenly goals are attained by spiritual means. They are alike in that both require a commitment toward achieving the goal on the part of each individual. Earthly goals can cause the loss of the soul; heavenly goals can mean the salvation of the soul. However, an individual cannot reach the heavenly goal by adopting just any means, but must follow the guidelines of the Word of God.

4. Why did Paul say, “forgetting those things which are behind”? What do you think this has to do with self-discipline?

5. In the first half of verse 15, Paul directs his words to “as many as be perfect.” He writes, “Let us therefore . . .” (referring back to verse 3). Who were these people with whom he included himself? See 1 Corinthians 2:6 and 2 Timothy 2:5.

6. What assurance does Paul give to the Christian that God will be faithful to each individual and will help him align his life to the will of God?

7. In your own words, describe the condition of an individual who allows himself to yield to every whim and fancy. Use Ephesians 4:14 as a reference.

8. Self-discipline is a necessity if one is to succeed in attaining any kind of goal. Give your definition of self-discipline and then cite some examples showing why it is vital for spiritual success.

4. As your class discusses these questions they should see that Paul did not presume to have reached the goal in his Christian race, but he had his face set as a flint Zionward. He was not dwelling on previous successes or failures, but disciplining himself to continue to seek the things of Christ. If a person is absorbed too much with the things of the past, he will be hindered in his progression toward the future.

5. Encourage your class to give their explanations. In the original Greek, the word *perfect* as used in this verse, means “to be spiritually adult, full-grown.” Paul was speaking to those who were fully established in the things of God (1 Corinthians 2:6), those who knew and were complying with the laws of the “course” (2 Timothy 2:5). They were fully fit for running the race. Help your students to recognize that all those who want to be mature Christians must bring their lives into conformity with God’s Word in every phase of their spiritual walk.

6. Verse 15 continues by stating “if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.” God is faithful to all those who are willing to follow Him. He will help them to have a spiritual mind, and to accept His instruction so that they can, indeed, mature spiritually.

7. Help your students to conclude that without focus, direction and control being exercised, a person is considered a child, and he opens himself to every wind of doctrine or pressure of doubt and discouragement. You might wish to use the illustration of sailing a boat—when the sails are set correctly, the winds that blow can be mastered and used to advantage. If, on the other hand, the sails are put up without any particular regard as to how they are raised, the winds may well cause the boat to capsize.

8. Allow time for your students to zero in on specifics. Some examples to get the discussion started: In order to be a successful Sunday school teacher, one would need to discipline himself to study, prepare, and be there. In order to be a member of the orchestra, self-discipline would be required to practice regularly, and to attend rehearsal sessions. Self-discipline requires the exertion of effort. While Christians look to the Lord for help, and pray earnestly to be effective in whatever the Lord has called them to do, they must also put forth some effort in the form of self-discipline to succeed in reaching their goals.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What are some things God expects us to do for ourselves?

Some people say they cannot help themselves, so that is why they give in to temptations. Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?

How does God deal with individuals when they lack self-discipline?

What is a testimony?

Are things that are legal always right to do? Why or why not?

What is the relationship between self-restraint and total commitment to God?

What comparisons can you make between the discipline of athletes, as described in the ANSWER story, and the discipline in the life of a devoted Christian?

Why is self-denial important to a Christian as well as an athlete?

THINGS TO DO

Give each student an envelope with several questions written on it. Inside each envelope place a surprise that they are not to have until the questions are all answered. When the questions on the envelope have been answered, they may see what the prize is. Talk about how this is an example of self-discipline.

Bring a copy of some laws (such as a driver education book). Talk about laws and why they are made. Why do we need to set up personal laws to live by?

Bring a toothbrush, face cloth, and a bar of soap. Make an object lesson on how we must discipline ourselves to use those things for our own well-being. Just as every

morning we must brush our teeth and wash our face, we must also read and pray. These things we learn to do for ourselves and must do them even though sometimes we don't feel like it.


Bring a bag of cookies or other treats and ask the students what would happen if they did not restrain themselves but ate all the treats. Make a parallel with our spiritual life—if we don't discipline our actions we soon become spiritually "sick."

Answers for ANSWER

Take Control!

Have you ever visited a ghost town? That's about all it's good for . . . visiting, looking it over and seeing what was and what could have been. The verse below compares a city to a person's spirit. Use the code to fill in the verse. If you don't want a "ghost town spirit" you had better have some self-control!

C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
O	◇	●	⊙	♥	■	▣	#	↖	☎	√	**	★	×
D	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
E	☐		↔	⊗	▲	○	□	☆	⊠	⊡	⊢	⊣	◆



H E T H A T H A T H N O
 ↖ ■ □ ↗ ◇ □ ↗ ◇ □ ↗ ☐ ||

R U L E O V E R H I S O W N
 ▲ ♥ ★ ■ || ☆ ■ ▲ ↖ ☎ ○ || ⊠ ☐

S P I R I T I S L I K E A
 ○ ↔ ☎ ▲ ☎ □ ☎ ○ ★ ☎ ** ■ ◇

C I T Y T H A T I S B R O K E N
 ☎ ☐ ☐ ☐ □ ↗ ◇ □ ☎ ○ ● ▲ || ** ■ ☐

D O W N P R O V E R B S 25:28
 ♥ || ⊠ ☐ ↔ ▲ || ☆ ■ ▲ ● ○

Looking at the Outcome

TEXT: Colossians 3:17-25; Romans 14:21; 1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:31; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 6:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; James 4:15

KEY VERSE: And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the LORD: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers. — Deuteronomy 6:18

Every day of our lives should be lived in the center of God’s will. Measuring our daily actions by the Word of God will show us whether we are drawing closer to God or moving farther away. If we daily ask God to show us His will, and then follow His will, we can be sure of God’s blessing, and that He will be honored by the outcome of our lives.

1. According to our text in Colossians 3:17,23, what is supposed to be the motivating factor in a Christian’s life? In what manner is this to be accomplished?

2. Any act on our part that would cause a brother to stumble spiritually or to become offended is not good. See Romans 14:21. Scripture indicates that an opposite course of action is the responsibility of the Christian, and that conduct of this kind will bring about the outcome desired by God. What is this opposite course of action? See Romans 14:19.

3. In 1 Corinthians 6:12, we read the phrase, “All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient.” The word *expedient* means “useful, or helpful to attain some end.” In light of this definition, how does the phrase apply to a Christian’s life?

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RESPONSES

1. We are to do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him. Ask your students how much good for the Lord can be accomplished by our own strength. Let this discussion lead to the conclusion that if we want to work for Christ, we must secure His help and strength. This text directs us to base our words and deeds on the Name of Jesus. When we are conscious of Christ in all we say and do, then the outcome of our living will be right. The admonition is also given that our work should be accomplished heartily. Help the students understand that this means to do our service with enthusiasm and not with the attitude of, “I have to do it.”

2. Christians are to follow after the things which make for peace, and endeavor to edify one another. Discuss with your class the benefits that come both to the giver and receiver of actions of this type.

3. Discuss with your class that there may be many things that are not sinful as such, but they are not useful or helpful in pleasing God or in getting ready for Heaven. We must also consider how our actions will affect others. As Christians, we want to do the things that produce the best spiritual outcome.

4. Encourage the students to give their answers, which might include marrying an unbeliever, business partnerships with non-Christians, participating in professional sports or other activities that are not expedient. We do not win the world by joining forces with the world, but we win souls by living a godly life separated from the sins and attitudes of worldly people. If we keep ourselves pure in our thoughts and holy in our living, separating ourselves from the influence of unbelievers as much as possible, then our lives and testimony will have an influence upon the ungodly to help them realize the reality of Christ’s redeeming grace.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. Name some ways one might be “unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (2 Corinthians 6:14). What would be the likely adverse outcome of a Christian’s putting himself into such a situation?

5. After reading 1 Thessalonians 5:22, explain what a Christian should do about evil. Name several ways this can be accomplished.

6. The Bible says, “Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Romans 12:9). Make a list of things that are evil which a Christian encounters almost daily. How should we go about avoiding the evils that have been listed?

7. In your own words explain how James tells us to plan for tomorrow (James 4:15). Why is this important?

8. Knowing that 2 Corinthians 5:10 is true, why is it so important to look at the outcome of our daily living?

5. A Christian should abstain from all appearance of evil. The answers the students give may include staying away from places of sinful amusement, choosing friends from among those who are morally upright and not from among those who are conspicuously sinners, always telling the truth and not being guilty of speaking half-truths, and being sure that all business dealings are lawful and above reproach. This is an important question and should elicit student participation. For the Christian to refrain from even the appearance of evil is of special significance to the world, for the world usually looks upon the actions of Christians, not their intentions.

6. Your students may list such things as cursing and swearing, cheating, being disobedient to parents, lying, stealing, and taking the Lord’s Name in vain. The answers to the second part of the question should bring out the need of being saved, being a new creature in Christ Jesus. Other answers will probably include the thoughts of being careful where one goes, careful of what one looks at, careful of what one reads, and careful to avoid evil company. Discuss with the class that most of our actions will either bring us closer to God or move us away from Him. To obtain the desired outcome, we should plan our actions so they will bring us closer to God.

7. “If the Lord will.” This is important because we do not have a guarantee of tomorrow. God holds the time of each life in His hands, and ordinarily He does not reveal the extent of that life to the individual. Discuss with the class how necessary it is that the Christian plan his life to be in the center of God’s will. The Apostle gives us the key: “If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.” If a person determines to do something against the Lord’s will, the outcome will be disastrous, probably in this life and surely in eternity. How much better to plan our lives according to God’s Word and His will as He shows it. In that way we will have the best in this present life and the final outcome will be eternal life with Jesus.

8. It is important because the actions of our daily lives either draw us closer to God or cause us to move away from Him. This is a good question with which to sum up the lesson. Draw the students into a discussion as to the consequences of living only for oneself. Contrast this, then, with living daily for Christ and eternity. Some may excuse their actions with the thought that living to please only themselves can, in time, be repented of and forgiven. This is true—if the time God has allowed them doesn’t run out. And if they do repent, just think of all that time that is lost to them. How much better to be thoughtful of the outcome of each day’s living, being guided by Christian thought, principle, and determination. The “Well done, good and faithful servant” will be heard by those who have been faithful in their everyday living. Jesus said, “Thou hast been faithful over few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Matthew 25:23).

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

Do your friends have an effect on whether you move toward or away from God? How?

Can our conscience help us determine if our activities aid or hinder us spiritually? If so, how might we know our conscience is trying to warn us?

In our ANSWER story, what did Stephanie want Jill to do? How do you think Jill's spiritual life would have been affected if she had followed Stephanie's suggestion?

What importance did King David put on learning from the Word of God as stated in the ANSWER key verse? (Do you know the key verse or do you have to check again to see what it is?)

What Scripture helps us to know that a Christian should be willing to give up anything he is doing if that thing would be a stumbling block to others?

On what occasions might it be good to ask yourself if a specific thing would honor or glorify God?

THINGS TO DO

Give each student a copy of a drawing of the face of a clock (large enough so that students can write in the space between the hours), or provide paper and pencils so students may draw their own clock. Ask the students to fill in the main thing they did each hour of the previous day. Allow about five minutes for this, then ask them to review their day. How could they have done better? What are they glad they did? Did they remember to pray? read the Bible? Would they like an opportunity, were it possible, to do some things differently? Bring out that it might be possible to have done some things they wouldn't want to fill in if they knew someone else would read it.

Strike a match and let it burn a bit. Blow it out. Emphasize to your students that the match could have been used to light a candle, a stove, a campfire, etc. But, instead it did no good and is now useless. Stress the point that once a day is over, you can't go back and change anything you have done. Being sorry or wishing things had been different doesn't change a thing. Be careful

with each day of your life. Draw close to God and ask Him, every morning, to help you make that day count for Him—a day which, in retrospect, you will have no regrets for the way you lived.

Make a list on a chalkboard containing all the lesson titles from this quarter. Write the key verses on slips of paper. Put them in a sack and mix them up. Have the students draw a slip of paper from the sack and tell you which lesson the verse matches. If they don't know, or answer incorrectly, put the slip back into the bag for someone else to draw until all slips have been matched to lesson titles. As you go through each verse, you can ask the students to sum up the importance of each lesson and how it can draw each of us closer to God.

Answers for ANSWER

Our Daily Guide

We must take care to do what is right. The things we do every day will keep us close to God or move us away from Him. The sentences below are from the Bible text. Fill in the missing words. Use this as a guide in your daily life.

MY GUIDE

1. Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.
2. Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands.
3. Husbands love your wives.
4. Children obey your parents.
5. Fathers provoke not your children to anger.
6. Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord.
7. Of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance.
8. He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done.

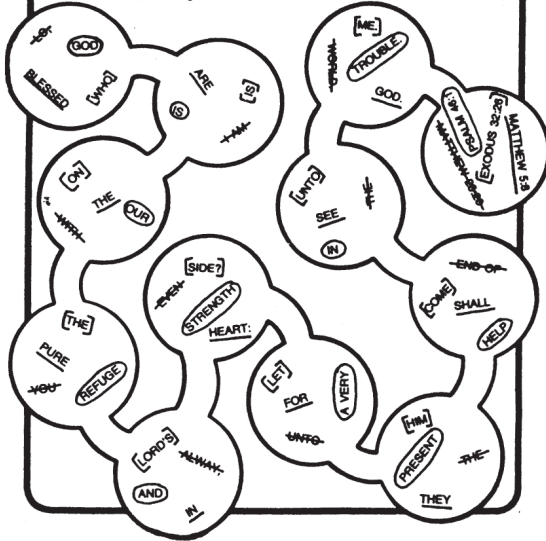


Answers for Extra Activity Pages in *The Answer*

Activity Page 41

Do You Remember?

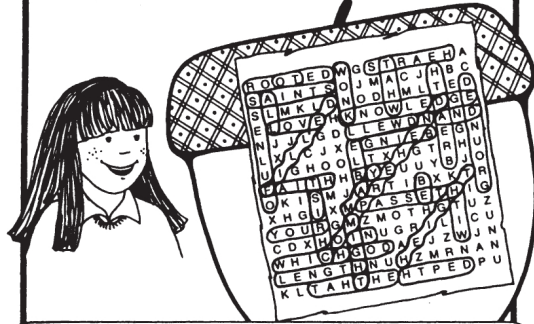
Below are the four shortest key verses we had this quarter. The first word of each verse is in the first circle. One word is circled, one underlined, one in parentheses, and one has a line through it. As you follow the verses through the maze, keep the same markings for each verse. Example: if the first word is circled then every word in that verse should be circled, including the text at the end of the verse. Have fun!



Activity Page 42

In A Nutshell

Ephesians 3:17-19 is Christian maturity in a nutshell. These verses tell what it means to be a mature Christian. The wordfind below has all the words from these verses. The words that are repeated in the Scripture are not repeated in the puzzle. For example: The word THAT is found three times in the verses but only one time in the puzzle. Copy the Scripture from the Bible on the lines below, then find each word in the puzzle. These would be good verses for you, your classmates and teacher to discuss.

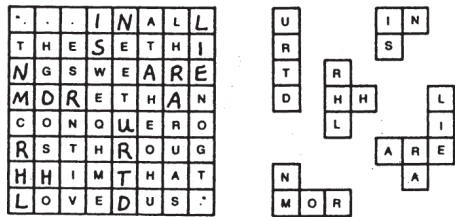


That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Activity Page 43

Real Winners!

The verse below tells us what Paul said about being a winner. To solve the puzzle, decide where each shape fits and write in the missing letters. Then write the letters in the order given on the lines below the puzzle.



Paul said "...IN ALL THESE THINGS WE ARE MORE THAN CONQUERORS THROUGH HIM THAT LOVED US."

Here are some questions for you. You'll need a dictionary for one of them. Ask your teacher for help, if you need it.

Who is "him" in the verse? _____

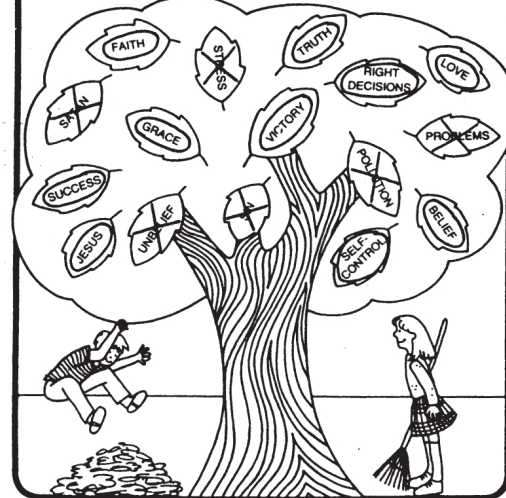
What does "conqueror" mean? _____

Are you a conqueror? _____

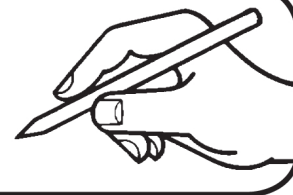
Activity Page 44

Green and Growing

When this summer is over and fall peeks through the door, leaves are going to start falling from the trees. This "Maturity Tree" is full of things that we want to fall from our lives. But it also has things that we want to keep and let grow. To make your tree "evergreen" circle the things that you would like to keep and grow in your life. Put an X through the things that you want to fall from your life.



Teachers Everywhere Are Crying Help



Dear T.E.A.C.H.:

Occasionally in our class discussions, a student will express a viewpoint or ask a question that is very different from what I expected. I want to let that student know I appreciate his thought, but sometimes developing it would lead away from the objective. How should I respond?

Concerned Teacher

Dear Concerned:

One thought might be to follow up those "sticky" questions or comments in class by writing the student a brief letter that shows your sincere interest in his viewpoint. Your letter will also show the student that you care enough about him as a person to take time to communicate with him, even though you were not able to develop his thought during class time.

Begin the letter with a friendly statement: "Jon, I was interested in the point/question you brought up in class last Sunday." Then restate the question so he knows you heard what he said. Give a Scripture reference or two which pertains, if possible. Conclude by letting the student know you would like to talk it over if he still has further questions.

Dear T.E.A.C.H.:

I teach an adult class which consists mainly of married couples. Recently I've wondered if the singles in our group may be feeling a little "out of it." How can I help them feel included?

Want to Win "Ones"

Dear Want to Win:

You've made a big step in helping your singles feel included by focusing your own attention on the fact that they may need extra encouragement to really get involved. State our by making sure

that the examples or illustrations you choose to work into your teaching are, at least part of the time, relative to singles. Don't focus entirely on spouses or children! When you pair off your students, or arrange them into small groups for purposes of discussion, don't put couples together, but rather group randomly.

Outside of class, personally encourage your singles to participate in social events of the church. If they feel they know the other members of their class on a social basis, they will feel more comfortable contributing during session time. It may also help to make them feel needed by giving them a job to do: keep class records, help plan programs, etc.

Dear T.E.A.C.H.:

Often I wonder if my junior students (I teach fourth grade) really understand the meaning of some of the words in the ANSWER story and the biblical text. How can I find out if they are really comprehending—and help them in they are not?

Worried About Words

Dear Worried:

You might consider putting up a "Word Window" bulletin board. Draw a big window, and each Sunday select two or three key words. Print the words and their definitions on colorful slips of paper and put them in the window each Sunday. (Or, if you're an artist, try writing the word on a drawing of a potted plant, a cat, or anything else you can think of that might sit on a windowsill.) Then use the word as you teach, calling attention to the definition. You might want to ask a volunteer to paraphrase the definition to see if they are getting the idea. Leave the words on the board for the entire quarter, reviewing them whenever they are applicable to what you are teaching.

Teacher's Name _____

A Bible study resource guide for teachers

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